

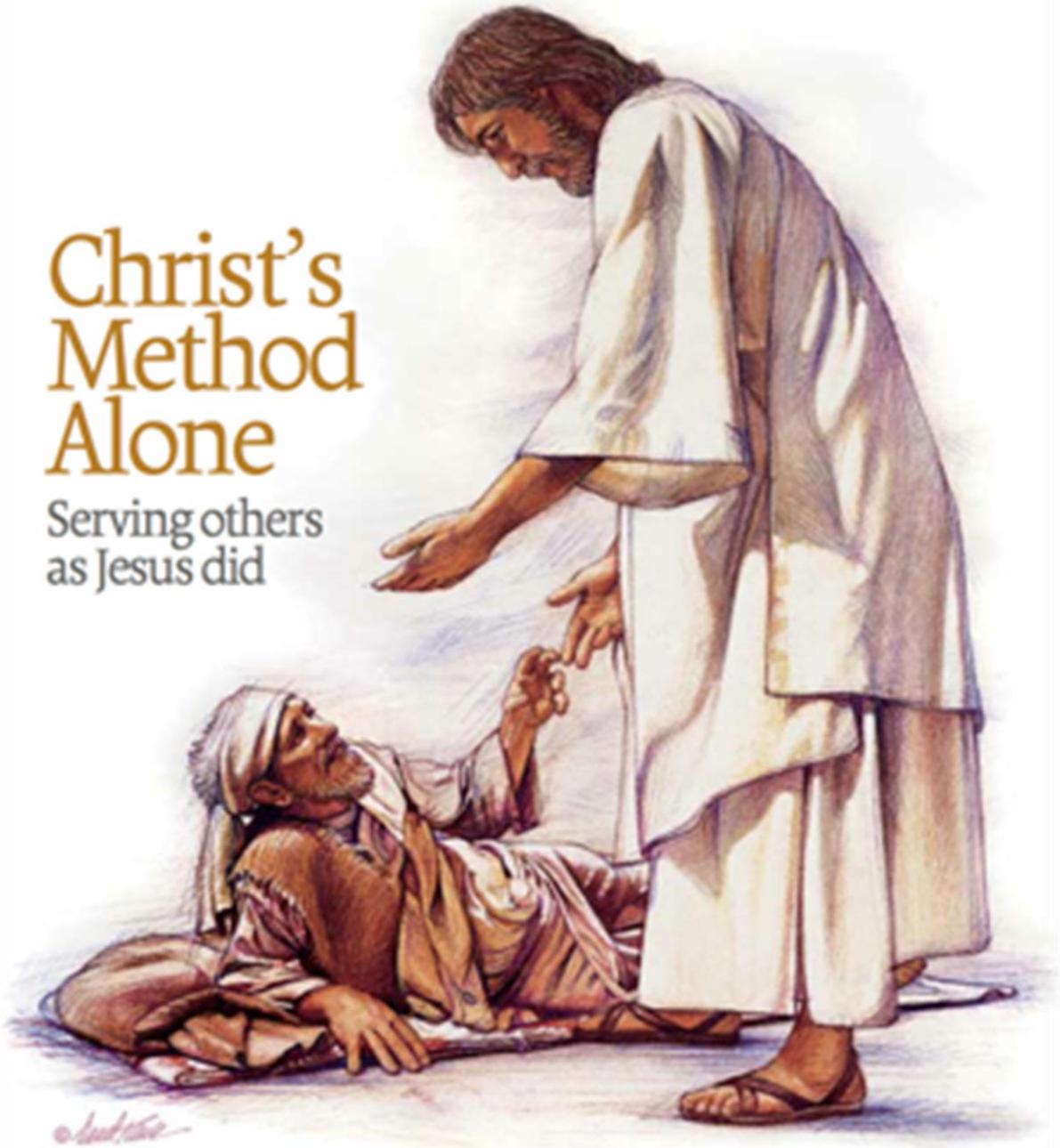
# WEEK OF PRAYER READING FOR 2014

ISSN 0819-5633 710

*Week of Prayer Issue*

## Christ's Method Alone

Serving others  
as Jesus did





## Greetings From the President

One of the most well-known passages about how to follow Jesus' example is found in the wonderful book *The Ministry of Healing*: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with [men and women] as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me'" (p. 143).

Christ cared about the whole person—physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. He wants us to prosper through our relationship with Him and our service to others through loving, caring ministry. Jesus ministered to people where they were—in cities, in towns, along the road, in their homes, by wells, even on the cross. He was not afraid to go wherever there was a soul to be saved.

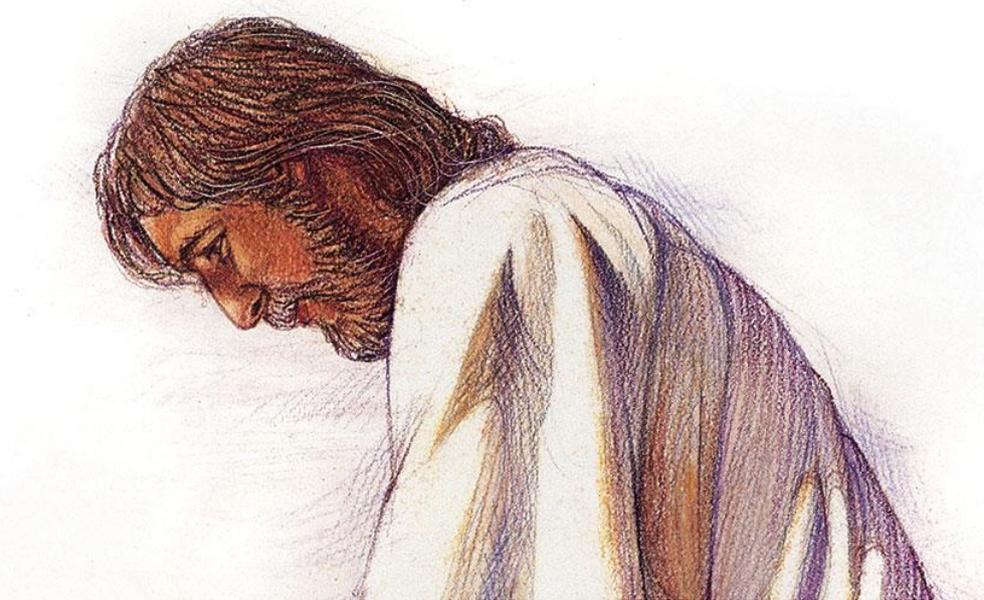
"Christ's Method Alone" is the theme for this year's Week of Prayer readings. Throughout the week we will see how much of Christ's ministry involved healing and how the ministry of health and healing plays a vital role in reaching others for Him. I invite you to join me this week, as you read through these thoughtfully prepared articles, to ask the Lord how to apply these powerful principles to reach others for Him.

If you have younger ones in the home (or if you simply enjoy great stories), you won't want to miss the accompanying children's readings written by Linda Koh, director of the Children's Ministries Department of the General Conference.

May the Lord bless us as we come together as a world church family to study and pray during this special Week of Prayer as we use Christ's method alone in anticipation of Christ's soon return.

Ted N. C. Wilson  
President

## Ministering Like Jesus



### Let God do the Capernaum miracle for you.

In the city of Capernaum there was a depressed, dejected, and helpless invalid. He had fallen into despair and had lost all hope of recovery. Full of bitter remorse, he knew his sickness was a result of sin. His was a sad case of physical, mental, social, and spiritual illness. He had hoped that the religious leaders might bring some relief; yet his hopes were dashed as they coldly pronounced him incurable. Helpless and discouraged, he spent day after day suffering in pain and regret.



But then he heard about Jesus. He heard that others, as sinful and helpless as he, had been healed. His friends encouraged him to be carried to Jesus, but his hopes fell when he remembered how sin had caused his disease. What he desired most was relief from the burden of sin. He wanted to see Jesus and receive the assurance of forgiveness. There was no time to lose—his flesh was already decaying. He asked his friends to carry him to Jesus, and they were glad to help (see Mark 2:3). How wonderful to have spiritually minded friends who will help you to see Jesus!

As the little group arrives at Peter's home, where Jesus is teaching, they face a major challenge: they find the crowd so dense that they can't even hear the Savior. Many times they try pushing their way through, but to no avail.

## Desperate to See Jesus

The paralytic is desperate. How could he be so close to Jesus, and yet so far? He is convinced that Jesus is his only hope for peace and forgiveness. He will do anything to see Jesus. Quickly formulating a daring plan, the man begs his friends to carry him up to the roof.

