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ABSTRACT

SPIRITUAL AWARENESS AND GROWTH OF INDIAN  
ADVENTIST YOUTH THROUGH RETREATS

by

Maywald Jesudass

Adviser: Nancy Vyhmeister

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Doctoral Dissertation

Andrews University

SDA Theological Seminary

Title: SPIRITUAL AWARENESS AND GROWTH OF INDIAN  
ADVENTIST YOUTH THROUGH RETREATS

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Ed.D.

Date completed: September 2000

Each year, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in India spends large sums of money on youth and Pathfinder camps. These camps provide recreation and interaction among the youth, but often fail to lead the campers to conversion and commitment. The program, the methodology, and lack of trained resource personnel contribute to these poor results yearly.

Retreats can provide a better alternative to youth camps. Retreats provide seclusion in which the retreatant becomes aware of self and God. The biblical-retreat models

of the Old and the New Testaments form the foundation of the study.

For centuries, the Roman Catholic Church has required retreats of religious orders. The Protestants have used camp meetings. These attract large crowds but provide spiritual nurture. Camp meetings have become an Adventist heritage. To care for the children and youth, summer camps were introduced. The summer camp idea spread around the Adventist world. For decades the youth camps fulfilled the evangelistic goals of the church. Today, youth camps in India are activity oriented, and fail to provide an environment conducive to spiritual formation. Hence, an alternate program is needed.

In search of the alternate program the researcher attended three interdenominational retreats: Blessing Youth Mission, Divine Retreat Center, and Inter-Collegiate Evangelical Youth Camp. These retreats were well planned; their main objectives were spiritual growth and missions. The programs of the retreats and dedicated resource personnel helped many accept Christ.

The biblical foundation of retreats, the instructions for camp meetings, along with the personal experience of the interdenominational retreats, helped to develop a youth retreat model. This model was implemented in the summer of 2000, and twenty-three retreatants testified to its positive

influence on them, particularly in the area of spiritual growth.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

SPIRITUAL AWARENESS AND GROWTH OF INDIAN  
ADVENTIST YOUTH THROUGH RETREATS

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

by  
Maywald Jesudass  
September 2000

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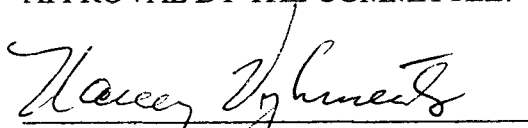
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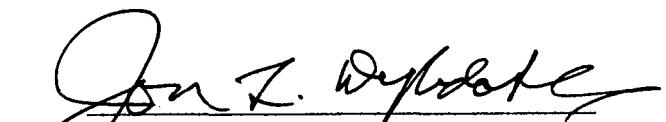
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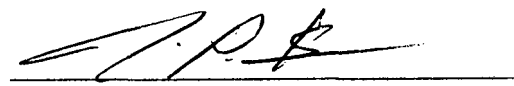
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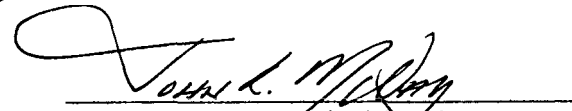
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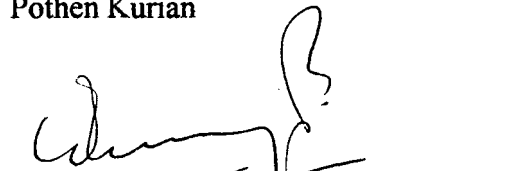
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Thank you, God, once again, for being with me till the end, as you promised.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose

Indian Adventist youth camps are traditional and activity oriented. Geared to offer a break from the mundane, their target is not the spiritual growth of the youth. The purpose of this dissertation was to study the biblical concept of retreat and several interdenominational retreat models. A retreat program has been designed to lead Indian Adventist youth into a dynamic relationship with Christ resulting in spiritual growth.

#### Justification

Indian Adventist Youth Camps revolve around recreation, paper presentations, discussions, honor classes, and social activities. The spiritual dimension of the camps is limited to the morning and evening devotions, and Sabbath services. To the question, "What impressed you the most about the youth camp?" the answers are: "terrific place," "nice food," "had lots of fun," "the big guys are understanding," and "spoil-sports, they wake us early." About spiritual

activities, the responses are, "the usual thing," "interesting," and "enjoyed the singing." For these results, each summer, churches in India spend hundreds of thousands of rupees on youth camps.

The Roman Catholics and the Protestants in India conduct retreats for Christian and non-Christian youth. They register a high percentage of success in leading the youth to a living relationship with Christ. Each year more and more Adventist youth attend these interdenominational retreats. Hence, we need to organize youth retreats to keep our youth within the church.

Further, 80 percent and above of Indian Adventist youth seek employment within the church. If they are led into a living experience with Christ, their commitment to Christ and the church will empower them to make substantial contributions to church and society. This spiritual formation effectively takes place under certain conditions: break from the routine, a secluded place where God's interaction is deeply felt, a place where God's creation becomes the great teacher, and activities that bring self-discovery, restoration, and hope. A retreat can provide the above and support the youth in the process of transformation.

King Solomon gives a remarkable reason to engage in this study, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy

youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shall say, I have no pleasure in them" (Eccl 12:1). If youth in Hindu India are won for Christ, before evil befalls them, they will stand upright for Him. Retreats can provide such spiritual maturity and strength.

### Expectations

The study has resulted in a Adventist Youth retreat model for India, which focuses on spiritual formation. If this model is adopted and implemented by the church, it will provide the religious experience youth are seeking in other churches. The migration can be stopped, or at least reduced. The Adventist high schools and colleges will also benefit from this retreat model. Up to 60 percent of the students studying in Adventist schools are non-Christians. Retreats will provide a conducive environment to introduce and experience Jesus Christ personally. Further, this retreat model, which is centered around spiritual growth, will allow youth to discover God and themselves. This experience will give focus to their lives; aptitude and spiritual gifts could be identified and used. The adults can also adopt this retreat model, making suitable changes, for their spiritual renewal and growth.

The spiritual experience and maturity gained at the youth retreat will become a compelling force to serve

humanity, making youth strong pillars of the church and young missionaries. This spirituality will also enhance growth of mutual trust between the church and its youth. The researcher also hopes to identify suitable places for retreats in each of the four unions. These consecrated retreat centers may attract multitudes who desire to witness God's manifestation.

#### Limitations

The following limitations gave the focus for the dissertation:

The resource material for the dissertation was gathered from the Spicer College Library, the Ellen White Research Center, Union Biblical Seminary (Pune), United Theological College (Bangalore), and Asian Bible College (Bangalore). To gain practical knowledge of camps and retreats, the researcher attended and evaluated three Adventist Youth Camps in South India, and three interdenominational retreats. Although the camps were in South India, the youth camp model is the same in other parts of India.

Based on the theoretical and practical insights gained, a youth retreat model was formulated, and then implemented once in South India. This retreat model is planned for three days and is focused on spiritual formation. Retreats can vary from half a day to any time that the retreatant

and/or the director appoints, depending on the retreat's purpose. Also, depending on the purpose, different kinds of retreats can be conducted. This retreat model is limited to the youth who are physically and the mentally sound. The retarded and the handicapped have different needs.

#### Overview of Chapters

There are seven chapters in this dissertation. The following is the overview of the chapters:

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the dissertation. In chapter 2 the philosophy and theology of retreats in some major world religions and cultures are studied, with emphasis on Christian retreats. In addition, the biblical foundations of solitary and group retreats are traced.

Chapter 3, "Adventist Camp Meetings," outlines the origin of camp meetings in the Millerite movement and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Later changes in camp meetings are traced. Further, the forms of camp meetings in India are briefly noted. The counsels of Ellen White regarding various aspects of camp meetings occupy almost one half of the chapter.

The origin and the purpose of the Seventh-day Adventist youth organizations are briefly presented in chapter 4, with special reference to youth camps. Youth camps in the United States are studied in comparison with camps in India. At

the end of the chapter, the purpose, the program, and the results of three youth camps in South India are recorded.

Chapter 5 gives information on each of three interdenominational retreats attended by the researcher: the place, the program, the purpose, the results, the useable ideas, and the impressions of the researcher.

In chapter 6, a three-day Adventist Youth Retreat conducted at Yercaud is described. The description goes from the planning stages to an evaluation of the results of the retreat, including suggested modifications.

Chapter 7 offers a summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR RETREATS

Nearly all religions and some cultures practice retreats. An individual or a small group, withdrawn from the regular routine, for a period of time, meeting the religious or cultural norms, is said to be in retreat.<sup>1</sup> The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church defines retreat as "these periods of time specifically set apart for spiritual contemplation, religious devotions, and inward renewal."<sup>2</sup> To the Roman Catholic Church, which has developed and mastered the art, the retreat is more than just inward renewal. It is "a prolonged and intensified engagement in spiritual exercises."<sup>3</sup> In some cultures,

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<sup>1</sup>Juan Manuel Lozano, "Retreat," The Encyclopedia of Religion (New York: MacMillan, 1987), 12:350.

<sup>2</sup>Royal L. Peck, "Retreat," The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church, ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1974), 840.

<sup>3</sup>T. Dubay, "Retreats," New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 12:428.

retreat is associated with initiation: a procedure in the rites of passage.<sup>1</sup>

The retreatant withdraws into a solitary place or to a building set apart for such purposes, breaking away from ordinary routine and regular social relationship. This isolation provides a suitable environment for the retreatants to "enter within themselves in silence, in order to establish contact with the divinity or with the world of the Spirits." Fasting, abstinence, prayer, meditation, and other techniques are used to make such contact, which usually results in revelatory dream, trance, or ecstasy.<sup>2</sup>

#### Types of Retreats

Retreats are practiced for religious and social reasons. Growth is the expected result. Religious retreats target self-realization, union with God, and inner healing, while cultural retreats help an individual to attain social status. Juan Manuel Lozano identifies four types of retreats. They are as follows:

#### Tribal Initiation Retreats

The children of certain tribes are isolated for a period of time after which they return to the tribe as

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<sup>1</sup>Lozano, 12:350.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 350.



adults: reaching manhood or belonging to a specific adult group.<sup>1</sup> For example, the Kpelle of Liberia practice the Poro initiation ceremony. The boys of the tribe are circumcised and spend a period of seclusion in the forest with the older men. "They return with scars down their backs, symbolic tooth mark indicative of their close escape from *namu*, the great masked figure, which ate the child but disgorged the young adult."<sup>2</sup> In some cases, after the period of seclusion, the boy is given "a new identity and loyalties and taught a new vocabulary and behavior appropriate to his new status." From this point, he belongs to a specific adult group.<sup>3</sup>

During this isolation, the boys are subjected to strict disciplines: fasting, abstinence, and the performance of certain more or less painful tasks. Protected by rigid taboos in a well-defined zone, these neophytes are instructed by the elders in certain traditional truths and beliefs. This period of initiation, interpreted as a period of death and rebirth, is expected to bring a deep transformation of the human being. "In this case, the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 351.

<sup>2</sup>Carol R. Ember and Melvin Ember, Cultural Anthropology (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 456.

<sup>3</sup>Paul G. Hiebert, Cultural Anthropology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1983), 165.

retreat is precisely the vehicle that allows this breaking away and entry."<sup>1</sup>

#### Revelatory Dream Retreats

An example of revelatory dream retreats is the dream fasts of the North American Indians, the Ojibwa. These are sacred, religious experiences. The Ojibwa believe that to become "acceptable social beings, adolescent males must undertake dream fasts in which they acquire powers from supernatural guardian spirits." These spirits guide the individual throughout their lives, in exchange for promises from the neophytes. The neophytes promise to do or not to do certain things.<sup>2</sup>

The children and adolescents are abandoned in a solitary place. Cut off from the normal world of relationships, they are subjected to strict fast, "until physical weakness induced a state of hallucination." The first image presented to the retreatant is considered as the guiding-protecting spirit. After this experience, an individual is regarded as the depository of a "sacred force."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Lozano, 351.

<sup>2</sup>Benjamin Kilborne, "Dreams," The Encyclopedia of Religion (New York: MacMillan, 1987), 4:489.

<sup>3</sup>Lozano, 351.

Apart from the Ojibwas, this form of retreat was practiced by the pre-columbian Indians, the Athapaseaus from Canada, and the Delaware and Algonquins of the Atlantic Coast.<sup>1</sup>

#### Monastic Initiation Retreats

Monasticism is an appropriate name for a recognizable type of social structure found in many religious traditions. The Christian religious and monastic orders, Jain monasticism, Hindu Sannyasism, the Taoist Association, Muslim Sufi orders, and the Buddhist Upasampada (goal, arrival) have monastic structures with varying degrees of formal institutionalization.<sup>2</sup>

In the Buddhist tradition, for example, the novitiate aim is to prepare the novices "for entry upon the way of salvation, and it ends with an anointing ceremony (abhiseka), which consecrates them." Another feature observed is the change of the novice's names, "to indicate that a secular individual had died and a religious one had come to birth."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>George Weekman, "Monasticism: An Overview," The Encyclopedia of Religion (New York: MacMillan, 1987), 10:35.

<sup>3</sup>Lozano, 352.

A two-stage procedure is followed in the Buddhist novitiate. In stage one, young people around the age of fifteen are accepted as novices with the consent of their families. On entry, they take the ten basic vows, shave their heads, and wear yellow robes. In stage two, the novice takes the vows of a fully ordained monk. The eligibility for this entry is five years of study and training under the direction of a master.<sup>1</sup> The Buddhist monasticism emphasizes personal poverty, subordination within the community, and prohibition of drinking alcohol and eating of meat. In all, there are between 220-250 regulations binding the novice, depending on the monastery.<sup>2</sup>

#### Spiritual Renewal Retreats

The focus of these retreats is the spiritual experience of an individual. This is achieved by isolation in a chosen place, for a period of time. Fasting, prayer, meditations, and other spiritual exercises revitalize the retreatant.

The retreat of spiritual renewal seems to be evident in all religions, although it is popular and widely practiced among the Muslims and Christians.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Collcutt, "Monasticism: Buddhist Monasticism," The Encyclopedia of Religion (New York: MacMillan, 1987), 10:43.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Lozano, 352.

### Retreats in Major Religions

In this section, retreats in Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity are briefly considered.

#### Retreats in Hinduism

In the Hindu view, the human life span is considered to be one hundred years. This is divided into four equal parts. The four Ashramas or stages are: Brahmacharya, Gaibastha, Vanaprastha, and Sanyasa. After crossing the stage of a student, a Hindu is married. On raising a family to his satisfaction, he enters into the third stage. In the Vanaprastha period, a Hindu is known as a "dweller in the woods." It is the stage of semi-retirement in which he devotes himself to "self-denial in food and raiment, to mortification of various kinds, to religious meditation, and to the strict performance of all ceremonial duties."<sup>1</sup>

This retreat leads a Hindu to attain spiritual maturity and "his eventual irradiation of the people who surround him by way of his example and teaching." After this experience the Hindu ascetic enters into the fourth stage. As a sanyasi, he returns back to society but not forming part of it.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Karan Singh, ed., Religions of India (New Delhi: Clarion, 1983), 25.

<sup>2</sup>Lozano, 351, 352.

## Retreats in Islam

The concept of retreat is amply documented in the Muslim world. The fourth pillar of Islam opens to every practicing Muslim the opportunity to retreat for an entire month each year.

Sawm: Retreat for All

During this month the social behavior of the whole community changes; the pace of life slows down, there is time for reflection and reconciliation, and social relationships are reaffirmed. David Kerr writes that "the fundamental intention of fasting is thanksgiving. Inwardly the fast is thought of as a disciplining of the soul to wait patiently upon God who guides and provides."<sup>1</sup>

Khalwa: Retreat by Choice

In Islamic theology, the word *Khalwa* means retirement, seclusion, or retreat. *Khalwa* is practiced by choice. It refers to a period of isolation in a solitary place or cell, involving spiritual exercises. It is believed that the Sufi Dhul-Nun al-Misri (d. 860) learned from a Syrian hermit the art of retreat and the spiritual benefits of being with God in private. Landolt writes that, on entering *Khalwa*, "one

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<sup>1</sup>David Kerr, ed., Eerdmans Handbook to the World's Religions (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1994), 322, 323.

should free oneself from worldly possessions and be in a state of ritual purity."<sup>1</sup>

Being in a cell, blocking even the entry of daylight, Khalwa enables a retreatant in "closing up of the external senses and the opening of the internal senses." This isolation may also lead to visionary experiences and extra-sensory perceptions. Hence, it is vital to be guided by a spiritual director.<sup>2</sup>

It is recommended that this seclusion be limited to forty days, and that it should be repeated once every year. The traditional basis of Khalwa is taken from the practice of Prophet Muhammad retreating on Mount Hira, and the example of prophet Musa (Moses) of the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup>

#### Retreats in Buddhism

The term Upasampada refers to retreat in Buddhist thought. Only those who desire to enter into a religious order practice this form of retreat. This concept was considered briefly, above, under Monastic Initiation Retreats.

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<sup>1</sup>H. Landolt, "Khalwa," The Encyclopedia of Islam (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1978), 4:990.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 4:991.

## Retreats in Christianity

As seen in the previous section, the practice of retreat is not uniquely Christian. It is only in the last few centuries that retreats have reached a high level of development in Christianity.

### History of Retreats

The experience and example of Jesus Christ, who spent forty days in the wilderness and whole nights in prayer (Matt 4:1,2; 14:23, Heb 5:16), provide the Christian initiation of the need for periods of solitude. The Pentecostal experience in the Upper Room is considered to be the first retreat by the followers of Christ. These examples were followed in succeeding centuries. It was the celebration of lent that suggested the first tentative steps towards the practice of the retreat.<sup>1</sup>

Around the end of the fourth century, Eulbunicus, the great monk of Melitene, withdrew to a mountaintop during lent of each year. Later, he and one of his friends went into the desert of Koutila, during the same period. In this isolation, they committed themselves to prayer and fasting.<sup>2</sup> These Lenten desert retreats continued to flourish for several centuries. In the fifth century, Eastern monks

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<sup>1</sup>Dubay, 428.

<sup>2</sup>Lozano, 353.



retired into the desert for prayers, fasting, and performing other penance. In the west, Benedict (c. 480-547) "envisioned intense spiritual life for his monks." Apart from special prayers, this spiritual exercise included restricted eating, drinking, sleeping, and speaking.<sup>1</sup>

The pilgrimages of the Middle Ages could also be considered as retreats. It required of the individual a break with the normal situation, leaving the family and the city to go to distant holy places for a period of time. "The deep reason behind these journeys was the desire to visit a sacred place where the presence of the supernatural was more perceptible." Many a time these pilgrimages provided a separation from the world. At times, they led the individuals into a conversion experience.<sup>2</sup>

The Modern Age retreat has its root in the spiritual movement called the Devotio Moderna. Initiated by Gerhard Groote (14th century), the followers of this movement were required to withdraw for a time to enhance a "fervent life."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dubay, 428.

<sup>2</sup>Lozano, 353, 354.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Roman Catholic Retreats

The modern retreat work derived its initial impetus from the "Spiritual Exercises" written by Ignatius of Loyola (16th Century), founder of the Society of Jesus. Approved by Paul III in 1548,<sup>1</sup> the Society of Jesus "did much of the effective work of the Counter Reformation through these exercises." These spiritual exercises gave the Roman Catholic Church a new direction in spiritual formation. In recognition of his work, Pope Pious XI named Ignatius as the patron of retreats.<sup>2</sup>

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, other saints and religious congregations helped to extend the retreat movement throughout the Roman Catholic world. Maria Antonia (1730-1799) of Argentina is considered as extraordinary among the heralds of the retreat movement. Before her death she provided retreats for 100,000 persons in South America.<sup>3</sup>

Pope Pius XI (1922-1939), in his encyclical on retreats, Mens nostra (Dec. 20, 1929), indicated the great advantages to be derived from them for all persons in the church. With no obligation laid on the laity, the canon law

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<sup>1</sup>Peck, 840.

<sup>2</sup>Dubay, 428.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

requires all priests to attend one retreat every three years, and members of all religious orders to attend at least one each year.<sup>1</sup>

### Protestant Retreats

Though the Roman Catholic Church paved the way, retreats are not limited to them. The Oxford Movement (Oxford College, England, from 1833 to 1845) experimented with retreats, later practiced them, considering them a success. The Church of England formally adopted retreats in 1856.<sup>2</sup>

Based on their theological understanding of ministry, the Protestant retreats assumed many forms for the minister and the member. For example, a group of twenty ministers, or lay folk both young and old, or people from the same sex, go to a secluded rural college and spend a weekend or longer. With the devotions scheduled at certain hours, they spend much of the time in meditation, each one alone with the Lord. The retreat usually culminates with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 429.

<sup>2</sup>Peck, 840.

<sup>3</sup>Andrew W. Blackwood, "Retreats," Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1955), 2:970.

### Purpose of Retreats

Although the general purpose of all Christian retreats is the spiritual growth of the retreatant, each retreat has a specific purpose. The purpose depends on the class of persons, the aim of the directing priest,<sup>1</sup> and the number of days in seclusion. Hence, retreats can result in (1) conversion from sin, (2) decision of vocation, (3) entrance into novitiate, (4) perpetual profession, (5) ordination to the priesthood, (6) preparation for marriage, (7) proficiency in a virtue (humility, charity), (8) problems in a stage of life,<sup>2</sup> (9) increase of personal holiness, (10) overcoming temptation or the world, and (11) receiving fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit. These and more can be achieved through retreats.<sup>3</sup>

### Suggested Program

The retreat program differs from one church organization to another. A high degree of organization is expected in a modern closed retreat. The schedule which runs from one to eight or more days may include: meditation, expositions and lectures given by the conductor, personal

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<sup>1</sup>A clergyman of experience plays the role of the directing priest or the conductor.

<sup>2</sup>Dubay, 429.

<sup>3</sup>William Benham, The Dictionary of Religion, rev. ed. (London: Cessell, 1891), s.v. "Retreats."

prayer and devotions, self-examination, personal interviews and counseling, and provision for silence, complete or partial. In Roman Catholic retreats the program includes daily mass and individualized help through the confessional.<sup>1</sup>

The concept of journaling is practiced in many retreats. The retreatant is encouraged to record the inspirations and interactions between the divine and the human. This activity culminates with the retreatant making "some definite resolution in writing as to amendment of life before returning home."<sup>2</sup>

Andrew Blackwood's suggestion to the organizers of retreats is valuable: "Keep the numbers small, the programs uncrowded, and the emphasis on Christian feeling rather than philosophic thought, or preparations for concerted action."<sup>3</sup>

#### Types of Retreats

The modern retreat is a flexible tool. Retreats are conducted for the clergy, religious orders, and laity. Lay retreats can further be subdivided according to age, sex, and occupation. These classifications have given rise to retreats for grade school children, teenagers, youth,

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<sup>1</sup>Dubay, 429.

<sup>2</sup>Benham, "Retreats."

<sup>3</sup>Blackwood, 970.

nurses, lawyers, physicians, businessmen, professional women, and married women.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the common retreat, there are at least four other types of retreats. They are:

1. Day of Recollection: according to his or her possibilities, an individual can retreat for an entire day or even a afternoon. With the help of a series of exercises, the retreatant recollects, repents, and is reconciled.

2. Monthly Retreat: the religious congregations usually observe this monthly retreat. A day in a month is set aside in stricter silence. Additional spiritual exercises are practiced, apart from the ordinary routine.

3. Private Retreat: a person makes the retreat alone. He is a self-made guide, assisted only by books.

4. Solitude Retreat: there are two kinds of solitude retreats. In an open solitude retreat, the retreatants commute from their homes to the retreat center. The closed solitude retreat requires the retreatant to be in the center during the entire period.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dubay, 429.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

### Retreat Houses

The Retreat Houses were established in order to facilitate the arrangement of retreats for those who wished to make them. In 1538, the first such house was opened in a villa in Siena, Italy. As the concept of retreat developed and became popular, retreat houses mushroomed all around Christendom. Though these houses are patterned after the monasteries, yet they provide many more facilities. Some retreat houses are said to have special powers. Their ideal location and the spirituality of the retreat director contribute to this power.<sup>1</sup>

### Biblical Retreat Models

God's people are called to separation and seclusion. This call is repeated both in the Old and the New Testaments. In Leviticus (13:5, 21, 33, 46,) and Numbers (5:3), the physically unclean and diseased were separated from the camp. This separation prevented defilement of the camp where God dwelt. Further, the Lord strictly prohibited the intermarriage between the Israelites and the heathen. In fact, the Israelites were not to make any covenant with them, "nor show mercy unto them" (Deut 7:2). The Israelites were to dwell alone, be holy unto God, that they may be His (Ezra 9:12; Num 23:9; Lev 20:26; Josh 23:7).

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<sup>1</sup>Lozano, 354.

To belong to the Lord definitely calls for disassociation with evildoers. Hence, Isaiah wrote, "touch not unclean things; . . . be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa 52:11). Paul's command to the brethren was, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly" (2 Thess 3:6). Further, Peter warns, "save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). Disassociation with evildoers does not seem as an option, rather it is a mark of one's spiritual growth. The call for separation is not only to empower one to be holy wherever he is, but to "come out" and belong to the Lord and His chosen people (Rev 18:4).

Even those who accept the call of separation may lose sight of the goal. For this reason Christ felt the need to retire from worldly associates from time to time. Jesus not only went alone up into a mountain to pray (Matt 15:29, 14:23). One time he "entered into a house, and would have no man know it" (Mark 7:24). He also took the disciples "aside privately into a desert place to rest a while" (Mark 6:31; Luke 9:10). "The rest which Christ and His disciples took was not self-indulgent rest. The time they spent in retirement was not devoted to pleasure seeking."<sup>1</sup> Ellen White observes that by this brief seclusion "they were

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1940), 361.



vitalized by divine power, and inspired with hope and courage."<sup>1</sup> It is recommended that "whatever a person's occupation, occasional change not only brings relaxation but imparts new vigor."<sup>2</sup> "Religious contemplation and commune between the soul and God are needed, if the soul is to retain . . . its ability to be of service to others."<sup>3</sup>

In the Scriptures there are two kinds of retreats. They are (1) solitary retreat and (2) group retreat.

#### Solitary Retreat

In a solitary retreat, an individual separates himself to be alone with God. The reasons for such seclusion could vary, depending on the individual's need, his call to ministry, and the circumstances. In the case of Jesus, "He went to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work. By fasting and prayer He was to brace Himself for the blood stained path He must travel."<sup>4</sup> Often in solitary retreats, the duration is determined by the fulfillment of the retreat's purpose.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>"Rest a While" [Mark 6:31], Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC), rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1976-1980), 5:616.

