An Evaluation Of The Concept And Function Of Mutual Ministry And Spiritual Gifts In The South Caribbean Conference

Edwin A. English
Andrews University

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ANDREW UNIVERSITY
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

AN EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT AND FUNCTION
OF MUTUAL MINISTRY AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS
IN THE SOUTH CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE

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

by
Edwin A. English
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Approval
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Eternal gratitude to the All-Wise One who fulfilled in me the promise

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him (James 1:5).
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The keynote of the South Caribbean Conference is "Evangelism." However, both the ministry and the laity need a higher level of consciousness in terms of conserving, edifying, and solidifying the new converts who are baptized into the Churches. In other words, the concern for goals must be balanced with the conservation of souls.

Perhaps one of the factors that contributes to this lack of proper attention to Church members, new as well as old, is traceable to the current concept known as "The Centurion Retreat." While no one can deny that goals and objectives are helpful incentives for efficiency and accomplishments, ministers should be alert to the possible dangers in allowing these goals to become ends in themselves.

What the administrative brethren and other members of the clergy need to keep constantly in view, is the fact that every minister does not have the gift of public evangelism. The man who has the gift of pastor-teacher or even pastor, does not necessarily carry out the work of a public evangelist successfully, and vice versa. Both categories of ministers are needed, and both offices were designed and given by God for the enlarging of the Laos, for its edification, and for its enrichment.
In the light of this, we would propose that the South Caribbean Conference needs to place much more emphasis upon and give attention to the concept and relationship of pastor and evangelist, for it is my conviction that in this Conference, as well as in any other field, failure to stress the proper role of the pastor will contribute to a high rate of apostasy.

A recent statistical report for over a period of three years, 1971 - 1973, shows that the South Caribbean Conference had an increase of 6,412 baptized members, but no accurate account of the breakdown in the apostasy rate is available. According to general estimates, apostasies for that same period were in the vicinity of about 1,022.1 (See Appendix I.)

In my judgment, the imbalance between Pastoral Evangelism2 and Pastoral Care and Nurture has kept the minister so preoccupied with the former and with other Church activities (for example, Harvest Ingathering),3 that the time he has left for Pastoral Care of the Laos is greatly reduced.

Perhaps an additional insight to the whole problem is the cultural milieu that surrounds the Churches in the Caribbean.

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1 Slimen Saliba, "Letter to Edwin A. English, 7 May 1974," Secretarial Department, South Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.
2 Refers to two Evangelistic Crusades held by the minister each year.
3 All members of the Ekklesia of the South Caribbean Conference engage in solicitation of funds from non-members, to help in the work of the Ministry of Reconciliation.
Coming from Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, and Baptist\textsuperscript{4} communions, most of these converts look to the minister to be an evangelist, pastor, administrator, manager, preacher, \textit{et cetera}. They see him performing all these roles within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, yet fail to discern that the area which receives most of his attention is that of evangelism.

A further insight that relates to the cultural environment of the Church in the South Caribbean Conference because of the diversity of religious backgrounds from which these people come, is the fact that the Concept of the Ministry of the Laity is virtually unknown and obviously lacking. The importance of this fact will become clearer in the succeeding chapters of this study.

In addition to this cultural and religious setting, another area of concern is the prevailing attitude towards new religious concepts and practices, especially those originating from America. In the past, American education and training have been viewed with some suspicion, because at times they have been quite irrelevant to the cultural and religious needs of the people. It is regrettable that, in a large measure, the American missionaries have failed to communicate more intelligently and wisely with the local situation in terms of adapting to the culture of the local people. As a result one finds that usually the American minister ministered to the local people in ways that are applicable to American people. This

\textsuperscript{4}A religious sect which differs from the Baptist congregations of the United States. The sect is divided into groups, two of which are the Spiritual Baptists and the Independent Baptists.
Americanization process has, in the past, affected the Concept of the Ministry, and this is partly responsible for the reluctance, if not suspicion, with which they view anything new coming from America. It could be that this attitude would not have prevailed had the missionaries been as properly educated as they are now, in their approach to missions.

The urgency and need for a programme that is particularly applicable to the situation of the Church in the South Caribbean Conference has led the investigator to devise a project which, hopefully, will correct and meet this urgency. Also, quite apart from helping to lessen the apostasy rate by involving the members of the Church in what I propose as The Buddy System, Fringe Membership Programme, and The Discovery of Spiritual Gifts, one extremely important result I envision as coming from the implementation of this project is that of helping to curb the attrition of young men in the ministry. It is my conviction that the above-mentioned problems could be greatly reduced, if not eliminated, when this Ministry of Reconciliation, as effected through the proposed programmes, is understood, not as the work of the evangelist alone, but as the work of an entire team—pastor, teacher, administrator, layman—also, when the Church realizes that all are part and parcel of a total ministry of Jesus Christ in His Church.

There is a pressing need for greater and more effective educational facilities for the training of the ministry. The educational preparation of the ministers in this Conference range from the 12th grade to the BTh, yet it cannot be said that all of
these men possess a true Concept of the Ministry of the Laity and of the relationship between the ministers and the laity. Of course, the college now offers a BTh degree, and it is encouraging that most of the younger ministers are taking advantage of this opportunity to equip themselves for a more efficient ministry, but their education will still be lacking unless there is a proper understanding of the Concept of the Ministry of the Laity. When this Concept of the Ministry of the Laity is rightly understood and appreciated, and the utilization of these varied gifts justly valued, then the laity could indeed be the greatest asset in the hands of the ministry; hence the justification and the rationale for this project.
CHAPTER II

THE MEANING AND FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

Its Meaning

In the New Testament, the Ekklesia has reference to an assembly of persons, summoned for a particular purpose. This assembly could either be gathered for prayer, instruction, or deliberation (Acts 11:26; 12:15; 1 Cor. 11:18). It may also connote a community of believers gathered from a single household (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 4:15) or from a single city; e.g. Jerusalem (Acts 8:1) or Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2). These communities could be depicted by a noun in the plural, as in 1 Cor. 16:1, 19, and also by a singular noun, as in the case of Acts 9:31.

Of significance here, though, is the fact that these communities, whether singular or plural, were called by God. They were the called out ones (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 11 Cor. 1:1, and Gal. 1:13). This qualification gives one the insight that those called by God are God's property. He called them into existence. He dwells in them through His Holy Spirit. He rules over them through His delegated servants to whom He has given the gifts of administration (1 Cor. 12:5). Through this community God's purpose is to be realized. The Church was called for the world, and God's aim is that the world
may be saved through the Church. This does not say that God cannot use other means even though He has chosen, selected, and called His Church for the salvation of the world.

The New Testament writings suggest, also, that the Ekklesia stands as name for the eschatological people of God who are gathered from all nations through the reconciling work of Christ to be participators of His glory here and in the ages to come (Eph. 1:23; 2:10; Heb. 12:22; Heb. 12:23, 24; Rom. 12:5; Col. 2:17).

P. S. Minear speaking on the elect of God, however, sees ". . . Christ as God's Elect, . . . the representative of the eschatological community. (Luke 9:35; 23:35; John 1:34.) It is in him as the Elect that men become the elect. (Eph. 1:4.)"5

The Old Testament concept of the Church, according to The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, would indicate that qahal is the assembling of Israel before God on Horeb (Deut. 4:10: 9:10: 10:4: 18:16), when God sealed His covenant with them. This served to define the significance of the Ecclesia of Israel . . . .6

It is known from the LXX that Ekklesia is used about one hundred times for the Hebrew word qahal--the basic meaning of the word being "meeting or gathering." But this is not the New Testament concept or meaning. The New Testament refers to persons called out from former backgrounds, be they paganism or Judaism; whereas, the


Old Testament refers to a "calling together." Therefore, for the sake of clarity, when **Ekklesia** is used in this paper it refers to the "called out ones."

One discovers, also, that Ellen White does not look to the Old Testament for the organization of the Church, but to the New. "It was at the ordination of the Twelve, that the first step was taken in the organization of the church that after Christ's departure was to carry on His work on the earth."\(^7\)

It would be beneficial to examine a few references to the meaning of the Church as seen by other scholars.

Henry Barclay Swete's observation of the Church is

> The house of God, a great mansion replete with all things necessary for the Master's use; a spiritual house built of living stones, designed for holy priestly service.\(^8\)

Swete uses the Greek Old Testament in which he traces the Church as coming from the Hebrew **qahal**, then declares that the term **qahal**--a term which has passed into Christian use--means the congregation of Israel. In this sense Swete concurs with the findings of the compilers of *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. The interpreters, however, go further in that they see the **Ekklesia** as belonging to God because He has called it into being, dwells within, rules over it, and realizes His purpose through it. Schmidt sees this "belonging" as the distinguishing attribute of ownership. The


genitive του θεου, which is of Old Testament origin, together with the New Testament concept of Church, stands in contrast with and even in opposition to other forms of society. Even when του θεου does not occur, one should understand that the called-out ones are God's, for it is only in this light that the full significance of Εκκλεσια can be appreciated.  

Following Swete's meaning of the Church, Hans Kűng refers to the Church thus:

Those who hear the word with faith and become part of the little flock of Christ (Luke 12:32) have received the kingdom itself. . . . The Church, consequently, equipped with the gifts of her Founder and faithfully guarding His precepts of charity, humility and self-sacrifice, receives the mission to proclaim and to establish among all peoples the kingdom of Christ and of God. 

This point of view seems to be the same put forward by R. Newton Flew, in which he assumes that the "little flock" to which Jesus spoke was the true Israel, those who through repentance and obedience accepted Jesus as their Shepherd and did not reject His message but were themselves commissioned to mission. 

Kung, however, by his statement on the meaning of the Church, seems to have opened up a critical path which he hopes ecclesiologists could follow in their attempt to show what the concept of Church means in the New Testament. However, should one adhere to this view he should 

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do so with the awareness that it is speculative

... to try and establish historically that Jesus' own preaching includes the constituting and ordering of a Church or gives a basis for taking the elements of constitution and order which may be discerned in the New Testament as forming a closed system.\(^\text{12}\)

Therefore, one would conclude that Kung sees the Church as the new people of God, and not necessarily a temple or a synagogue. This new people of God heard the word with faith and became a part of the little flock of Christ.

Gibbs and Morton see the Church as being both lay and secular. "It is lay because it is essentially made up of people. It is secular because it is sent into this world."\(^\text{13}\) Furthermore, they believe that the Church is a divine society because Jesus called men to follow Him, and still does. They are opposed to the Church being viewed as a "religious society" and prefer the term "lay society," because it is made up of the men and women whom Jesus called. For them, therefore, the Church, in essence, is people, and not an institution. It is

... the mystery of God's creation: a church made up of men and women, the only true lay, secular society, the herald and the instrument of God's purpose for all mankind.\(^\text{14}\)

To this body of Christ in the world, with all its members called to a united service in that body, is the concept they have given. What is

\(^\text{12}\)Küng, Church, p. 78.


\(^\text{14}\)Ibid.
even more challenging is their insistence that this people must become inextricably involved in the affairs of the world. While one would agree with them, there are risks involved. There is a certain amount of jeopardy in remaining aloof from the world so that the Church may retain her purity which, in the ultimate end she may lose, because indifference can only cause her to be relieved of her life-giving power and healing virtues. On the other hand, the Church runs the risk of being contaminated, becoming too secular and worldly by her mingling or becoming involved in the affairs of the world. It is here that the Church should emulate the example of its head, Jesus Christ. Jesus made it compulsory to isolate Himself from the world in order that He might receive power and strength so that He may freely mingle with the world in order to be its Saviour. It is this act of isolation and mingling which the early Church seemed to have mastered and this could be the reason for St. Paul's proclamation that the hope of the gospel was preached to every creature which is under heaven (Col. 1:23). This dualism is needed if the Church is to accomplish its mission and witness to a world which technology and science have given the feeling of "coming of age."

As a summary to this section and probably as a working guide for this project, it would be appropriate to say that the Church is God's called-out people, His assembly of persons summoned for a particular purpose (Acts 11:26; 12:15; 1 Cor. 1:2). The Church of God is God's property (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13), the Churches of Christ being men and women knowing and experiencing Jesus Christ by His indwelling Spirit (Rom. 16:16; Gal. 1:29),
baptized into Christ, their Head, having accepted the Word with faith; reconciled, dedicated, and committed to a progressive mission by God for themselves and for their fellowmen.

It is to this duty, this function, that we would now address ourselves.

The Function of the Church

Swete compares the Scripture 1 Pet. 2:9 with that of Ex. 19:5 to ascertain the priestly function of the Church. He sees the Church as the prototype of Israel, a spiritual house designed for holy acts of priestly services. Swete ascribes to this "body of Christ" a sacerdotal character which, he claims, belongs to the whole, pastors and people alike. This body is the priesthood of the laity, or to speak more correctly, the common priesthood of all believers, laymen and clerics, who belong to the essence of the Christian character.15 To him the Church is the priesthood of believers, having a special priestly function to perform in a similar manner as was the family of Levi and Aaron, dedicated to the special service of the tabernacle and on behalf of their brethren.

Swete's assertion falls within the category of an "isolation motif,"16 where the Church is only concerned with special services for its brethren and not for mankind, in general. But further, he makes provision for this lack by adding a "yeast" or "salt motif"17 in which

15Swete, Catholic Church, p. 864.

16Term used by Dr. Gottfried Oosterwal in his class "Church and Society."

17Ibid.
the Church mingles with the world in order to help save the world for God. He observes that the function of the Church is also self-propagation. "The Lord," said he, "sent her into the world to fill the earth with a spiritual progeny." He uses the figure of the mustard seed (Matt. 13:31f.) and the symbol of baptism (Matt. 24:14), then concludes that this is the work especially committed to the Christian Church in all successive generations, even to the time of the consummation. Swete further points out that "In the Apostolic Church . . . every believer was a missionary, within the sphere of his own opportunities." This was God's purpose and aim as announced by Jesus Christ in John 3:16. God called the Church for the sake of the world. The world is God's first concern, and His Church must make this concern hers. The Church's function, consequently, is for herself and for the world.

One of the primary functions of the Church is that of worship. She functions in the world as a worships of the true God, as the bearer, the recipient or the custodian of God's salvation in Christ Jesus. But along with this, the Ekklesia is the pilgrim people of God whose innate raison d'être is to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth by living in mission.

Joseph C. McLelland places a deep significance on worship, but he views it as one of the factors in mission. Says McLelland: "Mission is the orientation of the church, the milieu of the church, the

\[18\] Swete, Catholic Church, p. 94.

\[19\] Ibid., p. 95.
so that worship, fellowship, polity are always its servants."\textsuperscript{20}

Further, he places emphasis on the fact that "Just as the Gospel was God's declaration of intention, so the mission is the proclamation of this good news, the joyous telling of what's ahead."\textsuperscript{21}

The Apostle Peter states that the Laos is chosen. They are a royal priesthood, holy and God's purchased people. He continues that the Laos is to show forth God's praises (1 Pet. 2:9). Peter is saying, in essence, that the people of God are first called. They are the elected or the selected ones. They are not to remain static, but to show forth, to take back word, to announce, or to tell out to their fellowmen God's praises, to declare what His transforming light has done for them. In this sense, therefore, the called-out people of God are also commissioned to mission.

Minear, commenting on this passage in 1 Peter 2:9, says:

This passage suggests three inferences concerning the life of this people. Its previous existence was one of shadowy nonexistence in darkness. The transition into being coincided with the transforming operation of God's mercy. This transition was, in turn, inseparable from the vocation of declaring God's wonderful deeds.\textsuperscript{22}

Peter, Paul, and the disciples in the New Testament Church never had in mind that the missionary task of the Church was conceived of as being one of its many extra activities. Jones and Wesson

\textsuperscript{20}Joseph C. McLelland, Toward a Radical Church (Canada: The Ryerson Press, 1967), p. 11.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., p. 145.

\textsuperscript{22}Minear, Images of the Church, p. 69.
expressed it in this way:

... mission is of the esse of the Church in a profound way ... The Church does not have to do an occasional mission, or put on for the benefit of the world. She is a mission, automatically, by being bound up with Jesus Christ. Inevitably, she exists in the world as the bearer of God's commission to go to the ends of the earth to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ ... 23

McLelland insists that "The Church is part of God's mission to the world--the part made up of human agents attached to Christ's own person and work ..." 24 Kraemer notes that the Church is mission because of "God's concern for the whole of mankind." 25

From the above statements one probably would agree that the nature of the Church is seen in her being called out by God, and her function in her commission to mission. To say that the Ekklesia is mission implies that as called-out ones, she is at all times, in all places, in all the world, and even locally, embracing a Ministry of Reconciliation. This Ministry of Reconciliation is the work of the Laos, who created a Christian presence in the New Testament society until the designation, Christian, became synonymous with every disciple of the laity (Acts 11:26).

One must be careful not to see this function of the Church as mere obligation. If this were so, then mission would be a "mark" of the Church and not its very essence. Luke, in Acts 1:8, insists

24 McLelland, Toward a Radical Church, p. 21.
that it goes deeper. He quotes the words of Jesus, "Ye shall receive
to power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you and ye shall be
witnesses unto me . . . unto the end of the world." Therefore the
Holy Spirit is the Baptizer of the Church into witness-bearing.