Mark 2:4 indicates that the friends tore the roof apart. Imagine the confusion inside Peter's house as dust and debris began falling from the ceiling. The Scripture says: "So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying" (NKJV).<sup>1</sup>



A bed is coming through the roof to the feet of Jesus! Jesus looks into the pleading eyes of the invalid. He understands the situation perfectly, for it was Christ who had given this person hope. The man waits for the words of forgiveness from Jesus. What faith he and his friends had—faith that went through the roof!

Mark 2:5 records Christ's precious words: "Son, your sins are forgiven you" (NKJV). The words

are music to the invalid's ears. The burden of despair rolls from his shoulders. He has the peace of forgiveness. "In simple faith he accepted the words of Jesus as the boon of new life. He urged no further request, but lay in blissful silence, too happy for words. The light of heaven irradiated his countenance, and the people looked with awe upon the scene."<sup>2</sup>

## Which Is Easier?

The self-centered religious leaders in the room exchange glances at each other, remembering their unsympathetic rejection of this poor invalid. In their hearts they accuse Jesus of blasphemy and think they can use this as a pretext for sentencing Christ to death. Fixing His gaze on them while reading their thoughts, Jesus asks: "Which is easier to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, 'I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house'" (Mark 2:9-11, NKJV).

The man jumps to his feet with the strength of youth. Life-giving blood runs through his veins, and he glows with health. The wonderful love of Jesus! He heals the guilty of their sins and provides new life!

The same power that creates life restored that man instantly. The healing of the body by Christ is evidence of Christ's power to renew the heart.

## **Many Seek the Same**

Many today are paralyzed with worry, fear, and guilt. They feel discouraged and helpless. They carry heavy burdens and are seeking relief. "Everywhere there are hearts crying out for something which they have not," wrote Ellen White in the wonderful book *The Ministry of Healing*. "They long for a power that will give them mastery over sin, a power that will deliver them from the bondage of evil, a power that will give health and life and peace. Many who once knew the power of God's word have dwelt where there is no recognition of God, and they long for the divine presence.

"The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago—a revelation of Christ. A great work of reform is demanded, and it is only through the grace of Christ that the work of restoration, physical, mental, and spiritual, can be accomplished.

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"<sup>3</sup>

## **Following His Example**

Our Savior was interested in the whole person—physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. He wants us to prosper through our relationship with Him and our service to others in loving, caring ministry—by following His example. Jesus ministered to people where they were—in cities, in towns, along the road, in their homes, by wells, even on the cross—He was not afraid to go wherever there was a soul to be saved. If we are to minister like Jesus, we will do the same.

## **Questions for Reflection and Sharing**

1. Imagine yourself as one of the friends of the paralytic in Mark 2. Would you be willing to make a hole in a roof, or would that be utter nonsense? How can we be "faithful" friends to the people around us?
2. Think about the people living in your community and neighborhood. How can you reach them using Christ's methods alone in a practical way? Discuss your ideas with others in your church.
3. How can we minister to others when we ourselves feel unable to cope with life? How can Christ's methods alone change our own relationship with Jesus and reshape our ideas of ministry?

Jesus went to the people. In order to fulfill our prophetic calling as God's last-day remnant church, we need to go share the good news where the people are, as Jesus did.

We now live in a world with more than 50 percent of the world's population residing in cities. Let me make a heartfelt appeal you: Regardless of what line of work you are in, please join your church in the great work of reaching the people who are in the cities of this world. Follow Christ's example and reach out to those in need where the masses live. Join God's people around the world in the special emphasis on "Mission to the Cities."

The book *Medical Ministry* challenges us with these words: “There is no change in the messages that God has sent in the past. The work in the cities is the essential work for this time. When the cities are worked as God would have them, the result will be the setting in operation of a mighty movement such as we have not yet witnessed.”<sup>4</sup>

Brothers and sisters, we are yet to see that “mighty movement.” Let us earnestly study, pray, humble ourselves and seek God’s direction for us as a people, pleading with Him for the outpouring of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit, so that we can see this “mighty movement” take place. We want to see Jesus return. This world is wearing out, and I believe with all my heart that Christ’s literal second coming is soon! Let’s follow Christ’s example and go into the cities to reach the people where they are.

## **A Wholistic and Reinvigorated Ministry**

As Seventh-day Adventists we believe in the whole person concept, in ministering to those around us in a comprehensive way. Long before the current promotion of whole person health, God, the Creator of the human race and everything good on this earth, was declaring that He wanted us to be “healthy in every way.” God wants us to be revived and reformed through the Holy Spirit’s power today. He wants us to understand that we are a complex creature made in His image by His hand and breath.

This understanding of the “whole person” leads to a comprehensive approach in reaching people, especially those in the cities. This approach involves the use of centers of influence, local churches, church members, and teams of young people involved in a variety of outreach initiatives, health outreach and medical missionary work, clinics, health lectures, vegetarian restaurants, literature evangelism, small group outreach, door-to-door missionary work, community service and social work that follow Christ’s methods, Adventist Community Services and ADRA activities, integrated media evangelism, counseling centers, Bible studies by members, young people, and Bible workers, child evangelism, personal evangelism and witnessing, public evangelism, and many more methods yet to be initiated by the Holy Spirit. We need pastors, health professionals, and church members working together, as indicated by the Spirit of Prophecy, in a “blended ministry.”

In Ellen White’s manuscript 117, 1901, we read: “Every minister of the gospel should be prepared to do practical medical missionary work. The medical missionary work is to be as closely united with the gospel ministry as the arm is united to the body. The reluctance shown to promulgations of the principles of health reform is caused by an unwillingness to deny self. In our large cities, the medical missionary work must go hand in hand with the gospel ministry. It will open doors for the entrance of truth.”

God is also calling for us to reinvigorate the use of comprehensive health ministry in the large cities of the world. We need denominational organizations and supporting ministries working together in community outreach and soul winning in the large cities and around the world.

As Christ ministered to the people in the cities, He was active in “teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Matt. 9:35, NKJV). He taught and modeled being “healthy in every way.” He advocated and proclaimed choosing the full life and then sending people on their way to “tell the world.”

## A Great Yearning

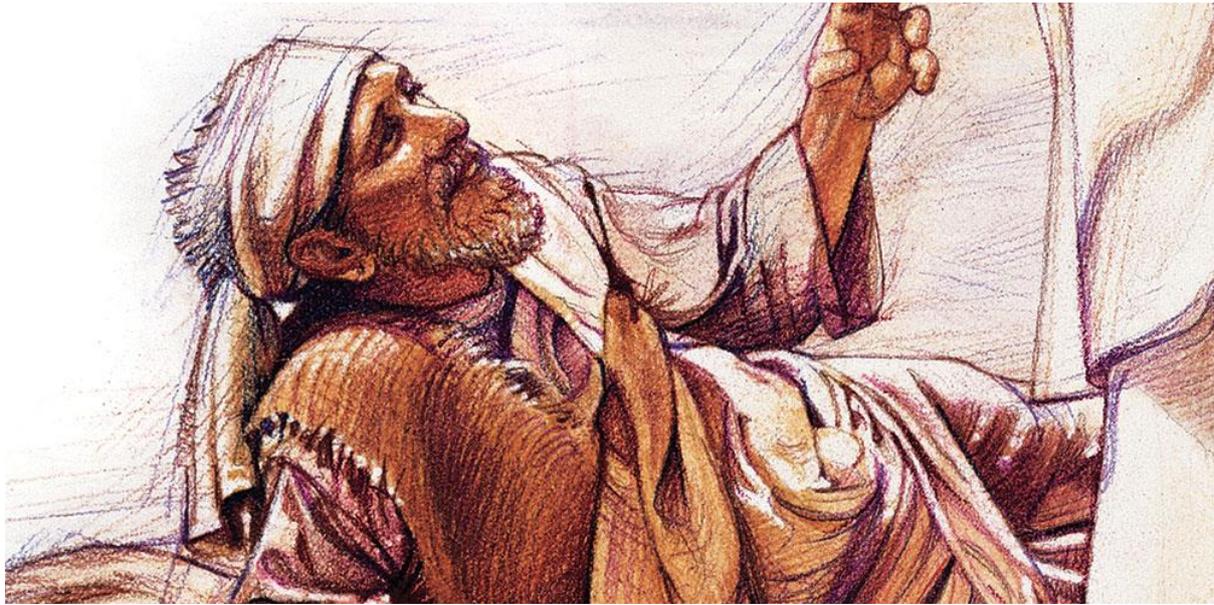
Matthew 9:36 explains that when Christ saw the people He had great compassion for them “because they were weary and scattered” (NKJV). The world today is weary and falling apart. There is a great yearning for that which is real and solid, that which will lead to peace and security, that which will unify people as a shepherd does for a flock. Christ is calling you and me today to choose full life in Him, to be healthy in every way through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit so that we might be shepherds to those who are scattered.