<sup>3</sup>George Rawlinson, Exodus, The Pulpit Commentary, vol. 2 (Chicago: Wilcox & Follett, n.d.), 238.

<sup>4</sup>White, Desire of Ages, 114.

In this section, the solitary retreats of Moses and Paul are briefly considered.

Solitary Retreat in the Old Testament

Exod 24:12-18 records the solitary experience of Moses on Mount Sinai. For forty days and forty nights Moses was on the mount. In the first six days, God taught Moses that "near approach to him requires long and careful preparation."<sup>1</sup> For "heart preparation and contemplation upon the character and will of God must precede intimate association with Him."<sup>2</sup> Moses, no doubt, was "occupied during the six days in continual prayer." On the seventh day, "God summoned him to a closer approach."<sup>3</sup>

"In this prophetic seclusion, separated from the world, his mind took deeply and strongly the impress of heaven."<sup>4</sup> "It is in communion with God that gifts are received for men."<sup>5</sup> The gifts that Moses received from God on behalf of mankind were: (1) the ten commandments, (2) the laws and

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<sup>1</sup>Rawlinson, 236.

<sup>2</sup>"And Moses Went Up," SDABC, 1:633.

<sup>3</sup>Rawlinson, 236.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph S. Exell, Exodus, The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1974), 532.

<sup>5</sup>"And Moses Went Up," SDABC, 1:633.

judgments of the book of the covenant, and (3) instructions concerning the erection of the sanctuary.<sup>1</sup>

Commenting on Moses' mountain-top experience, Ellen White writes, "Israel was now to be taken into a close and peculiar relation to the Most High--to be incorporated as a church and a nation under the government of God."<sup>2</sup> The solitary experience of Moses influenced the nation's spirituality. Furthermore, the ten commandments were to "be held as a sacred trust for the whole world. The precepts of the Decalogue are adapted to all mankind."<sup>3</sup>

#### Solitary Retreat in the New Testament

The records of Paul (Gal 1:17, 18) and Luke (Acts 9:12, 20) regarding the Arabian retreat seem to vary. But a careful study of the information from all sources outlines this period of two or three years as follows: "After spending some time preaching in Damascus, Paul retired to Arabia. When he returned to Damascus his preaching apparently attracted unfavorable attention."<sup>4</sup> However, he escaped being let down in a basket by the wall (2 Cor

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 1:632.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1958), 303.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 305.

<sup>4</sup>"Neither Went I Up." SDABC, 6:941.

11:33). Later, he went to Jerusalem after three years to meet Peter.

The location of Paul's Arabian retreat is under dispute. If we suppose that Paul retreated at the Sinaitic Peninsula, the scene of the giving of the law, then his visit to Arabia becomes full of meaning. "He was attracted thither by a spirit akin to that which formerly had driven Elijah to the same region" (1 Kgs 19:8-18).<sup>1</sup> But Kenneth Wuest writes that in A.D. 37, the probable year of Paul's conversion, king Aretas and the Romans were at war. This fact "would have made such a journey very doubtful."<sup>2</sup>

Irrespective of the exact location, in the desert Paul found "an awayness, an apartness rarely equaled anywhere else." "The desert proved a filling place in Paul's unfolding pilgrimage. It took the solitariness of the desert to put his world together on Christ's larger terms and pattern."<sup>3</sup> The solitude of the desert provided Paul an opportunity--(1) for quiet study and meditation, (2) to calmly review his past, (3) to repent and receive forgiveness, (4) to empty his soul of the prejudices and

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph S. Exell, Galatians, The Biblical Illustrator, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1974), 60.

<sup>2</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest's Word Studies, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1966), 51.

<sup>3</sup>Oscar Fisher Blackwelder, Galatians, The Interpreter's Bible, vol. 10 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 459, 460.

traditions, and (5) to receive instruction from the source of truth. Further, "Jesus communed with him and established him in the faith, bestowing upon him a rich measure of wisdom and grace."<sup>1</sup> For Paul, this experience was "sort of substitute for the three years' personal intercourse with the Lord, enjoyed by the other Apostles."<sup>2</sup>

Conder points out that "it was Paul's contention that the gospel he preached was no second-hand tale; it had come to him direct from God."<sup>3</sup> The solitary desert retreat not only empowered the messenger with the Message, but it brought "radical change in his own life," which became the proof of his claim.<sup>4</sup> This desert experience caused within Paul a thirst for the ministry in spite of the difficulties and perils that he had to face (2 Cor 11:25-27). He served the Lord untiringly to the extent that he was accused of turning the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Acts of the Apostles (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1911), 125, 126.

<sup>2</sup>Otto Schmoller, Galatians, Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1960), 26.

<sup>3</sup>F. R. Conder and C. R. Conder, A Handbook to the Bible: The Letter to the Galatians (London: Longman's, Green, 1882), 12.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

### Group Retreat

If a solitary retreat deepens an individual's spirituality, a group retreat establishes "one accord." One accord among people, and between people and God, results in unity in diversity and unity in the cause. Both in the Old and New Testaments, group retreats were not widely practiced.

#### Group Retreat in the Old Testament

The practice of group retreats in the Old Testament included the entire nation. Esther's call to the Jews of Shushan for a three-day fast, accompanied by intercession to God on her behalf, is an example. "Fasting, weeping, and wearing of sackcloth and ashes were essentially religious acts for many, if not most, Jews."<sup>1</sup>

The Israelites' retreat at Mount Sinai is another example (Exo 19:9-25). The Israelites camped before Mount Sinai. Moses brought word that the Lord wanted to speak to them. In the prescribed three-day retreat, two days were to be spent in preparation for the third. Regarding the preparation Ellen White writes, "Their person and their clothing must be freed from impurity. And as Moses should point out their sins, they were to devote themselves to

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<sup>1</sup>Carey A. Moore, Esther, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1971), 47.

humiliation, fasting, and prayer."<sup>1</sup> Sanctifying themselves, the Israelites were to practice detachment even within the family. "There must be separation from what is not of God, in order to fellowship with what is."<sup>2</sup>

The two days of separation were to prepare the Israelites for a communion with the Lord. "It was necessary that He should speak to men who for years had been surrounded by idolatrous associations, and who had become debased by years of servitude, in a most solemn, startling, and impressive form."<sup>3</sup> On the third day, God descended on the mountain, with thunder and lightning, and a thick cloud, accompanied by a very loud trumpet blast. "There was a period of solemn silence, and then the voice of God was heard."<sup>4</sup>

Jon Dybdahl observes that the three-day retreat resulted in the following:

1. It created a balance between nearness and distance. God desires to come near and have personal relationship with man; at the same time He maintains some distance. "God is to be loved, but He is to be worshipped and not trifled with."

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<sup>1</sup>White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 304.

<sup>2</sup>Exell, Exodus, 328.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 327.

<sup>4</sup>White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 304.

2. Moses is lifted "higher in the eyes of Israel. . . . He is the instruction giver, and above all, he alone can go up the mountain."<sup>1</sup>

The lessons for the Israel of old and today are, the "need to meet the God of the covenant and law before we meet the covenant with its accompanying commands. . . . The ground for faith and obedience is a person--an awesome person who can meet us and speak to us."<sup>2</sup>

#### Group Retreat in the New Testament

"The basic event was a communal religious experience, as a result of which the Apostles embarked on the first stage of the Church's mission."<sup>3</sup> This was said about the Upper Room experience of the 120 early Christians. "Upper rooms in Palestinian cities were usually the choicest rooms because they were above the tumult of the crowded streets. . . . Often they served as places of assembly, study and prayer."<sup>4</sup> In obedience to Jesus, after His ascension, they came back to Jerusalem, and were of "one accord" (Acts 1:1-

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<sup>1</sup>Jon L. Dybdahl, Exodus, Bible Amplifier (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1994), 176.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 177.

<sup>3</sup>William Neil, Acts, New Century Bible Commentary (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1973), 71.

<sup>4</sup>Richard N. Longenecker, The Acts of the Apostles, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1981), 260.



14). In contrast to the competitive spirit shown at the time of the last supper (Luke 22:24), calmness and solemn joy prevailed during this period of waiting.<sup>1</sup>

This ten-day retreat was "engaged in the highest exercise of the spirit. . . . True prayer requires both solitude at times and at times society. We need the help of one another in the pursuit of truth. . . . Common prayer is the joint striving of souls to lay hold upon the strength of God."<sup>2</sup>

During the ten days of expectancy and earnest prayers, the 120 were "drawn by one common impulse to merge their separate existences, their various pursuits, their divergent vocation, their several movements, their independent actions."<sup>3</sup> This was essential that they may clarify their life-work, and receive the promised endowment, the awful power of the Holy Ghost.<sup>4</sup> The ten-day retreat resulted in the pentecostal experience, an experience that brought heavenly illumination. Ellen White writes:

Under the Spirit's teaching they received the final qualification, and went forth to their lifework. No longer were they ignorant and uncultured. No longer

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<sup>1</sup>"Continued with One Accord" [Acts 1:14], SDABC, 6:127.

<sup>2</sup>A. C. Hervey, Acts of the Apostles, The Pulpit Commentary, vol. 41 (London: Funk & Wagnalls, n.d.), 14.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 30.

were they a collection of independent units or discordant, conflicting elements. No longer were their hopes set on worldly greatness. . . . Christ filled their thoughts; the advancement of His kingdom was their aim. In mind and character they had become like their Master, and men "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).<sup>1</sup>

### Conclusion

Retreats in different cultures and religions have taken many forms. In Christianity, retreats were required of priests and those belonging to religious orders.

During the nineteenth-century religious awakenings, the church became conscious of its members' needs. Retreats for the members took the form of revival and camp meetings. The following chapter discusses the contributions of camp meetings, particularly in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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<sup>1</sup>White, Acts of the Apostles, 45.

## CHAPTER 3

### ADVENTIST CAMP MEETINGS

The theology and models of biblical retreats were translated into the context of the nineteenth-century Protestant North America as camp meetings. The impact of camp meetings is the story of the nineteenth-century religious awakenings in the United States, with far-reaching influence on other parts of the world.

Though camp meetings did not originate with Seventh-day Adventists, they have become the heritage of this church because of the importance they have enjoyed in the past 130 years. The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia defines "camp meeting" as

a series of meetings held for a number of days, generally in a rural or semi-rural setting, with provision for encampment on the grounds.

It further adds that camp meetings are usually "conducted annually by a conference or an equivalent unit of church organization."<sup>1</sup> This chapter traces briefly the early history of camp meetings, noting especially Millerite

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<sup>1</sup>Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (SDAE), 1996 ed., s.v. "Camp Meeting."

meetings. Adventist camp meetings are described, and Ellen White's counsels on camp meetings are analyzed in the following sections.

### Early Camp Meetings

By the end of the eighteenth century American Christianity was devoid of spirituality. Reason reigned, religion was considered a "trick of priest craft." Revelation was said to lack authority, "and moral obligation a needless encumbrance; . . . therefore, animal pleasures were actually the only happiness." The church lost ground with a tremendous increase of drunkenness, immorality, and broken homes.<sup>1</sup>

At the turn of the nineteenth century, an outbreak of revivalistic phenomena swept across America, causing intensive revival among the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists. In July 1800, in Logan County, Kentucky, "thousands encamped in the woods for several days to hear the long neglected gospel; this was evidently the beginning of the increasingly frequent and effective camp meetings."<sup>2</sup>

The camp meetings in America became increasingly important. As a result, thousands were added to the church.

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<sup>1</sup>LeRoy Edwin Froom, The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1946-1954), 4:36, 37.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 4:38, 39.

Methodist camp meetings flourished especially. In 1812 at least 400 such meetings, of various sizes, were held annually in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

#### Millerite Camp Meetings

The great Advent Awakening of the early 1840s, also known as the Millerite Movement, was the outcome of the wide-spread revivalism. In the span of three years, between 1842 and 1844, 124 camp meetings were conducted. The attendance at each of these meetings was between 4,000 and 10,000. "It was believed that a half million persons attended these Millerite camps during 1842, 1843 and 1844."<sup>2</sup> "The speakers ranged in number from five to fifteen or more in larger camps, and down to two, three, or four in the smaller camps."<sup>3</sup>

#### Objectives

The objectives of the Millerite camp meetings were to preach the prophecies, to expound the signs of the times, to engage in prayer, to open the gates of salvation, to call for complete consecration, to emphasize the premillennial

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 4:43, 44.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 4:650, 651.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 4:653.

Second Advent, and to herald the glorious kingdom.<sup>1</sup> These meetings, according to Arthur White, "gave impetus to the heralding of the first angel's message and helped solidify the work."<sup>2</sup>

#### Camp Meeting Activities

The main features that marked the Millerite camp meetings were dynamic and persuasive preaching, singing, exhorting each other in Christ's spirit, praying often, and collecting offerings. Large offerings were received to meet the heavy expenses of camp meetings, both in cash and golden jewelry.<sup>3</sup>

The music included "songs of praise, exhortation warning, appeal, and doctrinal truth. . . . New words were set to standard or current tunes."<sup>4</sup> "The singing made the camp ring with its fervor, and enforced the oral message."<sup>5</sup>

In addition to listening to preaching, campers celebrated the Lord's Supper and participated in question

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 4:654.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur L. White, Ellen G. White, vol. 2, The Progressive Years: 1862-1876 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1983), 2:240.

<sup>3</sup>Froom, 4:646.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 4:654.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 4:646.

and answer sessions, and altar calls.<sup>1</sup> The parting ceremony was impressive and emotional. Earnest prayers of commitment were offered, and tears streamed down their cheeks as they sang hymns such as, "What, Never Part Again?" They felt that perhaps they would never meet again until "Gabriel shall sound the trump of God at the impending day of expectation."<sup>2</sup>

In July 1842, the largest tent in the country was erected in New Hampshire. Made of heavy canvas, the "great tent" was 120 feet in diameter and had a center pole 55 feet high. Four thousand persons could comfortably be seated in the tent. That summer the tent was pitched in seven other cities. "The tent's very size attracted much attention and helped draw the crowds to hear advent preachers."<sup>3</sup>

#### Results of Camp Meetings

Millerite camp meetings were a blessing both to the church and to the community. These camp meetings resulted in many accepting the advent faith, backsliders were reclaimed, and numerous baptisms were conducted. During these meetings much literature was distributed, and the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 4:654.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 4:651, 652.

<sup>3</sup>R. W. Schwarz, Light Bearers to the Remnant (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1979), 41, 42.

spirit of unity embraced the believers. "There was widespread and effective publicity and opportunity provided for successful evangelism." Above all, those who attended the camp meetings were awed by God's presence.<sup>1</sup>

#### Adventist Camp Meetings

Seventh-day Adventist camp meetings began in 1868. Within a few years they became very popular with the support of James White and Joseph Bates, who had participated in the Millerite meetings.

#### General Conference Action

In the 1868 General Conference session, held in Battle Creek, camp meetings were discussed. A committee action was taken:

Resolved, that this conference recommend to our people to hold a general camp meeting annually at the time of the sessions of our business associations.<sup>2</sup>

Two months later, in an editorial, James White strongly affirmed the unsuitability of holding camp meetings during the business sessions. He wrote: "This is not a good time for a general gathering of our brethren and sisters to enjoy a spiritual feast."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Froom, 4:655.

<sup>2</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Camp Meeting."

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



### First Camp Meeting

The first Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting was held in September 1-7, 1868, in a maple grove, on the farm of Elder Root, at Wright, Michigan. Inclusive of visitors, 2,000 were in attendance.<sup>1</sup> The week's program began with the keynote address of Ellen White, who highlighted the objectives of camp meetings.<sup>2</sup>

#### Physical Arrangements

The campground was patterned after the Millerite meetings. In the center was the outdoor meeting place, around which were pitched twenty-two tents which housed the campers. Two large tents were erected for meetings in case of rain.<sup>3</sup>

Each family or group cooked their own food outdoors. The camp organizers provided hot gruel both in the morning and evening. The camp was lighted by wood fires, which were erected on posts. While these burned through the night, kerosene lights or candles in the tents were expected to be

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur Whitefield Spalding, Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1962), 2:10, 13.

<sup>2</sup>A. White, The Progressive Years: 1862-1876, 248, 249.

<sup>3</sup>Spalding, 2:10.

put out at ten o'clock. Silence was to be maintained until the morning bell.<sup>1</sup>

### Meetings

Many children accompanied their parents to the camp meeting. James White saw the need and conducted separate meetings for them. He taught them, counseled with them, and gave each a small book of stories.<sup>2</sup>

During the week sixteen discourses were given, and two or three "social meetings" took place each day. The "social meetings" provided the campers an opportunity to share their experience, to praise the Lord, and even to confess their wrongs openly. This brought inner strength to the campers.<sup>3</sup>

### Spirituality

The camp organizers provided a strong spiritual leadership, which was positively received by the campers. This led to the reclaiming of backsliders. Believers deepened their consecration and some accepted the Savior for the first time. About this experience, Spalding writes:

A thorough work of spiritual uplift was done, and everyone was convinced that not only could the camp meeting be conducted in an orderly and reverent

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 2:11, 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 2:12, 13.

<sup>3</sup>A. White, The Progressive Years: 1862-1876, 249.

manner, but that it was a great asset to the spirituality of the church.<sup>1</sup>

#### Later Camp Meetings

After the first camp meeting, within a month, other meetings were held at Clyde, Illinois, and Pilot Grove, Iowa. Each resulted in similar or greater spiritual experience. In 1876, at Groveland near Boston, as many as 20,000 were present and thousands more were unable to get transportation.<sup>2</sup>

As in everything, time brought external changes in camp meetings. Spalding observes,

The crowds grew larger; the facilities were improved; the feeding of the multitudes became more scientifically organized; departments and age-periods received increased attention; but still in essentials the camp meeting remained the same.<sup>3</sup>

Camp meetings were traditionally held for ten days. Their aim remained the same: to revive and to evangelize. The practice of maintaining permanent camp meeting sites rather than moving to different locations each year became general.

Some campgrounds have cabins; most provide family tents and accommodation for home trailers and recreational vehicles, so that as many campers as may

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<sup>1</sup>Spalding, 2:13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 2:17.

desire can reside on the grounds during the encampment.<sup>1</sup>

These facilities in modern campgrounds enabled smooth functioning of the meetings and attracted all classes of people.

In his history of Adventism, Spalding records his conviction about camp meetings:

As a school of the church, as an inspirer of missionary zeal, and as a social cohesive force, the camp meeting has justified the enterprise that first set it to going in the sugar bush.<sup>2</sup>

He then sets forth the benefits of the annual camp meetings:

1. They united the Adventist family.
2. They provided an opportunity to interact with Christians of other denominations.
3. They enabled youth to interact socially and to grow spiritually among them.
4. The children received the benefits of juvenile companionship and experienced guardianship.
5. The presence of local workers and missionaries on furlough provided an international flavor.

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<sup>1</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Camp Meeting."

<sup>2</sup>Spalding, 2:19.

6. The information and instruction given in religion, health, education, missionary enterprise, church finance, and other features were an inspiration.<sup>1</sup>

#### Camp Meetings Today

The camp meeting idea still persists, but the meetings usually last only a few days. They are far more regional and specialty-oriented: ethnic and language groups have separate camp meetings. Describing the transition of camp meetings from the 1860s to the present time, Carlos Medley writes:

Campers, who once stayed in tents, now reside in cabins, lodges, dormitories, hotels, and recreational vehicles. Another shift has been to shorter and shorter meetings often held over long weekends, or regional meetings in multiple locations within a conference territory.<sup>2</sup>

The above is particularly true in the United States.

#### United States

Whatever changes the camp meetings have undergone, in the United States "for nearly 130 years church members have relished these spiritual celebrations."<sup>3</sup> Between the months of March and September of each year, the North American

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 2:14.

<sup>2</sup>Carlos Medley, "Camp Ground Reflections," Adventist Review, 28 August 1997, 6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Division (NAD) conducts several regional camp meetings. The duration of these meetings is from one to nine days.

According to the camp meeting schedule published in the Adventist Review, in 1997 NAD conducted 86 camp meetings.<sup>1</sup>

#### Ethnic and Language Groups

In the United States camp meetings are conducted for ethnic and language groups. Thus, for example, the North Pacific Union Conference organizes camp meetings for Blacks and Hispanics, while the Atlantic Union Conference conducts camp meetings in English, French, Korean, Portuguese, and Spanish.<sup>2</sup>

#### Specialty-Oriented Camp Meetings

The Adventist Singles Ministries sponsored the National Single Adult Conference in 1992. More than 300 people attended this camp meeting at Southern College in Tennessee, June 3-10, which had international participation. This camp meeting provided "a place to find salve for life's wounds and hospitality unfettered by traditional taboos." One of the speakers dealt with a vital question: "Does God view singles as incomplete or broken human beings?" Apart from the regular spiritual activity, this camp meeting

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<sup>1</sup>"NAD Camp Meeting Schedule for 1997," Adventist Review, April 1997, 25.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

provided for the "physical, emotional, social, and personal needs." White-water rafting, pancake feeds, comedy, and cave tours were some of the programs. "The daily program also acknowledged that making friends and having fun were important."<sup>1</sup>

In the weekend of March 2, the Adventist winter festival of 1996 attracted nearly 1,200 Adventist youth to the ski country of Colorado in North America. Skiers ranging from a "7-year-old to parents and a 75-year-old" came from "academies and colleges and communities across North America to ski and to enjoy the fellowship of other Adventists." "The religious services with music performances, dramatic presentation, and personal testimony . . . were spiritual, inspirational, and lively. The young people prayed, rejoiced, and worshipped in the joy of Christian community." Apart from skiing and the spiritual feast, vegetarian cuisine was available in promotional booths.<sup>2</sup>

To mention a few, these are two specialty-oriented camp meetings.

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<sup>1</sup>Kit Watts, "A Camp Meeting for the Whole Person," Adventist Review, 27 August 1992, 4.

<sup>2</sup>"It Wasn't Your Father's Camp Meeting," Adventist Review, 18 April 1996, 20, 21.

### Campground Blessings

Irrespective of time, size, format, or location, the blessings that camp meetings shower have remained the same. Carlos Medley re-echoes our pioneers' spiritual experience at camp meetings.

1. "Camp meeting provides an incredible opportunity for fellowship with other believers and a rare chance to renew friendships."

2. "Camp meetings provide a unique opportunity for God to bring a timely message to His children today."

3. At camp meetings, "we can train willing workers for Christian service, teach families the principles for healthful living."

4. At camp meetings we can "invite unbelievers to accept the saving message of Christ, and encourage longtime church members to re-consecrate their lives to God."

5. "Camp meetings give the entire family of God a unique opportunity to praise Christ's name with one heart, one mind, and one voice."<sup>1</sup>

### India

Camp meetings in the Indian Seventh-day Adventist Church are not widespread. Most churches conduct revival meetings spanning from one to three days. These are

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<sup>1</sup>Medley, 6.



organized at least once a year, but churches in some regions of the northeast conduct youth convention and annual meetings. In the northern, central, and southern parts of India, the All India African Adventist Students Association (AIAASA) introduced camp meetings.

### Mizo Youth Conventions

The Adventist Church in Mizoram is divided into six regions. The youth from all six regions form the Adventist Youth Federation (AYF). The AYF organizes annual youth conventions. These youth conventions are regional, where three to six AYFs come together for two to four days. If conducted in a rural area, the host church members accommodate the visitors in their homes. In cities these conventions take place in Adventist schools.

### Purpose

The Mizo youth conventions care for the spiritual and social needs of the youth. They focus on (1) Youth revival, (2) training youth for various church offices, (3) training youth for local evangelism and to be missionaries, (4) educating youth regarding drugs, courtship and marriage, and other youth-related issues, and (5) establishing friendship between neighboring churches.

## Program

From five in the morning to eight at night, a well-planned program guides each hour. Apart from morning and evening devotions and Sabbath services, seminars on youth-related issues and training programs occupy much of the convention. The afternoon of the last day is spent in games, followed by a farewell service. The farewell service usually goes late into the night; singing, sharing, and praying together bring the convention to a close.

The resource personnel are chosen from churches, conference and union offices, and educated lay people. At times well-equipped senior youth present papers.

## Results

Lalnilawma Colney<sup>1</sup> says, "Most of the youth conventions are successful. It keeps the youth within the fold, and togetherness is achieved." He proudly reports that youth conventions have given birth to the Hundred Missionary Movement in Mizoram.

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<sup>1</sup>Lalnilawma Colney is currently working towards his Master's in Education. During his twelve years of service in the Mizo field, he has been instrumental in organizing and being a resource person in four youth conventions.

Manipur/Nagaland Annual Meeting

The Manipur/Nagaland Section organizes annual meetings for these two states in the month of January. This annual meeting is considered as an Adventist festival, an important yearly event. The church members work hard, save enough money, and plan a whole year for this special occasion. Since Adventist school facilities are not large, many churches pitch their own tents on the campground. In case the host church is unable to cook food for the campers, each church unit cooks its own food. This three-to-four-day festival attracts children, youth, and older folks.

## Purpose

These annual meetings meet the spiritual and social needs of various age groups. The purposes of these yearly gatherings are (1) revival of churches, (2) interaction and friendship among churches, (3) unity of churches (a main concern), (4) evaluation of church growth, and (5) reorientation to the purpose for the existence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## Program

The rising bell at 5 in the morning prepares the campers for a day packed with activities. There are three sermons each day: morning, afternoon, and night. Seminars for each age group are planned depending on the need of the

group. Prophetic study, with a question and answer session, takes nearly two hours of the day. Breaks between sessions and after meals provide ample opportunity for reflection and interaction. The last day's social program and farewell meeting is a time to play, sing, share, and pray together.

Among the highlights of the annual meetings are the singing and the Bible quiz competition. The resource personnel for these meetings are prayerfully chosen from the union and division offices. At times, General Conference personnel provide a special spiritual feast. The campers leave the ground with tears, and with the assurance of coming together the following year.

#### Results

Langhu Sumil<sup>1</sup> testifies, "I have blessed memories about annual meetings. They have left within me a deep spiritual impression: I have definitely grown in the Lord." He recollects that, in 1997, 5,000 attended the annual meeting. This was "the largest annual meeting I have attended." Most of these meetings care for the felt needs of the churches. The youth particularly "find their life partner during annual meetings."

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<sup>1</sup>The report on the Manipur/Nagaland annual meeting was gathered from interviewing Laghu Sumil, an MBA student. He has attended six annual meetings, and has taught in an Adventist school for one and a half years.