Jesus further said to the little flock, "Peace be with you!
As the Father has sent me, even so I sent you" (John 20:21). The
disciples became apostles sent by Jesus, who Himself is the Model
Apostle (Kat exochen) (John 17:3). Consequently, the Church is the
community of the "sent," and also the community of witnesses. The
Church, the called people of God, who accepted the word by faith,
reconciled, dedicated and committed to God in Christ Jesus is now
sent back into the world to be His witnesses and to show forth His
praises, thus bringing glory to God. Hence the Church is sent to the
world to be its saviour and into the world to be God's witnesses.

As part of the mission of the Church, Künig adds that the
Church possesses diakonia aspects, not so much because of her service
of care for the bodily needs of others, but because of her fundamental
concern with living for others even as Christ, her head (Mark 9:25;
10:43 - 45; Matt. 20:26 - 28). Künig explains further that

... the origins of the word diakonia, in contrast to
other similar verbs, indicates that a completely personal
service is implied. This is an essential element in being
a disciple: a man is a disciple of Jesus through service
of his fellowmen.26

Jesus chose and emphasized this new conception of service
approximately six times in the synoptic gospels. This new concept must

26 Künig, Church, p. 391.
have had a strong impression on the disciples as they sought to emulate the Master who sent them into the world to be His witnesses by precept and example. It follows, therefore, that the Church is called and sent back into the world to live for others, to be servants in the world.

But in order to be of service to the world, one must fall in love with Jesus, for the root of this service is love. The goal of this service for others is love. Service occurs out of love for others even as Christ, having loved His own who were in the world, loved them to the end (John 13:1). This selflessness must begin at the household of faith (Gal. 6:10), spreading out in its mission to the world. The philanthropy of the early Church was chiefly shown towards members of its own body. However, it was also manifested towards the world in which Christ also had other sheep (John 3:16; 10:16). Therefore, when individuals are called out of the world, they are called to function as priests for Christ to a world about which He is extremely concerned. The Church is mission, and, as such, ministers to one another and to the world. God's aim is to offer reconciliation, through grace, to the world. His Church is the agent, and through its function it is the means of this reconciliatory process. It is the agent in that to it has been committed the Message of Reconciliation for the world. It is the means in that it proclaims this Message through the preached word and the demonstration of divine grace in the life.
CHAPTER III

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF THE LAOS

The Concept of the Laos as held by many in the South Caribbean Conference presupposes a distinction between the clergy and the laity. In considering the Biblical Concept of the Laos the question arises, "Is the Church laity, or is it comprised of both the laity and the clergy?"

From the standpoint of the Bible, the Church is laity (Acts 11:26; Acts 12:15; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Pet. 2:9), and there is no structural difference between the clergy and the laity. This clergy-laity concept, though not universal, pervades many churches, and is alive in certain areas of the work of missions in the South Caribbean Conference. Because of this, both ministers and members may have a wrong understanding of their mission to a world who needs to know of the saving knowledge of Christ.

With too many members, the idea is conveyed that the minister is paid to preach, to evangelize, and to oversee the business of the Church. But does not this position make the minister's work multi-faceted and pose a number of problems? Because of his professional training, the burden of the responsibility for the Church falls primarily on him, and he finds himself working or functioning as an
evangelist, pastor, preacher, administrator, organizer, counselor, and educator. As pointed out above, in-depth involvement in all these areas causes serious problems for the minister who may only have the gift of pastor-teacher and not the gift of an evangelist.

One major problem in this multi-faceted situation is that of competence. Can the minister acquire the competence to perform these many functions? How much time should he devote to each of these functions? Very often the minister finds himself cross-pressurized, in that the demands of his role require of him more than he is capable of effectively accomplishing. Added to this is the important fact that quite frequently the performance of his duties necessitates the supervision of a number of Churches.\(^\text{27}\)

Two fundamental questions may be asked: (1) Is this the Biblical view of ministry? (2) What, in fact, is the function or role of the Laos in the work of ministry?

Most converts in the South Caribbean Conference come from Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, and Baptist traditions--traditions that have made them dependent on the minister. He does the work of the Church and conveys to his congregation the idea that he is being paid to handle all the affairs of the Church on an autocratic basis. This same notion has permeated the ministry in the South Caribbean Conference and with the exceptions of Harvest Ingathering and Big Week,\(^\text{28}\)

\(^{27}\)In the South Caribbean Conference the minister is often given the supervision of between twelve and thirteen Churches.

\(^{28}\)Big Week: Members of the Laos are requested to sell missionary books during one week of each year. It is hoped that those who purchase these books and read them would eventually be led to Christ.
activities in which parishioners are actively engaged, the minister carries out independently every phase of the work of the Church, in many cases irrespective of the talents and capabilities present in his district. He is so evangelistically oriented that he does not see the necessity of planning his programme so that it would include the preparation of the laity for its ministry.

According to Ellen White, individuals upon acceptance of Christ, become co-workers with Him for the evangelization of the world.\(^{29}\) Therefore the laity, though non-ordained members of the Church, are directly commissioned to the mission of the Church.

Francis O. Ayres agrees with this assumption, for he emphasizes the fact that "If you are a baptized Christian, you are already a minister."\(^{30}\) Ellen White would wholeheartedly endorse Ayres' ideas. However, the South Caribbean Conference yet needs a correct understanding of the Biblical view of the term Laos, an understanding which would help to eradicate the existing misconception of the term laity and help to incorporate workable measures toward the progress of the work of missions.

The term Laos takes on both Old Testament and New Testament connotations. Viewed from an Old Testament point of view, the word is used with reference to the people of God. It was one of the many expressions in the Old Testament which indicated the unique


relationship which existed between Yahweh and His people (Num. 11:29; 16:41; Judges 5:11, 12; 1 Sam. 2:24). Strathmann states that "... it serves to emphasize the special and privileged religious position of this people as the people of God."  

In the time of the Septuagint, the term "people of God" was emphasized in a different way. It no longer meant a people in the sense of a mass or even in the sense of a populace, but a people in the sense of a union—people who are in union.

It should be observed, however, that according to Strathmann, this word Laos could mean "... the people as distinct from the rulers or upper classes, with a fluid boundary between this and the popular use for population [Gen. 41:40; Ex. 1:20]."  Perhaps it was from this concept where the people or Laos were looked upon as being lower in rank and distinct from their rulers, that the practice of distinction between the Laos and the minister continued down to the Greeks who then made the distinction between the lay and the magistrate. The dichotomy, however, does not seem to have had its origin with the Greeks, but at an earlier period. One would suggest that such usage originated in Egypt where the gulf or distance is set between the ruling class, the royal house and their courtiers, and the common people. A full examination of this usage, however, lies outside the scope

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32Ibid., p. 34.
of this study. But from the foregoing statements, one would conclude that it became feasible for this idea of characteristic difference to quickly work its way into a number of western languages, thereby creating a climate that conditioned man to look upon the word "lay" or Laos with inferiority.

Yet Strathmann insists that in the Septuagint constant emphasis is laid on the special religious position of Israel and that this is grounded in the fact that she is God's people. Minear seems to suggest that one must take into consideration first

... God and his purpose, then the emergence of his people as a manifestation of his purpose. The accent must be allowed to fall on the God who creates this society as his people by his choice of them.

J. H. Wharton, in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, directs our attention to the fact that

Israel /the people of God/ is Yahweh's "property possession, and inheritance". While the term "people of God" appears relatively few times, the use of /the Hebrew word/ qahal, with personal suffixes, "my people," "thy people," "his people") occurs very frequently in this sense . . . .

Strathmann emphasizes, also, that because Israel was Yahweh's chosen possession, the idea of her holiness must be attached (Deut. 7:6), Ps. 4:3).

\[33\] Strathmann, Theological Dictionary, IV:35.

\[34\] Minear, Images of the Church, p. 69.


\[36\] Strathmann, Theological Dictionary, IV:35.
In another section of *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, the writer also assumes that

The term . . . "people of Yahweh," may have had its origin in the cultic institution of the holy war in the days of the tribal federation before the monarchy, as a designation for the assembly of able-bodied men gathered for defensive warfare . . . . Behind this institution lay the unique COVENANT relationship, . . . Yahweh as the one who had constituted the people Israel through certain mighty acts in history, and had entered into covenant with them . . . .37

An important factor, and one which should be thoroughly understood, is that Israel was Yahweh's possession, not because of her choosing, but because of His gracious choosing wrought in love (Deut. 7:6). There was nothing impressive or virtuous about Israel to cause Yahweh to love her (Deut. 3:7; 9:6 - 15), but He God, did. In doing this God is seen exercising His priority while, at the same time, demonstrating the power of his love.

When Israel entered into covenant relationship with God, it was on condition that they remain faithful in the observance of Yahweh's requirements. But Israel proved unfaithful and lay under judgment because she had broken her part of the covenant relationship by her idolatry and could no longer be called Yahweh's people (Hosea 1:9; Deut. 9:27; Isa. 11:9). Because of their sins ten and one-half tribes were conquered, but Judah remained faithful for a while until she, too, was thrown into Babylonian captivity not having benefited from Israel's example. A remnant from this Babylonian captivity returned with repentance to God and to Jerusalem and were called "the people of Yahweh" (Hosea 2:23; Ezek. 11:16 - 20). This "people of God" 

eventually rejected the Lord of the covenant and they, in turn, were rejected as a nation or as God's special possession. This position was now openly given to all nations who accept Jesus as the Christ, the sent of God.

This idea or distinction is predominant in the New Testament, where Laos no longer stands for people in the sense of "nation" or "union" as indicated in the Old Testament, but in the sense of "crowd," "population," and "people." This is especially true in the writings of Luke and twice in Mark—Mark 11:32; 14:2—also, four times in Matthew 4:23; 26:5; 27:25, 64.

Strathmann notes that whenever the New Testament quotes passages from the Old Testament with reference to the word Israel, it gives evidence in both a specific and technical sense that the word Laos, and not Ethnos, is most always used for Israel. This, however, is not always true in the New Testament. Further, that in most Lucan passages, Ethnos is used for Israel either by non-Jews, or with reference to the attitude of a non-Jew, or in speeches before non-Jews.

Minear seems to think that on the strength of Rom. 15:7 - 12, this enlarged community which includes both Jews and Gentiles "... illustrates the flexibility with which Christians used such terms as 'the people of God.'" It should be noted, too, that Peter calls the Gentiles holy (Ethnos Hagion, 1 Pet. 2:9).

In the New Testament Laos is used most always for Israel, and has a religious basis, as seen from Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:68, 77;

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\[38\] Minear, Images of the Church, p. 71.
Rom. 11:1, et cetera. But most important, when Laos is used figuratively, it has reference to the Christian community. \(^{39}\) Minear agrees with the assumption that the term "people of God" or "people" must be taken figuratively, and adds that

... it cannot be transposed wholly into the "literal" objective categories of the usual sociological or historical research.\(^{40}\)

The Christian community is also seen in the New Testament as the true Israel (Rom. 9:6; 1 Cor. 10:18; Gal. 6:16). It is the true seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:29; Rom. 9:7, 8), the true circumcision (Phil. 3:3), and the true temple (1 Cor. 3:16). This community is taken from the Gentiles it began with the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10. Community, at times, has reference to both Jews and Gentiles.

Of significance here is the observation of James at the first Apostolic Council in Acts 15:14, when he proclaimed that Simeon hath declared how God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name.

It is with this view in mind that Strathmann's point is well taken, that

The circle of the word Laos is given a new centre. Only faith in the Gospel decides /who belongs to the Laos/. The title is not herewith taken from Israel. But another Laos now takes its place along with Israel on a different basis. This means, of course, that within Israel only those who meet the decisive conditions belong to this Laos. Thus a

\(^{39}\) Strathmann, Theological Dictionary, IV:52 - 54.

\(^{40}\) Minear, Images of the Church, p. 70.
new and figurative Christian concept arises along with the old biological and historical view and crowds it out.\textsuperscript{41}

God made this obvious (in Acts 18:10) when He told Paul to continue his work in Corinth on the grounds that He has much people in that city. Here one witnesses a transposition of the term which meant that in Corinth many future Christians were to be had. Further, Paul quotes two passages from Hosea in Rom. 9:23 - 26 which was originally addressed to Israel. Paul sees from this prophecy the conversion of the Gentiles. Here the Gentile Christians are for him "my people." Paul, therefore, finds no difficulty in ascribing the quotation to the Christian community, and thus these Gentiles, Christian community, are the people of God.

Strathmann states that
\begin{quote}
\ldots titles of honour ascribed to Israel in these passages, and the full assurance of Christian conviction and its justification in this respect may be seen from the fact that no need is felt to vindicate this bold transposition.\textsuperscript{42}
\end{quote}

This same position is held by John (Rev. 18:4) who quotes Jeremiah (Jeremiah 51:45) in which "my people," referring to Israel of old, is transferred to the Christian community. Finally, John sees this perfected Christian community of salvation, the people of God, in fulfillment of the prediction of Ezek. 37:27. But to this Christian community Paul, in Romans 12: and Eph. 4; tells that gifts were given. Nowhere in the Bible could it be assumed that these gifts were only for a small group of the community. Similarly, nowhere in the above

\textsuperscript{41}Strathmann, Theological Dictionary, IV:54.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., p. 55.
concept of the Laos does one find that gifts were entrusted to a segment of the Church. Each member of the assembly of God has a special gift given him at baptism into Christ—the Holy Spirit (1 Or. 12). The Spirit, in turn, endows these gifts upon mankind.

Ellen White goes further by promoting the idea that To the Church in the wilderness also, in the time of Moses, God gave His "good Spirit to instruct them." Nehemiah 9:20. And in the days of the apostles He wrought mightily for His church through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The same power . . . has upheld God's faithful children in every succeeding age.43

An elaboration of this concept will be given in the next section.

According to Paul, the people of God are entrusted with the Ministry of Reconciliation (Eph. 4:12). There is not found any reference in the Scriptures to indicate that this Ministry of Reconciliation is the responsibility of the ministers only, while the work of the Church is to support them without becoming actively involved, themselves, in this Ministry.

1 Peter 2:9 tells of the function of the called-out people—that of proclamation. Hence the elected status of God's people is that of mission.

Ellen G. White in Desire of Ages, speaking of Jesus' baptism, gives the assurance that "Jesus did not receive baptism as a confession of guilt on His own account. He identified Himself with sinners, taking the steps that we are to take, and doing the work that we

43White, Acts. p. 53. (Italics mine.)
are to do." Hence if Jesus took the steps that we are to take and did the work that we are to do, the work of reconciliation (Eph. 2:11 - 16), then those who accept Him and are baptized into His baptism are baptized into Christ to do the work of reconciliation. None is excluded.

Ellen White again contends that

As a steward of the grace of God, every church member should feel an individual responsibility to have life and root in himself. All who are ordained unto the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellowmen.

Therefore from the context of this passage, every member who is in Christ is ordained to the gospel ministry, the Ministry of Reconciliation.

With reference to the above, it must be noted that to this appropriated gifts, so that every member of the Church has his gift. The gifts are not given to a few so that they become "lords over God's heritage," but to each member of the Church is given a gift so that in this variety of gifts unity would be had and maintained. They were given "for the perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry of reconciliation, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12)." There is no dualism; there is no dichotomy, where the ministers are greater than the rest of the body.

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Originally, in both the Old Testament and the New, the Laos was the chosen people of God. Hendrik Kraemer insists that only in this light all members of the church are "laikoi" and only on this basis can they get other, more specific qualifications. It is significant to note that the word "lay," with its originally purely religious meaning, shares with some other central biblical and religious terms (e.g. "calling" and "service") the fate of having become entirely secularized.\(^{46}\)

In the religious field "lay" means those who are not ordained to the gospel ministry, but in the secular, its current usage means unqualified to speak or judge in various fields of knowledge and science. We are now confronted with this notion of ignorance, in that very few stop to probe into the Biblical origin of the term. They fail to understand that in the Laos, the people of God, is found ministers, lay-workers, administrators, or, as the Petrine epistle maintains, a priesthood of believers (1 Pet. 2:9).

As was indicated in the first section, the Ekklesia is the called-out people of God, commissioned to mission. Here the Laos is also God's people, the called-out ones, with no distinction as to who comprises the ministry and who the laity. In view of this understanding, an attempt will now be made to show the minister's role in this Laos concept and his responsibility in the mission of the Church.

The Minister's Position in the Concept of the Laos and its Mission

Let me now state that when the minister is referred to here, it does not mean the minister from the standpoint of an evangelist. The

\(^{46}\)Kraemer, _A Theology of the Laity_, p. 49.
distinction is elucidated in the Pauline writings when gifts were
given to the Laos (1 Cor. 12:14; Eph. 4:8 - 13; Rom. 12:6 - 8). Our
concern here is the minister, not as an evangelist, but as seen in his
role and function as a pastor and teacher in the Laos. One does not
disregard the fact that the individual who has the gift of an
evangelist is not worthy of consideration, but for the sake of
distinction of gifts we are considering the minister whose gift is
that of pastor-teacher or a teacher exempler.