God is calling us to be part of His great, united, and blended team of dedicated followers to show compassion on those who are weary and scattered, those broken in body and spirit. The need is great, and there are not enough helpers. Christ proclaimed in Matthew 9:37, 38 that the potential for harvesting was there, but the dedicated missionaries were few and that we should pray for the Lord to send laborers into the harvest.

Are you willing, like the friends of the paralytic, to persevere in the work of bringing others to Christ? Are you committed to pushing ahead regardless of what may happen? Are you willing to accept Christ’s call to be healthy in every way? How persistent are you? Are you willing to allow the Holy Spirit to bring revival and reformation into your life so that you will be ready to minister like Jesus?

Christ is coming soon! I invite you just now, at the beginning of this Week of Prayer focusing on “Christ’s Methods Alone,” to dedicate yourself fully to Him and to be willing to go wherever He calls, and to do whatever He asks you to do, to reach others for Him.

- 
1. Texts credited to NKJV are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
  2. Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898), p. 268.
  3. Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 143.
  4. Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1932), p. 304.



## Experiencing the Power of Faith

Heaven's hall of fame has a place for you.

For the past 25 years researchers have been examining the relationship between faith and religious belief more closely. Faith makes a positive difference in our physical, mental, and emotional health. Although the research is continuing and we do not have all the answers, we know enough to know that faith matters. Well-known universities, national public health research institutions, and privately funded health organizations are all coming to similar conclusions. A strong belief system can be a foundation for improved health.

Here are two specific examples of what a dose of spirituality can do for you:

A survey conducted in California revealed that worshippers who participate in church-sponsored activities are markedly less stressed over finances, health, and other daily concerns than nonspiritual types. Other studies have shown that spirituality contributes to reduce suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, criminal and divorce rates. According to a Columbia University study, women with pious moms are 60 percent less likely to be depressed in 10 years than women whose mothers aren't so reverent. Another study has shown that daughters belonging to the same religious denomination as their mothers are even less likely (71 percent) to suffer the blues; sons were 84 percent less likely.<sup>1</sup> So as a result of these and many other similar studies, scientists are coming to the conclusion that a strong belief system can be a foundation for improved health.

### Faith Makes a Difference

Let's explore genuine biblical faith: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).<sup>2</sup> Faith looks forward, since it is the "substance of things hoped for." The word translated "substance" means "foundation" in the original



**Mark A. Finley**

retired as a vice president of the General Conference in 2010. He continues to serve as assistant to the president of the General Conference, and as editor at large of *Adventist Review*.

language, which indicates that faith is the very foundation of our lives. But faith also looks up because it is the “evidence of things not seen.”

Faith is the assurance that ultimately God will fulfill all our dreams. Faith believes God will strengthen us to triumph over every difficulty and overcome every obstacle until the day when we receive our final reward in His eternal kingdom.

Ellen White clarifies the nature of biblical faith: “Faith is trusting God—believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, faith energizes our entire being and encourages our hearts. Faith renews our hope. Faith lifts our vision from what is to what can be. Faith believes God’s promises and receives God’s gifts before they are realized. Faith is healing.

## Heaven’s Hall of Fame

This is the kind of faith that enabled the heroes of the Old Testament to face all sorts of challenging circumstances and remain loyal to God. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and the other heroes of Hebrews 11 had one thing in common—*faith*—a faith that sustained and supported them throughout their lives.

Hebrews 11 lists the heroes of faith down through the ages. Their names hang high in heaven’s “hall of fame.”

Surprisingly, the first example of faith is a person who dies. There is no miraculous deliverance here: “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks” (verse 4). Scripture tells us that Abel was a righteous man, yet his faith got him killed. If he didn’t have faith, he would have lived. Cain did not have faith, and he lived. Abel had faith, and he died. This may seem strange to people who have a mistaken understanding of genuine faith. Faith does not always result in a Hollywood ending, but true faith hangs on.

Let’s consider Enoch, the next in this royal line of faith: “By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, ‘and was not found, because God had taken him’; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God” (verse 5). If Enoch didn’t have faith, he would have died. Enoch has faith and he lives, but Abel has the same quality of faith and he dies. Throughout Hebrews 11 each of these worthies of faith teaches us how to trust God. Enoch trusts Him in life, and Abel trusts Him in death.

Note the contrast between Noah and Abraham. “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household” (verse 7). Noah’s faith led him to do just what God said even though to the majority of people in his day it must have seemed ridiculous. Noah obediently followed God’s instructions. He trusted God. For 120 years he kept building an ark in spite of the fact that there was no rain. Now, that’s faith.

Abraham’s experience is just the opposite: “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going”(verse 8). Abraham’s faith led him to leave the security of his homeland and venture out into the unknown.

What contrasts! Abel died by faith, and Enoch survived by faith. Noah stayed by faith, and Abraham ventured out by faith. And the contrasts continue throughout the chapter.

Sarah conceived a child by faith when she was 90 years old. Years later Abraham took the child, Isaac, to Mount Moriah at God's command to sacrifice him. God honored Abraham's faith and delivered the child. The same God who asked these parents to believe He would give them a child asked them to believe when He commanded them to sacrifice the child.

Faith is not telling God what I want, believing He will give it to me. Faith is an abiding trust in God regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. We may be facing a life-threatening illness or enjoying good health. We may be perfectly content in our home or facing a move and dreading it. We may be prospering financially or struggling to pay the mortgage. We may be enjoying a great marriage, or the relationship may be strained. We may feel very close to God, or we may feel distant from Him. Faith is not dependent on our feelings or our circumstances (Hab. 3:17-19).

Each of the worthies of faith in Hebrews 11 had one common thread running through their lives: *They trusted God.*

## **Increasing Our Faith**

What do you do when your faith is weak? Listen to Romans 12:3: "As God has dealt to each one a measure of faith." When we make a conscious choice to reach out to this all-loving, all-powerful God and trust Him, He places within our hearts a measure of faith. Thus, faith is a gift God gives us. The more we exercise that gift, the more it grows. Faith grows as we learn to trust God in the trials and challenges we face in life. There are times in our lives when faith grows in the most difficult circumstances. Sometimes moments of greatest desperation are moments of greatest faith.

Our faith also grows as we meditate upon God's Word. As the truths of the Bible fill our minds, our faith grows. Scriptures affirm this divine reality: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The more we fill our minds with God's Word, the more our faith will increase.

Trust in God energizes our entire being. It strengthens us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Even in times of a life-threatening illness, our faith soars above what is to what will be. We grasp the "blessed hope" and rejoice in the glory of Christ's return when sickness will be abolished forever.

Until that day we live by faith in Jesus, the one who is the true source of all healing.

## **Questions for Reflection and Sharing**

1. We are surrounded by a media-saturated society that bombards us daily with ads and commercials. How can we remain people of faith in such an environment?
2. Why would God ask Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah? Is that not cruel and unreasonable? Is faith always reasonable?
3. In your church discuss ways of helping to grow the faith experience of our children, youth, and young adults. How can we become faith facilitators?



## Reaching the Whole Person

The day started as did most in the life of a busy family physician. Along with other duties, I had also scheduled a surgery for that particular morning. The patient was new in the small-town rural community we served during our first years in mission service. As I was leaving home, the ring of the telephone signaled an emergency that needed attention prior to the elective surgical procedure. I called the hospital and told them I would be arriving a few minutes late, but that I would be there by the time the patient had been prepared and anesthesia induced.

I arrived at the hospital, and as I scrubbed for surgery I casually asked if the patient was already asleep. The nervous nurse encouraged me to see for myself. Imagine my surprise to find the anesthetist, the operating room nurse, and the assistants standing next to a wide-awake patient lying on the table!

When I asked why the patient was not yet anesthetized, the retort from my colleagues was: “Ask the patient yourself!” I did.

The patient was a friendly person with a genuine smile that penetrated the veil of the premedication. She responded: “I’ve been told that you always pray with your patients before you perform surgery, and I would not allow your colleagues to start the anesthetic before you prayed with me.”

I did, of course, pray with her. The occasion turned into a wonderful opportunity to witness to both the patient and my colleagues—illustrating the heaven-ordained method and approach to reaching the whole person.



**Peter N. Landless**  
a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, is an associate director of the Health Ministries department of the General Conference.

## **We Are Wholistic Beings**

Health is so inextricably intertwined in all that we do and are that it seems germane to our being Seventh-day Adventists. God demonstrated His interest in the health of His people from creation. He created a magnificent environment to sustain the well-being of His creatures. He provided a nutritious diet, fresh air, pure water, and opportunity for exercise as our parents tended the garden. He cared for their spiritual health, and walked and talked with them in the cool of the evening.