### African Students Camp Meetings

The All India African Adventist Students Association (AIAASA) was born in October 1992 in Agra. "The initiation of AIAASA was a humble response of Pr. Joel Okindos' nine year prayer and dream." The inaugural meeting brought African students from Baroda, Aurangabad, Indore, Yammua Nagar, Udaipur, and Meerut.<sup>1</sup> In fact, it was during camp meeting at Agra in mid-October of 1992 that AIAASA was born. In the same month Jabalpur opened doors for another camp meeting.<sup>2</sup>

#### Purpose

The objectives of AIAASA are as follows:

To reach the unreached (Math. 28:19,20)  
 To cater for spiritual growth and fellowship  
 Help our brothers and sisters who are coming newly to India; not to be misdirected either in their spiritual stand or in their way of living.<sup>3</sup>

These objectives find fulfillment through (1) evangelism organized by AIAASA among non-Adventist Africans and Indian Africans in the interior parts of Karnataka, (2)

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<sup>1</sup>Erastus Otieno Odiyo, "Presidential Report," Arise, June 1995, 2.

<sup>2</sup>Martin K'Ajwang, "Camp Meetings," Arise, June 1995, 7.

<sup>3</sup>The AIAASA constitution is available in appendix B.

by publishing a magazine called Arise,<sup>1</sup> and (3) through the various camp meetings conducted by AIAASA.

#### Types of camp meetings

AIAASA organizes two types of camp meetings each year. The central camp meeting is for all India. The guest speaker for the central camp meetings is usually from Africa. The AIAASA has divided India into northern and southern zones; hence there are two zonal camp meetings each year. Each of these camp meetings lasts between five and seven days. Moses Maka, the president of the Poona region, proudly says, "Africans are fond of camp meetings. We have imported the African camp meeting model to India. The only difference is, that all of AIAASA camp meetings are in the cities."

Between June 1999 and June 2000, the following camp meetings were conducted:

1. Northern Zone, between November 9 and 13, 1999, at Jabalpur.<sup>2</sup>
2. Central camp meeting, June 17-23, 1999, at Roorkee.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Arise is published once a year.

<sup>2</sup>Moses Maka, "Northern Zone Camp Meeting: A Great Success," Arise, June 2000, 15.

<sup>3</sup>Julius Bichang'a, "AIAASA Central Camp Meetings Held in Roorkee School," Arise, June 2000, 17.

3. Southern Zone, at Pune, from December 27, 1999, to January 2, 2000.<sup>1</sup>

4. Central camp meeting, at Aurangabad, June 5-11, 2000.<sup>2</sup>

#### Program

Before each camp meeting the planning committee studies the spiritual and the social needs of African students. This results in the choice of the camp theme and the topics for seminars. The day begins with exercise at 5:30 each morning, and ends with the guest speaker's message. A well-planned program assists in each day's success. Breaks after each session and after meals provide time for reflection and interaction. The last day is usually set apart for social activities. The recently concluded central camp meeting at Aurangabad had scheduled a picnic on the last day.

Moses Maka says that "AIAASA draws resource personnel from Spicer faculty and students. The professors and students have been a tremendous blessing to African camp meetings."

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<sup>1</sup>Nicodemus Nyangweso, "The Hand of the Lord Seen During the Southern Zone AIAASA Camp Meeting," Arise, June 2000, 18.

<sup>2</sup>The Central camp meeting program sheet appears in appendix A.

## Results

The AIAASA camp meeting has been a great strength to the African students. Moses Maka testifies that those who attended the Northern Zone camp meeting "went to their stations fully rejuvenated and edified."<sup>1</sup> Nicodemus Nyangweso, the president of the Southern Zone, has this to say about camp meeting: "Throughout the week we were richly blessed by the sermons delivered by the various speakers."<sup>2</sup>

Most of the AIAASA camp meetings conclude with a baptismal service. The recently concluded central camp meeting (June 5-11, 2000) at Aurangabad witnessed the baptism of six non-Adventist African students.

Camp Meetings in the Writings of Ellen G. White

Ellen White had much to say about camp meetings. There are close to 1,050 references to camp meeting in the published Index.<sup>3</sup> These references are studied under sixteen subtitles.

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<sup>1</sup>Maka, 15.

<sup>2</sup>Nyangweso, 19.

<sup>3</sup>Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1962), s.v. "Camp Meeting."



## Purposes of the Camp Meeting

Ellen White derived the foundations of camp meeting from the Lord's instructions to the Israelites. The Israelites gathered in Jerusalem three times a year to worship God and to express their gratitude. These were times of instruction and revival. She questioned, "If the children of Israel needed the benefit of these holy convocations in their time, how much more do we need them in these days of peril and conflict!"<sup>1</sup>

Attendance

In view of this she made a compelling appeal to all who are able to attend camp meeting with a sense that God requires this of them.<sup>2</sup> She affirmed that camp meetings bring strength and spiritual welfare. There believers can witness prayerful and powerful preaching of God's word. The believers are bound in God's love and truth, resulting in true Christian fellowship.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Ellen White recommended inviting and encouraging friends to also attend camp meetings. If necessary, food and lodging should be

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1948), 6:39, 40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 2:575.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 4:115.

provided for friends who are needy, so that all could "stand on the Lord's side and obey His commandments."<sup>1</sup>

### Objectives

Ellen White's stated objectives for camp meetings can be summarized as follows.

1. To be separated "from business cares and burdens"<sup>2</sup>
2. To "devote a few days exclusively to seeking the Lord"<sup>3</sup>
3. To occupy the time in self-examination, and penitential confession of sins<sup>4</sup>
4. To renew vows to the Most High<sup>5</sup>
5. To reach all classes of people with the gospel<sup>6</sup>
6. "To attain to a higher Christian experience, to advance in the knowledge of God"<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 6:40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 2:601.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 6:31.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 6:46.

7. To experience the "danger of being overcharged with the cares of this life"<sup>1</sup>
8. To teach the principles of health and temperance reform<sup>2</sup>
9. To train pastors, elders, and deacons "to do more perfect work for the Master"<sup>3</sup>
10. To break the prejudice, opposition, and indifference against Adventists<sup>4</sup>
11. To train in practical missionary work<sup>5</sup>
12. To train in giving treatment to the sick.<sup>6</sup>

#### Physical Arrangements of Camp Meeting

Ellen White suggested that inexpensive plans should be laid for camp meetings. The finances should be managed by an able person, so "as to accomplish the greatest possible amount of good" in an economical manner. She observed that the work will not be crippled if a balance is maintained between economy and the needs of the camp meetings. Though

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Life Sketches (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1919), 228.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, Temperance (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1949), 244.

<sup>3</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:49.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 6:70.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 9:82.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 9:83.

she was against much display, yet "everything connected with the grounds be neat and tidy."<sup>1</sup>

### Finances

Since camp meetings were evangelistic in nature, the budget was provided by the conference as well as by the local church. Ellen White appealed, "Let none who are able come empty-handed." "Come with your offerings as God has blessed you." A free-will offering is an expression of gratitude to the Giver of all benefits.<sup>2</sup>

### Food

In the days of Ellen White, people cooked their own meals on the campground. In some places the managers of the camp meetings sold cheese, candies, and other hurtful things. The profit from the sale was to help meet the camp expense. Regarding this Ellen White said, "Let not foods or confectionery be brought upon our campground that will counter work the light given on health reform." The light given to Ellen White was: "We need to keep more strictly to a simple diet of fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 6:34.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 2:576.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, Counsels on Diet and Foods (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1938), 329.

They should be prepared in a simple manner, "not turn these seasons [camp meetings] into occasions for feasting."<sup>1</sup>

She reasoned with the campers that confectionery items and meat should be kept away from the dining tents. "If we appreciate the blessings of God, if we are feeding on the bread of life, we will not be much concerned about gratifying the appetite."<sup>2</sup>

Speaking about the effects of food on one's body and mind, she explained that when we burden the stomach "with too much food, even of a simple character, the brain force is called to the aid of the digestive organs." At the camp meetings, "brain power" should be kept "especially vigorous, and in the most healthy condition to hear the truth, appreciate it, and retain it, that all may practice it after their return from the meeting."<sup>3</sup>

### Discipline

A high order of discipline was expected at camp meetings. Ellen White saw an inseparable relation between the discipline of a professing Christian and the truth practiced and preached. She envisioned that "every camp

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Counsels on Health (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1951), 121.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 142.

meeting should be an object lesson of neatness, order and good taste. . . . And in all our work we should present the discipline of organization and order."<sup>1</sup>

She expected that Christian discipline--a "pure, wholesome, cleanly" encampment--would impress the Adventists, as well as the unbelievers "with the sacredness and importance of the Word of God." She concluded: "We should ever bear in mind that angels of God are walking through the encampment."<sup>2</sup>

#### Spiritual Attitudes in Camp Meetings

Preparation for camp meetings and the working of the Holy Spirit in the camp create a spiritual atmosphere and attitude.

#### Preparation

Ellen White pointed out that preparation for attending camp meetings was needed. This preparation should include self, home, and church. She warned that when self-preparation is neglected, one cannot feel the presence of God or behold His powerful manifestations.<sup>3</sup> If doubts, murmuring, and disputes are carried into the camp, she

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<sup>1</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:34, 35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 5:164.

wrote, "You bring evil angels into the camp and carry darkness wherever you go."<sup>1</sup>

Self-examination, confessing of sins to God, and faults to one another will set one's soul in tune with God. "Make an earnest effort to empty the soul temple of all rubbish."<sup>2</sup>

Before camp meeting, "set your house in order," she urged. "Prepare your children for the occasion." "Pray three times a day, and like Jacob, be importunate. At home is the place to find Jesus; then take Him with you to the meeting." This preparation was to include deep heart searching, teaching the importance of inner beauty, of clean hands and pure hearts, and removing existing differences.<sup>3</sup>

Ellen White observed that there was much preparation of clothing and food.<sup>4</sup> Many were disappointed at the close of the meetings, because their overburdened stomach made it difficult to appreciate eternal things.<sup>5</sup> Hence, she said, "Let the preparation for eating and dressing be a secondary matter." The Lord desires clean hands and pure hearts,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 5:165.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 5:163.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 5:164.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 5:162.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 5:163.

rather than fine clothes.<sup>1</sup> Further, clothes should be simple and suitable for the climate. Clothes should also enhance proper blood circulation.<sup>2</sup>

Ellen White's repeated statements reveal her belief that camp meeting is a place where one interacts with God. This interaction causes growth in the knowledge of His Word, experiencing Him personally, and witnessing Him at work. For this reason corporate preparation is needed. The entire church should be involved in searching of the soul with humility and confessing faults one to another. Thus, "all differences and alienations among brethren may be laid aside before appearing before the Lord at these annual gatherings."<sup>3</sup>

#### The Holy Spirit and His Working

"All occasions where there is personal labor for souls are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain." With this striking statement, Ellen White encourages campers to ask of the Lord for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and to hold on to the promise, "where two

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 5:164.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 2:602.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 5:165.



or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst" (Matt 18:20).<sup>1</sup>

White also wrote: "The success of the meeting depends on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit." For the Spirit's outpouring "every lover of the cause of truth should pray."<sup>2</sup> She further pointed out: "If those who participate in these meetings are under the control of, and moved upon by, the Spirit of God, their conduct will not be so cheap and frivolous. Everything will be of an elevated, and holy character."<sup>3</sup>

#### Ministerial Personnel

Ellen White has much to say about the ministerial personnel and their attitudes.

#### Ministers' Spirituality

Ministers must meet the Lord before ministering. In prayer they should seek wisdom and power. After this encounter, their faces will be lighted up and their words will be filled with power. Ellen White wrote: "We are to work in harmony with the messengers of heaven. . . . We are

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1923), 508.

<sup>2</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:42.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, Manuscript Releases (Silver Spring, Maryland: E. G. White Estate, 1993), 19:318.

not to feel that our talking and sermonizing can do the work." It is the Lord who can reach people. If the minister remains a stumbling block to God's working, then the camper will return untouched.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from personal prayer and congregational prayers, Ellen White emphasized the need for ministerial personnel to pray and counsel together. These two elements enhance harmony and unity. Time should be set apart for prayer and counsel.<sup>2</sup>

#### Ministering Like Christ

Ellen White's constant plea was to educate and train people during camp meetings. She suggested that messages should be short and the teaching method adopted instead of sermonizing.<sup>3</sup> Referring to this great need she said, "More time should be devoted to patiently educating others giving the hearers opportunity to express themselves. Presenting Christ's method as the divine model, she noted: "Few sermons were preached by Christ. He was the great Teacher, and

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<sup>1</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:50.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 88.

crowds gathered wherever He went to listen to His instruction."<sup>1</sup>

The minister's message must be Christ centered, bringing hope to the lost and deliverance to the enslaved. Ellen White desired that the preaching "should be of the most spiritual character, that the people may be led to see the reason of their weakness and unhappiness. Many are unhappy because they are unholy." Hence, Christ's righteousness and victory should be presented as substitutes for sinfulness and slavery.<sup>2</sup>

Saying that "their manner of labor and their religious zeal in no way correspond with their profession of faith," Ellen White condemned ministers who "whip other churches and ridicule their faith." Such ministers are unprepared to minister, have a self-important attitude, and make an unrealistic claim "to have truth in advance of every other people."<sup>3</sup>

White observed that "our camp meetings are not held for the purpose of putting men on exhibition of showing off their capabilities." Those who come to these meetings thirst for His righteousness and desire to grow spiritually.

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, The Voice in Speech and Song (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1988), 232.

<sup>2</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:53.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 5:165.

Hence, experienced workers, who are filled with the truth, should be asked to preach, rather than unproved preachers.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding teamwork, Ellen White made the following observation: "In all our camp meetings the ministerial force should be as strong as possible." It is unwise for one or two to be burdened with heavy responsibilities. Hence, teamwork is required. "In God many can do valiantly . . . In our large meetings a variety of gifts is needed. Fresh capabilities should be brought into work." Irrespective of the size of the team and the variety of the gifts among the ministerial force, "the co-operation of all the workers is essential."<sup>2</sup>

Commenting on Eph 4:11-13, she observed, "This scripture presents a large program of work that may be brought into our camp meetings. All these gifts are to be in exercise."<sup>3</sup>

#### Medical Personnel

Ellen White recommended that a tent be set aside for doctors and nurses. Health lectures and free medical advice should be given to the campers. Because of this ministry,

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, The Retirement Years (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald, 1990), 36, 37.

<sup>2</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:46.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 6:48.

"in several large cities where camp meetings were held, some of the leading citizens urged that a branch sanitarium be established, promising their co-operation."<sup>1</sup>

Ellen White approved the involvement of non-Adventist resource personnel in certain specialized areas. Speaking of the area of temperance education, she said, "Much good could be done if some of the W.C.T.U. [Woman's Christian Temperance Union] were invited to our camp meetings." This would contribute double benefit for they could train women in the temperance ministry, as well as hear the truth.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Program at the Camp Meeting

Ellen White made the following suggestions concerning the camp meeting program.

#### Schedule

Ellen White observed: "At our camp meeting there is much more preaching than there should be." This "brings a heavy burden upon the ministers," and does not give people "time to appropriate what they hear." Thus the mind becomes confused and the services become wearisome. Time for reflection should be given.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>White, Counsels on Health, 467, 468.

<sup>2</sup>White, Temperance, 224.

<sup>3</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:87.

Praise Service

Ellen White identified the spirit of praise as a vital element, long neglected and often misunderstood. Praising not only expresses the joy of one's soul but also uplifts the heart. She wrote: "There would be much more power in our camp meetings if we had a true sense of the goodness, mercy, and long-suffering of God, and if more praise flooded forth from our lips to the honor and glory of His name."<sup>1</sup>

To stir interest in the camp meetings, and to make them attractive, singing talents and musical instruments should be pressed into service. Ellen White supported her view by saying: "The use of musical instruments is not at all objectionable. These were used in religious services in ancient times. The worshipers praised God upon the harp and cymbal, and music should have its place in our services."<sup>2</sup>

Ellen White says, "When the congregation is not so large, mostly of our people, the way would be to take less time in speaking and let the people have a chance to testify to what they have heard." She reasoned: "When the crowd is there, that could not interest them."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 62.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 150.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, Sermons and Talks (Silver Spring, Maryland: E. G. White Estate, 1994), 2:88.

Suggested Topics

According to Ellen White, subjects to be presented at the camp meeting were temperance, the third angel's message, the prophetic study of Daniel, and topics pertaining to the end time.<sup>1</sup>

"In our labors at the camp meetings more attention should be given to the work of teaching the principles of health and temperance reform." This should be the case because of the time we are living in. She urged ministers to educate people on the issues of temperance.<sup>2</sup>

Ellen White's vision for believers was that they should be co-workers with the ministers and the heavenly agencies. Hence she urged ministers to train the believers at camp meeting to give Bible studies, to conduct cottage meetings, to demonstrate healthful cooking, and to treat the sick.<sup>3</sup>

For these trained members, the ministers were to make plans for their involvement in ministry. Thus, they would be helped to see that "as receivers of the grace of Christ they are under obligation to work for Him."<sup>4</sup> At the camp

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<sup>1</sup>White, Manuscript Releases, 21:442.

<sup>2</sup>White, Temperance, 244.

<sup>3</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:49.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

meetings many should be taught to be self-supporting missionaries in their communities.<sup>1</sup>

### Small Groups

Ellen White advised: "In the place of having one mammoth camp meeting, have several small camp meetings."<sup>2</sup> She suggested: "A long line of meetings should be held in many other places." "Two or three meetings in different places should be in progress at the same time." Even in large camp meetings, "greater good can be accomplished by breaking up the large congregation into sections. Thus the educator in the Bible truths can come closer to the people than in a large assembly."<sup>3</sup>

Ellen White was shown that as the end approaches there would be less preaching and more Bible study. Regarding this she said: "There will be little groups all over the ground with their Bibles in their hands, and different ones leading out in a free, conversational study of the Scriptures."<sup>4</sup> This "was the method that Christ taught His disciples."<sup>5</sup> She concluded: "Let the minister invite those

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 9:81.

<sup>2</sup>White, Manuscript Releases, 15:250.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 15:341.

<sup>4</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:87.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 88.



who do not understand the lesson to go into a smaller tent, where he can study the Word with them."<sup>1</sup>

Further, Ellen White recommended that the minister should be involved in personal ministry. They should "meet the brethren and sisters in little companies for seasons of prayer."<sup>2</sup>

#### Follow-up of Camp Meetings

In response to the question, What should be done after camp meetings? Ellen White says, "Establish a mission. Let the very best workers . . . be organized into a company to sell our literature and also give away papers." Further, she suggested, "Consecrated women should engage in Bible work from house to house." Judicious young men should attend the meetings of the Young Men's Christian Association, "to search the Scriptures with them and suggest helpful questions."<sup>3</sup>

"Preparatory work is not of one half the value that the after work is."<sup>4</sup> Without careful afterwork, seeds sown at the meetings would wither for lack of moisture.<sup>5</sup> "This

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<sup>1</sup>White, Manuscript Releases, 17:54.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:74, 75.

<sup>4</sup>White, Evangelism, 432.

<sup>5</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:74.

work requires you to watch for souls. . . . The tenderness of Christ must pervade the heart of the worker. If you have a love for souls you will reveal a tender solicitude for them."<sup>1</sup>

She wrote of a dream she had regarding follow-up work:

I dreamed that I saw a partially completed building. The workmen were gathering up their tools, preparing to leave it unfinished; but I entreated them to consider the matter. "The building is not finished," I said; "come back and keep at work until it is roofed." Then they came back and continued the work.<sup>2</sup>

The brethren heeded her counsel to "remain and continue" the work of the camp meeting. As a result a number accepted the truth.<sup>3</sup>

#### Camp Meeting for Youth

Ellen White envisioned that camp meeting ministry should take on other dimensions. She instructed, "At all our camp meetings, work should be done for the children and youth."<sup>4</sup> She explained the purposes for such a course of action:

1. To care for the needs of children and youth attending the camp meeting

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 6:75.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 72.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 6:105.

2. To work for their conversion<sup>1</sup>
3. To be "more fully instructed in the Word of God"<sup>2</sup>
4. To use the potential of younger ministers to work with the children and youth<sup>3</sup>
5. To provide an opportunity for non-Adventists to attend camp meetings<sup>4</sup>
6. To reach the parents of the children<sup>5</sup>

Ellen White's vision for camp meetings was for a place where "the people may be educated, and special efforts should be made for the unbelievers." Camp meetings should be considered as missionary work. They are "for the spiritual enlightenment of the people." Thus, the influence of camp meetings can be lasting though it may not be easily discerned.<sup>6</sup>

Though camp meetings were beneficial, they were largely confined to adult forms of religious expression. Attempts to care for the needs of children led to the idea of summer camps. Regarding this, Spalding stated,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>White, The Retirement Years, 37.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>White, Testimonies for the Church, 6:106, 107.

<sup>6</sup>White, Sermons and Talks, 2:89-91.

The Junior Summer Training Camp was, and is, in effect the denomination's camp meeting expressed in terms of Junior psychology.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Spalding, 3:215.

## CHAPTER 4

### ADVENTIST YOUTH CAMPS

This chapter deals with Adventist camps, in the past and the present. Special attention is paid to youth camps in India.

#### Youth Camps in North America

Youth camps are popular around the world, among both the children and the youth. Many individuals and organizations conduct secular and religious camps. Whichever camp one may attend leaves behind a lasting influence. Camps have become an integral part of Christian children and youth activities.

This is true with the Seventh-day Adventists, especially in North America. "Seventh-day Adventist camping endeavors to place campers in a natural environment for the development of the whole individual, including mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional aspects." As of June

1994, there were fifty-three Adventist campsites located throughout the United States, Canada, and Bermuda.<sup>1</sup>

#### SDA Youth Organizations

Three levels of ministry to youth are Adventurers (for children ages 6-9), Pathfinders (10-15 years), and Senior Youth Ministry (young adults, 16-30 years).<sup>2</sup>

World-wide there are two major Adventist youth organizations. They are the Adventist Youth Society and Pathfinders.

#### Adventist Youth Society

Adventist youth societies are the young people's organizations "in the local Seventh-day Adventist churches." The evolution of youth ministry in the Adventist church had its beginning "when youth work was blended with Sabbath school." Today, the youth ministry "is divided into clearly defined areas of interest but pursues the same goals."<sup>3</sup>

Young Luther Warren and Haray Fenner organized the first youth society in Michigan in 1879. It was made up of

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<sup>1</sup>Summer Camp Ministries, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, "Seventh-day Adventist Summer Camps," Silver Spring, Maryland; 15 June 1994, 1, Document file, Ellen G. White Research Center, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

<sup>2</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Adventist Youth Societies."

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

boys; later, girls were also allowed to join. Twelve years later, a sixteen-year-old boy named Meade MacGuire organized a youth society in Wisconsin. Neither local society grew into a wider organization.<sup>1</sup>

Appeals such as the one penned by Ellen White from Australia in 1892 inspired the founding of SDA youth organizations:

We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. . . . We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth.<sup>2</sup>

### Pathfinders

The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia defines Pathfinder clubs as "organizations providing a character-building program of activities for both boys and girls from ten to fifteen years of age." Launched in 1950, these clubs were formed to promote the missionary volunteer classes. They also provide an opportunity for children to interact with responsible adults "in mutually enjoyable projects."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Youth Department of Missionary Volunteers."

<sup>2</sup>Spalding, 3:121.

<sup>3</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Pathfinder Clubs."

Further, the club enables each member to become "trustworthy, resourceful, possessing a worthy goal in life and a sense of mission."<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1930s two laymen first used the term "Pathfinder" in their California church to designate a club for boys in the basement of their home. In the 1940s a number of conferences throughout North America experimented with a program similar to the present Pathfinder idea, under different names. The club in the Pacific Northwest is an example; it was named "Trail Blazers." J. H. Hancock designed the present Pathfinder club emblem in 1946. The flag was introduced in 1948 and the song in 1952.<sup>2</sup> "The Pathfinder club is now a worldwide organization, in 1993 numbering more than 900,000 members."<sup>3</sup>

#### Beginning of SDA Camps

"The first camp was the child of necessity," wrote C. Lester Bond. At that time, more and more Adventist children attended camps conducted by different organizations. Church

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Spalding, 2:2.

<sup>3</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Pathfinder Clubs."



leaders observed that the influences of such camps were not wholesome.<sup>1</sup>

In view of this situation, Grover Fattic, the Missionary Volunteer Secretary of the Michigan Conference, designed a summer camping program. In 1926, the first camp was conducted at Townline Lake, in Michigan. For ten days, sixteen juniors and five seniors camped in six tents. Several miles from the nearest town, the campers enjoyed being outdoors in God's creation.<sup>2</sup>

The camp was so successful that the next summer two camps were conducted, one for boys and one for girls. In 1930, leadership training camps and senior youth camps were organized. The concept of summer camps soon spread to different parts of America and the world field. The greatest growth in camps took place in the 1950s.<sup>3</sup>

Every summer thousands of boys and girls participate in Pathfinder camps. These camps provide the children "purpose in their pleasure, new and higher ideals, and

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<sup>1</sup>Lester Bond, The Master Comrade Manual (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1938), 188.

<sup>2</sup>Nathaniel Krum, The MV Story (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1963), 57, 58.

<sup>3</sup>John R. Loor, "The History of Seventh-day Adventist M. V. Summer Camps," M.A. term paper, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1973, 7, 8.

greater power to cope with their problems."<sup>1</sup> These summer camps have proved to be one of the most effective as well as enjoyable enterprises of the Pathfinder program.<sup>2</sup> In 1974 camps witnessed an outstanding growth rate. "Within the ten unions of North America there was an attendance of 32,610 campers. . . . These campers attended 358 camping periods." This resulted in 99 baptisms and 5,277 decisions for Christ.<sup>3</sup> It soon became apparent that summer camps were here to stay.

Yet it took the General Conference twenty-eight years after the first summer camp to approve this program. John Loor records the action:

Whereas, Missionary Volunteer Summer Camps for junior and senior youth during the quadrennium 1950-1954 have resulted in 10,203 decisions for Christ and the church, and

Whereas, twenty-eight conferences in North America and several fields overseas have found by experience that conference or mission-owned campsites greatly enhance the effectiveness of the MV Camping program, and

Whereas, only thirty percent of our MV membership had the advantages of Adventist Camping in 1953, we

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<sup>1</sup>Desmond B. Hills, ed., AY Handbook (Pune, India: Adventist Youth Department, Southern Asia Division, 1973), 2:91.

<sup>2</sup>Krum, 59.

<sup>3</sup>Donald E. Livesay, "Development of Seventh-day Adventist Youth Camps," a term paper, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1975, 13.