The Church is so structured that in the distribution of gifts
to its members, certain people may be given certain functions to
perform. God may require some to devote all their life to His work,
on a very special basis. The Church, on the other hand, recognizes
this and sets these individuals apart by ordination. Hence, in the
case of the minister, God calls, and this call is sanctioned by the
Church so that the two are indispensable to the function of the Laos
and its task or its ministry. This is the classical Protestant view,
and differs from that of the Roman Catholics who see ordination as a
sacrament and a gift of the Church.

One author states that

/In the ceremony of the laying on of hands /there is/
added no new grace or virtual qualification. It was an
acknowledged form of designation, an appointed office and
a recognition of one's authority in that office.\footnote{White, Acts, pp. 161, 162.}

Emphasis must be placed on the statement which follows: "By it the
seal of the church was set upon the work of God."\footnote{Ibid., p. 162.} Consequently,
when one is ordained, it simply shows that the Church, the Laos, has
set its seal on God's work. It recognizes and realizes that, like the
Levites, the minister is called to be a minister of ministers. It
realizes that the call is a call of distinction and not of separation--a call that in its distinctness designates the role of the
minister in the special realm of God's representative among the Laos,
teaching, edifying, and equipping them for mission.

Further, Paul, in Eph. 4:8 - 11, has given a list of gifts
out of which exempler and teacher is given to the same person. A
pastor, therefore, is a teacher. As a teacher his role or function
is not that of an office, but that of service--a servant.

Richard Baxter wittingly elaborates this point by saying

that

It is the duty of the minister not only to teach the people
committed to his charge, in public--but privately and
particularly to admonish, exhort, reprove and comfort them,
upon all reasonable occasions, so far as his time, strength
and personal safety will permit. He is to admonish them in
time of health, to prepare for death. And for that purpose, they are often to confer with their minister about
the state of their souls . . . .49

The minister becomes the servant of the servants of Christ, a priest
to the priests. As pastor-teacher he is a shepherd, a person who
gives mental and spiritual nourishment to the Church, while, at the
same time, guards and supports them. But in order to do so, Baxter
firmly believes that it is necessary that he, the minister knows
every person that belongs to his charge. He should realize that a

49Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor (Marshallton: The
more accurate knowledge of his charge is necessary to truly know his flock.\textsuperscript{50} Referring to the ministers, he continues, "And once we know all the flock, then we must take heed to them."\textsuperscript{51} The minister serves; he is not being served (Matt. 9:26).

Baxter sees the minister as an "usher"\textsuperscript{52} or one who gives lectures (Acts 20:28); one who carries the Gospel and helps the people of God to do the same. He sees Christians as scholars of Christ, the Church as His school, the Bible as His textbook. He then states: "... this is what we will be teaching them daily."\textsuperscript{53}

As exemplar-teacher the minister functions as an interpreter of the Scriptures (Luke 24:27), and as one who brings out that which is latent and hidden (Acts 11:4). In no instance does it infer that the minister, as pastor-teacher, is above the people of God, but his position is one of servant and his gift is "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12)." Consequently, if a part of the minister's work is for the work of the ministry, that is, the Ministry of Reconciliation, this minister, with his gifts of pastor and teacher, must serve the Laos in their fulfilling of their ministry.

One would agree with Ellen White when she says that "The best help that ministers can give the members of our churches is not

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Usher: Term used by Richard Baxter for one who functions in the role of the pastor.
\textsuperscript{53} Baxter, Reformed Pastor, p. 13.
sermonizing but planning work for them. Give each one something to do for others."\(^\text{54}\) Is it any wonder that so many in the Church become despondent, weak, and ignorant of their mission to the world? Could it therefore be said that because the minister, as a pastor-teacher, fails to set the people of God to do their work, he finds himself doing that which was entrusted to them? As an overseer, he should not find himself carrying out the work of the Church alone. This is contrary to the counsel of God.

The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.\(^\text{55}\)

This Laos concept as Church and Christian community experienced a change in its basic meaning in the New Testament as early as at the end of the first century.

Kraemer states that "Clement of Rome in his letter to the Corinthians in A.D. 95 already uses the term laikos as connoting those who belong to the ordinary membership."\(^\text{56}\) This ecclesiastical development is a deviation from the Biblical Concept of the Church as Laos and as a royal priesthood. This statement of Clement's alludes to two distinguished bodies in which the authoritative leadership resides in the clergy and not in the Church. It is clear that this duality reflects the duality of the Graeco-Roman society or city state,

\(^\text{54}\)White, Welfare Ministry, p. 110.
\(^\text{55}\)Ibid., p. 111.
\(^\text{56}\)Kraemer, "The Laity," pp. 50, 51. The priesthood as the central ministry in the congregation could not but develop as the highest office. The Church came to be regarded in the first place as the organ for providing sacramental grace as the nourishment for eternal life.
with two sectors of the one body of municipal administration—the Kleros or magistrate and the Laos, the people. Kleros is the word from which the term clergy originates. But, as pointed out earlier in the paper, this duality is outside the scope of this study.

The minister's gift as exemplar-teacher is likewise given to the Laos, the Church, the Christian community. Therefore, the minister, as pastor-teacher, should be able to help the Laos to find their gifts given them of the Holy Spirit at their baptism (Acts 2:38, 39). This does not mean an under-estimation of the position of leadership occupied by the minister in the Church. A look at two verbs will help us to see the character of this leadership.

In the Pauline epistles the word proistemi is used with respect to those who "are over you" (1 Thess. 5:12, 13). They were to be respected and to be esteemed very highly in love because of their work. The same word is used in 1 Tim. 3:5 where it is asked, "How can a man who does not know how to manage his own household possible care for God's Church?" Another reference is found in 1 Tim. 5:17. At this time Paul seems to insist that certain elders are specified as being "worthy of double honour," namely those who rule well and labour in word and doctrine. The verb here, too, is proistemi.

Arndt and Gingrich's Lexicon gives two meanings for the verb. One is to "be at the head of, rule, direct, and the other is to be concerned about, care for, give aid." This latter sense is seen in Rom. 12:8 ("he who gives aid").

Observe, however, that the elder's leadership is exercised by "labouring" among the people, and that this "labour" is
specified in 1 Tim. 5:17 as being in preaching and toiling or
teaching.

The second verb that shows how the minister's leadership is
evident is hégomai. This word is used three times in Heb. 13, in
verses 7, 17, 24, with the plural participle hoi hégoumenoi humon,
and is translated "your leaders." Therefore, since this word is used
in Heb. 13 of the Christian leaders, presumably presbyters, one cannot
deny that the minister exercises some kind of "rule." But one must be
careful how he interprets and understands this. Jesus Himself said,
"Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as
one who serves" (Luke 22:26). It was Stott who said that Jesus
recognizes that there will and must be leadership in the Church, but
He interprets it in terms of service, and contextually Heb. 13 shows
what form the leadership service should take.57

One would agree that ministers ought to expect of their
members not mere compliance, but obedience and submission, "for they
are keeping watch over . . . souls, as men who will have to give
account" (Heb. 13:17). Again, in Heb. 13:7, they "spoke to you the
Word of God" and we were admonished to be imitators of their faith.

In view of this illumination, we now hold to the belief that
the minister, as pastor-teacher, is not above the Laos, but is called
out by God to serve the Church in a special capacity, to use his gift
for bringing glory to Christ's body, His Church.

57 John R. W. Stott, One People (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity
CHAPTER IV

THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND MUTUAL MINISTRY

WITH THE MINISTER AS THE INITIATOR OF KOINONIA

The Concept of Spiritual Gifts

In the preceding chapter an attempt was made to define the Laos and to outline the role of the minister within the notion of the Laos. In this section we would endeavour to perceive the gifts given to the Laos, the manner in which they functioned in New Testament times, and their application and use in the Church.

Approximately seven words are used by the New Testament writers for the word "gift." It is not intended here to list these seven words, but to confine these remarks to the word used by the New Testament writers for spiritual gifts—Charisma.

This word is used to denote a gift of grace, or a gift involving grace on the part of God as the Donor. And this gift is freely bestowed upon sinners (Rom. 5:15, 16; 6:23). Vine, however, gives a second function of this word, gift, when he sees God as bestowing "... His endowments upon believers by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the churches, ... (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31: ..."58

It is believed by some scholars like J. W. Wever and A. G. Barrois of The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, that the reason these gifts are probably called "spiritual gifts" is because they are used by Paul in Romans 1:11 as pneumatikon charisma. This has little bearing on the point under discussion here, for Paul is speaking to the use of his gifts as a means of edifying and grounding the Roman believers and the impartation or sharing of his gift with them. This would not be contradictory to his affirmation in Eph. 4:7, 8 that gifts were given by Christ, and in 1 Cor. 12:4--the Spirit. What should be emphasized, however, is this, that all gifts are given to man by Christ and, as such, they are spiritual and should be used by man to help his fellowman and to glorify his Maker.

Ellen White, in Desire of Ages, states that Christ on his ascension--that is, before He permitted or received homage of His disciples--had to ascend to the heavenly courts and from God Himself was given the assurance that His atonement for the sins of men had been effectual. At that time, also, He received gifts for His Church.\textsuperscript{59}

Observe, however, that both of these views--Paul's view that Charisma connotes a gift of grace, and Vine's view of the gift as God's endowment upon believers by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the Churches--must be looked upon jointly. There ought to be no separation, for without God's gift of grace these spiritual gifts cannot be operative within the Church.

\textsuperscript{59}White, Desire of Ages, p. 790.
In a general sense, therefore, spiritual gifts are "grace gifts," because man merits condemnation and death because of transgression. All man deserves is hell. But God, through Christ, has given grace to all men so that none need be lost.

Perhaps a brief example of about seven of these spiritual gifts given by Christ to the Church would give an idea of their general usage. There is no specific reason why these were chosen, nor would they be given in chronological sequence nor in the order of the Synoptic Gospels. They are given primarily as examples.

Jesus, because of His uniqueness,—that is, being the God-man, offers man the gift of Rest (Matt. 11:28). This is only possible as man accepts Him for what He is, for He is mighty to save and to recreate. The Rest Christ gives man should always remind man, himself, of the lost peace of Eden, and also the restored peace through this God-man. This true rest spoken of here is also possible through true Sabbath-keeping. To the Laos is also given the "Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 16:19). These keys are the words of Christ, or, as Ellen White discloses: "All the words of Holy Scripture are His, and are here included. These words have power to open and to shut heaven." It is also upon these words that men are received or rejected by heaven. This authority, consequently, was given to the Laos who are commissioned to mission.

Coupled with the former gift, is Christ's gift of "Living Waters" (John 4:14). Christ's words were and are the "water of life,"

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\[60\] Ibid., p. 413.
and by His death living streams of salvation would flow to all who are thirsty. "In smiting Christ," said Ellen White, "... Satan thought to destroy the Prince of Life; but from the smitten rock there flowed living water."  

An extremely important gift given to the Church, and which is of particular significance in a day when occult movements are sweeping the world, is the gift of "Power Over Evil Spirits" (Luke 10:19). It would seem that the people of God are today afraid to use this gift, probably because of the wide-spread use of faith-healing, which some take to be a sign of the Church.

Jesus, in John 6:51, gives to His Church Himself, the "Bread of Heaven" as assurance of our deliverance from sin and surety of our power to obey the law of heaven.

Probably the gift the Church needs to exhibit most is the "Legacy of Peace" given in John 14:27. Most assuredly materialism, brought about by technology and science, is crushing the hold of God's people from this true gift given to the Church by Christ. There is need for a consolidation of man's spiritual resources, and a subordination of his natural tendencies in order that he might accommodate this gift.

These seven gifts, and more, given to all believers in Christ, can only be actualized by the indwelling Spirit given to man after Christ's ascension and which must be acknowledged by him. These gifts are to be shared with mankind by the assembly of God.

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61Ibid., p. 454.
The Greatest Spiritual Gift

Jesus, before His departure from this earth, told the Ekklesia that He shall pray the Father to give them Another Comforter and that this Comforter was to abide with the Church forever. It is important to observe that Christ uses the word alios and not the word heteros. The latter expresses a qualitative difference and denotes another of a different sort.

Vine suggests that "Christ promised to send 'another Comforter' (alios, another like Himself, not heteros), . . ." But W. H. Griffith Thomas sees that alios and not heteros was used because alios . . . is Someone distinct from Christ. He is to glorify Christ, and together with the neuter word "Spirit," there are the masculine pronouns autos, and ekeinos. All this clearly shows His personality, His distinctness from Christ, and His personal activities.

But then, to add to this dilemma, Buchsel points out that both words are used interchangeably, and that to give a distinction becomes quite impossible. However, Buchsel feels that "Allos is often used where only two are in question . . ." It would seem to me, therefore, that a way out of this dilemma, and maybe an effective compromise, is to recognize that all three of the above statements about the

Holy Spirit, the Comforter, are correct: that Buchsel was right in comprehending that _allos_ was used where two are in question (John 14:16; John 18:16). Jesus used _allos_ because He was talking about another person, like Himself, God. This also concurs with Vine who sees the Comforter as another like Christ, who is God. Thomas in a clear-cut manner underscores this _allos_ as being a person, like Christ and God. Thomas, therefore, stresses the personality of the Holy Spirit, which tells us that we have God working in and through us for our good forever. Ellen White sheds further illumination on this problem when she expresses the idea that

The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Combined with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. . . . By the Spirit the Savior would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.65

It should be realized that the primary gift and the source of all other gifts is the Spirit that Christ has given to be in every member of the Church. Man's genuineness of being occupied by the Spirit is tested by his confession that Jesus Christ is Lord of his life (1 Cor. 12:3). Magnificent would be the work of the Lord Jesus Christ when this is conceived, and the Church gives itself up to the control of His Spirit; for, without question, the Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. It is to be with the community unto the time of consummation. "From the Day of Pentecost," affirms

65White, Desire of Ages, p. 669.
Ellen White, "to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service."\textsuperscript{66}

The Spirit is the instigator of the unity of the Ekklesia. Racial and social differences were abrogated (Gal. 3:28) because the believers were all one in Christ, being baptized unto Him (v. 27; Eph. 4:4). It is within this unity that the people of God are enabled to reveal Christ's character. They give full proof of this unique gift of their Lord to His Church.

The remarkable instances of witnessing by the early disciples were achieved by the use of these gifts, an involvement which empowered them to witness for truth and righteousness. Obviously, it was because of this same gift of the Spirit that these disciples were the constant target of the enemy of truth and righteousness. It was by this gift that the Church was able to exercise faith in God while, at the same time, learn to improve their entrusted power and by this pursuit were sanctified, refined, and ennobled by the indwelling Spirit. This experience probably called for daily humiliation on the part of the Church as they submitted to the molding influence of the Holy Spirit which caused them to receive "... of the fullness of the Godhead and to be fashioned in the likeness of the divine."\textsuperscript{67}

It is possible to attain and maintain this state of likeness if one remains cognizant of the work of the Holy Spirit as outlined by Christ in John 16:7, 8. One phase of His work is to reprove the

\textsuperscript{66} White, Acts, p. 49.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p. 50.
world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment (v. 8). To most scholars today, the word referred to here has to do with the secular world. The work of the Spirit is to point out to this secular world her sins and to inform her of the judgments to come. But was this the real truth of Christ's sayings? Was He not speaking to the Church and the world of sin that still existed in her? Biblically speaking, the Jews knew no distinction between the world and society. The world is essentially good. God made it good (Gen. 1). Even after sin entered, God claimed that He still loved the world (John 3:16). What man needs to realize is that sin exists in the world. He must therefore understand what is meant by the world as over against the called-out ones, the Ekklesia.

When the word "world" is used in the Bible, one must be cognizant of three words: oikoumene, aion, and kosmos. These three words are synonymous in some of their meanings, and on occasion they are used interchangeably. The first word, oikoumene, is probably an abbreviation of e oikoumene ge, the inhabited earth, and is used about fifteen times in the Greek New Testament. The second, aion, generally means long duration, and is used in the Greek New Testament some thirty times. The last word, kosmos, is found approximately 188 times in the New Testament and is used by John 104 times; 46 times by Paul, and the remaining times by Peter and James. 68

The Bible seems to view the world in two spheres: (1) the world in the sense of fallen man: (2) the world in the sense of

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redeemed man. In the former sense the world is at enmity with God. Something of this perjorative sense of kosmos may be seen in Heb. 11:7 where Noah, a righteous man, condemned the world. In James 1:27 "religion that is pure and undefiled before God" is interpreted as keeping one's self unstained from the world which is at enmity with God. Peter, in 11 Pet. 1:4, speaks of the corruption that is in the world, and in 11 Pet. 2:20, "the defilements of the world." Another example would be 1 John 2:15, 16 where the world is seen as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

With the above understanding, one gets the idea that the world of fallen man is not a place, but his thinking, his mentality or mind of ideas that centres in serving self instead of God. The world in the sense of redeemed man is sinner man transformed and renewed in mind by the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 12:2; Titus 3:5). The paradox, here, is this: Both of these worlds find themselves in the redeemed man and in the Church. One needs, therefore, a daily washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, if he is to suppress the world of self that seeks for the mastery of his soul. Hence, when Christ told the Christian Community that the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, will reprove the world of sin, why could it not be with reference to the world of sin, selfishness and pride that overwhelmed first the Church, who was first to be cleansed before she could tell those who knew not how much self and pride had conquered them? In other words, the Holy Spirit reproves the world of sin inside of the Church and prepares them to reprove the world of sin
outside of the Church. The text John 16:8, consequently, has a
double application. The Holy Spirit is given to rid the Church of
sin first; then it is to make her righteous in and through Christ, and,
lastly, through the manifestation of its power in the lives of the
community of believers, it proves that the people of God can keep the
law. This brings judgment against the prince of this world of
selfishness and pride who stands condemned because his impossibility
has been made possible through this gift of the Holy Spirit to the
Church.