From the beginning, spirituality and health have been intertwined. Even after the Fall, the Flood, and the Egyptian captivity, God demonstrated His concern for the health of His people by giving them specific directives regarding health. These protected them against many of the diseases that ravaged the Egyptians and others.

In the fullness of time God modeled wholistic development in the life of our Lord Jesus. Scripture confirms that “the child [Jesus] grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him” (Luke 2:40). “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (verse 52). Here the physician, Luke, correlates the physical, emotional, mental, and social, and demonstrates the wholistic Being in whose image we have been created.

God, in His gracious love, emphasized that we are wholistic beings through the health message to this church through Ellen White. The vision given in Otsego, Michigan, on June 6, 1863, brought the clarion message that it is a spiritual duty to care for the body temple, and the wholistic integration of body, mind, and spirit was clearly confirmed. These same principles have stood the test of time and the scrutiny of science. The principles of rest, sunshine, balanced nutrition, trust in God, exercise, temperance, and breathing pure, fresh air are aimed at maintaining balanced wholeness.

The Otsego vision emphasized that the primary purpose of taking care of our health is to enable us to serve God and our fellow beings. We will enjoy better health, but this health is not the end in itself. We are saved to serve, as Ellen White wrote: “We have come to a time when every member of the church should take hold of medical missionary work. The world is a lazar house filled with victims of both physical and spiritual disease. Everywhere people are perishing for lack of a knowledge of the truths that have been committed to us. The members of the church are in need of an awakening, that they may realize their responsibility to impart these truths.”<sup>1</sup>

This was true then, and is even more urgently true today. This is a call to comprehensive health ministry, personally and corporately as a church, graciously sharing and caring while preaching, teaching, healing, and discipling.

## **Purpose of the Wholistic Health Message**

The wholistic health message firmly grounded on biblical understanding and inspired revelation, addresses the fundamental issues of the human existence: disease and resulting suffering. Although important, this refers not only to diet. Ellen White outlines the purpose of health reform: “In teaching health principles, keep before the mind the great object of reform—that its purpose is to secure the highest development of body and mind and soul. Show that the laws of nature, being the laws of God, are designed for our good; that obedience to them promotes happiness in this life, and aids in the preparation for the life to come.”<sup>2</sup>

The health message is God-centered, which transforms it from information *about* health into a fully integrated philosophy *of* health. There is a moral component to being stewards of this wholistic gift of life, as Paul illustrates: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).

We are sustained and healed by the power of God. Any wholeness we enjoy comes from Him. Through His grace, we can even enjoy wholeness in our brokenness. Paul records this when, in his brokenness, he is assured by the Lord: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

Even in our brokenness, “our first duty toward God and our fellow beings is that of self-development. Every faculty with which the Creator has endowed us should be cultivated to the highest degree of perfection, that we may be able to do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable.”<sup>3</sup>

As we develop into our full potential, our service to God will be multifaceted, truly caring for all the needs of the human experience. An important component of sharing any message is the actual modeling of the principles taught. This is Christ’s method in practice. There is mingling, caring, sympathizing, ministering to the needs, and then encouraging people to follow Jesus.

### **What Does “Reaching the Whole Person” Look Like?**

Throughout the Bible we find unforgettable examples of God’s reaching the whole person. He gave Israel a moral law and completed the circle by providing lifesaving health instructions. The ultimate revelation of whole-person care was demonstrated in the life, ministry, and miracles of Jesus. The Savior had compassion for the weary and tired (Matt. 9:36). He miraculously fed the hungry masses (Matt. 14:15-20) and urged His disciples to give a cup of cold water (Matt. 10:42). He restored the demoniac to a state where he was clothed, in his right mind, and sitting at His feet (Luke 8:35).

As a church, we have been blessed with the knowledge of how to live life to the full. It is our sacred duty to care for the body temple, and then to spend and be spent in service to a broken world, crying out for a grace-filled revelation of Jesus through His followers. As wholistic beings, we should honor Him in body, mind, and spirit to “preserve every power in the best condition for highest service to God and man.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Questions for Reflection and Sharing**

1. What would you say to someone who believes that health has nothing to do with spirituality?
  2. In this sin-filled world countless people suffer from debilitating illnesses; what do you think Jesus’ attitude is toward those individuals?
  3. What are some specific ways that we can care for the whole person?
-



## Living a Faithful Life

Within both religious and scientific communities a growing interest has developed about the life of the ancient Hebrew prophet Daniel. This interest is being driven, in part, by increasing disease rates within Western nations.

Daniel's life and health practices were based on God's moral and health laws, and he emerges as a pattern of integrity amid a corrupt world. He and his companions even risked their lives in order to maintain fidelity to God's laws.

Let's look briefly at what some studies are now saying about Daniel's biblically informed health practices.

### Choosing the Best Diet

When offered the king's food, Daniel instead chose to eat only plant-based foods (Dan. 1:16), the diet originally prescribed for humankind at Creation (Gen. 1:29).

When a plant-based diet was recently followed for 21 days by researchers, it was discovered that its adoption led to "improved cardiovascular and metabolic health."<sup>1</sup> In addition, those following such an eating plan had better blood sugar control,<sup>2</sup> which researchers are finding is directly related to one's level of self-control and willpower.<sup>3</sup> Simply put, if your blood sugar is consistently in the optimal range, your ability to control your actions and reach your goals are greatly improved.

The plant-based diet Daniel and his friends requested would have protected them from eating animal products, which are high in arachidonic acid, a chemical shown to increase negative moods and emotions.<sup>4</sup> Daniel's biblically informed diet increased his mental ability and thus put him in a position where he could serve as an example for the principles and purposes of God.



Daniel chose water to drink instead of wine, which also may have given him an edge mentally. Not only does drinking water enhance memory in the young<sup>5</sup>—a recent study by the University of East London has suggested that drinking as little as 24 ounces (three cups) of water before taking a test improved reaction time by as much as 14 percent.<sup>6</sup> No wonder Daniel and his friends ended up having a tenfold cognitive edge!

## **Prayer and Meditation**

Daniel led a life of prayer and meditation on God’s Word.

Researchers have been amazed to find that just thinking about religious themes can refuel self-control.<sup>7</sup> Another study has indicated that prayer is “a kind of anaerobic workout for self-control,”<sup>8</sup> with just three hours leading to “improved attention,” and with 11 hours leading to “increased neural connections between regions of the brain important for staying focused, ignoring distractions, and controlling impulses.”<sup>9</sup> The study resulted in participants having “more gray matter in the prefrontal cortex,”<sup>10</sup> as well as increased “blood flow to the prefrontal cortex,”<sup>11</sup> the brain’s center of executive functions that differentiate humans from the animal kingdom.

Thus, those who follow Daniel’s divinely informed practice of private prayer (Dan. 10), in addition to corporate prayer (Dan. 1 and 2), can expect similar results.

Daniel’s brain health and success were certainly based on his confidence in God. As a result, he devoted unswerving obedience to God’s moral and health laws (Dan. 9:4, 13). Daniel’s fidelity to God’s laws benefited not only himself but also those he served, as evidenced by the actions of Darius, the king of the Medes, who put him in charge of his affairs so he would “not suffer loss” (Dan. 6:2), a phrase concerning the loss of revenue. Daniel’s high regard for the law of God led him to be honest not only in his own life practices but also with the king’s and the kingdom’s finances.

## **Honesty**

Contemporary research concerning honesty finds that those who are even recently exposed to the law of God are also apt to have higher levels of honesty.

Participants in one study were split into two groups. One group was asked to recall the Ten Commandments, and the other to recall 10 books they had read in high school. Among the group that recalled the 10 books, widespread cheating was observed. In the group that was asked to recall the Ten Commandments, no cheating whatsoever was observed.

The experiment was rerun, and this time participants were reminded either of their school’s honor codes or the Ten Commandments. Once again, those who focused on the Ten Commandments were measurably more honest. Even when the experiment was run on a group of self-declared atheists, the same results were seen.<sup>12</sup>

Although Daniel faced many stressful situations, he always maintained a spirit of gratitude, even spending time in thanksgiving when he heard about the decree that would land him in a den of lions (Dan. 6:10)!

The ability to maintain a grateful attitude has now been shown to lead to fewer health problems, a better outlook on life, and an ability to progress toward important personal goals

in the area of academics, relationships, health, and others.<sup>13</sup> Science recommends that daily gratitude journals be kept for optimal health of brain and body.

## Keeping the Heritage

While many factors influenced Daniel's early years, Josiah's reform may have somehow played a positive role as well. Daniel was very young when Josiah brought the people back to faithfulness to God and His law.