Recommend that conferences and missions, wherever possible, enlarge their plans and facilities to make the camping experience available to all our youth, and we

Recommend that all our conferences and missions seriously consider the purchase of campsites and facilities for youth camps, which will be completely under the direction of our own organization.<sup>1</sup>

### Objectives

In the Master Comrade Manual, Bond affirms that Adventist youth camp must be different from any other camp. Its primary purpose should be to enable the campers to befriend God through His creation.<sup>2</sup> The Adventist Youth Handbook notes that,

The summer camp is not a mere vacation or outing. There is, indeed, refreshing and invigorating recreation of both body and mind; but in holding these summer camps we have a more inclusive purpose.<sup>3</sup>

This "inclusive purpose" is partially stated in the Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia: "Camping is part of the Adventist Youth recreational and training program."<sup>4</sup>

In his paper, John Loor quotes Don Salborg's clearly stated objectives for youth camps.

1. To make attractive the joy and privileges of Christian living.

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<sup>1</sup>Loor, 9.

<sup>2</sup>Bond, 192.

<sup>3</sup>Hills, 1:69.

<sup>4</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Camping."

2. To stimulate the devotional life, including the art of meditation, science of prayer, and comprehension of true worship.
3. To give opportunity for making Christian friendships and the broadening of social development.
4. To effect in each camper desirable changes in Christian conduct and character which will lead to a decision for Christ.
5. To provide an opportunity for the development of good citizenship, loyalty, teamwork, and sense of responsibility.
6. To teach self-reliance and resourcefulness, awakening the noblest qualities of mind and spirit.
7. To teach an appreciation for the knowledge of the created works of God, and thereby an insight into the wisdom and love of God.
8. To give knowledge of outdoor skills which may lead to a lifetime of enjoyment in outdoor recreation.
9. To interpret true principles of healthful living, physical fitness, and safety.
10. To deepen the sense of service.<sup>1</sup>

#### Activities

The following is a typical day's program in a youth camp. The day begins with reveille, soon followed by flag raising and morning watch. The personal inspection and the inspection of quarters is sandwiched between the morning watch and breakfast. The morning and afternoon sessions are devoted to crafts and Missionary Volunteer honors. Each day, one or more of the recreational activities is scheduled. These include swimming, hiking, boating, and horseback riding.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Loor, 13, 14.

<sup>2</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Camping."

Based on the needs, youth-related topics are presented, followed by group discussions. Training in Christian leadership is provided, along with Master Guide classes. Time for recreation and reflection is part of the daily program. For this reason, says Hills, the camp schedule should not be tight.<sup>1</sup>

The North American Division Summer Camp Ministries states that "each week's program consists of approximately 12 hours of instruction in the areas of each camper's interests." These sessions are "held Monday through Friday and are taught by qualified staff members. . . . Most instruction is on a one-to-one basis, to help build self-confidence and special skills."<sup>2</sup>

The Adventist Youth Handbook recommends that, in making the camp schedule, top priority should be given to religious activities. Apart from the morning watch, there are early-morning prayer bands, mid-morning camp councils, and campfire devotions.<sup>3</sup> At times a good attention-keeping campfire could include "bands, musical groups, skits, novelty items, and whatever the imagination can dig up."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hills, 1:70.

<sup>2</sup>Summer Camp Ministries, 2.

<sup>3</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Camping."

<sup>4</sup>Livesay, 11.

The Friday night campfire is special, for it climaxes with a consecration service. Whenever possible, an ordained minister serves as camp pastor. He ministers during the devotions and counsels with the youth, leading many to make decisions for baptism.<sup>1</sup> Livesay reflects that regardless of changes in camp programs from time to time, "each year there are hundreds of thousands of dollars spent for our youth camps. This money is only well spent if it is to produce trophies for God."<sup>2</sup>

#### Types of Camps

Camps today are of various types, conducted for different groups of people. There are camps for juniors, seniors, teenagers, adults, and families. In addition there are camps for underprivileged children.<sup>3</sup> A major contribution Adventists have made in camping is to conduct camps for the blind. "Each year twenty weeks are dedicated to blind people, ages 10 and older. Blind campers participate in every activity sighted children enjoy: water skiing, horseback riding, canoeing, mountain climbing, rappelling, and other recreational sports."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Camping."

<sup>2</sup>Livesay, 11.

<sup>3</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Camping."

<sup>4</sup>Summer Camp Ministries, 2.

Camps may be of different varieties. Some are conducted at an established site. Others use outpost or wilderness campsites. In some places camps are held in winter, with snow sports occupying a major part of the young people's time. Yet other camps may feature learning and using survival skills. Each type of camp attracts different young people.<sup>1</sup> Livesay concludes that along with traditional camping, today there are "ski camps, winter camps, motorcycle camps and wilderness survival camps."<sup>2</sup>

The camping season climaxes with the camporee, which is a conference-wide campout, in which "units join in comparing camping skills in a wilderness area, spending at least two nights and three days in outdoor living enjoying open-fire cookery and campfire stories."<sup>3</sup> A camporee provides the Pathfinders with Christian competition as well as exposure to sister units.

Wherever it is feasible, there is a strong trend towards erecting permanent camp facilities on conference-owned property. Usually a campsite provides a lodge, a

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<sup>1</sup>Lawrence Maxwell, MV Pathfinder Field Guide (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1962), 153, 173, 181, 187.

<sup>2</sup>Livesay, 15.

<sup>3</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Pathfinder Clubs."

kitchen, dining room, quarters for staff members, cabins for the campers, a headquarters building, and a swimming pool.<sup>1</sup>

### Benefits of Youth Camps

Youth camps, beyond doubt, constitute an effective program for children and youth. From earliest years, the results of camps have been notable. Bond identified the reasons for such success: (1) the isolation of the campers from an urban setting in God's nature book; (2) the companionship of God-fearing leaders, and (3) the execution of a well-planned program. These features give the campers benefits "of physical health, mental alertness, and spiritual influences, and with incentives which appeal most strongly to their age."<sup>2</sup>

In one camp, a leader questioned a senior camper, "What good did these young people get out of the camp?" He answered,

They learned to obey and be disciplined. They learned to take defeat with grace and rejoice with the victor. They learned to forgive one another without reservation. They learned to cooperate with one another to make their unit the best. Above all, they learned to study their Bible and to pray.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>SDAE, s.v. "Camping."

<sup>2</sup>Bond, 185.

<sup>3</sup>Krum, 235.



The results of summer camp are multidimensional. Campers come to feel and develop their own individuality. They acquire resourcefulness, self-reliance, and the ability to live with the bare minimum, far from modern conveniences. Camps also provide chances to exhibit unselfishness and true sportsmanship. Demanding teamwork, summer camps help individuals to learn to respect the rights of others. Faithful performance of duty, however menial, has a far-reaching influence. Says Hills: "The summer camp is one of the most intensive schools we have, and yet, there are no classrooms and no study books."<sup>1</sup>

#### Youth Camps in India

The Adventist youth society spread into the world field like wildfire. It was not long before it took root in Southern Asia Division. On May 18, 1909, the first young people's society was organized at Mayfield House, Mussoorie, North India. Led by Dr. H. C. Menkel, it consisted of twenty-seven members. In 1914, the division organized its first Missionary Volunteer Department.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hills, 2:91.

<sup>2</sup>Krum, 230.

### Brief History

In 1953 a Southern Asia Division Youth Congress was held on the Spicer Missionary College campus. "Almost eight hundred delegates speaking forty different languages came from many parts of the division to rally, as brothers and sisters in Christ beneath the banner of Prince Emmanuel."<sup>1</sup> The number of participants in church youth activities grew. "In 1960 there were 231 societies, with a membership of 8,666."<sup>2</sup>

As in other places, the summer camps became the main attraction. This resulted in many youth taking their stand for Christ.

### Three Camps in South India

In 1998 and 1999, the researcher attended three SDA youth camps in different locations in the southern part of India. In this section of my dissertation I describe and evaluate the three.

#### Nursing College Camp

Fern Hills, Kodaikanal, welcomed twenty students from the Nursing College, Ottapalam, and their five staff counselors for a Bible camp, November 12-15, 1998. The

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 233.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 231.

theme of the retreat was, "The Cost of Christian Commitment."

#### Physical aspects

The Kodaikanal Hills are a tourist center in the southern part of Tamil Nadu. Hundreds of tourists come each day to allow the mystical mountains, breath-taking valleys, waterfalls, and the silver-lined lake to enchant them. Seven thousand feet above the sea level, Kodaikanal Hills accommodates some of the best residential schools and hotels in India.

On a majestic mountain, fifteen acres of land make up the campus of Fern Hills. Owned by the Seventh-day Adventists, Fern Hills formerly provided relief from the heat for missionaries to the Southern Asia Division. Tall pine and teak trees, with beautiful flowerbeds and bushes, fluffy clouds, and a star-studded sky make Fern Hills one of a kind.

After most of the inter-division missionaries left India, Fern Hills has not been maintained well. The facilities on campus are old and need renovation. Though Fern Hills could easily accommodate about 120 retreatants, in its present condition it only has space for 50. The camp has a bungalow at the entrance, six duplex cottages, a

kitchen, a chapel, a patch of level ground for camp activities, and a house for the caretaker.

Pastor Yuvaraj resides on the campus with his family, caring for the estate and the local church. He said, "Ours is a prime property. If renovated and maintained, it would attract several activities." Even so, "within Adventist circles our campus is used at least once in two months." Picnics, camps, conferences, and seminars are conducted here. "We don't have any demand for the campsite from outsiders."

Lakshamma, a thoughtful old lady who works on the estate, asks, "Sir, do you know why people come here?" Without waiting for an answer, she goes on: "The trees on our campus touch the sky. Those flowers [pointing at some] are not found downhill. Of course, the air itself brings healing."

#### Food

The food served was nutritious and well-balanced. Though simple, it was tasty. "On the whole, it provided the extra calories required for hill station and camp activities," says Sofi Verghese, a third-year student. "We feasted on fruits. I wish they served tasty food, I mean non-vegetarian food," says Naveen, a second-year student. Water was icy cold, but available in plenty.

"The camp budget was Rs.20,000.00," says Jonny Wilson, the camp treasurer. Each student was charged Rs.300 towards the Bible camp.

The program

A printed schedule outlined a well-planned program for each day.<sup>1</sup> Though labeled "Bible Camp," this camp was no different from other Adventist camps. As usual, the camp activities focused on the holistic development of the campers.

Daily activities. The rising bell was at 6 in the morning. Camp activities began with morning devotions at 6:30. Apart from two and a half hours for the three meals, the day was packed with activities until 10 p.m. One was expected to go to bed between 10 and 12 p.m. This flexibility was allowed because of the maturity of the students.

An hour each was scheduled for morning devotions and evening worships. The messages, during devotions and worship, were shared by the staff counselors. Various dimensions of the camp theme were touched on in each of these talks. The pattern followed in each meeting was song service, special songs, welcome, prayer, message, song, and

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<sup>1</sup>The program sheet appears in appendix A.

session of prayer. Each day a new song was taught. There were good musicians among the campers.

Unlike other camps, the ministry of the camp pastor was missing. When asked about this, a senior staff counselor responded:

Our local pastor cannot fit into an English camp such as this. We had invited other pastors to support our camp. None could make it for various reasons. Nevertheless, our staff were a "revelation" in this camp.

The devotional and worship sessions were inspiring and creative. Some themes from the devotional talk were enacted and some were well illustrated with audiovisuals.

Marriage matters. Three sessions, of seventy-five minutes each, dealt with marriage matters. The topics covered by Stanley John, youth director of the North Kerala Section, were choosing a life partner and marriage, sex before marriage and outside of marriage, and the roles of husband and wife. Because nearly half of the campers were in the final year of nursing, "Marriage Matters" were important to them. The first forty-five minutes were spent in presentation. Thirty minutes of questions and answers followed. Stanley's experience, as a pastor and marriage counselor, his Christian approach, and his practical ideas were appealing.

Christian basics. The three sessions on "Christian Basics" carried the title: Who is a Christian? The Higher Calling of a Christian, and Sacrificial Service of a Christian.

Pastor Pradhudas, whose prayerfulness and enthusiasm were contagious, made presentations for an hour, followed by fifteen minutes of discussion. These sessions were inspiring and challenging. They were biblical and were well supported by the writings of Ellen G. White.

Social activities. A total of six hours were scheduled for social activities, though we spent nearly twice as much time. This was apart from the breaks labeled "Relax," "Snooze," and "Siesta."

The social activities included a treasure hunt, hikes, campfires, and moonlight walks. The walks took us to three high points of Kodaikanal. The campfire was filled with interesting items presented by the three units of campers.

These social activities provided a platform to exhibit personal talents. A few participants surprised the campers. Helen John, a staff counselor, describes: "During the camp, some students discovered their hidden talents, while others had an opportunity to polish theirs."

Sabbath activities. The Sabbath in this camp was spent exactly as it is in church. The Friday night vespers

was followed by Sabbath morning's general Sabbath School, lesson study, and divine service. The youth program in the evening brought the Sabbath to a close.

The suggestion to make changes in the Sabbath service was opposed by opinions such as: "How else can we spend the Sabbath?" "Let us not try anything new," and "We have a set pattern, why should we invent one?" Of course, worshipping with the local Adventist company of some fifteen members was a special blessing.

Resource personnel. Four staff counselors and the camp director, Mrs. Ruth Christopher, senior tutor at the nursing college, supported the two pastors from the field. All presentations were well received.

#### Camp discipline

Being a mature group of campers, the young men and women socialized with respect and cordiality. The staff counselors and the resource personnel were friendly and supportive. A high order of discipline was expected and maintained by all.

The attendance and participation in all camp activities were healthy. The campers assembled before time, and did not allow delays to dampen their spirits. "From the discipline point of view, this is one of the best camps I have attended," says Pastor Stanley John.



## Evaluation

Ottapalam Nursing College camp is taken as the ideal model. The two reasons are:

1. The age group of Ottapalam Nursing College campers (18-25) is the target group of the researcher's study and proposal, and

2. The camp site chosen by the Ottapalam Nursing College is the same place that the researcher is proposing as the Retreat Center for South India.

Assessment. The pattern followed in the Bible camp was outlined six years ago. Ever since, the pattern has been followed to the very letter. Only the camp theme has differed from year to year. This camp was to be commended for:

1. The staff counselors' supportive role for the welfare of the camp; their creativity, willingness to work together in consultation and prayer, and humility to do the odd things were a positive influence.

2. When retreatants' participation is expected and encouraged, and when ample opportunities are provided, self-discovery results; this should be one of the goals for any retreat.

Testimonies. At this camp, a testimony service was not scheduled. This deprived the campers of the opportunity

to express themselves. The following four testimonies were gathered by interviews on the return trip.

Orthodox Church Member: "I belong to an orthodox Jacobite family," says Beeta John. "I am impressed by the freedom of worship and wide participation in this camp. Our church lacks such youth activities." When asked about her response to the sessions, Beeta says, "For all that Jesus has done for me, it is only natural to expect me to follow Him. Even if I am not called to carry a heavy cross, I will serve humanity in a small way."

Adventist Student: Arul Selvi, an Adventist for the past eleven years, says, "This is one of the best camps I have attended. The place is great; I enjoyed the fellowship. I noticed that the barriers between juniors and seniors was broken during the camp." To the question, Has this camp helped you to grow spiritually? Selvi smilingly says, "At least I learned how to choose a life partner. Of course I was blessed by knowing the identifying marks of a Christian. I didn't realize that being called a Christian in itself demands an exemplary life."

Hindu Student: "The place is beautiful, I feel closer to God up here," says Rajendran. "Though the devotion and sessions were good, the one concept that was appealing is: 'Service to man is service to God'."

Staff Counselor: Angeline Singh is a tutor in the nursing college. She says, "All through this camp the Lord has been good to us. Our needs were provided and we did not have any mishaps. What brought me fulfillment and joy was when I noticed tears and hope in the eyes of the students. I am assured that the Lord will intervene in each of their lives as and when He chooses." When asked, "Did the Lord touch your life?" Angeline answered with a big, "Yes, He did. I have once again committed my life for effective Christian service to the nursing students."

#### Moolakadai Church Youth Camp

The Seventh-day Adventist Tamil Church, Moolakadai, Chennai, organized a youth camp at Koney Falls May 16-19, 1999. The theme of the camp was "Kalugin Setaikalil" [On Eagles' Wings] based on Isa 40:31.<sup>1</sup>

#### Resource personnel

The church pastor was the camp director. In addition there were a camp pastor, two persons to make presentations, and a person in charge of games and campfires. These five resource personnel worked as a team, contributing to the camp's success.

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<sup>1</sup>The program sheet is available in appendix A.

### The program

Two sessions dealt with youth-related issues. Each session was one-and-a-half hours long. Presentations took an hour, and half an hour was spent in discussion and answering questions. The topics presented were: City Trends and the Adventist Youth, and Marriage and Sex. Pastor Sudan Muttaiah's presentations were biblical and practical. The youth enthusiastically participated in the discussion.

An hour in the morning and an hour in the evening were set apart for camp duties. The four units were assigned jobs in rotation. Some of the camp duties were to help in the kitchen, make campfire arrangements, clean the camp, arrange transportation, and operate the public address system. The units functioned only for camp duties.

### Evaluation

Two factors affected the camp. Koney Falls is a tourist center attached to a Hindu temple; there were many distractions. In addition, since cooks were not hired, there was considerable delay in serving meals.

### Assessment

This camp was to be commended for its leadership: the campers knew who was in charge. They followed instructions

and enjoyed supporting the camp director. Though they worked as a team, yet the "leader figure" was the director.

Also commendable was the teamwork. The planning committee consisted of the camp director, resource personnel, and youth leaders. They came together twice daily for consultations. No one dominated decision making and everyone's opinion was respected. They were also flexible.

Testimonies. In most Adventist camps, the testimony service is more like a thanksgiving service and a time when campers share their impressions of the camp. This helps the organizers to evaluate the camp. But in this camp, the campers were encouraged to share the daily working of the Lord in their lives. The youngest camper, Metilda, 14 years old, said, "It was nice to be away from home. I liked the youth issues sessions. I hope that the values learned can be supportive in decision making."

A college student, Santhosh, came to the camp wanting to get away from the heat of Madras. He testified, "Many of us are influenced by the prayer sessions. On our return, we are hoping to form a prayer group."

When asked about the purpose of the camp Pastor Shadrack had this to say: "I am hoping that this camp will

revive our youth, and encourage them to get involved in the church and the community."

K. G. Halli Higher Secondary  
School Camp

The K. G. Halli Seventh-day Adventist Higher Secondary School of Bangalore conducted its yearly school camp at Bargur, January 7-11, 1998. One hundred and thirty students, thirteen staff counselors, three resource personnel, the camp pastor, and the camp director spent four enjoyable days at the Lutheran Blind School. The theme of the camp was "Try Jesus, Be Transformed."

Resource personnel

The success of this camp can be largely attributed to the resource personnel. Their professional involvement in various camp activities, along with the spiritual leadership which they rendered, was truly a blessing to the campers. Their ability to make the Bible relevant to the youth was remarkable.

The program

Three hours a day were assigned for Adventist Junior Youth (AJY) classes: one class was scheduled in the morning, the other in the evening. The four topics covered were first aid, crafts, mammals, and stars.

The AJY classes were informative, practical, and well illustrated with visual aids. "These classes were interesting. It kind of equips us," said Sandeep of the eleventh standard.

The campers were divided into thirteen groups. Each day, an hour was allocated for group planning, counseling, and praying together. These groups contributed in the areas of music, camp duties, and programs for the campfire. The staff counselors were encouraged to initiate the concept of prayer partners. Counseling took place, though in a low key.

#### Evaluation

Although this was the largest SDA camp I have attended, the numbers did not pose any problem. The camp staff was efficient. One major psychological drawback was that the young people seemed to have gone from one school campus to another. This school camp was similar to a Pathfinder camp.

Assessment. This camp was to be commended for:

1. Group Time: the campers were divided into groups of ten. During group time they planned and worked together. This provided opportunity for participation and the young people achieved more.

2. AJY Classes: The AJY classes were effectively presented, communicating Christian ideologies.

Testimonies. The researcher gathered these testimonies by interviews on our way back home.

1. Christian: Simeon Durai, a student of class ten, belonged to the Baptist Church. An enthusiastic young man, Simeon said, "Except for the AJY classes, most of the activities were similar to our church camp. I was much inspired by the devotions."

2. Hindu: Pavan Kumar, a student of class eleven, comes from a staunch Hindu family. Being a good musician, he was often involved in song service. His impressions about the camp were, "I had a nice time. The Christ who Pastor Jeyapaul presented seems powerful. I like to study more about Him."

3. Muslim: "What did I like about the camp? Basically, everything except for the food," said Javeed Sait, a twelfth standard student, thin, tall, and friendly. Javeed said, "We don't have camps such as this in our community. Camp seems to be an effective tool for education."

In general, Adventist youth camps in India are a yearly program, both of the church and of educational institutions. The objectives of the youth camps are to go



to new places each year, to strengthen community bonds, and to provide the youth with an environment conducive to freedom of expression and activity. Hence, the youth camps are activity and "fun" oriented. Even the devotions and Sabbath worship are considered activities. There is little time for developing a relationship with God.

Such an interaction can only take place in retreats. These constitute a virgin territory for Adventists in India. The researcher's study about retreats took him to inter-denominational youth retreats, which are described in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5

### INTERDENOMINATIONAL RETREATS

In the recent past, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in India has been breaking free from its fortress mentality. This has opened doors for cooperation, adaptation, and sharing of expertise with other denominations in certain areas, without losing the Adventist identity.

For this reason, and also because the Seventh-day Adventist Church in India does not understand or do retreats, the researcher attended three interdenominational retreats. The retreats chosen for study were Independent, Catholic, and Evangelical. The following report is made from observation, interviews, retreatants' responses, and from available written materials.

#### Blessing Youth Mission

Blessing Youth Mission (BYM), headquartered at Vellore, Tamilnadu, has for the past twenty-eight years ministered to the spiritual needs of the churches in South India, and has provided missionaries to many unreached areas in different parts of India.

BYM conducts revival camps, training camps, camps for girls, and Sound Doctrine seminars. Through these camps and seminars, volunteers are recruited for missionary training programs, to be sent later into the mission field. As an interdenominational ministry, BYM not only conducts its own program but also accepts invitations from churches. It considers itself a "supplement to the local church and not a substitute."<sup>1</sup>

### History and Objectives

#### Origin

God poured out His spirit of intercession on a group of college students in South India in the 1960s. Rajan Stanley, a young engineering graduate, led a group of thirty young men in prayer and study of the Word. They met daily for seven long years. This team of intercessors came to Karaikudi in October 1970 for three days "to wait on the Lord." About this experience, Stanley later testified: "As we fasted and prayed, the Lord visited us with a prophetic message from Ezekiel 34:26 and Acts 1:8. An outpouring of

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<sup>1</sup>R. Stanley, "Silver Jubilee Praise Points," Blessing, December 1996, 4.

the Spirit resulted."<sup>1</sup> To realize this vision, the Blessing Youth Mission was born in 1971.

### Objectives

As stated in the BYM brochure, the objectives are:

1. Churches must be revived.
2. Believers must grow.
3. The Bible must be given its due place.
4. The gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit must be restored.
5. Youth must be reached and challenged.
6. Believers should unite, forgetting their differences.
7. Every Christian must become a personal soul winner.
8. People of God should be involved actively in neighbourhood evangelism.
9. All churches and fellowships must become missionary minded.
10. The poor must be helped.
11. India must be totally evangelized in this generation.<sup>2</sup>

### Operation

Thus far BYM has spread in the following areas: (1) camps, (2) revivals, (3) evangelistic rallies, (4) discipleship training programs, (5) campus cells--Bible study and prayer groups--and (6) student missionaries to unevangelized fields. Regarding BYM's operations, Stanley has this to say, "The principle that guides development of BYM's operations is twofold: God's guidance and need-based.

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<sup>1</sup>A. Lionel, "God's Hand in BYM's Origin," Blessing, December 1996, 11.

<sup>2</sup>Blessing Youth Mission, 1. The brochure appears in appendix B.

In the future some of the present operations may not be required, while some new one may be developed."<sup>1</sup>

### Achievements

At the end of each year BYM publishes its overall achievements (from its origin to the present). The following data are from December 1998.

BYM has 250 full-time workers stationed in eleven states, covering the south, central, north, and northeast of India. These workers are paid through generous donations of well-wishers; 82 percent of these donations come from Indians.

The following tasks are undertaken in the mission fields: (1) church planting, (2) revival ministries, (3) medical work, (4) adult-children literacy programs, and (5) relief work. BYM works with government and nongovernment organizations whenever possible, particularly in literacy programs and relief work.

Blessing is a monthly magazine published both in English and Tamil. Bimonthly it is printed in eight other Indian languages.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>R. Stanley, 5.

<sup>2</sup>Blessing is printed in the following languages: Assamese, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, and Telugu.

Cassettes (135 of music and messages), 45 books, and various tracts are produced in ten languages. These cater to the various needs of youth and of the church at large.<sup>1</sup>

### Revival Youth Camp

BYM conducted a Revival Youth Camp during the Pongal holidays,<sup>2</sup> January 14-17, 1999. This camp took place at Blessing Center, Sittari Hills, in the district of Harur. Harur is a small township sandwiched between Salem and Tirupathur. Within six hours, 320 retreatants flooded the campsite. Of these, 87 were not Christians. They were from different parts of South India, carefully selected through applications. Age restriction (15-25 years) was a major factor in the selection, apart from considering the place, church affiliation, religious background, and language fluency, either in English or Tamil.<sup>3</sup>

### Physical Aspects

#### Campsite

Blessing Center is located on the eastern ghats (mountain passes) of the Blue Mountains. Its tall trees,

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<sup>1</sup>Evangeline Stanley, "The Year 1998," Blessing, January 1999, 7-8.

<sup>2</sup>Pongal is a harvest festival celebrated in the southern states of India. Most educational institutions remain closed for 3 to 7 days.

<sup>3</sup>The sessions were translated from English into Tamil.

rare colorful flowers, blue mountain tops, visiting clouds, and golden sunsets and sunrises make this campsite one of a kind. The mornings are melodious with the orchestra of birds, while the nights are gloriously lit with starry skies. The very air is energizing. This mountaintop experience lifts the soul heavenward.

### Facilities

Blessing Center is a fifteen-acre campsite which can comfortably accommodate 500 retreatants. The following facilities are available: (1) ten duplex cottages, each accommodating four or a family; (2) five dormitories, each accommodating seventy-five, all connected to a music system; (3) well-equipped kitchen with cooks and helpers; (4) dining room-recreation hall;<sup>1</sup> (5) a large and beautiful chapel made of stone blocks; (6) three houses for residential staff;<sup>2</sup> (7) telephone booth, and (8) book stall and general store.

These facilities are well-maintained and are easily accessible.