"If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be," cautions Ellen White, "it is because the promise is not appreciated
as it should be." Again, White states:

Since this is the means by which we are to receive power,
why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit?
Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, and preach concerning
it? The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to
those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to
their children. Again, White states:

The Church, individually and corporately, is in need of a daily
baptism of the Spirit. This was the source of the Apostles' power.
It must not be forgotten that it is still the only source of power to
the Church if she is to prove a regenerating agency thus making
effectual the salvation made possible through Christ's death.

Before entering into a discussion on the varied gifts of the
Spirit, reference must be made to them as being gifts outside of the
Church.

69 White, Acts, p. 50.
70 Ibid.
Outside Gifts

While it is true that God, by the gifts entrusted to His Church, speaks to the world, the Church must also recognize that God, through His strange acts, speaks to the Church from agents outside the Church who possess special gifts. God often reveals truth through those who are gifted outside of the Church—truths to which the Christian community can whole-heartedly subscribe.

One striking example of this exhibition of gifts outside the Church could be drawn from the time of the Exodus. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, through his gifts of counseling and administration, greatly assisted his son-in-law (Ex. 18:15 - 24) in judging the people of God. The case of Balaam could also be mentioned here, for Balaam, endowed with the prophetic gift, foretold of the coming of the Messiah (Numbers 24:17).

In the New Testament there is reference to a man who was not a follower of Jesus but who, through the gift of miracles, was casting out devils in the name of Jesus. On that particular occasion John, the disciple, called upon the man to cease his performances. Then Jesus did an extra-ordinary thing (Mark 9:38, 39; Luke 9:49, 50): He forbade John from forbidding him who was engaged in this work, making use of his gift.

Thus the Church needs to realize and acknowledge the fact that God has other instruments with gifts outside its community. She ought to be in a state of constant awareness that God's act of choosing her as His Church does not preclude others who are not of His Church from exhibiting their gifts. In a corresponding manner,
manifestation of the use of these gifts outside the Church should not be interpreted by the Church to mean that she, God's Church, has failed. It may mean that as a Church she is not using her gifts, either on account of her unfamiliarity with them, or because she is not yet awakened to the possibilities that lie in her. The Christian, then, cannot afford to be insular as he witnesses persons outside the Church making use of their gifts in their endeavour to glorify God. Every professed Christian has something to offer. He may not have all the light of truth of the Third Angel's Message, but he is willing to use his gift for the glory of God. So whether he belongs to the Church or not, he should not be despised.

Ellen White seems to justify this position when she infers that none who show themselves in anyway friendly to Christ are to be repulsed. We must not indulge a narrow, exclusive spirit, but manifest the same far-reaching sympathy which Jesus exhibited.

This is wise counsel, particularly to those who may feel that because one does not belong to the Laos his gifts are not from the Lord. Especially is this true if he does not in all things conform to their ideas and opinions. Suppose the individual with the gift outside the Church does not know as much of the way as the one inside, how can he conform? If, therefore, one has done all in his power to enlighten the gifted, as did Priscilla and Aquilla for Apollos (Acts 18:26), and the gifted rejects the additional light, the

71White, Desire of Ages, p. 457.
72Ibid., pp. 457, 458.
member of the assembly of God would then have grounds for repulsion. Again, if one sees that the gifted rejects the Lord Jesus as Saviour and Master, but seeks to exalt self, then repulsion is in order.

It follows that attention must now be focused on those gifts in the Ekklesia.

**Varied Gifts of the Church**

The most elaborate exposition of this combination of unity in diversity is found in these Pauline epistles (1 Cor. 12 - 14; Rom. 12:4 - 8; Eph. 4:10 - 13). Elizabeth O'Connor makes the observation that

The Church of the Holy Spirit is full of variety. Sameness and conformity are the demands of alien spirits. No gift is unimportant. There are no lesser gifts. Each is crucial to the proper functioning of the Body; each contributes to the rich diversity needed by the Church for its work within the total organism of humanity.\(^\text{73}\)

From the twelfth through the fourteenth chapters of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, Paul, probably for the first time, develops his teaching on the gifts given to those who have been called into the Church for the work of the ministry. A list of these "spiritual gifts," follows in this order: Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith-healing, Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits, Tongues, and Interpretation of Tongues. Here one needs to stress, as Paul indicated, that

\[ \ldots \text{there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;} \]
\[ \ldots \text{and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;} \]

and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one (1 Cor. 12:4 - 6, RSV).

Paul seems to repeat this same truth in Romans 12:4 - 8, even though the list is not identical. The same is true for 1 Cor. 12:28 - 30 and Eph. 4:11 where emphasis is placed on the same general categories, with some specific reference to the various ministries of the Laos. Richards is emphatic in his remark that "'The ministry' is thus divided among all the members of the body of Christ. Each is given an ability to contribute, and each is to use it fully."74

Attempts have been made to classify these gifts as natural or supernatural, miraculous or non-miraculous, but these have all proven futile, simply because the New Testament draws no such distinction. Paul speaks of varieties of gifts, varieties of services, varieties of workings. He does not distinguish these gifts in kind nor does he indicate how the rich and manifold operations of the Holy Spirit find their expression in an equally rich and manifold diversity of effects (1 Cor. 12:4 - 6). They all seem to stem from the same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God, who is the source of life in Jesus Christ.

Richards further looks upon these gifts as abilities to contribute. He stresses the use of these abilities in an interpersonal and social manner, whether the gift be preaching or stimulating the faith of others. Gifts are given to meet the human needs.75

Ellen White was even more explicit when she announced that "All are

75 Ibid.
to be employed in Christ's service. . . . These gifts he returns to us purified and ennobled, to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow men."76 To all members of the Laos, she says, "The gifts are already ours in Christ, but their actual possession depends upon our reception of the Spirit of God."77

From the above statements it becomes evident that individual members of the Ekklesia will never know their gift or gifts until they have, by faith, received the gift of the Holy Ghost. On the other hand, if each member of the Church is connected with Christ and the gifts of the Spirit are recognized, then the poorest and most ignorant of Christ's followers will be dominated with a power that will tell upon hearts. God will make them the Church for the outworking of the highest influence in this world.

The work of the minister is to help the Church identify this lack of the Spirit. At the same time, he ought to make known to them that the gifts are theirs in Christ, but that actual possession is dependent on their acceptance of the Holy Spirit. It is a mistake for ministers and even parishioners to believe that the pastors alone are in possession of the gifts. Ayres adds it up this way:

When a man or a child is made a member of the body of Christ, he is not being elected into an honorary society. He is being grafted into a living organism in which he has a definite function.78

76 White, Positive Christian Living, p. 293.
77 Ibid.
78 Ayres, Ministry of Laity, p. 64.
Paul likens this body of Christ to the human body

(1 Cor. 12:14 - 23).

But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable we invest with the greater honor, . . . (1 Cor. 12:18 - 23.)

One recognizes from this statement that every member of this body has a gift. The diversity of gifts leads to a diversity of operations, but "it is the same God which worketh all in all" (1 Cor. 12:6).

Richards, in speaking to this point, would have us know that

. . . in our search for renewal we must resist looking to better theological education for our ministers, or to multiple staffs, or to better training for laymen in organizational positions. It means that we must focus attention on those with "no obvious function," on the average layman, who, as a member of Christ's body, has been given an ability which in the nature of the church he must be permitted to use.79

Therefore Richards agrees with the Pauline epistles that the gifts to the Church were given for a common good. They were given for the benefit of the Church (1 Cor. 14:5), for when one looks at the teaching on Spiritual Gifts in the Church, one would discover that the gifts were given to all, in that all appear to be involved in one another's lives--involved in sharing with one another what they have received

79 Richards, A New Face, p. 101.
from Christ. Each member of the Ekklesia is needed, and each has ability to contribute, and each must cooperate to promote a mutual ministry.

The Epistles are also saying that no one has sufficient wisdom to manage an interest without help from his brother or brethren. Therefore, no one should think himself solely competent to do so. The spirit that was manifested in the days of the apostolic Church was a humble, teachable one. The disciples on the Day of Pentecost "were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1). They were waiting, praying, with a fullness that reached every heart. They were mutual, joined to one another in love because they sought forgiveness and were forgiven. All things being common, the Holy Spirit descended.

With this gift of the Spirit the disciples received other gifts; for example, the gift of preaching at Pentecost (Acts 2), the gift of healing (Acts 3), the gift of teaching (Acts 4:2), holy boldness (Acts 4:12), the gift of prophecy and the gift of language (Acts 2). The point of interest here is that the mutual ministry preceded the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost. As mentioned above, when all differences, all desires for supremacy were put away, the disciples came close together in Christian fellowship.

The effects of this mutual ministry as practised by a spirit-filled apostolic Church will be observed in the discussion of the ensuing section.
Mutual Ministry

Jesus in sending His disciples on their first missionary journey, sent them two by two (Mark 6:7; Matt. 10; Luke 9:1 - 6). Jesus had a purpose in sending them in groups of two's instead of commissioning them to labour as lone missionaries. His purpose—mutual ministry. He knew that they would need the encouragement of each other, especially in times of persecution.

Ellen White elaborates on this by saying that None were sent forth alone, but brother was associated with brother, friend with friend. Thus they could help and encourage each other, counseling and praying together, each one's strength supplementing the other's weakness. . . . It was the Saviour's purpose that the messengers of the gospel should be associated in this way.®®

Mrs. White here mentions five important ingredients for mutual ministry: (1) Companionship, (2) Encouragement, (3) Counseling with each other, (4) Praying together, (5) Strengthening each other in weakness. There is a suggestion here that each member of the Church needs kindness and sympathy, and no doubt when Jesus sent His disciples in these groups of two's He did this with the consciousness that through this method they would, by constant association with each other, develop these graces in their lives. By mutual ministry, then, minds will be rightly channeled to receive the polish and refinement they need.

Ellen White admonishes:

Be sure to maintain the dignity of the work . . . . All coarseness and roughness must be put away from

©©White, Desire of Ages, p. 350.
us. Courtesy, refinement, Christian politeness, must be cherished. Guard against being abrupt and blunt. Do not regard such peculiarities as virtues; for God does not so regard them. . . .

There is the greatest necessity that men and women . . . be persons of polish, of understanding, not having the deceptive outside gloss and simpering affectation of the worldling, but that refinement and true courteousness which savors of heaven, and which every Christian will have if he is a partaker of the divine nature.81

Another reason: In addition to sole dependence upon God, mankind is dependent upon one another and need spiritual and emotional strength just as the disciples did. In like manner, they need to be bound together by ties of human brotherhood. Further, Ellen White clearly says that

We are too indifferent in regard to one another. Too often we forget that our fellow-laborers are in need of strength and cheer. Take care to assure them of your interest and sympathy. Help them by your prayers, and let them know that you do it.82

One of the most significant statements on this matter of mutual ministry is this:

It was the Saviour's purpose that the messengers of the gospel should be associated in this way. In our own time evangelistic work would be far more successful if this example were more closely followed.83

Christ Jesus bequeathed to His Church His Memorial of Humility, a service which is vital in the function of mutual ministry. In the Petrine epistles (1 Pet. 2:9), the Laos is called a royal priesthood,

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83White, Desire of Ages, p. 350.
an holy nation, God's own people. As priests they are to bear one another's burdens, as well as the burdens of the world. The Pauline epistles also support this concept and show that all Christians are priests (Rom. 12), in that in the daily offering of sacrifices they offer their own selves. Under the power of the Spirit, the Christian priest is disciplined to conduct himself wisely in what he teaches, preaches, and as he rules, serves, gives, suffers, loves, lives, and acts towards friend, foe, and fellowman.

Dillenberger quotes Luther as saying:

Therefore everyone who knows that he is a Christian should be fully assured that all of us alike are priests, and that we all have the same authority in regard to the word and the sacraments, . . .

Jesus said, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). When Jesus girded Himself with a towel and washed the feet of His disciples, Ellen White said that "... He desired by that very act to wash the alienation, jealousy, and pride from their hearts. This was of far more consequence than the washing of their dusty feet."

The important lesson here is that the disciples were prepared to partake of the paschal supper and share in the memorial service which Christ was about to institute only when they were brought to the state of humility and love. It was only then that they were prepared for communion with Christ. By the act of washing the disciples feet


\[85\] White, Desire of Ages, p. 646.
Jesus meant to wash their hearts from sin. This was the climax of their preparation for communion with Christ.

Peter, in his refusal, was recoiling from the higher cleansing included in the lower. "He was really rejecting," said Ellen White, "his lord." Therefore refusal to partake of this service of humility is a rejection of Christ, and how few know this! One is not prepared for communion with Christ unless he is first cleansed by His efficacious blood. The question is therefore asked: Who helps in the performance of this efficacious act while Christ is no longer on earth to do so? By His words, "For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15), Christ speaks clearly to the disciples that they were to exemplify this mutual, unselfish ministry which has its origin in God. It is evident that God does not live for Himself, for He is constantly ministering to others. In giving Jesus, who is the head of the human family, God has given us an example of what it means to minister. Therefore, true greatness is only seen in humility. It is as Ellen White declares:

The only distinction /in God's kingdom/ is found in devotion to the service of others. . . . /This memorial of humility/ was to be observed by the disciples, that they might ever keep in mind His lessons of humility and service.

So when Peter washed the feet of John and John his, they were by the very act, when possessed by the spirit of this service, standing in Christ's stead, washing away their brother's selfishness, evil surmising, bitterness, and self-seeking. When done in this spirit,

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86Ibid.
87Ibid., p. 650.
this service, which was to precede the Lord's Supper would cease to be a mere ceremonial. The Church, now humbled, would serve one another in love (Gal. 5:13). Hence Ellen White could say

His disciples, in performing the same rite, pledge themselves in like manner to serve their brethren. Whenever this ordinance is rightly celebrated, the children of God are brought into a holy relationship, to help and bless each other.\(^8\)

It would seem that the practice of feet-washing and the Lord's Supper were engaged in very frequently in Bible times, probably more than once a quarter.

Luke, in Acts 2:44 - 47, gives to the Church a parallel in this act of mutual ministry. He shows hearts sympathizing with hearts that were probably burdened through poverty because of their acceptance of Jesus Christ. It is recorded that they "had all things in common" (Acts 2:44). The discouraged and grieved were cared for and the naked were clothed. An outstanding account of selflessness is shown here in that the brethren, in their togetherness, brought comfort to the distressed. They were willing to sell their possessions and goods, and gave to fulfill every man's need.

This practice of sharing gave the members of the Church the sense of belonging, the sense of assurance that at least someone cared. Sympathy in trial evoked the following words from Luke on behalf of the Apostle Paul: "... on seeing them Paul thanked God and took courage" (Acts 28:15). Concern for one another inspired hope so that all praised God and as a result believers were favoured by

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 651.
even the unbelievers (Acts 2:46). Christ's prayer for His Church was thus fulfilled (John 17:21), and wherever this type of hospitality was predominant, the religion of Christ was blessed. The love of Christ was manifested by the unselfish ministry of the disciples. Because of this manifest oneness, the world believed that Jesus was the Christ. In all their relationships genuine love for others were expressed and thus God added to the Church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:47). Persons were added to the Church because of personal, unselfish efforts. The social aspect of the gospel here seemed to be more effective for good, for it broke down prejudice and made hearts receptive to truth. The total lives of the disciples were occasions for ministry to others. What they were, what they did, had the potential for helping and fulfilling. Through their daily relationship with their fellow believers, God worked to build up His Church. How, then, could the minister remain static and not encourage and prevail upon the Laos to share this ministry?

The Minister as Initiator of Koinonia

The word Koinonia is used by Paul in Rom. 15:27 when referring to the Gentiles who were "partakers of their spiritual things." Paul almost offers a command to future converts when, in being grateful for what the Gentiles had done, he notes that it was imperative for the Gentiles to minister to those who were in need since those in need had given them of the spiritual.