Daniel's commitment to do God's will reminds us of the young King Josiah's determination to elevate the law and lifestyle of God (see 2 Kings 22; 23). As a result of his rediscovery of God's law, Josiah experienced a personal revival and reformation, which led the entire nation on a course to revival. Josiah received one of Scripture's most sterling commendations: "Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did—with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses" (2 Kings 23:25).

Josiah's faithful life and lifestyle parallel that of Daniel and his friends, who years later, exiled in a foreign land, purposed and planned to live a life of integrity within the courts of Babylon.

Ellen White wrote, "The character of Daniel is presented to the world as a striking example of what God's grace can make of men fallen by nature and corrupted by sin. The record of his noble, self-denying life is an encouragement to our common humanity. From it we may gather strength to nobly resist temptation, and firmly, and in the grace of meekness, stand for the right under the severest trial."<sup>14</sup>

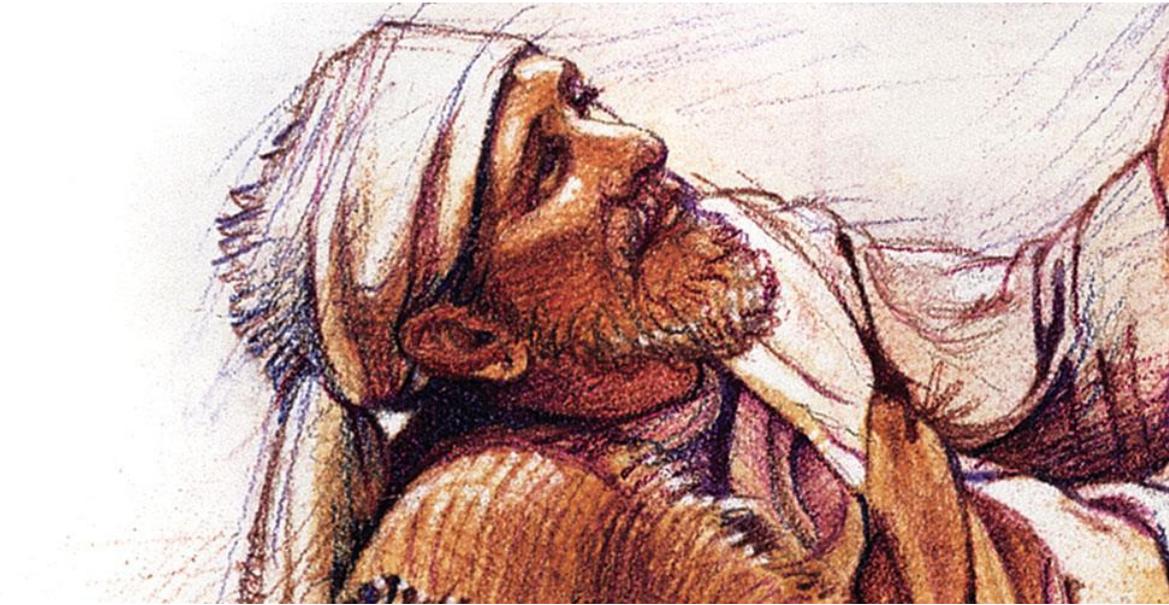
May God help us to be faithful, as was Daniel, in our sphere of influence.

## Questions for Reflection and Sharing

1. What lifestyle changes should you make in order to better follow the God-ordained principles of good health?
2. Can we always make such changes based on our own willpower?
3. If not, from where can we obtain help?

- 
1. Richard J. Bloomer, Mohammad M. Kabir, John F. Trepanowski, Robert E. Canale, and Tyler M. Farney, "A 21-Day Daniel Fast Improves Selected Biomarkers of Antioxidant Status and Oxidative Stress in Men and Women," *Nutrition and Metabolism* 8 (2011): 17. Available online at: [www.nutritionandmetabolism.com/content/8/1/17](http://www.nutritionandmetabolism.com/content/8/1/17).
  2. Ibid.
  3. M. T. Gailliot, R. F. Baumeister, C. N. DeWall, J. K. Maner, E. A. Plant, D. M. Tice, L. E. Brewer, B. J. Schmeichel, "Self-control Relies on Glucose as a Limited Energy Source: Willpower Is More Than a Metaphor," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no. 2 (February 2007): 325-336. Available online at: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17279852](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17279852).
  4. Bonnie L. Beezhold, Carol S. Johnston, and Deanna R. Daigle, "Vegetarian Diets Are Associated With Healthy Mood States: a Cross-sectional Study in Seventh-day

- Adventist Adults,” *Nutrition Journal* 9 (2010): 26. Available online at: [www.nutritionj.com/content/9/1/26](http://www.nutritionj.com/content/9/1/26).
5. D. Benton and N. Burgess, “The Effect of the Consumption of Water on the Memory and Attention of Children,” *Appetite* 53, no. 1 (August 2009): 143-146. Abstract available online at: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19445987](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19445987).
  6. “How Drinking a Glass of Water Can Make Your Brain 14 Percent Faster.” Available online at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2366353/How-drinking-glass-water-make-brain-14-faster.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2366353/How-drinking-glass-water-make-brain-14-faster.html).
  7. “Religion Helps Us Gain Self-control, Study Suggests,” *Science DailyNews*, Jan. 24, 2012. Available online at: [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/01/120124113045.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/01/120124113045.htm).
  8. Roy F. Baumeister and John Tierney, *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), p. 180.
  9. Kelly McGonigal, *The Willpower Instinct: How Self-control Works, Why It Matters, and What You Can Do to Get More of It* (New York: Avery, 2012), p. 25.
  10. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
  11. *ibid.*, p. 25.
  12. Dan Ariely, *The (Honest) Truth About Dishonesty: How We Lie to Everyone—Especially Ourselves* (New York: Harper, 2012), pp. 39-44.
  13. Robert A. Emmons and Michael E. McCullough, “Counting Blessings Versus Burdens: an Experimental Investigation of Gratitude and Subjective Well-being in Daily Life,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84, no. 2 (February 2003): 377-389. Abstract available online at: <http://psycnet.apa.org/index.cfm?fa=buy.optionToBuy&id=2003-01140-012>.
  14. Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 79.



## Maintaining a Positive Attitude

**It's part of the total health package.**

The event is the 2010 Honolulu Marathon. Television cameras and reporters are poised at the finish line to capture a long-anticipated world-record moment. The exceptional athlete is Gladys Burrill. Trackers have been following her progress throughout the course, and now the finish-line spotter identifies her in the distance. Fans lean across the ropes to catch a glimpse. When she comes into view, cheers break out, and shouts of encouragement fill the air!

Suddenly Gladys slows, then stops. The fans' shouts turn to groans. Questions fill the air: "Why did she stop?" "Is she injured?" "What's the problem?" After a long pause, Gladys turns the doubts back to cheers as she resumes her pace and crosses the finish line with a world-record performance.

Gladys Burrill, age 92, has become the oldest woman to complete an official marathon. Guinness World Records confirmed Burrill's accomplishment, and the Hawaii House of Representatives honored her with a certificate and lei ceremony.

One mystery remains: Why did she stop so close to the finish line? Her time could have been a full two minutes faster had it not been for that delay. Gladys explained that a few hundred feet from the finish line she stopped in order to pray, because in her words: "I thought my life would change once I crossed that line. I knew some people needed encouragement. It's easy to get discouraged and be negative. It's so important to think positive! It makes such a difference in how you feel and your outlook on everything.

"I had a lot of obstacles in life," Gladys said, "but God was always there with me." At age 11 she contracted polio but later recovered. The mother of five lost her son, Kevin, to a brain tumor. Then, just two years before she achieved the world record, her husband passed away.



**Des Cummings Jr.**  
is executive vice president of Business Development for Florida Hospital and the Florida Division of Adventist Health System.



Because of the inspiration of her positive attitude, the press dubbed her the “Gladys-ator”! The NBC news headline read “92-year-old Marathoner’s Secret? ‘Think Positive.’”

Gladys is a Seventh-day Adventist, a living example of the benefits of the Adventist health message. Her diet is vegetarian; her lifestyle is active. But her positive attitude is what caught the imagination of the press.

A positive attitude is vital to total health. Paul advised the Christians in Thessalonica to practice three attitudes that fuel life with positivity: “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thess. 5:16-18). Let’s consider each in turn.

## Joy

Jesus’ life was filled with joy. He wanted to impart it to the disciples: “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:11). Ellen White echoed this theme: We are called to “catch the reflection of the smile of God, and reflect it to others.”<sup>1</sup>

Because of back injuries, my father suffered severe pain. Many mornings he found it difficult to walk, yet he met people with a smile. When they asked how he was doing, his standard response was “Terrific.”

To me, it seemed hypocritical to project joy in the midst of pain. I asked him, “Dad, how can you tell people you are terrific when I know you are in pain? How can you smile instead of grimace?”