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<sup>1</sup>The television in the recreation hall can be used only at news time.

<sup>2</sup>The residential staff care for the estate, are qualified resource personnel, and form the intercessory prayer group.

## Food

A wide variety of tasty food was served. In general the food was balanced, though it lacked fruit. Some said, "Food was A one!" Others felt that it was "better than a wedding feast."<sup>1</sup> Good spring water was available in abundance.

## Registration

The camp fee was Rs.200. That did not include travel. For those who needed financial assistance, BYM covered up to 50 percent of the travel cost and the retreatant's church paid up to 50 percent of the camp fee. Availability of financial assistance was advertised along with other details of the camp several months before the date.

## The Program

In general, each of the sessions and camp activities was centered around wholesome Christian growth and revival.

## A day's schedule

BYM's daily schedule was 16 hours long. The rising bell rang at 6:30 a.m., and the day's activities concluded a little before 10:30 p.m. At 10:30 p.m. the lights went out. An hour was provided for each meal. Time between the

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<sup>1</sup>Sofia Luke, "Sittari Hills--God's Dwelling Place," Blessing, March 1999, 10-11.



sessions was available for reflection. However, the leaders repeatedly reminded us, "Too much free time will get you into trouble." Attendance to all activities was encouraged.

Morning devotions. An hour was spent in morning devotions, from 7 to 8. The devotion had three parts: praise and worship took the first fifteen minutes. The next thirty minutes were spent in personal prayer and meditation. The passage for meditation was announced, the retreatants were to write in a notebook their impressions and the inspiration received from the passage. No length or content was specified for the writing. The last ten minutes were spent in a small group or with a partner in prayer.

Keeping in mind these three parts, the worship leader led out as inspired. Hence, each devotion had different elements.

Youth issues. A one-and-a-half-hour session each day dealt with youth-related issues. Dr. Lillian Stanley made her presentation in one hour; this was followed by group discussion. Each group consisted of twenty to twenty-five retreatants. A leader and secretary were chosen from within the group.<sup>1</sup> Questions and guidelines for discussion were given.

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<sup>1</sup>These same groups functioned in other sessions throughout the retreat.

The topics presented were Marriage and Sex, Overcoming Habits, Time Management, and Youth and Society. These topics were approached from the present, took us to the past, to the word of God, and back to the present in applying the principles learned. The retreatants were receptive.

Missionary models. "He will revive you, you need to reach the unreached." This slogan of BYM's leaders was emphasized in most of the camp activities. During this session of one and a half hours, Brother Lionel presented a case study of missionaries who pioneered the work in India.

The missionary call, opportunities to work with God, methods used, cooperation with the training of local leaders, and the end result were sketched and considered. Those chosen for study were Bartholomeus Ziegenbalg, William Carey, Vedanayagam S. Azaria, and Amy Wilson Carmichael.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of each session, a burden for the unreached was expressed. Brother Lionel encouraged each retreatant to ask the following questions: "Lord are you calling me for missions?" "If so, can you impress upon me your will?" and "Where do you want me to go?" After ten minutes of prayer those convinced were asked to enroll in the training

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<sup>1</sup>As resource material, presenters used S. D. Ponraj, Pioneers of the Gospel (Madhupur, Bihar: Mission Educational Books, 1993).

program. Many retreatants responded to the challenge of missions. Within these four days, each group was to submit a plan specifying how they as a group or as individuals would participate in the gospel commission.

New Life Formula. These sessions were led by Brother Stanley.<sup>1</sup> New life was explored in five dimensions: (1) in Christ, (2) in the Spirit, (3) on our knees, (4) with His Word, and (5) for others.

These sessions were scriptural and very inspiring, presented in sermon format. After the presentation each retreatant was asked to write in a paragraph or two the essence and the inspiration of the message. They were also to write a prayer of commitment. Lucas George, a retreatant from Kerala, wrote this prayer: "Jesus, help me to spend time with your word daily. I need to hear your voice and mend my ways."

#### Special programs

Spirit baptism. Two sessions were set apart for this powerful experience, each building on the other. Sister Sarojini ministered in both these sessions. The first session dealt with cleansing from sin, past hurts, and

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<sup>1</sup>Stanley has a charismatic approach; though inter-denominational in ministry, his roots belong to the Assemblies of God (AG).

worries; it also considered waiting while praying and claiming the promise of the Holy Spirit. The second session emphasized giving oneself totally to the Lord and receiving the power, fruits, and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

These Spirit-filled sessions had a tremendous impact on the retreatants, affecting their behavior and participation during the rest of the retreat.

Campus ministries. Ashok Kumar led out in two sessions regarding campus ministries. The first session made clear the history, organization, and leadership of campus ministries. It also presented the materials and outreach programs available for use in campus ministries.

In the second session the dimensions and effectiveness of campus ministries were presented. These are: (1) prayer cells, (2) Bible study groups, (3) peer counseling, (4) seniors mentoring juniors, (5) relief groups,<sup>1</sup> and (6) study circles.

These two sessions opened new possibilities for ministry among students. They were well illustrated with examples and were professionally done. The material was relevant to the retreatants.

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<sup>1</sup>The relief group cares for the needy students of their college, as well as undertaking relief projects for the community.

Field trip. The afternoon of the third day was spent in a tribal village 5 kilometers from the campsite. In this village BYM has a mission station. Established three years ago, this mission includes a medical center and two classrooms. The station missionaries, along with the resource personnel of the retreat, exposed us to the realities and methods of missions.

This field trip was inspiring. Many retreatants were impressed to participate in mission. On our way back to the campsite, John, one of the retreatants, told me, "I'm touched by the needs of the unreached, and the sacrificial spirit of the missionaries. I am determined to become one."

Counseling. All through the retreat the resource personnel were available for prayer and counseling. But on the second and the fourth day two hours were set aside for counseling. During this time, all the retreatants were encouraged to meet with the counselors.

Five professional counselors, along with some of the resource personnel, counseled the retreatants. These sessions were professionally done and the retreatants were benefited.

Testimonies. On days 3 and 4, retreatants were encouraged to briefly share testimonies between sessions.

Apart from this, the editorial board for Blessing requested written testimonies for publication.

The following testimonies were shared between sessions:

Nominal Christian: Naveen Raj belongs to the Methodist church. A native of Salem, Naveen is a brilliant engineering student. His achievements in studies as well as in sports have earned him many laurels. A regular church goer, Naveen says, "Going to church is a childhood habit. Participating in church activities was an opportunity to exhibit talents." A natural leader, Naveen enjoys respect in church circles. "Basically, I came to this retreat to expand my circle of friends." But God had other plans for Naveen. He testified with tears,

I was suddenly convicted of my sinfulness. Those sins which I cherished only God knew. As I began to confess, I felt light within. My past rolled away, joy and peace flooded my soul. I believe I received the Holy Spirit during the anointing service. I offer my life to God.

Student Missionary: "I have enrolled my name for student missionary training program," said Paulson of Coimbatore. A computer degree student, Paulson was touched by Lionel's message on mission, "Dream Missions--Do Missions--Dedicate for Missions," at the end of which Lionel had appealed to the retreatants to get involved in missions.

Paulson was one of the seventy-eight who signed up for future training. He said:

I am burdened for the unreached. It is so marvelous to see, the transforming effects of the Gospel on the tribal. Missions is what I want to do!

Muslim Retreatant: Abdul Khadar is a degree student from Madras. He had never been to a retreat, though he loves to visit hill stations. Knowing this, his friend "tempted" him to come. On the fourth day, this is what he said:

Initially, I felt irritated by Christian spirituality and endless sessions. By the third day, I was confused between my beliefs and the teaching I heard. I spoke to a staff member;<sup>1</sup> he clarified some of my doubts. Today, I decided to pray to Jesus. I have a strange feeling that I would follow Him soon.

Later, when I asked Abdul how his family would react to his conversion, he replied, "I don't know. I may be disowned. It's going to be difficult. Do remember me in your prayers."

Hindu Retreatant: "My childhood buddy brought me here. On special occasions, I have been to his church, and he has attended pujas<sup>2</sup> at my home," said Anil Kumar from Trichy. A higher secondary student, Anil enjoyed every moment spent in this retreat.

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<sup>1</sup>Some staff of BYM are well read in inter-religious disciplines and have worked with Hindus and Muslims.

<sup>2</sup>Puja is adoration of the gods with proper ceremonies.

The sessions on "New Life" impressed me the most. I have begun to read the Bible. Jesus is beginning to talk to me. I not only like to follow Jesus, I like to do something for Him. I'm real excited just being here. I want to thank my friend Rahul for bringing me over.

### Resource Personnel

In all, there were five resource persons, a team of professional counselors, and the ground staff of three families who lived on the site. The ground staff, along with the resource personnel, formed the prayer warrior team.

In general, the resource personnel were prayerful, humble, simple, and approachable. Their presentations were based on the Bible. Their charismatic approach, together with their field experience, made them effective.

### Description of resource personnel

Information about the resource personnel was obtained by personal interview and through the introduction that preceded their presentations.

Stanley Rajamani. Stanley, the founder of BYM, is an engineering graduate. His wife Lillian and daughter Evangeline, a professional counselor, minister side by side with this visionary. Though in his late fifties, Stanley is still very dynamic.



Lillian Stanley. Lillian is a pediatrician, a graduate of Christian Medical College, Vellore. Her love for youth makes her "lovable" and her presentations are relevant. She has authored eleven books.

Lionel Das. Lionel is an enthusiastic middle-aged BYM field worker. His specialization is double: campus ministries and training student missionaries. A father of three children (two teenagers), Lionel is friendly and popular.

Sarojini Ratham. Sarojini is the leader of the prayer warriors. Dedicated to ministry, she has found that her love for the Lord and His work gave her no time for marriage. Her personality emits godliness and kindness. Her session on the Holy Spirit was a blessing.

Ashok Kumar. Ashok, a computer wizard, together with his new wife, works for BYM. They work in the office as well as in the field. Ashok is the leader of campus ministries, and is still engaged in grassroots ministry in his neighborhood.<sup>1</sup> His sessions were practical and motivating.

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<sup>1</sup>Ashok Kumar leads out in a prayer and study group for the students of St. Joseph Vocational Training Institute, Vellore, Tamil Nadu.

### Evaluation of resource personnel

The resource personnel are evaluated on the basis of the material used and made available to the retreatants, methods used in presentation, and the response received.

The evaluation is rated on a scale of 1 to 10.

- |                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| 1. Material     | 8 of 10  |
| 2. Presentation | 8 of 10  |
| 3. Response     | 9 of 10. |

### Camp Discipline

Though the age of the retreatants was between 16 and 25, the discipline expected and maintained exhibited Christian maturity. The behavior during sessions, in the dormitories, and during other activities was exemplary and representative of the churches to which the participants belonged. This was a great message to the 27 percent who were Hindus and Muslims.

Mrs. Jemina Sugirtharaj, one of the leaders of the prayer warrior team, told me, "We pray particularly for the discipline of the retreatants. Indiscipline invites Satan; this hinders God's working."

### Usable Ideas

In this section, those ideas which are new to the researcher and effective are briefly stated. Though each of

the sessions and activities was enriching, some were creative and practical.

#### Small group discussions

The small groups for discussion and prayer were effective. They provided a platform for expression, participation, and an opening to pray for each other's needs. Thus a personal touch was maintained.

#### Field trip to a mission station

This trip provided the retreatants an opportunity to witness the implementation of mission. This practical aspect of learning enabled young people to envision their future contribution to mission.

#### Keeping a journal

During registration, a 100-page notepad was given to each participant for the purpose of maintaining a journal. A sheet of instructions was attached to this pad. This concept of maintaining a journal, in which are recorded the summary of each session, along with one's reflection and a prayer of commitment, has far-reaching influence. When encouraging the retreatants to do this, Stanley said, "Such a journal stands as a witness between God and you. Even several years later, the journal will remind us of our

vision. We can relive those moments of hope and be encouraged."

#### Non-Christian participation

Churches were encouraged to identify interest among non-Christians. A good 27 percent of the retreatants were Hindus and Muslims. BYM had a special team of staff to work with and support this group.

#### Student missionary training program

Those retreatants who gave their names were to be called within six months for a training program lasting two to three weeks. After this training program, those who express willingness to go to the mission field are given placements.<sup>1</sup> The BYM supports their missionaries financially.

#### Conclusion

At the end of my first inter-denominational youth retreat, I had grown in my understanding of retreats and definitely in the Lord. BYM's focus on the youths' conversion and life-long commitment to Christ found success in this retreat. Their burden, "Revive to reach out," and

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<sup>1</sup>Lionel pointed out that BYM has trained close to 4,000 student missionaries. Of these, 250 are on their payroll. Many others have joined mission organizations affiliated with local churches.

their vision to "catch them young" (to be missionaries for Christ) is slowly becoming my burden for Adventist youth.

### Divine Retreat Centre

Divine Retreat Centre (Divine) is the Catholic Bethesda pool of mercy, where thousands flock each week to experience God personally and to witness His manifestation among the retreatants. Though Catholic, inter-denominational, interreligious, and international people participate in retreats fifty-two weeks a year. Divine's influence is far reaching, particularly among Indian communities around the world. Presently there are five branches in different parts of India. Work in some parts of Europe and Canada is underway.

Divine is gigantic in every dimension. Surprisingly, no written history, aims, or objectives are available. Hence, information was gathered through brief interviews. One major hurdle was that none of those attached to Divine liked to be interviewed. "We speak little, pray more; the rest is the Lord's doing," said Sister Mareena.

### History

In 1985, Fr. Matthew Naickomparambli returned to Kerala from Rome. In Rome, he had spent six years studying theology and was involved in meditation. He claims, "While in meditation, I was anointed by the Holy Spirit and

received the gifts of the Spirit." On his return, he and Dr. Augustine Vallooram<sup>1</sup> worked in the same parish. "They were the most loved priests in this part of Kerala," says Abraham Matthew, a retired Chief Justice.<sup>2</sup> "Both these priests visited their members' homes and soon realized that each home had a bigger cross to carry than the home before." This burden gave rise to the formation of an intercessory prayer group located at Chalakudy, Potta. "Do you now see the reason why we don't have written history, aims and objectives? Our entire ministry is need-based. Our focus is people," says P. J. Antony, the chief editor of Divine Voice.

In 1987, the intercessory prayer group at Potta started conducting retreats during selected weeks. This, naturally, was Matthew's brainchild. Talking about the rapid progress from this point, Sister Mareena Elengical<sup>3</sup> says, "The public pressurized us to conduct retreats more often. From once a month, we gradually ended up having retreats each week of the year. Just in twelve years,

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<sup>1</sup>Augustine now coordinates overseas retreats conducted by Divine.

<sup>2</sup>Since his retirement, Abraham Matthew serves as a resource person at Divine.

<sup>3</sup>Sister Mareena was part of the initial, intercessory prayer group. She now coordinates "Prayer Tower" for Divine.

because of the attendants, we have outgrown our resources. But God has graciously provided our requirements. This is our third retreat site; many of the buildings that you now see are less than four years old."

Babu Rajendran, one of the program coordinators, was asked, "What is the secret behind Divine's explosive growth?" With a broad smile he replied, "You! you are the secret of our growth. Talking about publicity, our publications and audio ministry does a little. The 'word of the mouth' has been our major medium of publicity. You like what happens here, you tell people. People bring their friends. Above all, it is the Lord who brings people each week."

I asked Matthew, "Has your dream come true? Is this all you wanted Divine to be?" His answer was quick: "Let me make a correction, young man. My dream for Divine was only a grain of sand. But the Lord has desired that Divine be a mountain. Who knows what He will make of it in the future?"

### Objectives

Divine Center is not guided by written objectives. "We prefer to be led by the Holy Spirit and by the changing needs of the masses," says Vallooram. The objectives listed below are based on the claims of the coordinators of Divine,

the focus of the week's program, its impact on the retreatants, and my own perceptions.

1. The inner cries of the masses should find a platform for expression.

2. The masses should receive inner healing.

3. Catholics should learn the secret and power of personal prayers.

4. Catholics should have a deeper understanding of their beliefs.

5. Catholics should study the Bible regularly.

6. Every listener should receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

7. The Holy Spirit will empower an individual to be a witness.

8. Praise and worship should be a part of regular worship services.

9. Praise and worship can be used as therapy for mental illness.

10. Miracles should follow God's people, meeting their inner needs.

11. All Christians should be united under "one Shepherd."

12. Jesus Christ is the only solution for all problems.



## Physical Aspects

### Location

Divine Retreat Centre is situated at Muringoor, Northern Kerala, on national highway 47, about 3 kilometers from Chalakudy. Divine Nagar is a newly inaugurated railway station,<sup>1</sup> which is less than 200 meters from the retreat center.

### Retreat Center

The retreat center consists of two campuses which are divided by the national highway. As expected of a Catholic institution, Divine's concrete structures are huge and beautiful. Tall coconut palm and pine tree, paddy fields, tea and coffee plantations, jackfruit and banana trees create a retreat atmosphere at Divine. The income from these cash crops makes up to 25 percent of the yearly expenses for the ground staff, resource personnel, and volunteers, says Kurian, the financial manager.

### Available Facilities

The facilities available on campus enable the ground staff to implant Catholic discipline. In fact the facility and the discipline have been the major factors in the success of the weekly retreats. The center includes places

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<sup>1</sup>Though Indians and foreigners flock in thousands to Divine, there is yet no facility for air travel.

where people may buy fruit, books, cold and hot drinks, and general merchandise. It has a postal counter, a travelers' ticket counter, and a telephone booth. In addition, there is a laundry. For spiritual and intellectual growth, one finds a library and prayer halls. These facilities are located on both campuses.

### Accommodations

The larger campus has three six-storey blocks. Each is allotted for one of three large language groups, namely Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu. The other campus has one six-storey block which accommodates five smaller language groups, namely, English, Hindi, Konkani, Kannada, and Marathi. In all, Divine ministers to eight language groups.

These huge blocks are basically large dormitories; the few single rooms on each floor are occupied by resource personnel and the priest in charge of the floor. Rooms for families are available only for the sick or handicapped. If not, even husbands and wives stay in their assigned dormitories. Children normally stay with their mothers.

Each dormitory accommodates roughly one hundred retreatants.<sup>1</sup> Bunk beds are provided, with a thin fibre

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<sup>1</sup>Sister Teresa Glen, in charge of all records, said: "Two years ago, we had 34,600 retreatants. You should have seen the crowd, they slept on the terrace, in corridors, in the dining hall, or wherever they found a vacant place."

mattress and a pillow. Toilets and wash basins are sufficient and clean. Water is available around the clock. The maximum capacity of Divine is 25,000.

The dormitories are well ventilated; fans keep the air circulating. Since power cuts are common, a giant generator takes over within seconds, giving no time for delays and discomfort.

### Food

The food served was simple and nutritious though fruits and variety were absent. The kitchen is clean and well equipped. Drinking water is treated with herbs. There are two coffee breaks each day.

The queue for food is minimized, by having each language group close their session ten to fifteen minutes after the other.

### Registration

Prior booking is not needed. The registration fee per person is Rs.170. This includes boarding and lodging for a week. Registration also channels language groups to their block and campus.

The week I attended Divine was March 21-27, 1999. It was announced by the end of the first day that 8,000 retreatants were registered.<sup>1</sup>

### The Program

Each day of the week there was a well-planned program. The sessions and other retreat activities were centered around the conversion of a retreatant, both through knowledge of the word and experience. Divine's retreat pattern is exemplary and charismatic. The program is divided into the daily and the special programs.

#### Daily Program

The day begins at 5:30 a.m. at Divine. At 6:15, the mass starts and goes on for one-half hour. This is followed by sessions one after the other. The day comes to a close at 11 p.m. An hour is allotted for each meal, though the supper (9:30-10:30 p.m.) timing is not the best. One half-hour each is given for the two coffee breaks. The day's schedule is very rigid; it does not provide time for reflection.

Apart from the daily program, one special program took place each of the six days. It was special not only because

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<sup>1</sup>Sister Teresa Glean has this to say regarding the retreatants: "Attendance figures released at Divine are rounded up to the closest 100."

it was different and spiritually uplifting, but its impact on the process of transformation was tremendous. Each retreatant's needs were met.

#### Rosary prayers

One half hour each morning was spent in saying the Rosary, the prescribed prayers of the Roman Catholic Church. A leader led out in these prayers, the congregation followed. Even the non-Catholics were encouraged to participate in these prayers. By the end of the week, with some help from prayer books, most of the retreatants knew by heart some of the prayers. The habit which this created was to begin each day with prayer.

#### Worship and adoration

After Rosary, a song leader and a group of musicians led out in worship and adoration, for at least one-half hour. The service usually went overtime.

Scriptural, praise, and worship songs with good rhythm were chosen. By the third day, people felt comfortable in clapping as they sang; many even danced. Praise and worship followed each session for 15 to 20 minutes.

This provided the release the muscles and the mind needed to be receptive for the session that followed. It also set the tone and was uplifting, if not for the dancing.

### Devotional messages

Basically, each session was about one and a half hours long: fifteen minutes for praise and worship at the beginning, one hour of presentation, followed by prayer and worship in conclusion.

The devotional messages were biblical, simple, well illustrated, and gospel oriented. The topics covered were the love of God, Jesus our Saviour, the Holy Spirit, God's Word and its power, personal prayers, sharing Christ with the lost world, being prepared for His coming, and "All things are new in Christ." These appealing messages had a pastoral approach.

### Issues

Six issues were dealt with, touching on religion, society, and health. These sessions were well presented: first, the issue as it is was seen in various dimensions, then the biblical perspective, and finally the practical application. The issues discussed were victory over sin, sin and its consequences, the need for praise and worship, the Christian and society, Christianity and other religions, and healthful living. After each of these presentation a loud round of applause followed.

## Doctrinal teachings

After the evening's tea break the priests occupied the retreatants for close to two hours. Half an hour was spent in praise, prayer, and worship. For forty-five minutes a priest taught a church doctrine; this was followed by Holy Communion.

The church doctrines taught were mostly attached to a ritual. The base of the teachings was biblical, though some arguments were drawn from church history. The topics taught were saint worship, the Eucharist, confession, authority of the church, baptism, and state of the dead. The invitation to participate in the Eucharist was limited to the Christian retreatants.

## Special Programs

### Testimonial sessions

In the retreats I have attended thus far, testimonial services are conducted mostly towards the end of the retreat. Divine also had such a service. But they had testimonial sessions for a day and a half at the very beginning. These testimonial sessions were powerful and real. They built faith, created hope, raised the level of expectations, and prepared everyone to witness God's working.

Some of the testimonies shared were given by (1) An AIDS patient being cured at Divine; (2) A Brahmin lady who had received Christ at Divine, and how her wealthy family turned to Him; and (3) A brilliant marketing manager who became an alcoholic, lost his job and his family, even his parents kicked him out of home; he came to Divine, received Christ, and everything else returned.

#### Confession<sup>1</sup>

In the afternoon of the third day, close to three hours were spent in the Roman Catholic Church practice of confession. For this, they invited only the Catholics, but mentioned that other Christians could also participate after a brief interview with the priest in charge. Priests from town supported the priests at Divine in this ritual of confession.

#### Counseling

Two sessions in the afternoons were set apart for counseling; each session was two hours. In all there were twenty counselors. Most of them were professionals from neighboring towns, while a few resource personnel also counseled. Every retreatant was encouraged to meet a

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<sup>1</sup>Because of the crowd, the confession was held in a large hall. Here, priests sat behind a wooden barrier, the retreatant knelt on the stool provided and spoke into a small opening.



counselor, and if necessary, to meet the same person the following day as well.

Some retreatants were disappointed because they could not meet with a counselor even once. Either the number of counselors or the days of counseling must be increased.

#### Service for the married

This was a beautiful ceremony, in which a message about marriage was presented. After the message, the married couples were called to the front to repeat their marriage vows, holding each other's hand. They affirmed that they loved each other, that they forgave each other; they blessed one another and prayed for each other on their knees.

This brought healing and new strength for the married; and for those not married, it highlighted the sacred relationship marriage offers.

#### Inner healing service

This service lasted for two hours. In this service the retreatants were taken on a long journey "within self," a journey in which one stops and deals with guilt, hurt, anger, bitterness, and fears. Jesus heals the "inner being"; restoration of broken relationships is also

achieved.<sup>1</sup> This service was very emotional, spiritual, and applicable to every retreatant. After the service, until the end of the retreat, calmness and joy radiated on the faces of retreatants.

#### In-filling service

This was a consecration service. Anthony Paul led out dynamically in this service. The steps he asked us to follow were:

1. Consecrate each part of your body to the Lord.
2. Pray through each gift and fruit of the Spirit and claim them personally.
3. Let your neighbor lay hands on you first, followed by the priest, and pray for the in-filling of the Holy Spirit.
4. Thank God for filling you with the Holy Spirit.
5. Promise the Lord that the received gift will be used for His glory.

This service was the next-to-the-last session, which was followed by the session on the "Gospel Commission." The in-filling service was practical, appealing, and involving.

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<sup>1</sup>The recommended steps in dealing with a person who has hurt you are, "forgive them, pray for them, bless them, embrace them in love, and let go of all the resentment," says Rev. Matthew.

## Testimonies

In the Divine "pool of mercy," the Lord powerfully manifests Himself in many ways. Thousands of retreatants come each week with great expectations. Dr. Joseph Thomas,<sup>1</sup> a resource person and one of the persons in charge of the platform, repeatedly announced, "If someone has told you go to Divine, pay Rs.170 and carry home a miracle. I want to assure you, miracles take place at Divine daily, for Divine in itself is a miracle. Do not focus on miracles. Focus on God; miracles will follow."

From thousands of testimonies, seven were selected. These testimonies were recorded in Divine Voice, given by resource personnel, or heard during the week's retreat.<sup>2</sup>

Testimonies From Divine Voice

"Thou art great, O Lord!"

For seven long years Angelo Carvalho and his wife longed to have a child. The specialists in Bombay were of little help. In September 1997 they went on a pilgrimage to Divine hoping that the chief of doctors would have something different to say. Surely, the Lord met them. "The word of

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Thomas, M.D., studied in Washington, D.C. He attended a retreat in the U.S. conducted by Divine. Two years later, he joined Divine Centre as a resource person.

<sup>2</sup>Divine Voice is a monthly magazine, published in the eight languages in which the retreats are conducted.