Koinonia is used here for partaking, but it gives one the idea of having a share in (1 Tim. 5:22; Heb. 2:14; 1 Pet. 4:13; 2 John 11);
also, in another sense, this word is given to connote sharing, or sharing with (Rom. 12:27, RSV). In the American Version it takes on the sense of communicating or distributing (Gal. 6:6), but it is most frequently translated "fellowship."

At the heart of Koinonia is the basic word Koinos, common. Its nouns Koinonia (fellowship) and Koinonos (a partner), together with the verb Koinoneo (to share) bear witness to what one has in common. C. H. Dodd says that "... koinonoi are persons who hold property in common, partners or shareholders in a common concern."\(^9\)

A careful study of the New Testament shows that this word-group for Christian Koinonia or "commonness" is used in three forms instead of two as stated above. It infers that the Church shared together in a common Christian inheritance. Stott would have us believe that this was the fundamental meaning of the word.\(^0\) Fellowship, however, could be described as something subjective and objective--subjective when it gives each member of the assembly of God an awareness or sense of belonging together as was seen in Acts 2:41 - 47, where there was warmth and security in one another's company.

The objective side of fellowship is recognized in the common possession of the blessings of the gospel. Because of their common faith and common salvation, the members of the New Testament Church were joint partakers of grace (Titus 1:4; Jude 3; Phil. 1:7). These three attributes--faith, salvation, and grace--were common among the

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\(^0\)Stott, One People, p. 75.
early Christians (Eph. 2:8, 9). Because of the witness of the Apostles, themselves ministers, fellow-believers shared in the saving grace of the Trinity. The Church had fellowship with them (the Apostles) and fellowship "with the father and His Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:1 - 4; Acts 2:42). Their fellowship with one another depended, however, on their fellowship with Him (1 John 1:6, 7; 1 Cor. 1:9). This is fellowship with Christ as regards both their present and future existence—present in that they were in Him and future in that they will be with Him forever. Hauck adds that Christ was the first to show this type of sharing of full fellowship when he shared the flesh and blood of His brethren in order that He might vanquish death.91

The second concept of Christian fellowship could be observed when the Church was 'called' by God into fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, through the breaking of the loaf and the blessing of the cup at communion or participation in His body and blood (1 Cor. 1:9; 10:16; 10:20; John 13:18 - 30; Matt. 26:20 - 29). This communion or Lord's Supper was given by Christ to commemorate the deliverance from sin into eternal life as the result of Christ's death. This fellowship was to be kept until He comes the second time in power and glory for His Bride, the Church.

But it was Paul, an Apostle and minister, who made highly significant use of this fellowship which arises in the Lord's

Supper. Paul made it plain to the people of God that the meaning of the Supper is personal fellowship with Christ (1 Cor. 10:16, 17), and the partaking of the bread and wine created fellowship between them, thus merging them into one body—soma-Christou, the Church. Therefore for Paul, the bread and wine were vehicles of the presence of Christ.

Ellen White voiced this point when she made known that

Christ by the Holy Spirit is there to set the seal to His own ordinance. He is there to convict and soften the heart. Not a look, not a thought of contrition, escapes His notice. For the repentant, brokenhearted one He is waiting. All things are ready for that soul's reception. He who washed the feet of Judas longs to wash every heart from the stain of sin.92

To have fellowship with Christ at communion two things are evident: (1) All who come with their faith fixed upon Christ as Saviour, Lord, Master, and High Priest, will be abundantly blessed. (2) Those who neglect to habituate this divine privilege will suffer loss. Both Paul and Ellen White would give assent to this. When the benefits of accepting these privileges are faithfully told to the Laos by the pastor, then abstinence from the sacred rite of communion would not predominate. For Paul, the partaking of bread and wine is union or sharing with the heavenly Christ. These divine privileges are only possible when the preparatory service of humility is properly understood by the Church and made use of.

Prior to partaking of the Lord's Supper, and before feet-washing, some time should be given for the people of God to examine themselves, confess their sins, and to reconcile all differences before each

92White, Desire of Ages, p. 656.
brother exercises his "priestship" to the other. It should be kept in mind that secret sins should be brought before God only. Says Ellen White, "... they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly confessed."

After this is done, as priestly brothers they wash one another's feet, giving each the assurance that Jesus, their High Priest, has washed away their sins and they are now clean to partake, to fellowship with Him and their brethren at the Lord's Supper. This truth, Paul, the minister, taught to the Church (1 Cor. 11:27 - 33). When the believers, by mutual ministry, in Christ's stead wash one another's feet, they become priests to each other. By faith in Christ the temporal act of cleansing becomes the spiritual act of washing away each other's sins.

Ellen White goes further when she contends that man's physical nature is affected by the death of Christ. Man, by that death owes his earthly life to Him. The very bread man eats was purchased by His broken body. The water he drinks was bought by His spilt blood. Both sinner and saint, as they eat this daily food, are nourished by the body and blood of Christ. Christ is reflected in every water spring.

Ellen White asserts

All this Christ has taught in appointing the emblems of His great sacrifice. The light shining from that Communion

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service in the upper chamber makes sacred the provisions for man's daily life. Hence the family board becomes as the table of the Lord, and every meal a sacrament.\textsuperscript{94}

Equally important is her reference to man's spiritual nature, in that by receiving Christ's word and partaking of His flesh and blood man becomes one with Him. And man can only live a life of holiness by the life received for him on Calvary's cross. As he, by faith, contemplates the Lord's great sacrifice, his soul assimilates the spiritual life of Christ and receives spiritual strength from every Communion. This service forms a living connection by which man, the believer, is bound up with Christ, and thus with the Father. In a special sense, she maintains, the Communion forms a connection between dependent human beings and God.\textsuperscript{95}

Lastly, man is granted the privilege of fellowship with the Holy Spirit who dwells in all the people of God and makes them partakers of the divine nature (Eph. 5:11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Matt. 23:30; 1 Tim. 5:22; 2 John 9; Rev. 18:4). Begotten by the will and mind of the Father, man is redeemed by the blood of the Son, and quickened by the presence of the Spirit. Paul, the minister, tells man that this is fellowship, the common salvation in which man has come by grace through faith to share. Paul, Peter, John, apostles and ministers of the New Testament, admonish that salvation does not exempt us from suffering. These apostles themselves were examples of suffering; hence initiators of Koinonia. They shared Christ's suffering,

\textsuperscript{94}White, Desire of Ages, p. 660.

\textsuperscript{95}Ibid., p. 661.
fellowshipping in His glory, and died in the hope of sharing in His
dead life (Phil. 3:10; 1 Pet. 4:13; 5:1; Rev. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:7;
Heb. 10:33).

A Summary of the Theological Foundation of this Project
and its Practical Application
Within the Church

Chapter I presents a statement of the problem which faces the
Church in the South Caribbean Conference. It also gives an insight
into the cultural and educational background of the ministers and
people of that Conference and the impact the missionaries have had on
them.

In Chapters II to IV an attempt has been made to give a
theological foundation, which, I hope, will serve a two-fold purpose:
(1) A source of lectures for the classes, whereby as a part of the
project set forth in Chapter V, I propose to expose my students to the
Biblical Concept of the Laos, The Nature and Function of the Church,
and The Biblical Concept of Spiritual Gifts. (2) This theological
foundation also serves as the basis upon which the second half of
this project is built.

The second half of the project is the practical application
of the theological aspect, but it is done in such a way as to include
the cultural background of the people of the South Caribbean
Conference—a people with a conscious resistance to change.

In Chapter V, the beginning of this practical application,
effort is made to effect this change by beginning on the level of the
people, meeting them where they are on their own ground with the
standard groups of the Church, and building them into teams while, at the same time, setting them to work in a mutual ministry. The approach finds its foundation in Christ's sending of the twelve and seventy in groups of two's to work for their fellowmen.

My reason for this approach is precisely because these concepts are new in the South Caribbean Conference. I am hereby attempting change by way of trial and suggestions, starting from the least objectionable and gradually building the people up to where they will hopefully be expected to participate in this unusual upswing. In my endeavour to get them involved in further mutual ministry, as will be shown in The Buddy System, the Laos will unconsciously be mingling with the world. The aim in this approach is the conversion of many of the world to Christ through the Laos. It will be a conscious move on my part to get the Church to perform its task in the Ministry of Reconciliation, thus fulfilling Eph. 4:12. But in the third section, which is Chapter VII, I am aspiring to introduce to them, for the first time, the three Biblical Concepts found in the theological foundation; namely, The Meaning and Function of the Church, The Biblical Concept of the Laos, and the Biblical Concept of Spiritual Gifts. It is my belief that the Church is now ready to be told their true position as God's people, His community, the people who are called to a Ministry of Reconciliation. They should be told that they have already begun this ministry as they ministered to "Fringe Members" and new converts. Here, too, they should be made aware of the minister's true position, acknowledging that God, in order to effect His work, has given them gifts at baptism to be used
in this ministry both for their fellow-believers and for the world. Consequently, it is imperative that they discover their gifts and use them for the glory of God.

In the implementation of the goals for this project, the following methods will be employed: Workers' Meetings, Ministerial Retreats, Conventions, Lay Institutes, and lectures given to the students at the Caribbean Union College. Practical engagement of these principles will also be effected.

The above considerations form the background for the practical aspect of the project as set forth in Chapters V to VII.
CHAPTER V

A MINISTRY TO FRINGE MEMBERS

Let us for the sake of clarity say that "fringe members" are members of the Church who become discouraged probably because they are left out of the activities of the Church and therefore feel that they do not belong. As a result, these individuals may attend Church occasionally but refuse to participate in the affairs of the Church even if they are requested to do so.

Another category of "fringe members" are those who are financially indigent. These individuals may not have the material possessions necessary for Church attendance each Sabbath and are thus embarrassed to appear in Church in the same garb for even four consecutive Sabbaths. This state of things may lead to discouragement.

Then there is another class who find refuge "behind a post" in the Church or sit at the back pew so that they could slip out without being noticed by the minister or officers of the Church. In this category of "fringe members" are those who have fallen into sin but who keep struggling to be Christians. They love the Lord, but are weak in the things of the flesh. Perhaps the most adamant of all "fringe members" are those who fell within the disciplinary measures of the Church. These individuals are at times the hardest to be
reclaimed. From my experience I have discovered that love is most effective in reclaiming the "fringe members" of this category when it is seen and felt by disinterested action towards them.

Here now is an example which brings into focus this classification of "fringe members." This example is used because it offers an ideal condition for "fringe members" and shows what could have been accomplished with greater insight, better knowledge, and good planning.

**Situation in Siparia, Trinidad, West Indies**

When I entered this district as its new minister, I was alarmed at the existing conditions in the Church from a spiritual point of view. This was an ideal Church of about 250 members, according to the records of the Conference Office, but only thirty-two percent, or about eighty members, attended Church services each Sabbath. The Church Board, the governing group of the Church was active: also, the Lay Activities, Missionary Volunteer, Dorcas, and Temperance Groups. But as its minister, schooled in the philosophy that the minister is directly responsible for the advancement of the Church, I set myself to the task of doing the work of the Church instead of helping them to realize and accomplish their work of reconciliation.

Ellen White states:

In laboring where there are already some in the faith, the minister should at first seek not so much to convert
unbelievers, as to train the church members for acceptable cooperation.\textsuperscript{96}

Now observe:

Let him labor for them individually, endeavoring to arouse them to seek for a deeper experience themselves, and to work for others. When they are prepared to sustain the minister by their prayers and labors, greater success will attend his efforts.\textsuperscript{97}

What Mrs. White is pleading for is change--change from the traditional know how to something unheard of in the ministry of the South Caribbean Conference or in the Caribbean Union. One would therefore agree with Glock and Stark that

\ldots ministers must break with tradition to cope with contemporary life, \textit{for} it appears that the church faces a major educational job to encourage an atmosphere in which the minister is allowed greater freedom in defining his role.\textsuperscript{98}

This major educational programme is required of the administration of the South Caribbean Conference if they are to avoid frustration in the ministry, especially among the younger men whose sole ambition is to evangelize. When these young workers discover that they have not the gift of the evangelist they become discouraged. Had they the knowledge that they may have had the gift of pastor or pastor-teacher, their whole outlook may have been changed.

After becoming acquainted with my multi-faceted role at Siparia, I immediately obtained from the Church Clerk a list of all

\begin{footnotes}
\item[\textsuperscript{96}]White, Gospel Workers, p. 196.
\item[\textsuperscript{97}]Ibid. (Italics mine.)
\end{footnotes}
the members of the Church, together with their addresses, and was thereby able to visit each "fringe member" individually. The rate of apostasy at this Church was great, and for a while I wondered what my next step should be. Should I recommend to the Board that these individuals be dropped, or should I encourage them to return to God seeking Him more fully and, at the same time, use my authority in getting the Church to accept them without their public acknowledgement of their misdemeanors as the custom was for flagrant disgrace to the Church? I decided on the latter course of action. Finally, after working unflinchingly for about six to nine months, I got each "fringe member" to appear before the Church Board and express their sorrow for sin, soliciting the Board's forgiveness. I had a reason for taking this course of action, a reason which will be revealed later in this paper.

There are two reasons why this reconciliation was possible, probably three. (1) As their new pastor, these members felt ashamed to know that I had to become involved in their past affairs. (2) Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Caribbean have a deep respect for their ministers, a carry-over from the Roman Catholic and Methodist religions. (3) The interest I showed in each member, personally, caused them to have confidence in me, knowing that I had a profound concern for their souls.

The irony of the above-mentioned situation was that after the Church Board had given these "fringe members" the assurance that they were forgiven, they then turned to me and insisted that we drop them from Church fellowship. This was my opportunity to reveal to the
Church Board my reason for getting the "fringe members" to come to the Board and ask forgiveness. They had just exercised their authority, as a Church (Matt. 18:18, 19) in loosing their brethren from their sins. How could they now want to rescind their act of forgiveness? The point was well taken, and those "fringe members" became the best workers of the Church. They became members of my Evangelism Class, trained for evangelistic endeavours. However, I failed in that I did not train them toward the conservation of membership by putting them to work for one another.

One may question, "Is this, also, the work of the minister?"

Most assuredly! Does not this agree with Paul's statement in Eph. 4:11-13 that the minister who has been given the gift of pastor-teacher is the shepherd, the person who gives mental and spiritual help to the people of God as a guardian who brings out from the assembly its latent and hidden talents? The minister is given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body" (Eph. 4:12). His work, therefore, is not to do the work of the Church, but to get the Church to do its work.

Viewed from this angle, one would then conclude that the minister who fails to train the Church toward membership conservation, falls a victim to a one-sided ministry—a ministry which the South Caribbean Conference is in desperate need of reforming.

The questions with which we are now confronted are these: What could I have done to help the Siparia Church to sense her responsibility as her brother's keeper? What should I have done to
enable them to see that they erred in letting their minister carry all the burden of the Church and do all the work of reconciliation?

Mrs. White strongly advises that

Ministers should not do the work which belongs to the church, thus wearying themselves, and preventing others from performing their duty. They should teach the members how to labor in the church and in the community.\(^9^9\)

Upon this advice I would now construct a programme that would have greatly helped the Siparia Church out of that situation.

Too often much is taken for granted by both ministers and laity in regard to "fringe members." After these individuals have left the Church, the manner in which they are approached often seems to make them lose complete interest in the Church. In the first place, steps should be taken to discover what is being done to reclaim these members. In the case of the Siparia Church, I should have confronted the Church with their responsibility in working toward the conservation of membership.

In every Church there are groups that should be utilized for mutual ministry, but this has not been put into full-scale operation in the Churches in the South Caribbean Conference.

My idea for using standing groups is borrowed from Etzioni, who sees varied groups of workers in a factory producing better when the community spirit is maintained. But when this community spirit is removed and they no longer control the factory a decline is seen between the relationship of the workers and management, thus blocking

\(^9^9\)White, Christian Service, p. 69.
communication between management and workers. The job for the management is to seek to give back to these groups the community spirit if they want maximum production.

This was definitely the problem at Siparia. The community spirit was lacking and a communication block between the local elders, elderly members, and "fringe members" was apparent.

Siparia, as all Seventh-day Adventist Churches, has groups. My goal should have been the utilization of all these groups for mutual ministry in helping to reclaim "fringe members." The Church Board, the governing body of the Church, should have been used as a pilot model in getting a programme started that would spark off the other groups in helping all "fringe members" to feel that they are wanted and desperately needed in the Churches. Before this could be accomplished, however, the Church Board needed to develop a team spirit. This could have been realized in about three or four sessions of about twenty to thirty minutes duration once per week, where each member would have a direct, personal experience of what it meant to be a board member of Christ's Church. Well do I know that in order for the Church Board to work together as a team this group must have before them clearly stated objectives.

1. Each member of the team must become aware that he belongs to a team whose duty is to care for one another, pray for one another, and learn to love one another so that honesty and trust would emerge

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2. Each "fringe member" must feel a sense of belonging to the community of believers who thinks well of him and trusts him.