His response: “A smile is a ministry. It allows me to turn my attention toward others and not myself.” I learned that his secret to remaining positive was memorizing promises from Scripture and sharing them with others.

One of my dad’s favorites Bible texts was Psalm 34:5: “Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.” Dad’s smile and Bible promises were a positive gift that continues to bless my life.

A smile is face evidence of a positive attitude. Researchers from Wayne State University have measured the relationship between smile intensity and longevity. The Wayne State team found that people with broad smiles lived an average of about five years longer than those with no smile or weak smiles.

The attitude of joy goes beyond smiling. It is a gift that propels us through pain as well. In bad times it enables us to pursue God’s plan by visualizing victory. Jesus endured the cross “for the joy set before him” (Heb. 12:2). As Ellen White commented: “Faith in God’s love and overruling providence lightens the burdens of anxiety and care. It fills the heart with joy and contentment in the highest or lowest lot.”<sup>2</sup>

Notice that Jesus did not equate joy with emotions. Feelings can fluctuate according to circumstances. At Gethsemane He prayed, “If it is possible, may this cup be taken from me” (Matt. 26:39). His emotions recoiled from the thought of separation from His Father; but joy enabled Him to paint the picture of victory on the canvas of agony.

Joy is the attitude of heaven. At the creation of the earth “all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7, margin). At Jesus’ birth the angel message was “I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people” (Luke 2:10). During His ministry Jesus revealed: “There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10). He described heaven as entering into “your master’s happiness” (Matt. 25:21). No wonder Paul advised: “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil. 4:4). Joy leads us to experience the positive optimism of heaven in the midst of an epidemic of pessimism on earth.

## **Prayer**

A life of prayer “without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17, KJV) can be experienced only through an attitude of prayer. Prayer endows us with “the mind of Christ,” enabling us to see all things through the eyes of God. Ellen White wrote: “Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power.”<sup>3</sup>

Since 1990 the United States’ National Institutes of Health has funded research that focused on the relationship between spirituality and health. In the book *God, Faith, and Health* Jeff Levin summarizes the findings of scholarly research in this field.

A number of studies focus on the impact of prayer on health. One example is Dr. Marc Musick’s study of 4,000 adults from North Carolina. The significant finding was that the more frequently people participate in prayer and Bible study, the healthier they rate themselves. Epidemiologists have found that how we rate our health has shown to be one of the reliable indicators of overall health.

## **Gratitude**

Ellen White wrote: “Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise.”<sup>4</sup> Gratitude is based on the belief that “every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights” (James 1:17). The result of God’s work is goodness: it was true in the perfect world of the Garden of Eden, and it is also true in today’s imperfect world.

As our senses become tuned to the goodness of God, gratitude and praise flow through our beings. Our spirit is lifted in praise, our minds tuned to God’s thoughts, and acts of giving to others invigorate us with a “helper’s high.”

We Seventh-day Adventists experience the Sabbath as a day of gratitude as we cast our cares on Him and experience the goodness of salvation. As we praise Him for the goodness He has brought into our lives we experience the Sabbath blessing. I invite you to practice the benefits of the Sabbath throughout the week by taking daily “rest stops” to notice God’s goodness and express your gratitude.

Gratitude is the result of seeing God’s goodness in this present world. Gratitude in the future is the result of seeing God’s goodness in the world to come. The eye of hope sees God at work in this broken world, and interprets natural disasters as evidence of the soon return of Jesus. Hope not only fuels gratitude—it enhances health.

Pioneer Adventist physician John Harvey Kellogg declared: “Hope is the most powerful stimulant for the body.” Hope has significant impact on our physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Oncologist Jerome Groopman linked hope and healing in his book *The Anatomy of Hope*. “Clear-eyed, hope gives us the courage to confront our circumstances and the capacity to surmount them. For all my patients, hope, true hope, has proved as important as any medication.”

May we experience the positive attitudes of heaven: “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thess. 5:16-18) that we may “enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well” (3 John 2).

### **Questions for Reflection and Sharing**

1. As you look at your own life, what three barriers stand between you and having a positive attitude? How might the three prescriptions highlighted in this article help overcome them?
2. Of the three characteristics listed, which do you find easiest to exercise? Which is most difficult? Why do you think that is?
3. Joy, prayer, and gratitude are described as contributing to total health. How have they contributed to your feelings of well-being? Be specific.

- 
1. Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1932), p. 45.
  2. Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1890), p. 600.
  3. Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1930), p. 249.
  4. Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 251.



## Reaching the Cities

### We can do more than we imagine.

A familiar story tells about a young man who was walking on an ocean beach. In the distance he noticed an old man walking toward him.

Periodically the old man would bend down, pick up something, and throw it into the ocean. Curious, the young man watched as the man repeatedly bent over, picked up an object, and threw it into the water.

When he came within talking distance, the young man asked the other man what he was doing. The old man explained: He was rescuing the starfish washed ashore by throwing them back into the water.

With disbelief the young man said, “Why? That’s useless. There’s no way you can save all the starfish; the task is too big. You can’t begin to make a difference.”

Without a word the old man bent over, picked up another starfish, and threw it back in the water. Then he quietly said, “Well, it made a difference for that one!”

We can’t do everything, but we can do something. We can’t change the whole world, but we can change the world where we are. That’s what Jesus wants us to do in the city or community where we are: make a difference! How do we make a difference? By doing “good,” just as Jesus did; intentionally, creatively, passionately, consistently doing good.



## Different Approaches

Jesus did good wherever He went. While there's no exact formula for witnessing and soul-winning, the Bible and Christian literature reveal a variety of methods that can be used when we witness and do good. Here are just a few:

*One-to-one appeals*, such as Philip in Acts 8:26-40, or Jesus in John 3:1-21;

*Storyteller narratives*, such as Solomon in Proverbs 7:6-27, or Jesus in Matthew 12-15;

*Direct confrontation*, such as Stephen in Acts 7:1-51, or Jesus in Matthew 15:3-9;

*Gospel proclamation*, such as Peter in Acts 3:12-26, or as Jesus instructed the 72 in Luke 10:1-22;

*Intellectual conversation*, such as Paul in Acts 17:22-34, or Jesus in Matthew 22:29-32;

*Personal testimony*, such as the blind man in John 9:1-34, or Jesus in John 14-15;

*Dialogue exchange*, such as Andrew in John 1:40-42, or Jesus with the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-26;

*Invitational appeal*, such as Jesus in Luke 5:27;

*Service/health/interaction*, such as the paralytic's friends in Mark 2:1-12, or Jesus in John 13:1-20;

*Acts of supernatural power*, such as the apostles in Acts 5:12-16, or Jesus in John 4:46-54.

The operative word is to *do*: do something good, and do it now. As Ellen White wrote: "The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago—a revelation of Christ. A great work of reform is demanded, and it is only through the grace of Christ that the work of restoration, physical, mental, and spiritual, can be accomplished."<sup>1</sup>

She further wrote: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with [men and women] as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"<sup>2</sup>

## Bold Challenge

In recent months Seventh-day Adventists around the world, all 18 million, are being challenged with a fresh, bold outreach appeal called Mission to the Cities. Every Adventist is asked to personally reach out to his or her neighborhood, community, and city to minister in practical ways as Christ did. The appeal is inclusive and intentional. Each believer can demonstrate their love for God and people by sharing the life-changing, Christ-centered good news found in the Bible in the context of the Seventh-day Adventist message.

Adventists respect the various religious faiths that base their beliefs in the Bible. However, we passionately believe that the Adventist message, the three angels' messages (Rev. 14:6-12), is God's message for this crucial time in history. We believe God has called Adventists to share this truth.

It is not new truth; it has been believed and practiced by faithful believers throughout the ages, from Genesis to Revelation. Adventists are called to direct people back to eternal truths that have been lost, ignored, and attacked through the ages. Adventists are called to "rebuild the ancient ruins" and "raise up the age-old foundations" (Isa. 58:12).

So how do you feel when confronted with this appeal to be involved in personal evangelism? Do you wonder if your efforts will make a difference? Some believers are impressed with the sheer magnitude of the task and experience feelings of enthusiasm, even excitement. Others, when they contemplate the sacrifice that will be required, feel a sense of depression. To still others, the apparent impossibilities of the task to impact the lives of the 7 billion people living on this planet seem unattainable, so they slip into a state of detachment and paralysis.

The good news is that we can successfully execute the challenge of ministering to the communities in which we live. We can embrace the challenge of Mission to the Cities with energy and enthusiasm. The apostle Paul helps us with this challenge of effectively using Christ's method for reaching the cities.

## **Empowering Principles**

In Acts 20:17-24 Paul outlines four simple principles for successful witnessing and evangelism. In succinct language he summed up both the attitude and actions of Christ's followers who want to do good.