God revealed Jesus in a new light to us. We returned home full of the joy of the Lord. Within a few days, after our return, my wife shared with me the wonderful news that she had conceived. On May 14, 1998, our baby girl was born, whom we have named 'Divina'.<sup>1</sup>

"He molded me"

Having lost his job, Alex D'Souza was depressed, worried, angry, and yet proud. Being young, he began to indulge in the pleasures of the world. He says, "Some unknown power was leading me. . . . I was in darkness and was totally lost." A week's retreat at the Divine changed the course of Alex's life. He testifies:

He filled me with His Holy Spirit and His gifts. During adoration, I was touched by the Lord and was healed. . . . Today, I run for Him. I have started a prayer group and I am prepared to go to the ends of this world to proclaim His good news. I am prepared even to die for Him.<sup>2</sup>

#### Testimonies of the Resource Personnel

Each of the resource personnel has experienced Christ in a powerful manner. Most of them were transformed during a retreat at Divine.

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<sup>1</sup>Angelo Carvalho, "Thou Art Great, O Lord!" Divine Voice, March 1999, 27.

<sup>2</sup>Alex D'Souza, "He Moulded Me!" Divine Voice, November 1997, 15.

P. J. Anthony

Currently the chief editor of Divine Voice, Anthony also serves as a resource person. A born politician, belonging to the Communist party of India, Anthony emerged as a national leader in a span of eight years. His intellectual capacities soon earned him a sponsorship to Russia. In Russia, his commitment to Communism increased. Armed with Communist ideologies and ruthless agendas, he returned to India with the master plan of bringing down governments and religious powers. He was confident that Communism would soon become the driving force of the nation.

But that was not to be so. During his years in Russia, a young man walked into Anthony's house day after day sharing Christ with his family. Soon his family was converted to Christianity. On his return, Anthony was surprised at the changes at home. Through the converted lives of his wife and children, along with the persistent witness of the young man, Christ found a way into this communist's heart.

Anthony sadly realized:

I was corrupt to the core. My projected commitment for the welfare of people was false. I did things for my own growth, in the process some have benefitted. One sleepless night, it suddenly occurred to me that India and its masses need Christ and not Communism.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>P. J. Anthony shared his testimony before he began a session.

Aravindabsha Menon

A staunch, educated Brahmin, Aravindabsha Menon lost his job for no known reason. In the years that followed, his belief in gods and rituals wavered as he began to associate with atheists. Soon he began to travel all around South India, lecturing in seminars, about his new-found faith. "No God, New Life" was his gripping slogan and theme.

After one such lecture, a Hindu scholar and saint approached Aravind and made friends with him. Aravind was urged by this saintly friend to look beyond the failures of ritualistic Brahminism to the universal God. Ultimately this saint introduced Aravind to Jesus Christ, the universal God, as found in the Vedas.<sup>1</sup>

Aravind, in his book Divine Harmony, translates two verses from the Vedas which influenced his decision for Christ.

This man, the first born of the God is all that was, all that is, and all that has to be. And he comes to this world to give recompense to everybody as per his deeds. Rigveda 10:90:236

This (sacrifice) is the only way for the redemption and liberation of mankind. Those who meditate and attain this man, believe in heart and chant with the

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<sup>1</sup>Aravindabsha Menon, Divine Harmony (Muringoor, Kerala: Divine Printers, 1997), 84-96.

lips, get liberated in this world itself and there is no other way for salvation too. Yajurveda 30:1:18.<sup>1</sup>

### Witnessed Testimonies

Each Friday night, between 10 and 11 o'clock, testimonies are shared. Those who like to share their testimony in other languages do so with the aid of translators. Of the many testimonies I heard, I have chosen to share three.

Jon Francis

That week Jon Francis and his wife had come to Divine for they had nothing further to lose. Four years before they had lost a fortune in business. Five months before they were thrown out of their jobs. Their failures in interviews and "no vacancy" signs brought Jon Francis and his wife to the bitter realization that they would be penniless in less than two months. What is more, they lost their friends of the "fast lane" to which they once belonged. At this time, they were told by a stranger that Divine could reverse their wheel of fortune. So they came.

On the fifth day, after the mass, as was the custom, the priest read out the revelations received by the intercessory prayer group. One of them was that to five persons who had recently lost their jobs the Lord had

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 95-96.

granted better jobs. On hearing this, Francis's heart leaped. Right after the prayer, he telephoned his mother and inquired if any of their applications had found favorable reply. The mother excitedly replied:

Son, you and your wife are asked to join work, in the multinational company. This job pays you much higher than any other you had. You are asked to join work immediately. I'm so glad that our bad days are over.

Maria Rodrigues

Two years ago, in a road accident, Maria Rodrigues sustained multiple fractures of both legs. Surgeries and steel rods helped put her legs together. Long months of hospitalization, followed by wheel-chair restrictions at home, brought Maria's MBA studies almost to an end.

It took eight months for the right leg to gain strength and to become flexible. But the left leg did not respond even to physical therapy. In view of the failure of medical science, doctors prescribed Maria a week's retreat at Divine.<sup>1</sup>

We saw Maria in the wheel chair for four long days. Crutches placed along one side, her mother helped Maria wheel around the campus. On the fifth day the entire

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<sup>1</sup>In many parts of Kerala and some parts of its neighboring states (Tamilnadu, Goa, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh) doctors prescribe Divine as the last resort.



congregation rejoiced with Maria as she walked on to the platform without help. She testified:

The Lord has healed my legs completely. I am so excited. I'm walking after two years. During the healing session, I was praising and pleading with the Lord to have mercy. I don't know how long I sat there in tears, suddenly, a strange feeling aroused my entire body, some kind of strength flowed into my legs. Unconsciously, I stood up. . . . I'm so happy, I just want to thank the Lord with all of you.

#### Melody

A 21-year-old housewife, Melody lives among the rich in Bombay. Her husband, who works in the Gulf states, makes a fortune each month. Melody's late-night entertainments became her addiction. Soon, wine and drugs were her constant companions.

Five weeks ago, her friends brought her to Divine. The wine and drugs she carried in her baggage lasted the entire week. So it was just another week for Melody. When she was packing to go back, she reported,

A strong urge to stay for another week persisted. I'm glad I gave in, for the Lord healed me during the second week.<sup>1</sup> For the past three weeks I have been working with drug addicts that came to Divine. The Lord is with me. I am free from drugs and wine. I know the Lord will do the same and more for those in need. I thank the Lord for this miracle, and for giving me new life.

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<sup>1</sup>To my surprise, in the English group there were close to 30 retreatants who were at Divine for the third consecutive week.

## Resource Personnel

There are three categories of personnel who minister at Divine. They are the lay resource personnel, clergy, and volunteers. Considering the numbers, age groups, languages, cultures, and needs, these three groups effectively serve Divine.

### Lay Resource Personnel

The resource personnel at Divine are highly qualified, and all practice their own profession.<sup>1</sup> Hence, they are lay persons. Each takes a session in his or her field of expertise. Only a few minister week after week. The others serve Divine when available.

All the resource personnel are born-again Christians and have a charismatic approach. Most of them have encountered God at Divine; hence, they render their services free of charge. Their presentations were based on the Bible. They are experienced, well prepared, and able communicators.

### Clergy: Priests and Sisters

The priests at Divine have multiple functions. They conduct mass each day, counsel retreatants, hear

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<sup>1</sup>Among the resource personnel there are doctors, engineers, government officers, counselors, lawyers, businessmen, and teachers.

confessions, and offer prayer support for those in need. They settle issues, assist at the information desk, and are in charge of the floors. They also are a part of the intercessory prayer team.

The sisters work mainly with the women. They monitor law and order and assist in clerical work.

The priests and sisters are approachable and appear genuinely concerned about the retreatants' welfare.

### Volunteers

Most of the volunteers are young people from Kerala. There are graduates, college dropouts, even high schoolers among the volunteers. They usually join Divine after a retreat, and are eager to be of service. The volunteers stay in the dormitories along with the retreatants.

Their job description is: "Volunteers care for the retreatant's comfort; assist in the maintenance department; and all of them belong to the intercessory prayer group. They are taught church doctrines and clinical pastoral ministry. Hence, they can be of initial support to the emotionally disturbed. A volunteer is in charge of each dormitory."<sup>1</sup> Divine benefits by enrolling volunteers belonging to different age groups, cultures, and languages.

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<sup>1</sup>Father Augustine Xavier is in charge of the volunteers. He gave their job description and the related figures.

The clergy and the volunteers are commonly referred to as ground staff. They reside on campus and number up to 500.

### Camp Discipline

One of the identifying marks of Roman Catholicism is discipline. This was projected in every aspect of the retreat. The following were some of the expectations:

1. Rising bell was at 5:30 a.m. At night the lights went out at 11:00. Volunteers maintained silence.

2. Attendance at sessions was compulsory. All the retreatants were expected to leave the dormitory by 6:35 a.m. The dormitory remained locked, except during meal time.

3. A strict queue was followed at the dining hall. Retreatants washed their own plates and glasses after eating.

4. Silence was maintained during the sessions, at the dormitory, in the dining hall, and in the corridors.

5. Relationships with the opposite sex were discouraged. Even married couples could not sit together; they stayed in different dormitories.

6. A retreatant could not leave campus, except in case of an emergency, until the end of the retreat.<sup>1</sup>

I was impressed by the discipline expected and maintained by Divine. Discipline is a major factor for Divine's successful retreats week after week.

#### Adaptable Ideas

Divine Retreat as a whole is unique and enriching. Every session and activity is well thought out and is geared towards the process of transformation of mind, soul, and body. The following ideas are relatively new and had profound impact on the retreatants. Hence, they are usable.

1. The wide use of lay resource personnel, who are highly professional, yet good communicators.

2. Round-the clock intercessory prayer groups: From day two they began to send messages to the retreatants about their answered prayers; these were read in the evening after mass.

3. Worship and adoration: scripturally meaningful songs with good music.<sup>2</sup> Worship and adoration play a vital part in the spirituality and inner healing of a person.

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<sup>1</sup>Though identified by a letter as a pastor studying retreat models, I was not permitted to go to the other campus even for an hour of observation.

<sup>2</sup>Divine has its own song book called Divine Praises. Some of the songs were composed by their musicians.

4. Testimonial sessions at the beginning of the retreat. These testimonies become faith builders; seeds of hope are sown.

5. The powerful inner healing session. Many physical illnesses are healed when the inner being is made right with God and others.<sup>1</sup>

6. In-filling session, where the retreatants fast and pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

7. The service for married couples. This service provided an opportunity for healing to take place in troubled marriages. It is also a model for the young retreatants.

#### Conclusion

My fondest memories of interdenominational retreats are from Divine. As a student I not only learned many new dimensions of a retreat, but was personally blessed.

In the next section of this chapter, the youth retreat model of the Evangelical Union is studied and evaluated.

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<sup>1</sup>During the inner-healing session, Babu Rajendran said, "Most of the bodily pains, allergy, nervous problems, even some major diseases are caused by guilt, anger, hatred, and a messy past."

Bangalore Inter-Collegiate Evangelical  
Union Youth Camp (EU)

Objectives

The objectives are as stated in "A Manual for EU."

1. EU is Bible believing.
2. EU is evangelical.
3. EU is a fellowship of new life.
4. EU is interdenominational.
5. EU is spiritually centered.
6. EU is financially independent.
7. EU is not a church.
8. EU is international in its sympathies.
9. EU is not a sect.
10. EU is evangelistic.

The Bangalore Inter-Collegiate Evangelical Union Youth Camp is a yearly event. In 1999 it was conducted May 26-30 at Vistar, a campsite twenty-three kilometers from Bangalore. The camp was entitled "INSIDE OUTSIDE," with the focus on "Better Christian Living."

The twenty-two retreatants were mostly college and higher secondary students. This number did not include camp parents and resource personnel.

### Physical Aspects

In this section, the facilities available on the campsite, along with services provided, are briefly described.

#### Campsite

Vistar is a retreat center owned by a board of trustees belonging to an inter-religious group. It is currently managed by a Christian. Vistar's 12 acres of land accommodate an office block, dormitories, cottages, kitchen and dining room, staff quarters, and three halls of different sizes. The 200 coconut trees, 60 mango trees, pines, and silver oaks make Vistar a picturesque and pleasant retreat center.

In some ways Vistar is a unique retreat center. The following are its special features:

1. Equality--irrespective of sex, education, and position--is practiced at all levels, among workers and towards retreatants. For example, all the workers of Vistar eat with the participants, sharing the same food.

2. They run a paper-recycling processing unit along with a pottery manufacturing section. Villagers are educated in these two units; this in turn provides employment.



3. Vistar as a whole revolves around the motto "A people and a place friendly to ecology." The landscape, constructions, and working force all exhibit this underlying principle. Hence, the use of wood is at a bare minimum.

#### Accommodations

Vistar offers comfortable accommodations. Each room accommodates 5 persons, while the cottages are for families. Two brick walls connected by a stone slab make the cot. The tables are similarly patterned. Vistar's capacity is 120 retreatants.

The bathrooms and toilets are clean. There is running water around the clock.

#### Food

The food served was nutritious, tasty, and simple. Purified water was available. "Self-help" is another governing law of Vistar. We served our own food and washed the used utensils.

#### Registration

Vistar is expensive; lodging and boarding for a day cost Rs.125. Hence, the four-day retreat costs Rs.500. The Evangelical Union Graduate Fellowship donated Rs.250 for each student retreatant. Further, the youth society of the

retreatant's church paid the needed amount to support their youth in the retreat.

### The Program

#### A Day's Schedule

The four-day program was well planned.<sup>1</sup> Each day's schedule was basically the same, providing time for reflection and relaxation.

On the whole the entire program was geared towards wholesome development of Christian youth. The rising bell was at 6:15 each morning. By 10 p.m. we were encouraged to go to bed. This provided more than eight hours for sleep, which supported the retreatant's active participation in the following day's program.

The schedule was strictly followed and attendance was compulsory. Yet sessions running over and valid excuses for absence were acceptable.

#### Quiet Time

Each morning forty-five minutes (7-7:45 a.m.) were set apart for Quiet Time (QT).<sup>2</sup> QT was to be spent individually in reflective Bible study and in prayer. The QT material

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<sup>1</sup>Appendix A contains the program sheet.

<sup>2</sup>The material for Quiet Time was chosen and written by Sundip James, a senior in the EU fellowship. QT material is in appendix C.

consisted of (1) a chosen passage, (2) questions based on the passage, and (3) space provided for answers.

The retreatants were taught to read, observe, interpret, and apply the Scriptures. The concept of QT is good; if supervised and supported by seniors or staff, even baby Christians would benefit.<sup>1</sup>

### Praise and Worship

Every morning, immediately after breakfast, forty-five minutes were set apart for praise and worship.<sup>2</sup> Songs, praises, adoration, and prayers ascended to God's throne.

Charismatic in nature, this service set the tone for the day. Initially, those belonging to a more conservative background did not participate. By the third day, everyone was involved and all were truly blessed.

### Inside Outside

The camp's theme, "Inside Outside," was interestingly dealt with in three parts: Thoughts and Emotions, Attitudes and Actions, Relationship with God, Fellowmen and Self. At the very outset Sam Thomas made it clear that our inside affects our outside and vice versa. Three sessions were

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<sup>1</sup>The criteria for analysis are: (1) biblical base, (2) relevance to youth, and (3) appeal to individuals.

<sup>2</sup>The praise and worship leader was Bryan, who once belonged to a rock group. The Lord met him, and Bryan gave his musical talents to the Lord.

based on psychology: how environment, heredity, and religion influence our day-to-day activities. Biblical examples and application, along with personal experience, made these sessions effective.

### Youth-Related Issues

Three sessions were set apart for vital issues related to youth. The issues were entertainment and the Christian; finding God's will; sex, love, and marriage. Jacob Isaac divided each of the three sessions into: (1) introduction of the issue; (2) group participation--the three groups had to write down and present the pros and cons of the issue;<sup>1</sup> and (3) the biblical perspective of the issue.

In these discussions solutions were not offered to problems raised; rather each person was encouraged to view the problem against the BIG PICTURE, in a holistic view. Christian principles were laid down in conclusion.

### Case Study

Four biblical characters was chosen as case studies: Samson, Abraham, Mary, and John the Baptist. Idicharia Ninan, a professor of theology, used an expository method of presentation. At first, he briefly narrated the story; this

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<sup>1</sup>Writing down the pros and the cons of an issue was done differently. On the sheet provided, we were encouraged to write our ideas without discussing them with one another. This made everyone's ideas and opinions equally important.

was followed by an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the character. He concluded by extracting a moral for daily application. These studies were inspirational and presented in "youth language."

#### Purposeful Christian Living

Apart from the above-mentioned programs, each day a time slot was set apart for deliberation on the gospel commission and on service to the downtrodden. Attention was given to how this could be done through the available structures.

These ideas were presented in three sessions: (1) missions,<sup>1</sup> (2) life-style evangelism,<sup>2</sup> (3) EU and you. These sessions created an awareness of various needs, both in the mission field and in the neighborhood. They also identified the areas for youth involvement and life-time commitment.

#### Final Challenge

The final challenge was led by Ellen Alexander.<sup>3</sup> She spent ample time in recapturing the essence of the sessions

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<sup>1</sup>The topic "missions" was taken by Wayne Joseph, director of missions among tribals in Andhra Pradesh.

<sup>2</sup>"Life-style evangelism" and "EU and You" were presented by Peter Pottan, a senior staff advisor of EU.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen Alexander and her husband were the camp parents. They were the most loved seniors at the retreat.

of the past four days, and skillfully reduced them to "working principles."

### Testimonies

The campfire on Saturday night was inspiring. For a little more than two hours, we sang favorite songs, prayed for one another's needs, and shared the mercies and power of God we had experienced. We were encouraged to testify to the workings of the Lord during the retreat or at least to share impressions about the retreat.

The following are some of the testimonies shared by the retreatants.

#### Johnson

Though born into a Christian home, Johnson had never been to church in all his life. Three months before, his mother was hospitalized and was battling for life because of cardiac arrest. "I don't even know if you are real. If you are there, I love my mother a lot. Please give her life," he prayed. Two weeks after this prayer, Johnson's mother walked out of the hospital. This gave him the assurance of a living God.

Johnson was at the retreat because of an EU friend. He testified, "I was on the streets fighting for money. We showed mercy to our victim only if he paid more than the one who hired us. My life is a big mess. Who knows after the

retreat, I may be killed on the streets; other gangs may get me. But I'm glad I accepted Jesus, I have received His forgiveness this week. Do keep praying for me."<sup>1</sup>

### Ebenezer

A native of Bangalore, a born-again Christian, Ebenezer is doing the third semester in Business Management at Calcutta. Years ago, the Lord called Ebenezer to go to the northern part of India. The vision given to him was for ministry among college students. He testified to the faithfulness of the Lord.

The Lord not only asked me to go to Calcutta, He is with me there, and is using me in a small way. Some who never would have heard about Jesus are now His disciples.<sup>2</sup> During this retreat, the Lord has challenged me to take up missions full time. Lord, I am willing to go into the ends of Calcutta to make those mountains plain.

Ebenezer sat down with tears. We asked the Lord of harvest to fulfill his dreams.

### Sukumar

Sukumar has completed his degree, majoring in Botany, and is contemplating higher studies. He is the president of

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<sup>1</sup>Johnson now attends church and EU fellowship regularly.

<sup>2</sup>Ebenezer leads a prayer and Bible study group for college students in his hostel room.

EU student fellowship. He thanked the Lord for His providence.<sup>1</sup>

The Lord can be trusted. His ways are many and marvelous. Only a week before the retreat we received the required money, we didn't know who will be coming and who will not. I am grateful for His mercies, and am excited about His guidance. Friends, go from here, and allow Him to do greater things for you.

### Natssja

Young and energetic, Natssja has a contagious smile.<sup>2</sup> Born into a Methodist home, she grew up with her grandparents. Her parents worked in the Middle East, but spent their yearly holidays with Natssja and her sister. She says, "I don't know why I dislike my parents. My grandparents say I am rebellious. I think I was not loved." Natssja went in search of love, and all she found was boys with lust. Though hurt, she enjoyed the pleasures. About the retreat, she said:

During this retreat, I've learnt a lot about God and myself. I think I've found what I was looking for the unconditional love of Jesus. What's exciting is Christ's love is "free." Pray that my relationship with God and my parents will become better.

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<sup>1</sup>Several dates and different locations for the retreat were canceled. The EU students' officers definitely see the "hand of the Lord" in the retreat at Vistar.

<sup>2</sup>A twelfth-standard student, Natssja decorated her face, hands, and feet with colors and ornaments. Her clothes were inappropriate.



## Resource Personnel

The seven resource personnel were educated, had their own profession, and did not hold positions in their church. They were in their late thirties and early forties, hence, were able to relate well with the youth.

Status of Resource Personnel

Information about the resource personnel was obtained by personal interviews and through the introduction that preceded their presentations. The resource personnel are briefly introduced; mention is made of their social status, career, and Christian experience.

## Som Thomas

Thomas is an electronics engineer by profession; he is married and has two sons under eight years of age. He is closely connected with EU and its activities in the Bangalore chapter. The youth found it difficult to comprehend some things he said.

## Idicheria Ninan

Ninan is a graduate of Oxford University and has a Ph.D. in New Testament. He is currently professor at Southern Asian Bible College at Bangalore. Idi, as he is lovingly known, is married and has two teenage daughters.

He was on EU's payroll many years ago, and ever after has maintained a working relationship with them.

Jacob Isaac

Jacob is a young and dynamic theology graduate from Union Biblical Seminary, Pune. He runs a ministry called "Kerygma" for the youth of Bangalore.<sup>1</sup> A highly respected resource person in interdenominational circles, Jacob is friendly, highly professional, and has a special gift for ministering to youth.

Ellen Alexander

The retreat was the "brainchild" of Ellen. She is married to a bank officer and has two children; the older one is 12. She holds a diploma in theology. Though a housewife, she is involved in youth ministry, and leads a prayer/study group that meets at her home every Friday. She was on EU's payroll years ago.

Peter Pottan

Peter works for the Theological Association for Extension Education at Bangalore. He has long been connected with EU and has served in various capacities.

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<sup>1</sup>A brochure regarding "Kerygma" is inserted in appendix B.

Currently, he is editor of EU's monthly news and prayer letter, Communicare.

#### Evaluation of Resource Personnel

The resource personnel are evaluated on the basis of the material used, the material made available to the retreatants, methods used in presentation, and the response received spontaneously and through interaction. The evaluation is rated on a scale of 1 to 10.

- |                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| 1. Material     | 8 of 10  |
| 2. Presentation | 7 of 10  |
| 3. Response     | 8 of 10. |

#### Camp Discipline

Discipline at Vistar was commendable. This was a major factor that contributed to the success of the retreat. The size of the group made this possible.

The retreatants, the resource personnel, and the other staff were respectful of each other. Time consciousness, attendance at sessions, useful participation during discussions, and healthy relationships between opposite sexes were monitored and promoted. Genuine Christian concern and cordial friendship were extended, both within the group as well as to the staff of Vistar.

Improvements could be made on resource personnel. Most of them traveled back and forth each day to Bangalore,

limiting their usable participation to the session and a brief time afterwards.

#### Usable Ideas

As a student observer and critic, I was richly blessed by the entire retreat. The sessions were educative, fellowship was Christian, and all activities were geared towards the theme: Inside Outside. In this section, those ideas that were relatively new and effective are briefly mentioned.

#### Quiet Time

The concept and the materials supplied for Quiet Time were enriching. QT not only set the mood, but provided vitality for the day and its activities.

This concept can be further developed or modified according to the needs of the retreatants.

#### Camp Parents

The term "camp parents"--compared to "dean," "monitor," "in charge," or "supervisor"--is more friendly. It creates a feeling of belonging and provides the security of home. The other terms cause fear and suspicion among youth.

### Case Study

The expository approach to biblical case studies was very appealing. It has potential to positively influence the youth in the following areas.<sup>1</sup>

1. Identity: Youth can identify with characters studied who are similar to them, or as models.

2. Acceptance of self: As the study deals with strengths and weaknesses of character, the youth accepts self instead of being strangled in self-accusation, fear, and guilt.

3. Encouragement: End result of the character's life. The youth recognized various stages of growth in life and how all these led to fruitfulness at the end.

4. Hope and faith: These studies created hope for the future and faith in God.

### Conclusion

This retreat, like the others, was enriching. I wonder now if this process of study will ever come to a satisfactory end. The EU retreat has further expanded the boundaries of good youth retreats.

After observing and evaluating these selected inter-denominational retreats, the researcher realizes that the

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<sup>1</sup>During the testimonial campfire many of the retreatants expressed that the case study helped them in "knowing and accepting self" and creating "hope" within.

surface of retreats has only been scratched. Though three models may be an adequate sample, retreats by churches, ministries, or other youth organization are different one from the other. This factor contributes to the vastness of the subject. Keeping this in mind, the following conclusions are arrived at:

1. Each retreat is enriching and is unique in its own way.
2. Each retreat has its focus and target groups.
3. There are strengths and weaknesses in all retreats; weaknesses can be improved, while strengths can be adopted.
4. A church can follow more than one retreat model, depending on the target group, the need of the church, and the time of the retreat.

On the whole, retreats should contribute to wholesome Christian growth in the context of the church's mission. The models and the modalities can be worked out by the church and its leadership.

In the next chapter, based on the study done thus far, an attempt is made to reform and restructure the present Adventist youth retreat model. This is done within the Adventist framework considering present needs of the Adventist youth.

## CHAPTER 6

### AN ADVENTIST YOUTH RETREAT

Retreats are opportunities for youth ministry. They provide "a vital time of spiritual growth for most teens." It is said that "more growth takes place on these overnight events (retreats) than at any other time in youth ministry."<sup>1</sup> For these reasons and more, an Indian Adventist youth retreat model is essential. This chapter describes the youth retreat designed on the basis of the research reported in chapters 2 through 5.

#### Planning

Nearly three months were spent in planning for the Bethesda youth retreat. The booking of the retreat center and the advertisement were done two months in advance. After considering travel options, the retreatants were asked to make their own travel arrangements. The rough draft of the program was made, and the resource personnel were

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<sup>1</sup>Dennis C. Benson and Bill Wolfe, The Basic Encyclopedia for Youth Ministry (Loveland, Colorado: Group Books, 1981), 256.

informed about their area of contribution a month in advance.

The purpose of the retreat was to provide the youth with an opportunity to experience God, and to identify tools for spiritual growth. During the retreat, the retreatants were expected to meet the God of the covenant, to be united in praise and prayer, and to be taught by the Holy Spirit. To prepare ground for such interaction between God and the retreatants, the resource personnel spent a day before the retreat in fasting and prayer.

The ideas and programs of Bethesda Youth Retreat were adapted from biblical retreats, interdenominational retreats, and Adventist youth camps.

To achieve spiritual formation and holistic growth of the retreatants, the following activities were planned: (1) counseling, (2) inner healing, (3) in-filling service, (4) quiet time, (5) praise and worship, (6) case study, (7) nature walk, and (8) campfire. In addition, three other activities were included: exercise, time alone with God, and health education. The retreatants were divided into four groups. Each group had a resource person and a retreatant as their leaders.