3. Set a time for the accomplishment of these objectives:
   a) within the first six months to one year; b) a time of reckoning.
   This is to determine the weekly progress of each member as he reports to the group, that is, the Church Board team. There should also be reports as to the number of "fringe members" reclaimed.

   In building this team, as their minister, I should try to remember the counsel of Clyde Reid who believes that a wise pastor should offer all the help possible in getting these groups started, but tactfully try not to lead the group. I would begin the group with revolving lay leadership and gradually withdraw.\textsuperscript{101}

   Just before the introduction of this team setting, the groundwork would have already been laid in order that the members of the Church Board team could be told by the pastor what has been discovered in the realm of apostasies or Church laxities and what could be accomplished when each member realizes his responsibility to the other.

   The procedure therefore would be:

1. Solicitation of Church membership list from Church Clerk, and visitation of members on Church Record

2. A compilation of Sabbath School members from list received from Sabbath School teachers or Sabbath School Secretary--members who had been absent two to three times per month

3. From one specially selected class, visitation to a few of the "fringe members" encouraging them to return to Church by letting them know that the community longed for their return to become active members of the Church body.

The visits at this time must not be lengthy, but long enough and effective enough to let them feel the impact of my concern for them.

When I visited some of the "fringe members" of the Siparia Church I received comments such as, "I did not think that anyone cared or knew that I still existed, even wanting me back as you are suggesting. Because you care enough to come and visit me, I will return." It should be noted that it was because the pastor cared, and not so much because the members of the Church cared. They returned because the pastor cared, and this was partly wrong. It should have been, "we cared." Why? Because, according to the unwritten law, most Seventh-day Adventist ministers do not remain more than three or four years in a district. The people of God should have been helped toward a realization of their responsibility to "fringe members" and then do something intelligent about rectifying the situation. The education of the laity, particularly in terms of a proper understanding of their mission, should be one of the main concerns of every minister and, as such, is the responsibility of the Conference at large.

Faithful ministers, because of the pressure to evangelize and become "centurions," can do little or nothing in the way of training lay helpers to assist them in the pastoral role of the Church. The work, therefore, leans toward a one-sided evangelical thrust and needs an equally strong pastoral pull to set a balance to the work force.
Another point: The Church should be permitted to become priests to the wayward priests (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6). Had this been done at Siparia, then after my departure the work which I had begun would have continued. The Church would have strengthened one another in their ministry, for the members would have been given a true sense of their responsibility to one another as members of the royal priesthood of believers and would have been committed to their fellowmen and to God.

But how could I have done this for the Church when my training for the ministry had the same imbalance as the training of most of the ministers of the Conference?

After the "fringe members" expressed a desire to return I would not consider my work accomplished, to any degree, until I see them return the next Sabbath morning and personally welcome them to Church fellowship. It may be that in order to initiate the move toward a return to Church I would have to pay another visit to some brother or sister who may be in need materially for suitable clothing to attend Church services.

During the first visit it is imperative to obtain sufficient information from the "fringe members" in a very tactful way, with regard to their means of support, so that on the second visit these individuals are more willing to open up to me. They are more willing to tell of their needs.

When the Church Board meets for the third time, it does so for team building purposes. These meetings are now scheduled on a weekly basis to report their findings on their spiritual progress, as a
group, and of their individual growth in Christ after each has been praying for real love for one another. As Keith Miller observes, each group is making an experiment with each other's lives during this period, and should be reporting back to the group each week. They are now building confidence and trust in each other and should be encouraged to tell of their failures, joys and probably the ridiculous things which happened as they try to live Christ and be truthful to their brethren day by day.102

It is during this third meeting that I would seek to broaden the horizon of the group, including in their former schedule their responsibility to "fringe members" and soliciting their help by suggesting a trial programme for "fringe members" by prayer and visitation with weekly reports on the progress made. A list of all "fringe members" from about fifteen or twenty classes, adults and youth of the Church, would be exhibited and names freely assigned to a team of two from the Church Board's larger team. The rules would be simple:

1. Visit these "fringe members" together, in teams of two's
2. Tell them that the Church misses them and longs for their return
3. Do more listening, speaking only words of encouragement
4. These visits should not be of more than ten to fifteen minutes duration, unless the individual visited is sick. Should this be the case, then the team should help as much and as far as possible

5. If during the course of the visit it is discovered that financial assistance is needed, this should be reported to this entire team which meets once weekly, and the group would give or get the Welfare Department of the Church to help. In giving assistance to the person in need, the visiting team ought to give on behalf of the group, that is, the Church Board. This is the "We Group" and no longer the "I Group" or the "Dorcas Group."

As far as possible let the young person work with the young; the young married with the newly wed; the middle-aged and the old with the old. One must realize that kinship roles are indispensable if action towards reconciliation is to be derived. What I am attempting to accomplish here is training a group to help its members make constructive changes in their social selves, by means of analysis of here-and-now experiences.\textsuperscript{103}

The group developed into a team is now introduced to a here-and-now problem of "fringe members" and the need for reclaiming them. They must now make constructive changes in visiting, praying, and sharing of themselves as they seek to be their brother's keeper in a mutual ministry of love.

The team would then meet once a week for one-and-a-half hours to report on their

1. Visits to "fringe members"

2. Their prayer life for themselves and for one another

3. Their exhibition of Christ

As a source of encouragement to the team I would then relate my experience with the "fringe members" of the one Sabbath School class I visited, telling them that each class has a number of "fringe members" who must be visited and individually worked with and for; hence my reason for needing their help. The simple programme outlined above would hopefully be implemented.

Before implementing the programme, however, it would be good for us to heed the counsel of Robert C. Worley when he said: "Both clergy and laity should discuss together the issues raised and decide mutually on actions to be taken." The laity is to realize that together we are both responsible and accountable for the hope of others. They must realize that together we can create or destroy the basis of hope for our "fringe brethren."

Fifteen minutes would be allotted me for instruction to the group on how to approach, what to say, and to avoid saying on their first visit. I would not continue this leadership role, indefinitely, as I should seek to gradually withdraw, leaving the leadership to the local elders and possibly to the Lay Activities Leader.

The position of the Church in the South Caribbean Conference is of such that they are in need of churchmen, managers, administrators, ministers, and laity who will be deeply concerned about the conditions in their organizations that could possibly support a whole range of behaviours—ethical activity inside and outside the Church,

effecting a ministry to those in need, effecting a teaching so that knowledge and faith commitments are shared by all the Laos, inside first, according to Ellen White, before they venture to convert unbelievers.

Worley warns that

... clergy and laity together must be agents of institutional change if our perspective and activity are governed by Christian faith. Changing church and secular organizations is a theological activity. We change not for the sake of change, or to be contemporary, or to implement the latest fads, ... Our only valid basis for changing is to live our lives as the body of Christ.105

My objective for the Siparia Church should have been to get this large Church Board team divided into smaller teams of two's who, in turn, would form prayer groups with those "fringe members" with whom they were working within the "fringe members" own homes, carrying out the same principles of the larger team; that is:

1. Care for each other
2. Pray for each other.
3. Learn to love each other so that honesty and trust can emanate

There are some additional rules for group discipline that they may want to accede to.

1. Attend all meetings of the group if at all possible
2. Read assigned passages from the Bible and Ellen G. White's books and take part in all discussions
3. Begin and close each meeting on time

105 Ibid., p. 108.
4. Have refreshments at the close of the meetings, but no regular meals

Clyde Reid insists that

When the members have agreed on their own disciplines, they have something invested in the group and are likely to respect those commitments. On the other hand, if the disciplines are imposed by someone without a group decision involved, resistance may be expected.\textsuperscript{106}

Smaller groups which are to report to the larger group of the Church Board must also seek to establish a norm of confidentiality in which whatever is said by the "fringe members" would not be told or reported to the larger group. Discussion within groups must remain the secret of each group. What is reported is the progress or need for better insight in effecting progressive spiritual changes. When confidentiality is established the second step, frankness, should be encouraged and developed, because by the third or fourth meeting a mutual trust should be established where members feel free to use colloquial speech and speak their honest convictions without fear of annoying anyone.

Clyde Reid suggests another norm that could be used in these small groups. He calls this "honest anger." Members ought to acquire maturity enough to make them feel free to clobber one another as the occasion demands it.\textsuperscript{107} At the same time, it would be advantageous to maintain, at all times, a feeling of tenderness one for the other. In other words, as the groups mature, the relationship should be such

\textsuperscript{106}Reid, Groups Alive, pp. 41, 42.

\textsuperscript{107}Ibid., p. 42.
that both anger and warmth could be shared with one another. This helps to pave the way for the smooth running of business, especially when important decisions are to be made.

After the Church Board breaks up into smaller teams of two's and three's and smaller teams have been grouped up with other "fringe members" thus forming a separate group or groups of its own reporting to the larger group once each week, each smaller group is now functioning, taking on a distinctive style of its own or a "group personality." As pastor, I would make known to the Church, at large, what the Church Board, in groups, has been doing and prevail on the congregation by getting these "fringe members" to tell of the blessings they have received by the group visitation programme and also the prayer groups. It is now opportune time to appeal to the other groups of the Church that have not yet been involved, telling them of the remaining "fringe members" who are yet to be visited and reclaimed.

Bear in mind that every other Church group, that is, Young People, Lay Activity, Welfare, et. cetera, has its head in the larger Church Board team, who themselves are now active members in this larger team and are also members of one of the small teams with an additional "fringe member." They should be encouraged as the possible leaders for these new groups and seek to put into effect all that they have learned by participation. By this time as new leaders, with a little help from the pastor, they would have clearly in mind what procedure to follow.
In outlining this programme for "fringe members," the negative aspect of the programme will now be included.

Experience teaches that there are two elements that disrupt most programmes. These are jealousy and envy. Elizabeth O'Connor, in commenting on the elements of destruction said:

These emotions lie close to us all and are in evidence when we have an unfolding life. The more full of promise a life is the more it is apt to evoke uncomfortable responses in others. If a community is to exist at all, it must learn to deal openly and creatively with feelings of jealousy and envy.108

O'Connor's observation and suggestion is well taken, but what can one do when the individual does not see that he has an unfolding life and would need, therefore, to watch for and guard these emotions? Probably this is one reason why in developing a programme as this for the South Caribbean Conference, where in due course of time individual lives will be touched with lives more promising than theirs, the minister must expect to come in contact with these emotions. He should make ample provision to combat the adversary tactfully, yet openly and creatively. Possibly this is the reason why little is being accomplished in this area, because most individuals are reluctant to encourage one with a life more auspicious and prefer to choose to keep relationships on a polite, superficial basis or plane rather than suffer the agony of coping with the problems that arise in their own lives when confronted with other lives more propitious than theirs. It must be realized that these problems would be compounded when the Church is

engaged in the creation of structures such as "sharing prayer
groups"—groups that will bring out and develop the gifts of its
members.

Had I developed a programme as the above to cope with the
Siparia situation, three things would have been evident.

1. I would have heeded Ellen White's admonition when she
said:

The best help that ministers can give the members of our
churches is not sermonizing, but planning work for them.
Give each one something to do for others.109

2. I would have re-educated the Church in not looking to or
depending on the minister to do the work that is theirs to perform, for
Every member should feel that he has entered into a solemn
 covenant with the Lord to work for the best interest of His
cause at all times and under all circumstances.110

3. Members would have developed true Christian affection for
one another. Hearts would have been united not only with Christ but
with one another in a union that is most tender. True mutual ministry
would have been unfolding, and a real sense of what it means to be
"your brother's keeper" would have been theirs

And if I may add a fourth it would be this:

The Church would have developed the community "We Feeling,"
which would have given them a sense of collective participation in an
indivisible unity. This sense of belonging to the group is greatly

109 Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols.

needed, especially when a strong sense of individualism has invaded the Caribbean and groups are shunned as evil. The Church needs to realize that groups for spiritual upliftment and enrichment are woefully needed. Along with this they would have the "Role Feeling" which would have given them a sense of status, so that each person feels that he has a part to perform in the reconciliation story. This function would have reciprocal exchange.

Lastly, the "Dependency Feeling," where members would feel an individual dependence upon the people of God as a necessary condition for their own life.

It is my hope to awaken in the minds of our ministerial brethren who return to the Caribbean Union College to continue their scholastic pursuits, the possibility of implementing this programme of "Fringe Membership." Further, to hold practical sessions whenever and wherever possible in the Churches, with ministers observing and participating as far as and as much as possible.
CHAPTER VI

A BUDDY SYSTEM THAT WOULD POSITIVELY AFFECT
THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF YOUNG CONVERTS

During my internship in the South Caribbean Conference, I observed that most new converts were left to themselves once they had received the right hand of fellowship. In some instances these young members were hurriedly baptized without proper instructions, continuing in the Church with no spiritual follow-up by the pastor or members. This resulted, many times, in backsliding. The situation bothered me and set me thinking as to what procedures could be followed in order to avert this quick rate of apostasy.

After giving the matter careful study, I concluded that each new convert should remain in the Baptismal Class of the Church for a period of six months before they were left on their own. This would mean a three-month period of instruction before baptism and a three-month period of instruction after baptism reinforcing the same principles of the Faith. In fact, the individuals I baptized after I was given the credentials of a full-fledged minister were baptized on condition that they would remain in the Baptismal Classes three months after baptism. This rule of thumb affected both the new converts from evangelistic endeavours and children from members of the Church. As a result of this about seventy percent of the new
converts are still Seventh-day Adventists. The other thirty percent have become "fringe members" and apostates.

Probably the partial failure of this programme stemmed from my failure to teach the Church to properly care for one another. It was Ellen White who insisted that "All should be taught to work. Especially should those who are newly come to the faith be educated to become laborers together with God."^^ The thought continues that all, both new and old converts to the Lord Jesus are "... ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men."^^

As stated in my last chapter, some members were made to depend on the minister and were not made to rely on the corporate body of the Laos. Ellen White informs ministers that "In fastening minds to yourself, you lead them to disconnect from the Source of their wisdom and sufficiency." The ministers here are not being accused of wilfully seeking to capture the minds of the people. They are not accused of an intentional fastening, but of an unwitting act. Therefore, education in this particular area would greatly reduce this possibility.

Now for a setting of evangelistic procedures in the South Caribbean Conference:

At the end of each year, all ministers are asked to set goals as to how many new converts each would win during the next year. These

^^White, Welfare Ministry, p. 111.

Ibid.

White, Gospel Workers, p. 484.
goals must not fall under that of the Conference's, but must supersede it.

Goal-setting has its advantages and disadvantages; its merits and demerits. One advantage is that it gives the ministers the opportunity to formulate objectives and to aim at particular or specific targets. It could also be an indicator for the measurement of progress. Yet in the realm of disadvantages, goals that are mileposts for the measurement of progress can also be a means of producing frustration especially among those who have set goals that they know are not achievable.

A goal to increase the membership of the Church involves people over whose daily affairs the pastor has little or no control. Therefore goals ought to be formulated with the consent of the whole community, and not by one man for the entire body. Probably the most appropriate thing for a pastor to do is to set his annual goal in conjunction with the members of the Church and make sure that he can rely on their support for the accomplishment of this goal. In this way, each member of the community develops a feeling of involvement, in that the work of the Church becomes theirs and they move with the pastor as a concerted whole, the pastor himself having the support of all involved.

Too often ministers, in order not to feel petty in the eyes of their brethren, would set goals that they themselves do not believe in. How, then, could these goals be achieved?

Goal-setting as practised in the South Caribbean Conference is competitive to a large extent, and is probably one of the chief
sources of discouragement in the ministry. This competitive spirit is too often the cause why many of the new converts are not thoroughly indoctrinated, thereby resulting in apostasy.

Goals are essential, but they ought to be goals that are conceivable, believable, and achievable; not goals that are unattainable. Competition is also good, but it ought to be healthy competition with one's own self, where the individual seeks to better his former record as he seeks to improve his method of soul-winning and soul-saving within the sphere of the Church. This removes the spirit of rivalry and hard feelings, especially when the "century" is not realized. There will be no ill-feeling against anyone but the individual's own self. Perhaps, too, if the pastor is keen enough to discern his God-given gift and develop and use this gift, the feeling of inferiority which results in failure to achieve yearly goals, would be avoided.

Elizabeth O'Connor in commenting on gifts in relation to the Laos states: "Certainly our knowledge of gifts and creativity is incomplete, a subject to be pondered and worked through in this and every church community."\textsuperscript{114}

The famous sculptor Michelangelo envisioned an angel in a stone and after much painstaking effort, coupled with skill, he brought it out. Elaborating on this O'Connor continues:

Every person has the task of releasing angels by shaping and transfiguring the raw materials that lie about him

\textsuperscript{114}O'Connor, Eighth Day, p. 11.
so that they become houses and machinery and pictures and bridges. How we do this . . . is determined by the discovery and the use of our gifts.¹¹⁵

When the clergy makes this discovery, the discovery of gifts in themselves and in every member of the community, then they would be aware that not every pastor has the gift of an evangelist. The pastor who has the gift of a pastor would realize his gift and work within his capacity to edify, equip, and build up the Church to fulfill its mission. The evangelist would realize his gift (humbly so) and use it to the glory of God without belittling the work of the pastor. They are both soul-winners in different spheres, within the same prism, enhancing the work of each other.