Paul began by reminding the believers how he personally approached evangelism and soul-winning. Paul stressed the exemplary manner in which he lived among them when he worked in Ephesus (verse 18). He talked about how he ministered with humility and didn't allow opposition to hinder his service (verse 19). He reminded them of the different forms of evangelism he used, from public preaching to one-to-one, house-to-house teaching (verses 20, 21). Then Paul inspired the believers with his reference to being "compelled by the Spirit," that is, being impressed by the Holy Spirit, to evangelize in the great city of Jerusalem (verses 22, 23).

He reaches a climax by saying that regardless of the trials and tribulations that awaited him, "I consider my life worth nothing to me." Why? "My only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace" (verse 24). Paul goes on to identify by his example four attitudes of an effective worker for Christ.

*The Holy Spirit was Paul's partner.* For Paul, evangelism was a team effort, not a solo activity (verses 22, 23). The Holy Spirit, his companion, was a constant source of support and guidance.

*Paul was empowered to surmount obstacles.* He put duty over danger (verse 23). He maintained this mind-set by communicating with his Partner, focusing on his high calling, and by remembering why he was doing what he was doing. He kept in mind that the world desperately needed the good news he offered.

*Paul found inspiration in opposition.* He envisioned the eternal prospect over temporal comforts (verse 24). Paul knew that in every trial God has a greater benefit on the other side.

*Paul knew God had a purpose for his life.* He realized that while he couldn't finish other people's purpose, he could finish his own. Paul did the work assigned to him, knowing that God would accomplish the rest.

We will be successful if we assume the same attitude as Paul: not being overwhelmed by the immensity of the task, doing good where we are whenever we can, and trusting God for the outcome. While God works on behalf of the billions of inhabitants in the world, we must work on behalf of those to whom He directs us in our own world. Then we can, like Paul, finish our race and ministry with joy.

### **Questions for Reflection and Sharing**

1. "Jesus went around doing good." Unpack that sentence. What does it mean in practical terms for those of us who see Jesus as our example?
2. The author lists 10 ways to engage people in conversation about spiritual things. With which two or three are you most comfortable? In what practical ways do you use them?
3. The author mentions both Jesus and Paul as role models. With which one do you think you have more in common? Why?

- 
1. Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 143.
  2. Ibid.



## Reaching the World

### An imposing, but not impossible task

Confronted with the last commission that Jesus gave His followers (Matt. 28:18-20), we may ponder on what strategies or techniques we should adopt to accomplish such an enormous task. We face the challenges of reaching nonevangelized nations and ethnic groups, along with the growing secularization of Western nations. In recent years the emergence of neo-pagan spirituality posits new challenges and opportunities for our evangelistic endeavors.



So how can we reach the world for Jesus? I submit that above methods or techniques, a most important step in this process is to have a clear understanding of the mission Jesus bequeathed to us. The Scriptures show that Jesus had a clear vision of His mission. In the context of His encounter with Zacchaeus, Jesus illustrated and then clearly stated a crucial aspect of His mission. Since Jesus' mission is our mission, let us reflect on the story of Jesus' encounter with the tax collector.

### Jesus' Mission Statement

The story of Zacchaeus illustrates and states Jesus' mission. That tax collector had a strong desire to see Jesus. He may have thought that only Jesus was able to give him what money could not buy. So Zacchaeus was planning to find a way to see Jesus; however, in the process he wanted to remain unnoticed and unseen. To mingle with a crowd and try from a distance to glimpse the face of Jesus would not work, since Zacchaeus was small in stature. So he became creative; he figured out which road Jesus was passing through, ran ahead, and climbed into a sycamore tree. Zacchaeus did not know Jesus' mission statement, so he thought he'd found an excellent way to see Jesus yet remain unseen.

Zacchaeus thought he was the one looking to find and see Jesus, but now, seeing Jesus looking up at him, hearing Him mention his name, Zacchaeus begins to realize: *It is not I who am searching, looking to see Jesus, but it is Jesus who is looking and searching for me.* “And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house’ ” (Luke 19:5).<sup>1</sup>

What did You say, Jesus? You *must* visit me? Why “must”? Why me? Are You planning to punish me for my shortcomings and evildoings? What is Your agenda? What is the main purpose of Your desire to see me and visit me?

When the people saw Jesus visiting the house of the tax collector, they started to grumble, saying: “He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner” (verse 7). It is very remarkable that Jesus finishes this visit by explaining the “must” of His visit, and He does so by revealing His mission statement: “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (verse 10).

Said Jesus, Please, when you try to interpret My actions, see them in the light of My mission, My purpose of life and ministry: “I have come to find and save, not find and punish.”

## **Our Mission Statement**

Today Jesus invites His followers to identify themselves with His mission statement. He is looking for partners, those who are willing to make His mission statement their own. It is the supreme desire of our Redeemer to have in me and you someone who will make His mission statement a living reality. How would our churches look today if every member had the same mission statement? What environment, what atmosphere, would prevail in our churches? How would our young people feel in our churches?

Unfortunately, many young people have the impression that often the adults in our churches take only part of the mission statement seriously—namely, the part about finding and bringing in, but not the part that speaks about saving and thus loving and caring as Jesus did. When one looks at the retention statistics of many of our congregations, it becomes obvious that we have to change something. We need a reformation that leads us to Jesus’ full mission statement.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus stressed the importance of loving, forgiving, and caring. That’s why He was not ashamed to mingle with those considered to be society’s sinners and outcasts. This is why He left the crowd that was following Him and visited Zacchaeus, the tax collector. It is also of great interest to note that the Gospel of Luke does not record any rebuke or reproach while Jesus was in the house of the sinner Zacchaeus. Jesus simply shared His love and acceptance.

Looking at Jesus, Zacchaeus understood: “Jesus has no other agenda but to help me and save me!” This love of Christ not only converted Zacchaeus, but also brought him to a reformation of his life, to a divine transformation.

Ellen White wrote: “Christ came to bring salvation within the reach of all. Upon the cross of Calvary He paid the infinite redemption price for a lost world. His self-denial and self-sacrifice, His unselfish labor, His humiliation, above all, the offering up of His life, testifies to the depth of His love for fallen man. It was to seek and to save the lost that He came to earth. His mission was to sinners, sinners of every grade, of every tongue and nation. He paid the price for all, to ransom them and bring them into union and sympathy with Himself. The

most erring, the most sinful, were not passed by; His labors were especially for those who most needed the salvation He came to bring. The greater their need of reform, the deeper was His interest, the greater His sympathy, and the more earnest His labors. His great heart of love was stirred to its depths for the ones whose condition was most hopeless and who most needed His transforming grace.”<sup>2</sup>

The life of Christ clearly demonstrates that change in life is achieved more successfully through love and care than through sermonizing, confrontation, or criticism. As Ellen White reiterates: “We must expect to meet and bear with great imperfections in those who are young and inexperienced. Christ has bidden us seek to restore such in the spirit of meekness, and He holds us responsible for pursuing a course which will drive them to discouragement, despair, and ruin. Unless we daily cultivate the precious plant of love we are in danger of becoming narrow, unsympathetic, bigoted, and critical, esteeming ourselves righteous when we are far from being approved of God.”<sup>3</sup>

Warm, loving, caring churches are places where people feel accepted no matter what. These kinds of churches are places where people want to come, and want to bring with them their friends and neighbors. And if, in addition to this, every member becomes a loving, Christlike person, he or she will be a living, walking center of influence for Christ and His kingdom.

Jesus not only gave His life for sinners—He ministered to those whom He encountered, meeting their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs. He spent a significant amount of time just caring for people and healing them. Yes, His ultimate goal was to save them, to give them eternal life, but Jesus knew that salvation is accepted only when it is offered by someone who loves, who cares, who meets our needs.