## Objectives

Bethesda Youth Retreat objectives were formulated keeping in mind the target group, as well as the purpose of the retreat. The objectives were as follows:

1. To give the youth an opportunity to separate from the city and its demanding routine
2. To allow the youth to learn from God's textbook, His creation.
3. To guide them to experience God and interact with Him
4. To enable them to deal with their past, and to accept themselves
5. To educate the youth about the body, the mind, the soul, and the relationship between them
6. To help the youth to understand and accept God's plan and purpose
7. To empower the youth with God's Word and the Holy Spirit.

## Advertisement

Two months before the date, the first advertisement regarding the retreat was sent out to the three English churches in Bangalore and Hosur. The second advertisement was sent a month later. A copy of the flier appears in appendix B.

### Location

Yercaud, which literally means the "climbing forest," is a majestic hill station, fifty kilometers from the crowded township of Salem. Nearly 3,500 meters above sea level, its dense forest preserves wildlife. Apart from wildlife and a silver lake, Yercaud is known for its hair-pin bends. The steep roads, the deep valleys, and the peak touching the sky make Yercaud unique. Though not a virgin territory, Yercaud is not a crowded hill station.

### Retreat

In the summer of 2000, between May 11-14, this beautiful hill station attracted twenty-three retreatants and four resource personnel for a three-day "Bethesda Youth Retreat." This youth retreat was meant to be a "pool of mercy," a pool where God could display His grace and glory (John 5:1-9).

### Facilities

#### Lodging

Bethesda Youth Retreat was held in Ram's Bungalow, Yercaud, a Roman Catholic retreat center. This bungalow has two dormitories, each with fifteen beds, a prayer room, a worship hall, and two big bedrooms for family accommodation. In addition to the bungalow, there is a well-equipped kitchen, an open air chapel, six single rooms, and a

caretaker's house. This five-acre retreat center is well maintained. Tall trees, colorful flower beds, a playground, and an abundance of spring water make this place special and convenient. This campus is surrounded by rocks on one side and a stream within a kilometer on the other. Towards the north, less than 40 meters, is a point called the Jewel Box, from which at night one can see the twinkling township of Salem.

#### Food

At the retreat center, a team of three cooks served delicious and well-balanced vegetarian meals on time. Fruits and green salads were available every day. "The food was good, but it lacked variety," said Anita, a college student.

#### Registration

The registration fee for the three-day retreat was Rs.200. The local church was encouraged to extend financial assistance to the retreatants. At the time of registration, an identity card, a pen, a notepad, and a program sheet were given to each. In all, fifteen boys and eight girls registered for the retreat.

## Program

The program was planned for a three-day retreat. Some of the considerations in making the program were that the schedule not be tight; time should be provided for reflection and discussion, and the program should care for the various needs of the retreatants.

From six in the morning to ten at night, the retreatants were occupied in various activities. Attendance for each activity was expected, though not recorded.

Daily Schedule

May 11, 2000

* Registration	4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
* Introductory Session	6:15 - 7:00
* Supper	7:00 - 8:00
* Praise and Worship	8:15 - 8:40
* Devotion	8:40 - 9:20
* Season of Prayer	9:20 - 9:30
* Good Night	10:00 p.m.

May 12, 2000

* Rising Bell	6:00 a.m.
* Exercise	6:15 - 6:45
* Quiet Time--Our Soul Temple	7:10 - 8:10
* Breakfast	8:15 - 9:00
* Case Study--David the Shepherd King	9:15 - 10:15
* Alone with God--First Encounter	10:30 - 11:30
* Inner Healing--Past Hurts	11:45 - 12:45 p.m.
* Lunch	1:00 - 2:00
* Nature Walk	2:00 - 4:00
* Health Education--Nutrition	4:15 - 5:15
* Counseling	5:30 - 6:30
* Supper	7:00 - 8:00
* Campfire	8:15 - 9:45
Missionary Model--William Carey	
* Good Night	10:00 p.m.

May 13, 2000

* Rising Bell	6:00 a.m.
* Exercise	6:15 - 6:45
* Quiet Time--Cleansing the Soul Temple	7:10 - 8:10
* Breakfast	8:15 - 9:00
* Case Study--Esther: Such a Time as This	9:15 - 10:15
* Alone with God--Conversion Experience	10:30 - 11:30
* Inner Healing--Guilt & Forgiveness	11:45 - 12:45
* Lunch	1:00 - 2:00
* Nature Walk	2:00 - 4:00
* Health Education--Water	4:15 - 5:15
* Counseling	5:30 - 6:30
* Supper	7:00 - 8:00
* Campfire	8:15 - 9:45
Missionary Model--Amy Carmichael	
* Good Night	10:00 p.m.

May 14, 2000

* Rising Bell	6:00 a.m.
* Exercise	6:15 - 6:45
* Quiet Time--Equipping the Temple	7:10 - 8:10
* Breakfast	8:15 - 9:00
* Case Study--Saul to Paul	9:15 - 10:15
* Alone with God--Call to Service	10:30 - 11:30
* Inner Healing--Rejection & Self-Esteem	11:45 - 12:45 p.m.
* Lunch	1:00 - 2:00
* Missionary Model--James O Frazer	2:00 - 3:00
* Counseling	3:15 - 4:15
* Consecration and In-Filling Service	4:30 - 6:30
* Break Camp	

### Activities

Details regarding most of the retreat activities are furnished. This provides the reader with a clear understanding of what happened.

### Introductory session

At the introductory session the retreatants were extended a warm welcome, and the retreat's objectives and

code of conduct were stated. Later, the retreatants were asked to introduce themselves. On a sheet of paper, they were asked to answer two questions: Why are you attending the retreat? How can you contribute to make the retreat a success? Each retreatant chose a prayer partner who was also to be a peer counselor. The two were encouraged to spend as much time as possible with each other.

#### Quiet time

Each morning, an hour was spent in quiet time. The retreatants assembled in the chapel, the first twenty minutes were occupied in praise and worship, followed by personal reflective Bible study for thirty minutes. Prayer bands occupied the last ten minutes. The passages chosen for study were: 1 Cor 6:15-20; Mark 11:15-17; and Exod 25:8-10, 30, 31.<sup>1</sup> In the study, the retreatants were guided by a question and answer sheet. The resource personnel were available to assist the retreatants in their study.

#### Case study

Three biblical characters were chosen as case studies. First the story was narrated, then the strengths and weaknesses of the character were analyzed. Later, principles were drawn and applied to the present situation.

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<sup>1</sup>Quiet Time material appears in appendix C.

The presentation was given forty minutes; these were followed by group discussion.

#### Alone with God

An hour was allotted for this session. The retreatants spent the hour alone with God, recording in their journals recollections and inspirations regarding their first encounter with God, conversion experience, and their calling to service. This portion of the journal was evaluated by the resource personnel.

#### Inner healing

Inner healing is relatively new to Indian Adventists. Hence, time was taken to establish its need. The session was divided into three parts: forty minutes of presentation, fifteen minutes of introspection, and five minutes in guided prayer. The topics chosen were: past hurts, guilt and forgiveness, and rejection and self-esteem.

#### Health education

The morning exercise and health education were introduced, keeping in mind the relationship between body, mind, and soul. Wherever applicable, visual aids and demonstration were used. For example, hydrotherapy as a cure for common health problems was demonstrated. Goodness of nutrition and water were presented.

### Counseling

The retreatants were encouraged to meet with the resource personnel for counsel and prayer during any free time. In addition, three hours were scheduled for counseling. Two types of counseling were attempted: peer counseling, where the retreatants counseled and prayed for each other; and professional counseling.

### Campfire

Two campfires, one and a half hours each, were scheduled for the retreat. Praise and worship occupied the first thirty minutes, followed by an hour for the "Missionary Model" session. The last fifteen minutes were spent in prayer.

In the "Missionary Model" presentation, the life and work of William Carey and Amy Carmichael were studied. The retreatants were to answer questions such as: Who can be a missionary? What is a mission field? and, What do you want to do for the Lord in the next two years? For further training in mission, Jeeva Jyothi Medical Missionary School was recommended.

### Consecration service

On the last day, before breaking camp, two hours were scheduled for a consecration service. A testimony service occupied the first forty-five minutes. An hour was set



apart for the "In-filling Service," which was followed by commitment and a prayer of dedication. The "In-filling Service" focused on how to receive and use the fruits and gifts of the Spirit.

Other features of this retreat were five minutes of singing before each session, the sharing of testimonies and experiences by the resource personnel, and the meeting of the intercessory prayer team one half hour before exercise and after campfire. The resource personnel as well as interested retreatants joined in the intercessory prayer.

#### Resource Personnel

Four resource personnel contributed to the success of the retreat. Each is experienced in working with youth.

Dr. Shanmuganathan is a physics professor in a reputed college in Madurai, Tamil Nadu. He leads a weekly Bible study group at the college. An active layman, his burden for mission is contagious, and his experiments in discovering God are powerful. He led out in the "Alone with God" sessions, and made presentations in "Missionary Models."

Pastor Joel Osborne pastors a Tamil church in the northern part of Tamil Nadu. Close to 30 percent of his congregation are college students. Though he was in charge of "Case Study," "Consecration Service," and "Seasons of

Prayer," he was also involved in all the other activities. As a pastor of the retreat, Joel's ministry in prayer and exposition of God's word were a blessing.

Vinitha Osborne, Joel's wife, is a nurse. Though she did not interact much with the youth, her presentation on "Health Education" was excellent. She was the retreat nurse and directed the morning exercise. In addition, Joel and Vinitha served as the parents of the retreat.

Maywald Jesudass, the pastor of the Hosur English Church, was the director of the retreat. He was in charge of the sessions on "Inner Healing," and assisted in "Quiet Time."

#### Evaluation

Under this section, retreat discipline, survey, and three testimonies are recorded.

#### Discipline

At the retreat a high level of discipline was expected and maintained. The cooperation of the retreatants and the support of the resource personnel contributed to this. The advertisement and the announcements in the churches had highlighted the purpose of the retreat; hence, the retreat attracted a mature group. To a large extent the schedule was followed. Reverence in worship and the power of silence

were taught as major contributing factors in spiritual formation.

### Testimonies

During the testimony service, all were encouraged to share experiences and the guidance of the Lord, particularly during the retreat. Many testified that they had encountered the Lord in a special and personal way. Some shed tears of joy as they spoke about the healing and peace they had received. The following are some of the testimonies:

Sundaram testified that the study of the Bible characters (case study) helped him find purpose in life. Twenty-four years old, Sundaram is unsure about his career. Nevertheless he said, "I am assured that my existence has meaning. I'm glad that I have a part to play in building God's kingdom."

"I came here for a change," said Janet. Quiet and unassuming, Janet's posture projected the heavy load she was carrying. Regarding her burden of rejection she had this to say, "For no particular reason, I felt rejected. I thank God for Jesus who accepts me as I am."

A cheerful, strong, and friendly young man, Immanuel was the hero of the retreat. In the "Introductory Session," he asked for prayers on his behalf, to overcome his

struggles with bad habits. He testified, "The counseling sessions were a blessing to me. We identified some of the root causes of my problems."

### Survey

Although Bethesda Youth retreat was a fulfillment of my dreams, it is also a requirement of this study. Hence, the retreat was evaluated with the help of a questionnaire<sup>1</sup> which was self-made. The reasons for such an evaluation are: to analyze if the retreat has met its objectives, and to provide the retreatants with an opportunity of expression. It also enabled the retreatants to confirm their spiritual experience, though briefly, in a written form. In any case, evaluation will modify the program of the retreat, making it more effective.

The retreatants were asked to respond to the questionnaire after the consecration service. This questionnaire consisted of seven questions and attempted to find the retreatants' opinions in the following areas: difference in method (between camp and retreat), effectiveness of the program, and the end results (experience of the retreatants). All the retreatants returned the questionnaire. Some questionnaires had a few blanks.

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<sup>1</sup>This questionnaire appears in appendix C.

The following are the findings of the questionnaire:

1. Difference in method; Camp versus retreat:
  - a. 17 (74 percent) retreatants stated that there were substantial differences
  - b. 4 (17 percent) retreatants said that the differences were not remarkable
  - c. 2 (9 percent) retreatants were not sure.
2. Effectiveness of the program:
  - a. 19 (82 percent) retreatants identified the programs that were useful
  - b. 4 (17 percent) did not complete that part of the questionnaire.
3. End results in terms of spiritual growth:
  - a. 22 (95 percent) retreatants confessed that the retreat had enhanced their spiritual growth
  - b. 1 (5 percent) retreatant was unsure.

Apart from these findings, some of the valuable suggestions were: "three days are too short a time," "the schedule was too tight," "should include games and social campfires," and "plan retreats more often." Some invited the resource personnel to their local churches to organize youth prayer fellowships. Others assured that they will participate in such retreats in the future.

Analyzing these responses, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions: retreats positively affect spiritual growth, yearly retreats help in spiritual renewal, different retreat programs meet various spiritual needs, and plans should be made for a follow-up program.

## CHAPTER 7

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This dissertation studied a possible alternative to youth camps. Although youth camps in Adventist India are a yearly routine, the camps have failed to provide adequate spiritual nurture to the youth. In search of purpose and godliness, Adventist youth in India are leaving the church and are attracted by charismatic churches. The spiritual longing of Adventists between 16 and 25 years of age can be satisfied through retreats.

Retreats are practiced by major religions and cultures for monastic and tribal initiations, spiritual renewal, and to receive revelatory dreams. In the tribal's retreat, youth leave behind adolescence and emerge as adults. Religious groups prescribe retreats for spiritual renewal and growth.

In Christianity retreats are based on biblical models. In the Old and the New Testaments, solitary and group retreats were practiced. While the Roman Catholic Church came to the point of requiring retreats from religious

orders, the Protestants experimented with retreats in groups. During the early part of the nineteenth century, camp meetings attracted large crowds, providing spiritual nurture and contributing to great revivals in the United States.

The newly born Adventist Church, seeing the results, adopted camp meetings for nurture and evangelistic purposes. Soon camp meetings became part of the Adventist heritage. Today, in the United States, camp meetings are organized for ethnic and language groups. Specialty-oriented camp meetings are also on the rise. In Adventist India, camp meetings are not prominent. They are only prevalent in some parts of northeast India. In the north, central, and south India, African students conduct camp meetings.

From the counsels of Ellen White regarding various aspects of camp meetings grew the idea of youth camps. Camps organized by the Adventist Youth Society and the Pathfinders are popular around the world, particularly in India.

To help build an Adventist Indian Youth retreat model, three Adventist youth camps were studied: a nursing college camp, a church youth camp, and a higher secondary school camp. The programs in these camps were well planned, but were activity oriented, and the spiritual dimension was limited to morning and evening devotions. Thus, the



testimonies of the campers failed to reflect spiritual growth.

The next stage of the study took the researcher to three interdenominational retreats: Blessing Youth Mission, Divine Retreat Center, and Inter-Collegiate Evangelical Youth Camp. These youth retreats were well planned, and were focused on mission and spiritual growth. The resource personnel were well equipped and provided spiritual leadership. Praise and worship, prayer, study of God's Word, and Christian counseling led many to conversion.

Based on the theoretical and practical study on retreats, I developed a program for Adventist youth retreats. In the summer of 2000, this program was implemented at Yercaud. Twenty-three youth participated. The purpose of the retreat was spiritual awareness and growth. Hence, the program included praise and worship, intercessory prayer time, quiet time, inner healing, and alone-with-God time. The retreatants and the resource personnel experienced God personally, and the difference between a camp and a retreat was clear.

### Conclusions

At the end of the study, I feel like a child, holding tight to a handful of sand, wanting some day to own the beach. This study, I hope, is only the beginning and it has

paved the way for explorers to discover deeper insights and better programs in the line of retreats.

In this study I have learned much. Youth are in search of peace, purpose, and power. The church is responsible for providing them with opportunities to discover self and God. If a program which was meant for this purpose bears no fruit, it should either be reworked or an alternate be found. I propose youth retreats instead of youth camps.

Retreats will fill the spiritual longing of the youth and lead them to a conversion experience. This in turn will enable them to be committed to Christ and the church. I believe that retreats will also empower youth to attempt great things for God.

In time, this model will go through modification to better suit the retreatants. Other retreat models will be formulated with different goals. But the fact will remain, time and money spent on retreats will bring eternal returns.

### Recommendations

#### Recommendations for Educational Institutions

1. Spiritual retreats should become part of the Spicer Memorial College experience. Consideration should be given to replacing the general and leadership camps with retreats that would allow for spiritual growth. Not only should

students participate in retreats with their professors, they should learn to organize and direct youth retreats.

2. Seventh-day Adventist schools and colleges should explore using carefully planned and implemented retreats to develop student spirituality. Since retreats of small groups are more effective, different age groups or classes should have their own retreats. Costs for these retreats could be covered by collecting a monthly fee along with the regular school fees.

#### Recommendations for Church Pastors

1. Each pastor should plan for a yearly solitude retreat for a week or more. Monthly retreats for a day or one half of a day will also bring renewal.

2. Retreats for adults and youth should be planned each year. Experts in retreats and spiritual stalwarts should be invited as resource personnel. These retreats could include Christians and non-Christians from the community. Expenses for these retreats should come, at least in part, from the church budget. Follow-up work should take place after the retreat to safeguard spiritual growth.

## Recommendations to the Local Sections

1. Retreats for pastors, administrators, teachers, and medical professionals can be organized each year to benefit these workers. To make this possible, church administration would help prepare retreat leaders and devotional materials to be used in the retreats.

2. Retreats for Adventist students in non-Adventist colleges and universities should be especially encouraged.

## Recommendation for Further Study

Further study would be useful and interesting in formulating retreat programs. Retreat programs can be made for medical professionals, teachers, administrators, pastors, families, singles, physically handicapped, and rebellious youth.

APPENDIX A  
PROGRAM SHEETS

AIAASA CENTRAL OFFICE

[190]

C/O Richard Miencha  
 426 Cantonment  
 Aurangabad 431002  
 India  
 Date : 5-05-2000

Dear Walter News Media

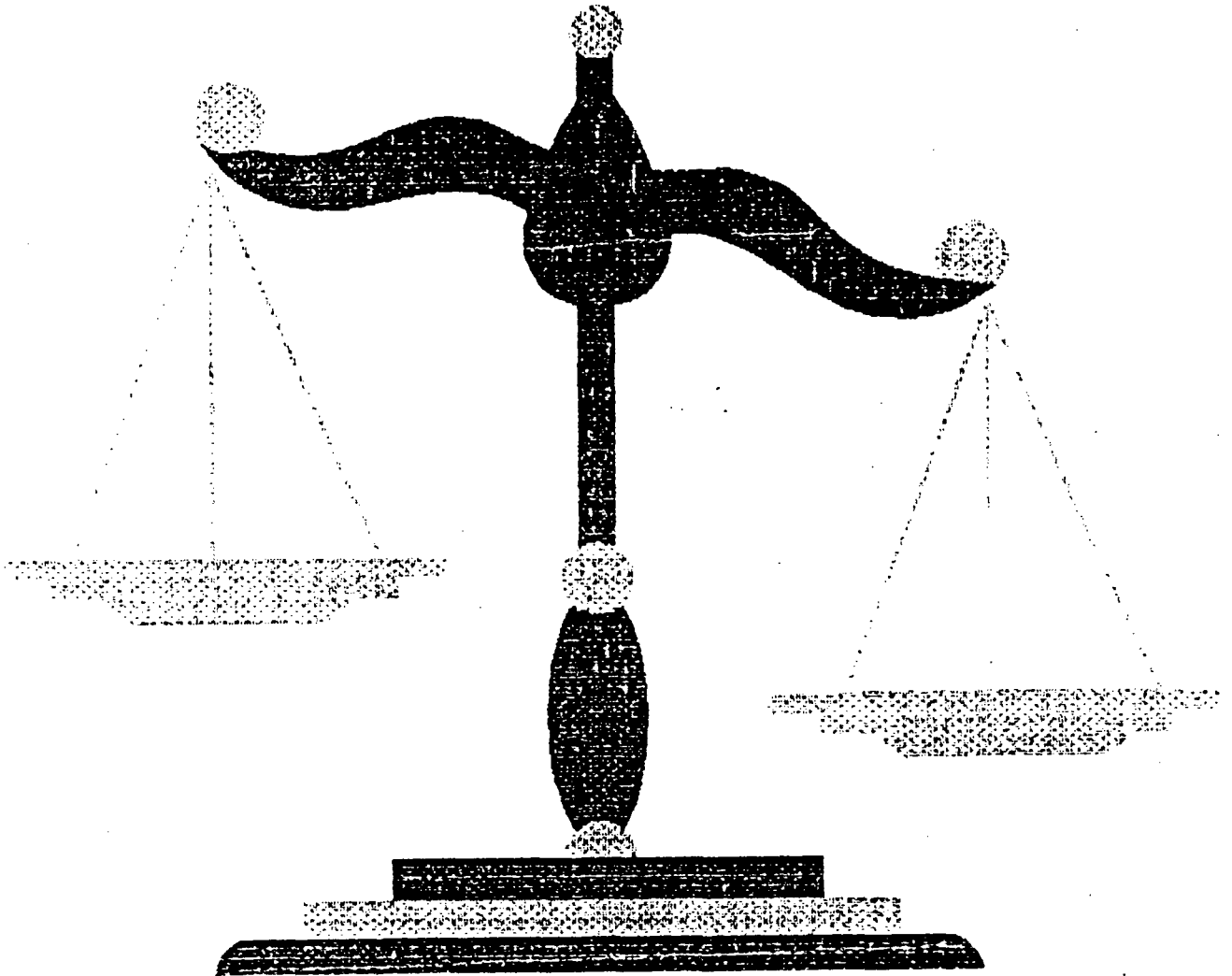
I greet you in the name of our risen saviour Jesus Christ. Below is a copy of the camp meeting programme.

	5:30 AM	6:30AM	7:00AM	8:20AM	9:10AM	10:00AM
DAY	6:30 AM	7:00AM	8:00AM	9:00AM	9:45AM	10:40AM
MON	----- ARRIVAL -----					
TUE	Preparation	Devotion (Nemwel)	Breakfast	Prayer (Moses)	Prophecy (Babu)	Health (Prassana)
WED	---do---	Sheila	---do---	Health (Prassana)	Spr.Gifts (Okoth)	Prophecy (Babu)
THU	---do---	Leakey	---do---	Spr.Gifts (Okoth)	Prayer (Moses)	Sabbath (Paul)
FRI	---do---	Jeremy	---do---	Sabbath (Paul)	Spr.Gifts (Okoth)	Prayer (Moses)
SAT	---do---	Breakfast	---	---Sabbath School---	---	Divine Service
SUN	---do---	do	---	---	PICNIC	---

	11:00AM	12:30PM	3:30PM	7:30PM	8:30PM
DAY	12:00PM	13:15PM	4:15PM	8:30PM	9:15PM
MON	---ARRIVAL---	---	Open.Cer.	Devotion	---
TUE	Divine Ser	Marriage (Omolo)	Spr.Gifts (Okoth)	Sabbath (Paul)	Guest Speaker
WED	---do---	Prayer (Moses)	Marriage (Omolo)	Sabbath (Paul)	Guest Speaker
THU	---do---	Marriage (Omolo)	Health (Prassana)	Prophecy (Babu)	Guest Speaker
FRI	---do---	Sabbath Preparation	---	Vespers (Khandagle)	---
SAT	---do---	Music	Que.& Ans. Time	Closing Ceremony	---
SUN	-----PICNIC-----				DEPARTURE-----

Miencha  
 Sec. Camp Org Committee  
 email camp-org@usa.net

# THE COST OF CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT



BIBLE CAMP  
SCHOOL OF NURSING, OTTAWA, ONTARIO  
NOV 12 - 15 1998  
FERN WALLS  
KOD-49K-71-12

BIBLE CAMP PROGRAMME  
"The Cost of Christian Commitment"

12TH NOVEMBER 1998: THURSDAY

8:00 p.m.	Arrival at Kodi
8:30 p.m.	Dinner
9:00 p.m.	Worship
10:00 p.m.	Good Night

13TH NOVEMBER 1998: FRIDAY

6:00 a.m.	Good Morning
6:30 a.m.	Nature Walk
7:00 a.m.	Devotion
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m.	Session I
9:45 a.m.	Relax
10:00 a.m.	Bible Games
10:30 a.m.	Session II
11:45 a.m.	Bird Watch
12:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Snooze
2:00 p.m.	Session III
3:30 p.m.	Treasure Hunt
4:30 p.m.	Hot drink
5:00 p.m.	Preparation for Sabbath
6:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:00 p.m.	Song Service
7:15 p.m.	Vespers (students)
8:30 p.m.	Counseling/Retrospection
9:00 p.m.	Moonlight Walk (Kokers
walk)	
10:00 p.m.	Lights out
ZZzzz...ZZzzz...	



## 14TH NOVEMBER 1998: SATURDAY

6:00 a.m.	Reveille & Personal
mediation	
6:30 a.m.	Nature Talk
7:00 a.m.	Devotion
8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00 a.m.	Bryans Park (S. School &
Lesson)	
11:00 a.m.	Divine Hour
12:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Siesta
2:00 p.m.	Session IV
3:00 p.m.	Pillar Rock (Hike)
5:00 p.m.	Session V (AY Meeting)
6:00 p.m.	Back to Square I
7:00 p.m.	Children's Day (Dinner)
8:00 p.m.	Retrospection/Counseling
8:30 p.m.	Campfire
10:00 p.m.	Goodnight (Wild Dreams)

## 15TH NOVEMBER 1998: SUNDAY

6:00 a.m.	Rise and Shine
7:00 a.m.	Devotion
8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30 a.m.	Session VI
9:45 a.m.	Packing
10:00 a.m.	Lunch Pack
11:00 a.m.	Goodbye, Kodi, Goodbye!!!

## DEDICATION

I humbly dedicate this work to the Adventist youth in India. These youth are the future pillars and present active visionaries of the church. I earnestly pray that each youth will find peace, purpose, and power through retreats.

# Welcome



M'kadai Church Camp  
Koney Falls.

## Theme Song

Jesus shine on me  
everywhere I go;  
when I follow fast,  
and when I listen  
slow ....

On bright  
mountains high, in  
dark valleys low.  
Jesus shine on me  
everywhere I go.



**On Eagle's Wings**  
**Kalugin setaikalil**

**Youth Cum Church**  
**Camp'99**

16<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> May

S.D.A CHURCH MOOLAKADAI, CHENNAI

But they that wait upon the Lord shall  
renew their strength; they shall mount up  
with wings as eagles.