The point to be emphasized is this: A man who has the gift of a pastor and knows that this is his gift would not seek to be an evangelist when he knows that this is not his gift.

Perhaps the discovery of the minister's rightful gift could be made during his college career, so that he enters the field knowing his gift, be it evangelist, pastor, or teacher, with the assurance and consciousness that God has given him the gift to be used for His glory and for the glory of His Church. Paul's statement in Eph. 4:11, 12 rings true here, and Ellen White encourages

One man may carry his part of the work as far as he can /for example, the evangelist/, and then the Lord will send another of His workmen to do another part of the work that the first worker did not feel the necessity of doing /say, the pastor/. . . . Therefore let no man feel that it is his duty to begin and carry forward a work

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 13.
entirely himself. If it is possible for Him to have other gifts in other laborers to work for the conversion of souls, let him /the evangelist/ gladly co-operate with them.\textsuperscript{116}

Following through she insisted that

\ldots the new converts will need to be instructed by faithful teachers of God's Word that they may increase in a knowledge and love of the truth, and may grow to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.\textsuperscript{117}

And note, "They must now be surrounded by the influences most favorable to spiritual growth."\textsuperscript{118}

It is this last sentence that intrigues me, for it is this section of the work that is sadly neglected. There is therefore need of a programme to greatly assist the young convert after the evangelist has gone to some other field or locality to continue the greatest work given to mortals.

The work for the new converts should begin a week or two before plans are laid for the Evangelistic Crusade. This would give the trainees at least six weeks of intensive training in preparation to perform their role as a buddy to the new believers in Christ Jesus. Then, on the day of baptism, they are publicly presented before the congregation as a buddy to the new convert. The buddy is responsible for helping him or her in being oriented into Church fellowship, to pray with and for, to sympathize and empathize with him as far as possible.


\textsuperscript{117}Ibid., p. 337.

\textsuperscript{118}Ibid.
The Buddy System

The origin of this type of mutual ministry began with the Master Himself when He sent out His disciples two by two (Mark 6:7; Matt. 10: Luke 9:1 - 6). He saw this system as one which would give the needed encouragement, companionship, and counseling to the disciples in their missionary endeavours.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, admonished: "... do good unto all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10). The writer to the Hebrews is a bit more emphatic, in that he calls us to "... consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ... (Heb. 10:24).

From the foregoing statements one can see that all should be interested in the soul salvation of his brethren; all are buddies; all are brothers' keepers.

Coswell quotes Calvin on this point as saying:

... it is the right and duty of every member to admonish his fellow members and provoke them to good works, and thus prevent the preaching from becoming frigid.119

Following through on this point Wilhelm Niesel repeats for us another of Calvin's gems by stating

Because the Risen Lord claims men as His own, in order through them to complete His work, we belong together as those we serve as a congregation in which each is dependent on the help of others. Thus the Church is

not a rigid institution but a living organism, a
fellowship of mutual service and helpfulness.120
Therefore since each member is dependent on the help of the other,
it is even more urgent for the new converts to receive this support
and mutual help from the older members of the Church in the form of
mutual service of buddies.

Implementation of the Buddy Programme

The dominant question then would be, "How should such a
programme be implemented?"

Before the initiation and carrying out of such a programme
as The Buddy System, groundwork must be laid. Members of the Church
must be trained to use their talents. Mrs. White contends that if
members are trained to use their talents, "... men would be
developed who would be prepared to fill positions of trust and
influence, and to maintain pure, uncorrupted principles."121

A Church Rally should be held one month before plans are laid
for the Evangelistic Campaign. A week before the Rally, however, the
pastor should meet with all the groups of the Church who have been
actively engaged in group work, along with reclaimed "fringe members,"
inviting them to co-operate with him in a training programme in
preparation to welcome and assist new converts up to about three
months after their baptism. After obtaining their consent and their

120 Wilhelm Niesel, The Theology of Calvin, trans.
121 Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols.
promised co-operation, discussion of plans for the Rally and Crusade will follow. These teams will then serve as encouragers to the other members of the Church with the intent to forming them in groups of eight. The Church Board team will be given material covering their group work, for with their former experience working with "fringe members," they should be prepared to assist the pastor in the formation of these groups and in instructing the other voluntary groups for a period of four to five weeks before the crusade begins.

On the day of the Rally, the sermon should be geared to arouse the consciousness of the congregation as to their duty to the young converts. Members should realize that before new converts are welcomed into fellowship they, the members, are responsible, by life and act, to lead them to their Saviour. Members ought to be reminded (and this is the work of the pastor-teacher) that only as they are seen as a warm-hearted, self-denying, self-sacrificing Church, cheerfully and gladly ministering to their brethren, would they be able to attract others in the Church. The preacher should attempt to rekindle in the hearts of the people the tender sympathy of Christ that was once theirs and a deeper love for those whom He cared for so much in that He offered His life for their lives.

Ellen White sums it up this way:

Divine truth exerts little influence upon the world, when it should exert much influence through our practice. . . . mere profession of religion . . . will do our neighbor no good unless our belief is carried into our daily life. Our profession may be as high as heaven, but it will serve neither ourselves nor our fellow men unless we are
Christians. A right example will do more to benefit the world than all our profession.122

The afternoon session is divided into three sections:

1. A short session with the help of the several members of the original groups as leaders for these new groups of eights or tens. They now meet in circles at various sections of the Church in a getting-to-know-each-other-better session. a) They give their names. b) They tell a little of their background. c) They tell something about themselves between the ages of nine and twelve. d) They tell when they were baptized and how they have become members of the Ekklesia.

This session should not last more than twenty minutes.

2. The second session should last about fifteen minutes. Members of the group will be prepared by the leaders of the groups on what they should say when they visit with new converts.

3. A practical demonstration of this first visit: Here the leaders of the various groups can select several team groups or training groups. This experience is designed to help members make constructive changes in their social selves by means of a here-and-now experience. While one training group is demonstrating, the others of the group will be given the opportunity to say what the demonstrating group did, either wrong or right, and should be able to profit from the practical demonstrations. At the same time they

122 White, Positive Christian Living, p. 349.
would be able to relate to one another while the experience lasts, and gain fresh insights into their social relationships 123

These practical classes should continue for one to one-and-a-half hours weekly, at a time agreed upon by all. The following are suggestive topics to be discussed:

1. Preparation for the Sabbath
   a) The physical aspect (2T, pp. 702, 703)
      (1) When preparation begins (6T, pp. 354, 355)
   b) The spiritual aspect (6T, p. 356)
2. Welcoming the Sabbath (6T, pp. 356, 357)
3. What is proper Sabbath-keeping (2T, pp. 582 - 585)
   a) Make it attractive for children (6T, pp. 357, 358)
5. Importance of Secret Prayer (Steps to Christ, p. 68)
6. Fellowship Groups
7. Diet for the Sabbath (6T, p. 357)

Fellowship or Buddy Groups will be enforced after the first visit to the home of the new convert. It should be noted that the Fellowship Groups, that is groups now formed by new converts and older members of the Church, would vary from groups of three to as large as the family accepting the Three Angels' Messages.

Each group is to seek to give expression to the common life which its members are now enjoying. They are to seek to deepen and enrich each other. The chief means to this end is a devotional

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123 Rolla Swanson, "Planning Change and Dealing with Conflict," The Chicago Theological Seminary Register 59 (May 1969): 30.
reading of the book *Steps to Christ* and through prayer. This book should be read privately before the group session begins. The groups are to meet for one hour each week at the home of the new converts. Mutual agreement should be reached by all groups as to

1. The time to meet and the time to close
2. The method of reading the book
3. Amount of material for discussion each week (one chapter suggested)

The reading must not therefore dominate the evening, and it is not the leader's responsibility to lecture to the group. His task is to help the group to feed upon Christ together, in and through these readings. Therefore, their object in re-reading each chapter is not just to understand what the chapter means, but to go beyond its meaning to its message, letting the chapter speak to the situation of each individual, to direct and correct, to exhort, rebuke, challenge, and, possibly, comfort.

Group leaders should invite members of the groups, and especially the new converts, to share leadership. This helps the new converts to be identified with the group as probably nothing else can.

Clyde Reid, in speaking of shared leadership, stresses this point by saying:

... when leadership is shared among the members of the group, research has shown that their personal investment is higher, morale is higher, and the group tends to accomplish more work towards its goals. Group members
feel that their presence and contributions are more important, so they naturally feel more closely identified with the group.\textsuperscript{124}

Etzioni sees this as expandable power in the group, so that when someone in the group takes over the leadership, for that moment that individual has gained power. This does not mean that the others have necessarily lost power, but that every person has gained some.\textsuperscript{125}

It seems to me that one of the tragedies in our Caribbean culture is that we do not work to make one another powerful. Self is to be crucified if we are to explore the ways in which all can receive and handle more power.

At the end of the three-month session, if it is at all possible, the Fellowship-Buddy Groups should assemble for Holy Communion in the home of the new converts. The true significance of the service must be told to these new converts, in that this service of humility is one in which the priesthood of believers is demonstrated, in that brother washes the feet of brother and proclaims that in the name of Christ his brother's sins are washed away.

It is hoped that after this three-month trial, the new converts would of themselves become leaders and do one of two things, probably both:

1. Ask for the continuation of the groups

2. Have a group of their own and be willing to move into the second phase of the Fellowship Groups, or, as Stott would call it,

\textsuperscript{124}Reid, Groups Alive, p. 81.

the "sharing in" and "sharing out" groups. This exercise of sharing is a definite asset in the deepening of fellowship.

It has been discovered by experience that if individuals are only inward-looking then they would become ingrowing, unhealthy, and most likely, static. Therefore, this second phase of Fellowship Groups for young converts must be one in which they are told that in order to avoid imbalance, the second half, that of "sharing out," is needed.

During the first half of this Fellowship Buddy System, the old converts encourage the new to solicit the interest of the immediate family. The old converts, themselves, must seek to befriend the unconverted husband or wife or children and even the nearest relatives. Both old and new converts should fully realize that they are called both to "holiness" and to "worldliness," that is, to be involved and to be withdrawn; to mingle and to isolate. They, the young converts, by this time must be cognizant of the fact that fruitful Christianity means mingling and being involved in the world to help save the world for God. But it is impossible to do so without isolation, to receive spiritual resource and strength which will enable them to make mingling a possibility without threat of subjugation.

Elton Trueblood would apply and define this truth thus:

... a fellowship of consciously inadequate persons who gather because they are weak, and scatter to serve

\footnote{Stott, One People, pp. 84, 85.}
because their unity with one another and with Christ has made them bold.127

Following through in a sort of ungoing thought he advances by insisting that

... we are making a great step forward when we realize that there is no inevitable contradiction between the idea of the scattered church and the idea of the gathered church. We gather in order to scatter!128

When the second session is held, the time, place, and setting will be the same as the first. However, the Bible now becomes the book and Christ is made the centre of attraction. He is now introduced to non-converts. The passages for discussion should be given one week in advance so that the non-member would have time to read and become familiar with them. At the beginning of the session, fifteen to twenty minutes should be engaged in prayer for the understanding of the Word and for each additional buddy who has become members of the group. This does not rule out the additional group praying for one another. It is hoped that this season of prayer will become more audible, natural, intimate, and more effective as it is entered into more fully week after week.

A list of suggestive topics for discussion may be

1. Following Christ in Prayer
2. Following Christ in Love
3. The Need for Christ
4. The Need for Repentance

128 Ibid., p. 83.
5. Would Christ Forgive Me?
6. Can One be Sure of Christian Growth?
7. Christ the Centre of Peace
8. Christ the Centre of Victorious Living
9. Like Christ in Obedience
10. How Can I Honour Him?
11. With Him in Glory
12. Like Christ in Baptism

This suggested list of topics for group discussion should be in the hands of each group member, and one week before the discussion all appropriate texts for each topic would be available to all. This does not mean that the suggested texts are final; others may be supplemented, but they should not be more than twelve. It is best, however, if passages of Scripture on the suggested topic be had and study made contextually. Other texts can be added only as a reinforcement of the main point.

As an innovation, these Buddy Groups can meet at different homes—say the new non-member's home, when the group can meet and pray and talk about Jesus Christ. They would find that their homes would become a more natural place to talk about Him.

Added to this list of innovations, someone in the group who had recently been faced with resentment or probably had a decision to make may witness to his own struggle. This was true of a pilot prayer group held in the community of Andrews University. In the group members may feel free to air their views from time to time. Out of these dialogues can come concrete suggestions which the group
member airing the problem might not have stumbled upon alone for years; many times, because of the lack of perspective. This openness and acceptance of one another help each member to become more and more honest with themselves and with one another.

Kelly speaks to this in these words:

The truly mature person (or group) has nothing to fear from listening to others; if anything, it deepens his understanding of his own heritage and convictions. . . . Rather, it can be a cooperative exploration of common problems for the mutual enlightenment of all.129

It is hoped that as a natural outgrowth of this Koinonia, this sharing of the Gospel of Reconciliation with one another, that individuals would know each other, love each other, take an interest in each other, and above all care for each other, for as Bruce Larson states: "The church is meant to be a company of people as committed to one another as to Christ."130 To this one may add, and also to the world.

Like the first group, that is the Fringe Membership Group, the objectives and aim of the Fellowship and Buddy Groups is soul-saving. These Buddy Groups should be able to report to the Church the individuals that have been converted among their friends and relatives during the first three months.

The process of preparing for future evangelistic crusades by training buddies, could be carried on by the older members and also


young converts who may not have established groups of their own but are willing to be buddies to converts as the older converts were to them.

It is my belief that a programme as the above would give the new converts as well as the old the evidence that the Church to which they belong is not something foreign or removed from them, and deepen their conviction that membership in a brotherhood of believers brings lasting spiritual results. Also, it would be demonstrated that each member plays a role in the Koinonia. The individual member has opportunities in shared leadership to direct the service, to tell his problems, to ask for aid spiritually and otherwise, to recount his religious experiences, to ask for prayer and to give thanks for prayers said. There is also the feeling that each buddy knows that he or she is a part of the group, that he needs the group in order to sustain his regeneration. One must not forget that man today is seeking to be integrated; he wants status and membership. Along with this, there is in him the desire for recognition, and this the Church of the South Caribbean Conference can give by the formation of these Fellowship and Buddy Groups for personal relationships and for membership conservation.

One way in which this can be more effective is by dividing up the larger Churches into smaller Churches of about 250 to 300 members. But until those in leadership see the need for this, let the Buddy System be introduced as a reaction against the impersonal-ization that these large Churches breed and which is destined to continue because of the introduction of technology and science. This
statement need not be interpreted as an attempt to discredit technology and science. No one can question the value of these, in that they aid man in the development of devices of immeasurable worth. What I am saying is that they can be detrimental when man, in his use of these devices, becomes selfish and impersonal in his dealings with his fellowmen even within the Church.

When the above programme is well formulated and in working order within the Church, then the minister is in a position to invite his Church officers to look at the Ministry of Spiritual Gifts.
CHAPTER VII

THE MINISTRY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

This chapter aims at the development of a week-end programme on the Ministry of Spiritual Gifts—a programme beginning Friday evening and ending Sunday afternoon in a camp setting, at Camp Balandra, in northern Trinidad.

Because this programme on the Discovery of Spiritual Gifts, along with The Buddy System and Recovery of "Fringe Members" is new to the South Caribbean Conference, one would again have to exercise caution and approach it from groups already existing in the Church. Loen suggests that consent be first obtained from what he calls "opinion leaders." Said he:

In every group, there are one or more opinion leaders. An opinion leader is not necessarily the person with the most responsibility: he may be influential by virtue of his personality, his experience, or his informal status with the group.131

This is certainly true of a Church Board, where can be found individuals with varying minds and with different educational backgrounds and social status. Some of these very influential individuals are well educated, and their influence holds sway particularly if affluence is also

predominant. These individuals are not elders of the Church but they are persuasive and their ideas have a decided hold on the group. A wise minister, though he would not show any favouritism, would not fool himself, but recognize that the opinion leader or leaders may be able to help or hinder him more than any other member of the group.

The minister needs to acquire the assent of these opinion leaders, along with that of the elders and a few of the Church officers on the holding of the week-end programme. He then meets with all the officers of the Church, and here they would be told of the plans for a retreat intended for the discovery of the Spiritual Gifts of the Church. Briefly, they would be told that God has given gifts to all men and that these differ according to the grace given to them (Eph. 4:7 – 12; 1 Cor. 12:11; Rom. 12:5 – 8). They would be admonished that the opportunity is theirs to discover their gifts so that they can be used to the glory of God and for mission. Further, that after the discovery of their gifts, the minister would solicit the aid of the Church Board in helping the Church to discover their gifts so that every one can be trained to use his or her gift in his or her mission to one another and to the world.