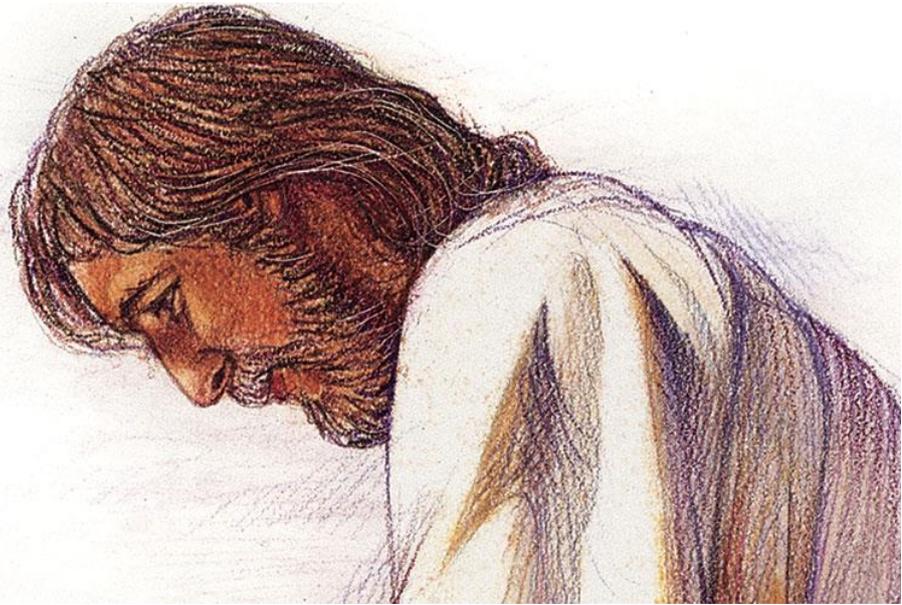
## **Our Commitment**

Let us never forget Jesus’ mission statement. May it become our mission statement as well. If we are serious about reaching this world for Christ, we have to follow Christ’s example.

We need more love for one another, more love for the erring, more love for the young, more love for our neighbors, more love for those who do not yet know Christ, more love for God Himself, more love for His Word, more love and acceptance for His mission statement.

People who experience Christ’s love cannot help loving others and witnessing to them. Let us pray that Christ’s mission statement becomes ours as well! With Christ’s mission statement we also have His promise to be with us until the end of days, and to bless our efforts for His glorious harvest. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

- 
1. Unless otherwise noted, texts in this article are from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
  2. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 5, p. 603.
  3. *Ibid.*, p. 605.



## Following Christ's Method

### Advancing Christ's kingdom with Christian concern



When Christ sent out the twelve disciples on their first missionary tour, He bade them, "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." Matthew 10:7, 8.<sup>1</sup> . . .

The giving of the gospel to the world is the work that God has committed to those who bear His name. For earth's sin and misery the gospel is the only antidote. To make known to all mankind the message of the grace of God is the first work of those who know its healing power. . . .

The world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago—a revelation of Christ. A great work of reform is demanded, and it is only through the grace of Christ that the work of restoration, physical, mental, and spiritual, can be accomplished.

### The Key to True Success

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."

There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and

rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit. . . .



In almost every community there are large numbers who do not listen to the preaching of God's Word or attend any religious service. If they are reached by the gospel, it must be carried to their homes. Often the relief of their physical needs is the only avenue by which they can be approached. . . .

Many have no faith in God and have lost confidence in man. But they appreciate acts of sympathy and helpfulness. As they see one with no inducement of earthly praise or compensation come into their homes, ministering to the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the sad, and tenderly pointing all to Him of whose love and pity the human worker is but the messenger—as they see this, their hearts are touched. Gratitude springs up. Faith is

kindled. They see that God cares for them, and they are prepared to listen as His Word is opened. . . .

Everywhere there is a tendency to substitute the work of organizations for individual effort. Human wisdom tends to consolidation, to centralization, to the building up of great churches and institutions. Multitudes leave to institutions and organizations the work of benevolence; they excuse themselves from contact with the world, and their hearts grow cold. They become self-absorbed and unimpressible. Love for God and man dies out of the soul.

### **Individual, Personal Work**

Christ commits to His followers an individual work—a work that cannot be done by proxy. Ministry to the sick and the poor, the giving of the gospel to the lost, is not to be left to committees or organized charities. Individual responsibility, individual effort, personal sacrifice, is the requirement of the gospel.

“Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in” is Christ's command, “that My house may be filled.” He brings men into touch with those whom they seek to benefit. “Bring the poor that are cast out to thy house,” He says. “When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him.” “They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Luke 14:23; Isaiah 58:7; Mark 16:18. Through direct contact, through personal ministry, the blessings of the gospel are to be communicated. . . .

The church of Christ is organized for service. Its watchword is ministry. Its members are soldiers, to be trained for conflict under the Captain of their salvation. Christian ministers, physicians, teachers, have a broader work than many have recognized. They are not only to minister to the people, but to teach them to minister. They should not only give instruction in right principles, but educate their hearers to impart these principles. Truth that is not lived,

that is not imparted, loses its life-giving power, its healing virtue. Its blessing can be retained only as it is shared. . . .

### **Every Member Involved and Trained**

Every church member should be engaged in some line of service for the Master. Some cannot do so much as others, but everyone should do his utmost to roll back the tide of disease and distress that is sweeping over our world.

Many would be willing to work if they were taught how to begin. They need to be instructed and encouraged.

Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath-school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted. There should be schools of health, cooking schools, and classes in various lines of Christian help work. There should not only be teaching, but actual work under experienced instructors. Let the teachers lead the way in working among the people, and others, uniting with them, will learn from their example. One example is worth more than many precepts. . . .

### **Work for Others Now**

Nothing will so arouse a self-sacrificing zeal and broaden and strengthen the character as to engage in work for others. Many professed Christians, in seeking church relationship, think only of themselves. They wish to enjoy church fellowship and pastoral care. They become members of large and prosperous churches, and are content to do little for others. In this way they are robbing themselves of the most precious blessings. Many would be greatly benefited by sacrificing their pleasant, ease-conducing associations. They need to go where their energies will be called out in Christian work and they can learn to bear responsibilities. . . .

But none need wait until called to some distant field before beginning to help others. Doors of service are open everywhere. All around us are those who need our help. The widow, the orphan, the sick and the dying, the heartsick, the discouraged, the ignorant, and the outcast are on every hand.

We should feel it our special duty to work for those living in our neighborhood. Study how you can best help those who take no interest in religious things. As you visit your friends and neighbors, show an interest in their spiritual as well as in their temporal welfare. Speak to them of Christ as a sin-pardoning Savior. Invite your neighbors to your home, and read with them from the precious Bible and from books that explain its truths. Invite them to unite with you in song and prayer. In these little gatherings, Christ Himself will be present, as He has promised, and hearts will be touched by His grace.

Church members should educate themselves to do this work. This is just as essential as to save the benighted souls in foreign countries. While some feel the burden for souls afar off, let the many who are at home feel the burden of precious souls who are around them, and work just as diligently for their salvation. . . .

## Use Current Opportunities

Let none pass by little opportunities, to look for larger work. You might do successfully the small work, but fail utterly in attempting the larger work, and fall into discouragement. It is by doing with your might what you find to do that you will develop aptitude for larger work. It is by slighting the daily opportunities, by neglecting the little things right at hand, that so many become fruitless and withered.

Do not depend upon human aid. Look beyond human beings to the One appointed by God to bear our griefs, to carry our sorrows, and to supply our necessities. Taking God at His word, make a beginning wherever you find work to do, and move forward with unfaltering faith. It is faith in Christ's presence that gives strength and steadfastness. Work with unselfish interest, with painstaking effort, with persevering energy. . . .

## Represent Jesus

In all your work remember that you are bound up with Christ, a part of the great plan of redemption. The love of Christ, in a healing, life-giving current, is to flow through your life. As you seek to draw others within the circle of His love, let the purity of your language, the unselfishness of your service, the joyfulness of your demeanor, bear witness to the power of His grace. Give to the world so pure and righteous a representation of Him, that men shall behold Him in His beauty. . . .

Lift up Jesus, crying, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29, ARV).<sup>2</sup> He alone can satisfy the craving of the heart and give peace to the soul. . . .

From age to age the Lord has been seeking to awaken in the souls of men a sense of their divine brotherhood. Be coworkers with Him. While distrust and alienation are pervading the world, Christ's disciples are to reveal the spirit that reigns in heaven.

Speak as He would speak, act as He would act. Constantly reveal the sweetness of His character. Reveal that wealth of love which underlies all His teachings and all His dealings with men. The humblest workers, in cooperation with Christ, may touch chords whose vibrations shall ring to the ends of the earth and make melody throughout eternal ages.

Heavenly intelligences are waiting to cooperate with human instrumentalities, that they may reveal to the world what human beings may become, and what, through union with the Divine, may be accomplished for the saving of souls that are ready to perish. There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. All who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to His service will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own Spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in mind and heart. Through the grace given us we may achieve victories that because of our own erroneous and preconceived opinions, our defects of character, our smallness of faith, have seemed impossible.

To everyone who offers himself to the Lord for service, withholding nothing, is given power for the attainment of measureless results. For these God will do great things.

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all texts in this article are from the King James Version.
2. Texts credited to ARV are from *The Holy Bible*, edited by the American Revision Committee, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1901.

This article has been excerpted from pages 139-160 of the book *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905). Seventh-day Adventists believe that **Ellen G. White** (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during more than 70 years of public ministry.