Isaiah 40:31

SUNDAY 16<sup>th</sup> May

1:00 P.M - Boarding  
 5:00 -6:45 P.M - Wash  
 6:45 - 7:15 P.M - Song Service  
 7:15 - 8:00 P.M - Devotion  
 8:00 - 8:30 P.M - Supper & Relax  
 8:30 - 10:00 P.M - Camp Fire  
 10:00 P.M - Good Night

MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> May

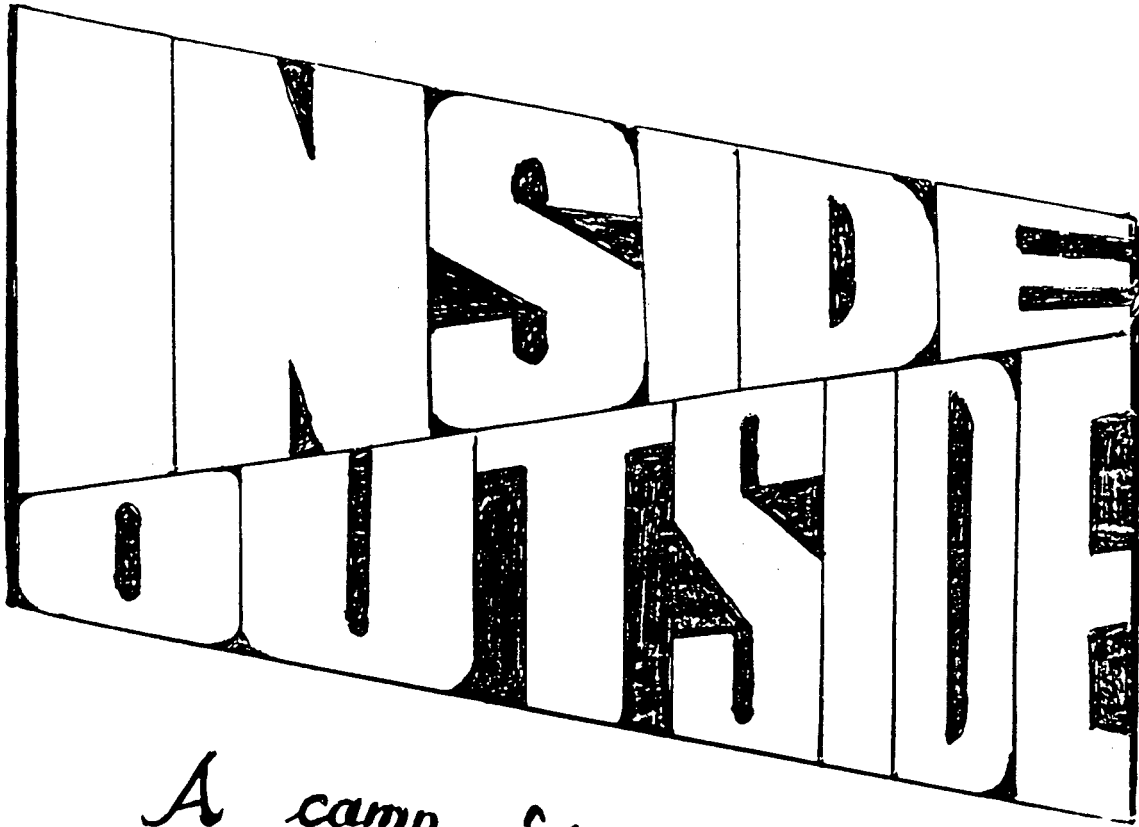
Good Morning : 5:00 A.M  
 Roll call : 6:00 A.M  
 Devotion : 6:15 - 7:00 A.M  
 Breakfast : 7:00 -8:00 A.M  
 Morning Duties:8:00- 9:00 A.M  
 Presentation I : 9:00- 10:30 A.M  
 Olympic Games:10:30-12:00P.M  
 Meals&Relaxation:12:00-2:00P.M  
 Presentation II : 2:00 -3:30 P.M  
 Hiking : 3:30-5:00P.M  
 Camp Duties :5:00 -6:00 P.M  
 Attendance :6:00 - 6:15 P.M  
 Worship : 6:15 - 6:45 P.M  
 Supper : 7:00 - 8:00 P.M  
 Camp Fire : 8:00 - 10:00 P.M  
 10:00 P.M Good Night

TUESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> May

Good Morning : 5:00 A.M  
 Roll call : 6:00 A.M  
 ✓Devotion : 6:15 - 7:00 A.M  
 ✓Breakfast :7:00 -8:00 A.M  
 Morning Duties :8:00- 9:00 A.M  
 ✓Presentation III : 9:00- 10:30 A.M  
 ✓Olympic Games :10:30-12:00P.M  
 Meals&Relaxation:12:00-2:00P.M  
 ✓Presentation IV : 2:00 -3:30 P.M  
 ✓Treasure Hunt: 3:30-5:00P.M  
 Camp Duties :5:00 -6:00 P.M  
 Attendance :6:00 - 6:15 P.M  
 ✓Worship : 6:15 - 6:45 P.M  
 \*Supper : 7:00 - 8:00 P.M  
 ✓Camp Fire : 8:00 - 10:00 P.M  
 10:00 P.M Good Night

W'DAY 19<sup>th</sup> May

Good Morning : 5:00 A.M  
 Roll call : 6:00 A.M  
 Devotion : 6:15 - 7:00 A.M  
 Breakfast :7:00 -8:00 A.M  
 Morning Duties :8:00- 9:00 A.M  
 Presentation III : 9:00- 10:30 A.M  
 Olympic Games :10:30-12:00P.M  
 Lunch 12:00-2:00P.M  
 GOOD BYE.



A camp for  
Better Christian living

Name - MAYWALD JESODASS

Class - PCIAA

college - \_\_\_\_\_

26<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> May 99'

VISTAR Doddagubbi Bangalore-562149.

Bangalore Inter Collegiate Evangelical Union.

EU PROGRAM SHEET  
INSIDE-OUTSIDE

TIME	Day 1 May 26	Day 2 May 27	Day 3 May 28	Day 4 May 29	Day 5 May 30
7.45-8:15		B R E A K F A S T			
8:15-9:00		W O R S H I P			
9:00-10:00		Inside-Out 1 (ST)	Inside-Out2 (ST)	Inside-Out 3 (ST)	Voice of the Times (INC)
10:00-10:30			B R E A K		
10:30-12:00		Missions (WJ)	Finding God's Will (JI)	PBS Workshop (JI)	EU & You (PP)
12:00-1:00		Q U I Z	&	Q U E S T I O N	T I M E
1:00-3:00		L U N C H		T I M E	
3:00-4:15		Entertainment & the Christian (JI)	Sex, Love & Marriage (JI)	Lifestyle Evangelism (PP)	Take Off
4:15-6:00		T E A	A N D	G A M E S	
6:00-6:15			W A S H	U P	
6:15-7:30	Key Note (VA)	Close Encounters (EA)	Careless Whispers (ICN)	Strength Not Her Own (ICN)	

7:30-8:15

8:15-9:15

Video:  
Abraham

Talent Hour

9:15-9:30

R O

---

(ST) Som Thomas, (VA) Vijay Alexander,  
(EA) Ellen Alexander, (JI) Jaco Isaac,

D I N N E R

Prayer Time

Campfire

O M P R A Y E R S

---

(ICN) Idicheria Ninan, (WJ) Wayne Joseph,  
(PP) Peter Pothan

APPENDIX B

BROCHURES



EXPLAINING CRUCIFIXION



CONFRONTING SORCERERS



***Blessing  
Youth  
Mission***

*Reviving  
the  
Christians...*



MINISTERING TO THE SICK



REACHING THE TRIBALS

Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya and Telegu. Books, tracts and cassettes are also produced in these languages.

### ORGANISATION

Orderliness and discipline are emphasized, but the organisational structure of the Mission is kept simple. The Mission is registered with the government as a religious and charitable society. A Board of Directors, in which no paid staff of the Mission is a member, holds the legal ownership of the Mission. Brother A. Lionel is the present Chairman. The ministerial matters are handled by Central, State, Regional and Area Coordinators. The head office is in Vellore, Tamilnadu. Most of the top leaders have moved out to be stationed in various parts of the country.

The Mission maintains an interdenominational stand. It considers itself as a supplement to the local church and not a substitute.

### OFFERINGS

The Mission accepts voluntary contributions from Christians of any nationality, but over 80% of the support comes from Indians. We invite your partnership through your prayers, participation and contributions.

**BLESSING YOUTH MISSION**  
**Post Bag 609**  
**Church Colony**  
**Vellore 632 006, India**  
**(Telephone : 0416-42943, 42828)**

### HOW YOU CAN INVOLVE IN THE MINISTRY OF BLESSING YOUTH MISSION

(Please tick ✓ as desired.)

- I desire to PRAY regularly for the missionary work of BYM.

Please send me the BLESSING Magazine in the..... language.

✧ Annual Subscription

Rs. 30/- Inland / \$ 10 (Overseas)

Life Subscription

(Magazine & Books)

Rs. 300/- Inland / \$ 100 (Overseas)

- I want to CONTRIBUTE regularly for the needs of the Mission.

(Monthly/Quarterly/Half-yearly/Annually)

Strike what is not applicable.

☆ Missionary Support : Rs/ .....

☆ Field Expenses : Rs/ .....

☆ Youth Programmes : Rs/ .....

☆ Relief Work : Rs/ .....

☆ Literature Ministry : Rs/ .....

- I enclose herewith Rs/ .....  
 to be used where needed.

Name : .....  
 (Mr/Mrs/Miss)

Address .....

Please tear this portion and send it to BYM.

Handwritten notes:  
 . K. S. ... 1960  
 ...  
 ... 16-25

# Blessing Youth Mission

## ORIGIN

God poured out a spirit of intercession on a group of college students in South India in the 1960s. After about 7 years of almost daily gathering for prayer, nearly thirty of these young men under the leadership of a young Engineering graduate, R. Stanley, came together in Karaikudi in October 1970 for three days to wait on the Lord in fasting prayer. The Lord visited them with a prophetic message from Ezekiel 34:26 and Acts 1:8. An outpouring of the Spirit resulting in an ingathering of souls was the promise. To realize this vision was born the Blessing Youth Mission (BYM) in 1971.

## OBJECTIVES

- Churches must be revived.
- Believers must grow.
- The Bible must be given its due place.
- The gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit must be restored.
- Youth must be reached and challenged.
- Believers should unite forgetting their differences.
- Every Christian must become a personal soulwinner.
- People of God should involve actively in neighbourhood evangelism.

- All churches and fellowships must become missionary-minded.
- The poor must be helped.
- India must be totally evangelized in this generation.

## OPERATION

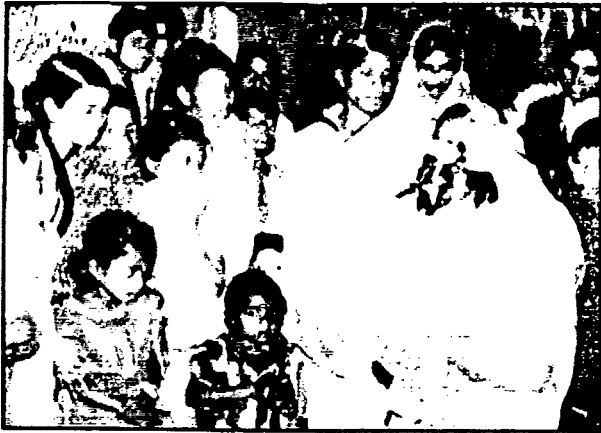
Revival camps are conducted for Christians to experience renewal and restoration. Bible study programmes and training camps are organised for the growth and maturity of believers. We accept invitations from churches and organisations to minister to their members. We help to form outreach teams for visitation evangelism.

Evangelistic rallies are conducted for students, and the respondents are followed up by discipleship training programmes. Campus cells are organized for Bible study and prayer. Student teams are sent to unevangelized fields to catch a missionary vision.

As on date (1998), about 250 fulltime workers are stationed in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu and Uttar Pradesh. Many of them are involved in cross-cultural missionary evangelism leading to church planting, and others in revival ministries. Medical, literacy and relief works are incorporated appropriately.

The Mission publishes its message and ministerial news in *BLESSING* magazine, monthly in English and Tamil, bimonthly in Assamese, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada,

EVANGELISING RURAL WOMEN



FEEDING THE POOR



*Reaching  
the  
Non-Christians*



CHALLENGING THE STUDENTS



RAISING NEW CONGREGATIONS

ALL INDIA AFRICAN ADVENTIST STUDENTS'  
ASSOCIATION -CENTRAL OFFICE  
(Seventh-day Adventist)  
(AIAASA Constitution)

Preface AIAASA is an Association formed under the SDA church. This historical Association was born on 24-10-1992 at Agra Camp. The stations represented included Baroda, Aurangabad, Indore, Yamuna Nagar, Udaipur, Meerut, and Agra the hosts.

The initiation of AIAASA was through Pastor Joel Okindo.

The first office bearers were as follows: Late Shadrack Nyalgoti (Chairman), Jephtha Mayatho (Secretary), Jactone Osodo (Treasurer, Pishon Nyabute and Gladys Osoro represented brothers and sisters respectively. Rose Maseno and Monda were committee members. Pastor Jenson was chosen as the Patron of the Association. He is still the Patron of the Association.

S.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION/AIMS:

The objectives of the Association are as given here below:

- i. To reach the unreached (Matt 28:19-20)
- ii. To cater for spiritual growth and fellowship
- iii. Help our brothers and sisters who are coming newly to India. Not to be misdirected either in their spiritual stand or in their way of living.

S.2 GUIDELINES FOR GOVERNANCE:

(A) Relationships

- i. In stations: To collaborate with the church and work as a department.
- ii. Where there is no church: The Leaders in such a place should make arrangements for fellowship by coming with one and carry out church activities.

(B) Membership: The zealous solemn obligation of the Association (AIAASA) membership should be impressed on everyone who applies for admittance to the Association.

- i. SDAs
  - ii. Non SDAs
- The rules and regulations of the Association binds both the cases.

S.3 REGISTRATION AND SUBSCRIPTION

- (a) Registration: AIAASA members in each station are considered registered after paying Rs.10/- (per person). The same is sent to central office.

NOTE: Once a person has been registered he need not be registered. This applies especially to transferees. His name (Registration number) is to be intimated to the central office.

- (b) Subscription: AIAASA members are required to pay their annual subscription fee of Rs.100/- maximum. 60% to remain in the station to meet branch expenses, e.g. organizing revival meetings, seminars, etc., at their convenient time. 40% to be sent to central to be used for annual central seminars and camp meetings.

NOTE: Fee for registration and the annual subscription is subject to change from one year to another depending on the needs of the time. Likewise the central office should aid any station(s) in case of need.

# Kerygma

SALT OF THE NEW GENERATION

[206]

584/C, 6th 'G' Cross, 6th Block, Koramangala, Bangalore - 560 095. INDIA

☎ +91 - 80 - 553 4749. Fax : +91 - 80 - 553 6315 (Attn : Kerygma)

E-mail : kerygma\_@rocketmail.com

## SYMBIOSIS COMMUNICATIONS

The Media and  
Communications  
Network of  
Kerygma

## CARE

Creative  
Arts for  
Revival and  
Evangelism

## ADAPT

The Open Home  
Ministry of  
Kerygma

TO PERMEATE THE URBAN  
SOCIETY WITH THE GOSPEL OF  
CHRIST, USING THE MEDIA &  
CREATIVE ARTS, AND TO  
PROVIDE AN ENVIRONMENT  
FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH &  
PERSONAL VISION.

### WE BELIEVE

We believe in God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. We believe in the inspiration and the infallibility of the Word of God. We believe in the universal sinfulness of man, and salvation through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. We believe in the Holy Spirit, His power and gifts to the body of Christ, the universal church for life and service. We believe in the second coming of Christ and His final judgement.

### IT BEGINS HERE ...

Kerygma is a ministry born out of a vision to communicate God's love to today's urban populace, particularly the youth, who are perishing without Christ. God's call is upon a new breed of believers (1Pet 2:9) to proclaim the unchanging Gospel to a changing world.

God desires his people to reach out in freshness and in love, to a generation that demands the same. Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth" (Matt 5:13). In response to this is Kerygma's radical commitment to be the difference to a generation void of flavour.

## URBAN MINISTRY...

*Is there  
a  
real need?*

*1. Number of suicides are  
approximately 25,000 every  
5 yrs. and growing.*

T  
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S

- EVANGELISM** To present the Gospel of Christ effectively using means like the media and creative arts.
- DISCIPLESHIP** To disciple new believers by providing adequate resources in an environment suitable for spiritual growth.
- REHABILITATION** To meet the needs of the emotionally orphaned and to rehabilitate them through counselling and fellowship.
- MISSIONS** To nurture and to motivate believers to respond to God's calling to missions.

[207]

2. Depression & stress related illnesses are prevalent among even the 7-8 yr. olds in the city.

3. Prostitution is growing at an alarming rate among college teenagers.

The essence of the Great Commission is the need to permeate society and draw them to the green pastures of abundant life. Directed towards this effort Kerygma has chosen the following strategies.

=====**SYMBIOSIS COMMUNICATIONS** *The Media and Communications Network of Kerygma*=====

In keeping with the changing media scenario, Symbiosis Communications seeks to exploit the latest multimedia techniques to communicate the Gospel. Our Web page, hosted at Geocities will now help us reach you with information regarding our ministry's development and growth. You can reach us through E-mail with your feedback and support.

Visit Our Website: [www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/4035](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/4035)  
E.mail: [kerygma\\_@rocketmail.com](mailto:kerygma_@rocketmail.com)

Our expansion programme includes evangelism through the television, audio and video cassette chat lines over the net and other communication channels

=====**CARE** *Creative Arts for Revival & Evangelism. A division of Kerygma*=====

The highly interactive arm of Kerygma which seeks to dialogue at a personal level through the creative arts.

*The Coffee House* - Roof top acoustics, Box guitars, an unrehearsed DJ, and free coffee, provide an alternative, yet favourable environment where youngsters unwind and tune into soulful Gospel music and moving testimonies. These efforts are directed towards helping them build a relationship with Jesus.

*Footprints* - Here's where the rubber meets the road.... always shod with the shoes of the Gospel of peace, Footprints are forever on the move. Powerful sketches, inspiring choreographs, etc., are all part of the creative bonanza of this evangelistic team.

CARE has plans for expansion, to address the changing attitudes of young people. This includes get-away Retreats, music workshops and concerts, promotion of young artists and new bands, concerts of praise, networking of professional artists etc., all of which are focussed towards promoting and encouraging creative evangelism.

=====**ADAPT** *The Open Home Ministry of Kerygma*=====

The biggest reality today to the youth of this city is emotional pain. In all the songs they sing, the words they speak and the things they do, the rhyme is the same-hurt, bitterness and rebellion. Issues such as **Abortion, Drug abuse, Alcoholism, Prostitution and Teen pregnancy** can be best dealt through personal interactions. Availability is thus the key. To this end **ADAPT** opens all doors and provides a place called home to the emotionally orphaned.

Professionally trained counsellors, Care lines, Youth Fellowships and a library of books and tapes etc., are all part of **ADAPT's** provision towards a wholesome environment.

The Kerygma Centre presently under development, would house the counselling cells till further facilities are available.

✂ ----- cut here and send ----- ✂

Name.....  
Address.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
Tel.....

I'd Like to know more about your ministry  
 I'll keep you in my prayers  
 I'd like to be part of your ministry  
 Symbiosis Communications     CARE     ADAPT  
 I enclose a gift of ..... Please use it as you think best for for the following ministry .....



# **BETHESDA YOUTH RETREAT**

May 11-14, 2000

Place: Ram's Bungalow, Yercaud Hills, Salem District

Yercaud is God's dwelling place. The breath-taking sceneries, the star-studded sky, the flaming sunsets, and the very air is magical.

**COME! Explore God's creation, and experience His power.**

- Age Group: 18-25 years
- Retreat Fee: Two hundred rupees only
- Travel Arrangements: Travel at your own convenience
- Registration: May 11, 2000, 4-6 p.m.

**Do you want to experience God? COME.**

**How about a travel into yourself? BE HEALED.**

**What about God's purpose for your life? DISCOVER SELF.**

**You may find right answers! NO EXTRA CHARGES.**

**DONT MISS. This retreat will impact your life for eternity!!**

For further information/inquiry, contact:

Pastor Maywald Jesudass  
SUD of SDA, Box 2  
HCF, Hosur 635 110  
Tamil Nadu

APPENDIX C  
CAMP MATERIALS

## EU QUIET TIME MATERIAL

Read: Luke 8:26-39

May 27, 1999

1. Note what the demon says to Jesus in vs. 28. Note his manner and his body-language. What do we see here about Jesus and his authority? Did the demon fear Jesus or did He just command the demon's respect? How does this affect our relationship to Him?
2. In vs. 37, what do the people ask Jesus to do? What do we do when He confronts us with living the Christian life the whole way?
3. Read the miracle that took place before this passage. Note what the people did to Him after He performed this miracle. To get to this demon possessed man, Jesus had to calm a storm while crossing the lake. When He got to the side, He was sent back without doing anything except this one miracle. Do you think Jesus knew that this would happen? If so, why did he cross the lake in the first place? What does this teach you about the importance He places on each one of us.

Read Job ch. 1 & 2

May 28, 1999

1. Read 1:20 and 2:10 again. How would we have reacted in Job's place? Was Job's riches and his religion in any way connected that when one was gone, the other was in danger? Do Job's replies suggest that his was a faith instilled in him from childhood?
2. What does God say of Job to satan in 1:8 and 2:3? If this was what happened to the world's holiest man, is there any comfort for us in our troubles that seem so big?

## EU QUIET TIME MATERIAL

Read Revelation 3:1-7May 29, 1999

1. What does the Holy Spirit tell the church at Sardis? Is there anything that we can identify with in this message?
2. This church received a letter from God Himself. If that same God were to write you a letter, what would it be like? Try filling this one up.

May 29, 1999  
Heaven, the  
high throne of God

Dear

The one who loved you and gave himself for you, no longer merely the lamb that did not speak a word as He was led to the slaughter, but is now the Lion of Judah, victorious over death, triumphant over sin.

I know you and I love you for. . .

But this I have against you that, . . .

Wake up, remember, and repent!

To him that over comes, I shall give a crown of life and I shall grant unto him to be a part of my temple in the new Jerusalem.

John 15:16May 30, 1999

"You did not choose me but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you." NASB

1. Did we choose ourselves? If not who is He that chose us? What should this bring about in us? What does the word 'appoint' mean? What should the realization of our 'appointment' bring about in us?

2. How do we bear fruit? Note the word 'that' in ". . . that you should go . . . fruit should remain." Does this imply that our fruit will automatically appear once we realize just who has appointed us? Think about this for a minute.
3. Again note the word 'that' in ". . . remain, that whatever. . . ." What does this imply about our requests being granted?

## BETHESDA YOUTH RETREAT

YERCAUD, MAY 11-14, 2000

**QUIET TIME : An Hour of Praise, Personal Study, and Prayer**

May 12, 2000

**TEXT** : I Cor. 6:15-20

**TITLE** : Our Soul Temple

**THEME** : Our body is God's Sanctuary. His dwelling place should be clean and vacant.

**MEDITATION POINTS :**

1. Read I Cor. 6:15, 16

Identify some things that are defiling your body? Do you want to be clean?

2. Read I Cor. 6:17-19

Presently, how much of your soul temple is occupied by the Holy Trinity?  
Do you recognize that sin is not only breaking of God's law, but also being selfish - holding on to something you like. For example, your ways.

3. Read I Cor. 6:20

God has emptied heaven for our salvation. Spend sometime in praising the Lord for Jesus and His sacrifice. Do you like to commit your life (all parts of your body) to Him?

## **BETHESDA YOUTH RETREAT**

**YERCAUD, MAY 11-14, 2000**

**QUIET TIME : An Hour of Praise, Personal Study, and Prayer**

May 13, 2000

**TEXT** : Mark 11:15-17

**TITLE** : Cleansing the Soul Temple

**THEME** : Jesus can cleanse you and make you a blessing.

**MEDITATION POINTS :**

1. Read Mark 11:15, 16

Do you acknowledge that your soul temple is messy? Whose help will you seek?

2. In the temple there were merchants and customers, animals and doves, and money changers. Are there sins or weakness within you which identifies with the above mentioned characters?

3. Read Mark 11:17

What do you understand by your soul temple being a "house of prayer for all nations?"

4. Spend time in blessing and worshipping the Lord who desires to make you a blessing.

## BETHESDA YOUTH RETREAT

YERCAUD, MAY 11-14, 2000

### QUIET TIME : An Hour of Praise, Personal Study, and Prayer

May 14, 2000

**TEXT** : Exodus 25

**TITLE** : Equipping the Temple

**THEME** : God wants to equip, empower, and decorate you.

#### MEDITATION POINTS:

1. What are the compartments of the sanctuary?  
Name its articles?
2. Read Exodus 25:1-7  
The Israelites brought a free-will offering to help build the sanctuary. Do you have a part to play in the construction of your soul temple?
3. Read Exodus 25:9, 10  
Moses and the workmen followed God's pattern in the construction of the temple. Do you think God has a pattern-purpose for your life? Can you identify one person God has used to bring fulfillment of His purposes in your life?
4. Skilled people worked on the best and most expensive material, and brought out beautiful articles. When Solomon's temple was dedicated people rejoiced, and God's glory descended. You will be a masterpiece when He is finished with you.  
Bow down before this awesome God, lay prostrate in His holy presence.



## BETHESDA YOUTH RETREAT

YERCAUD, MAY 11-14, 2000

### QUESTIONNAIRE

Kindly fill this questionnaire; your response will help evaluate the retreat. Use the backside of the page if necessary.

1. How many Adventist Youth camps have you attended?
  - a. None
  - b. One
  - c. Two
  - d. More than two
2. Do you think there are differences between camps and retreats?
  - a. None
  - b. Not remarkable
  - c. Substantial differenced.
  - d. Not sure
3. Which are the two programs that helped you to know and grow in the Lord?
  - a.
  - b.
4. Write down two programs that supported you to discover self.
  - a.
  - b.
5. How would you grade the resource personnel? Circle a number (Consider their presentations, availability, spirituality, and attitude).  
Bad - 1 Average - 3 Excellent - 5  
1    2    3    4    5
6. What are the changes you would like to suggest to improve the retreat?
7. Choose one of the below to express your experience during the retreat.
  - a. Free from burdens/sins/guilt
  - b. The Lord touched/spoke/revealed Himself to me
  - c. Found purpose, want to serve Him
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_

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