With their accession to our plans for this spiritual retreat, we would be in agreement with John L. Casteel who said that

The purpose of retreat is the deepening of communion with God, with other persons, and with oneself. . . . The purpose of retreat is the offering of ourselves to God in such a way that He can draw us into closer communion with Himself--and through this communion grant us richer community with other persons in Christ and a truer understanding of ourselves. The root of this purpose is
to be found in the Great Commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and the second that is like it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Plans would then be laid for the success of this retreat: for, as Robert G. Kilgore insists, "The first step toward a successful retreat is good planning." This may include preparation for the children and also transportation. Timing for each programme would be looked into; also a general schedule giving opportunities for small groups to have discussions and prayer after each lecture. Included, also, would be periods for silent listening, rest, work and nurture.

Before the week-end retreat, each officer of the Church is asked to read very carefully, if not contextually, the following passages on Spiritual Gifts for at least ten or more times: (1) Romans 12:1 - 12; (2) 1 Cor. 12 - 14; (3) Eph. 4:1 - 16. They would be sent materials giving them up-to-date knowledge on the meaning of certain terminologies such as (1) Laos; (2) Kleros; (3) Ekklesia; (4) The Origin of Laity and Clergy. This assignment and the materials would be sent to each officer of the Ekklesia about two weeks in advance, so that they can read and become familiar with these terms and the passages of Scripture.

Instruction would be given so that they can receive the greatest benefit as they re-read these Scriptures, thus allowing these


133 Robert G. Kilgore, "Retreats Can Revive a Church" Church Administration (January 1973), 11.
passages to speak to them. If possible, they are to prepare notes on the message they received from the passages.

The first lecture on Friday evening will be on "The Biblical Concept of the Laos," the text used being 1 Peter 2:9. A statement would be in place, showing that this Laos refers to Ex. 19:5, 6 in which the term used in reference to Israel is qahal, people of God. It therefore stood for a unique relationship that existed between Yahweh and His people (Num. 11:29; 16:41; Judges 5:11, 12). It shows that Israel was called out by God for a specific purpose. It was a call to status, a call to function, not a call to indolence; hence it was a call to progress.

Of importance here is the fact that there are shifts in the meaning of the term Laos. These differentiations will also be given during the lecture. Let it be known that the word, Laos, emphasizes a special people, the people of Israel. Peter, therefore, takes this Old Testament word that refers to Israel and applies it to the community of believers of the New Testament. Consequently, all that God expected of ancient Israel He now expects of this community. Like Israel, the Church is called out from among the Ethnos to a place of distinction. In other words, the Church is now a unique people. The members are now the religious people of God. The term is here used by Peter in a figurative sense and, as such, it has reference to the Christian community.

According to Kittel, this Christian community is wholly a Septuagint usage which goes beyond the Old Testament and is no longer
used for a nation, as Israel, but a community, and in this community belongs all nations. Therefore, as officers of this community, members of the Church are members of God's special body, because they are taken from the Ethnos, the people of the rest of the world or nations, the Gentiles (Acts 10; Acts 15:14). Here James, at the first Apostolic Council, proclaimed that Simon hath declared how God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people, for His name. Members of the community, therefore, are part of this people of the Gentiles. This does not exclude Israel of old or the Jews from being a part of this people of God. Membership in the Church is dependent upon man's acceptance of Jesus Christ and His Gospel of Salvation.

Biologically and historically, the Jews are no longer the people of God, because they rejected Yahweh and His Christ, the Messiah (Acts 18:6; 13:46). Individuals who have accepted Jesus as Lord and master are now his true community, His people called out from the world to go back to the world with the invitation to come to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Like Israel of old, the Church is not called to idleness, but to progress, or, as Peter puts it, to proclaim. In order to proclaim, the Church must mingle with the world, to be of service to them, breaking down prejudice in order to make the call more effective.

Peter tells us, also, that as God's chosen people, His community, we are now His chosen generation. In other words, the Laos is honoured.

John, in Rev. 18:4, quotes Jer. 51:45 where the Laos is referred to as "my people," the Christian community. But to this
Christian community Paul in Eph. 4; Rom. 12; and 1 Cor. 12:4 tells that gifts were given. Nowhere in the Bible could it be assumed that these gifts were only for a small group of the community, nor was evangelism for only a selected few as was formerly believed. This means that God has given gifts to all members of the Church, and more so, to the Church at large, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ.

In 1 Cor. 12:13 and Acts 2:38, 39 Paul speaks of baptism by the Spirit into this community. To this community was given a diversity of gifts. The Laos is all in need of one another as the hands are to the feet. The minister's gift was given him to help the Church and the Church's gifts were given them to help the minister (1 Cor. 12:19 - 24). In Rom. 12:6 there is proof that our gifts differ. In Eph. 4:7 there is also evidence that the Laos receives grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. In 1 Cor. 12:11 there is word on the dividing of gifts to every man severally as He will. At baptism, also, the Holy Spirit gives gifts to the Church. Paul, in Eph. 4:12, tells that the minister alone is not responsible for the Ministry of Reconciliation. This is the work of the Church, not the minister solely. The minister helps to edify the community and to guide them in identifying their specific gifts of the Spirit. As members of the Church, their status is that of mission to one another and to the world.

In closing the lecture, this quotation from Ellen White is in order:

Jesus did not receive baptism as a confession of guilt on His own account. He identified Himself with sinners,
taking the steps that we are to take, and doing the work that we are to do.\textsuperscript{134}

The whole purpose and aim of this first lecture is to awaken in each officer of the community (1) to seek and to discover and to recognize his or her gift given him by the Holy Spirit; (2) to encourage each to develop his gift as a means of enriching the Church and bringing glory to God by its use; (3) to understand their true function as the people of God in the Ministry of Reconciliation.

At the close of the lecture there should be a two-minute period of silence, thus allowing the Spirit to speak. This period of silence should be improved upon during the second and third lectures until the last day of the retreat when a full five minutes would be given to this exercise.

Group discussion on the Concept of the Laos and gifts given to each member now follows. The number of the groups would depend on the number of Church officers. In an ideal Church of about 250 members, the groups would total about twenty-five to thirty members, taking into consideration that in most Churches of the South Caribbean Conference one person may have two offices. In situations like this, the large group can easily be divided into two groups of fifteen or three groups of ten. The Local Elders or Lay Activity Leader, who by this time have become leaders of groups having had experience in leading out in the "Fringe Membership Group" and the Buddy System, can lead out in these group discussions. Circular formations would

\textsuperscript{134}White, \textit{Desire of Ages}, p. 111.
be ideal, in that individuals can face one another as they discuss these here-and-now problems.

The group leaders would encourage shared leadership participation, and any unanswered questions would be turned in to the pastor to be hopefully answered just before the next group session following the Sabbath services. This period, like the lecture, would last for about twenty minutes. The following twenty minutes would be given to prayer for a closer understanding of themselves and an infilling of the Holy Spirit, with the hope that His suggestions would be heard and taken.

A paragraph or two about the need and importance of the gifts of the Spirit is legitimate at this time. These should be read just before prayer. The following passages from the book, Acts of the Apostles are suggested: Chapter 49:1, 2; 50:2; 51:2, 3; 52:2, 3, 4, 5; 53:2; 55:2, 3; 56:1, 2.

The 11:00 o'clock Sabbath service would involve the group as one large circle. This is a conscious innovation from the accustomed Church setting. Prayer and a Hymn of Meditation follows a short Song Service. At this 11:00 o'clock hour the lecture is entitled "God's Kleros." Its format follows:

God's people have an exalted position, but this position is not one of secularism, but one of function. This position does not set the Church apart from the world, but makes her members servants—servants in the sense that members of the Church are called to be proclaimers, givers of the Good News of The Three Angels' Messages of Rev. 14:6 - 14. As servants, the Church takes on the
attitude of sharers with the world of the Good News received. Its members are priests in this Ministry of Reconciliation. 1 Pet. 2:9 puts the people of God in the membership of the priesthood of God. John, in Rev. 1:6, affirms this truth. As priests, therefore, the Church belongs to the clergy, and this attests to the certitude of Martin Luther's belief that we are a priesthood of the believers. Therefore, as such, we are God's priests; we are (1) His priests to one another (e.g. the Service of Humility); (2) to the world (e.g. Proclamation, Welfare).

In order to function as ministers to one another and to the world, the Church first accepted Christ, then was baptized into Christ by water and by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Cor. 12:13). Therefore, at baptism all received gifts. It would be appropriate, here, to rehearse a little of the first lecture for reinforcement.

Baptism into Christ means (1) The putting on of Christ (Gal. 3:27); (2) Receiving strength from Christ to fight against the flesh (Rom. 13:14); (3) New men and women, created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24); (4) Baptism to do the work Christ did (DA, p. 111); (5) Proclaiming the Gospel. The baptism of Christ, therefore, is different from all baptisms. It differs from John's which was a baptism of repentance and a belief on Him who was to come. Before one, therefore, is baptized into Christ, he first becomes sorry for his sins and turns away from them to Jesus. This is all possible through the working of the Holy Spirit on men's lives. But is not this repentance? It is after this that forgiveness follows; then comes baptism.
It was after baptism and the wilderness experience that Jesus began His work of ministry. He began His work by proclaiming that the Kingdom of God is at hand. He healed, comforted, taught and preached. Consequently, anyone who is baptized into Christ and has truly put on Christ must do His work (Matt. 4:1 - 17; Mark 1:9 - 15). Christ expects this of every member of His Church.

Here is a challenge from Ellen White:

But God does not want His people to hang their weight upon the ministers. As a steward of the grace of God, every church member should feel an individual responsibility to have life and root in himself. All who are ordained unto the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. He who loves God supremely and his neighbor as himself cannot rest content with doing nothing.135

The Church is ordained unto the life of Christ. Therefore the Church is ordained to work for the salvation of its fellowmen, and as an ordained minister within the community the minister's ordination differs only in function in that he becomes the servant of the Church to teach, to edify, to help prepare them to do the work of the Ministry of Reconciliation, to reconcile the world back to God. The Church is also ordained by the Holy Spirit after baptism, just as Christ was ordained to proclaim the gospel to the world.

The setting now shifts to the seashore or under the trees where, for a period of twenty minutes, discussion as to the content of the lecture and its personal meaning and application to lives would take place. As formerly, this is preceded by a three-minute interval of silent meditation. The same procedure follows as was carried out

135 White, Welfare Ministry, p. 111.
on Friday night, the difference being that unanswered questions would
be answered if they were not already answered through the lecture.
The session closes with a twenty-minute season of prayer, the
interlude following including the lunch hour and a rest period
before the 4:00 o'clock meeting convenes.

To the minds of many people the question as to the actual
possession or receipt of the Gifts of the Spirit poses a problem.
How does one know that he possesses a gift? How does he know his
gift? The third lecture would be in direct effort to answer the
question, "What Does it Mean to Receive the Gift of the Spirit?"

There is a brief rehearsal of what it means to be baptized
into Christ, with emphasis on the fact that the members of the Church
are ordained by the Holy Spirit to work for the salvation of their
fellowmen. Further stress would be laid on the call to be the priests
of God, with emphasis on the function being one of mission both to one
another and to the world. To achieve this Christ, through His Holy
Spirit, has given the Church gifts.

An exercise in a deliberate reading of parts of 1 Cor. 12;
14; Rom. 12; and Eph. 4 is entered into. Re-emphasis on the truth
that the minister is not higher than the layman in the sight of God
is given. It is pointed out that the minister's ordination sets him
apart for a particular function to them, God's people. He has been
given the gift or pastor, or gift of pastor-teacher (Eph. 4:11).
Eph. 4:12 gives the reason for this function. Therefore, this is no
office of exclusive distinction, but of service to and for the Church.
Just as the minister's gift of pastor-teacher does not set him above the Church, in the same manner the gifts of the community, be they evangelism, faith, wisdom, administration, or teaching, do not set them above the minister or above one another. All functions are for performances. Both the minister and the Church need each other in the performance of the Ministry of Reconciliation. Both have erred in that the minister has assumed the work of the Church, and the Church in that she allowed him that privilege. The work of the minister is to assist the Church in the performance of her ministry, to edify the members so that they can edify the world to help in perfecting them so that they can do the same for the world into which they mingle each day. Said Paul, "... The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'" (1 Cor. 12:15 - 21). (See Appendix II for sermons.)

A moment of confession is needed here on the part of both the minister and the laity. The minister now relates to the group in this manner:

1. He questions: "Who would like to know and recognize his gift?" (Make sure the distinction is made between gifts received at baptism, from the Holy Spirit, and those natural or developed talents with which one is possessed.) Ellen White in speaking of natural and acquired gifts say that all are to be employed in Christ's service

2. He requests that all write on a slip of paper the gifts they desire most. (These slips ought to be collected and the information written out so that each group can have them on Sunday, the day set aside for the discovery of gifts.)
A four-minute period of silent meditation precedes the question-and-answer period. Twenty minutes of group session and twenty minutes of prayer would now be in effect here.

A brief meeting with the group leaders ensures giving them a breakdown of the procedures for the following day, Sunday. Anticipatory results are also discussed.

The Sabbath programme closes with vespers and a healthful recreation on Saturday night for about two hours—8:00 to 10:00.

On Sunday morning, the last day of the retreat, all members of the groups gather in the main building of the camp site.

Prior to the meeting a list of the various gifts desired will be written on the blackboard and on large sheets of paper. The sheets will be distributed to each group. If there were three groups of ten, the sheets would be appropriately given. Following the Opening Hymn, the group enters into a five-minute period of silence which culminates with prayer by the pastor. This period of silence, in particular, is designed to awaken in each heart the earnest desire to really discover their gift or gifts. With the Spirit's pleading, the gifts cry out for recognition. It is to be expected that each group may be required to help someone pray in order that he or she may discover the gift that is to be used in mission.

The period of silence ends with the question: "What would you like to do for the Lord?" The answers are again written down on slips of paper and collected. The next question which brings on the occasion for creativity to blossom forth is this: "In what way
would you really like to be active for the Lord?" It is to be known that when the "new age of the Spirit" comes, it will come, hopefully, without birth pangs. At this point all inhibitions should be removed from each individual because of their former group experiences. Here is a particular timely occasion for the minister or group leaders to get every member of the groups to identify one another's gifts as they are observed. This is apart from the role each individual would like to see himself play in the service of God.

Individuals will be privileged to acknowledge the gifts identified, and the leader of the groups would raise the question as to who would like to make his gift known to the group at large. It is wise to follow this procedure within one's own group first before attempting to do so publicly before the entire body. When an individual makes public what he or she thinks is his gift, the entire group acknowledges the person with the gift. Acknowledgement of gift or gifts possessed by persons does not mean that the rest of the group would give up praying for one another in seeking to fulfill their mission, but it will be an encouraging factor leading others to discover and reveal theirs.

Elizabeth O' Connor's statement is well taken here. She writes: "Confirmation of a gift also carries a responsibility to others. Part of this is to hold the person accountable for his gift." \(^{136}\)

\(^{136}\) O'Connor, Eighth Day, p. 32.
Ellen White would agree with this statement for she says of a person having certain talents:

Kindly affections, generous impulses, and a quick apprehension of spiritual things are precious talents, and lay their possessor under a weighty responsibility. All are to be used in God's service. But here many err.137

The naming of gifts before the entire group should not lead to self-conceit, but should help to awaken in the owner a deeper sense of responsibility. There should be freedom in the improvement and use of his gifts. Each officer is now obedient to the persons receiving and discovering their gifts. Says Ellen White, "The Lord desires us to use every gift we have, and if we do this, we shall have greater gifts to use."138 The Holy Spirit calls the gifts forth so that the power of the Spirit becomes visible in their exercising. (See Appendix III on "A Guide to the Discovery of Spiritual Gifts.")
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, therefore, it can be said that with the implementation of the foregoing programmes in the South Caribbean Conference, a three-fold result is hopefully possible:

1. This mutual ministry to the "Fringe Members" will strengthen and bless both the "fringe Members" and those who minister. As a natural sequel, the apostasy rate will be curbed.

2. By befriending the young convert the older members of the Church will be spiritually blessed and fortified in their beliefs as they seek to strengthen and guide the new members while, at the same time, involving them in working for others. This, when effectively done, will also stay backsliding and prove a blessing to the entire Church in the South Caribbean Conference.

3. Lastly, by getting the Church to be conscious that the Ministry of Reconciliation is theirs, and that the gifts were given them by the Holy Spirit at baptism for the "perfecting of the saints" and for the edification of the Church they, by their use of same, would become witnesses to the world of what God is willing to do and can do for them when they accept His call through His people and become filled with His Holy Spirit.

In the revelation and acknowledgement of gifts by the members of the Church, there is opportunity for each to decide what his role is in this Ministry of Reconciliation. The discovery of gifts will naturally mean additional work for the pastor and for the Church at large in that the gifts must be utilized effectively.
It is possible that in spite of the lay-training programmes discussed in this project, some individuals may need further training in order to make effective use of special gifts which the Spirit reveals to them. There need not be a deadlock here. Should occasions like these arise special training classes would be set up and, if necessary, additional help would be enlisted from experts in whatever field the need may represent. This would be done in an endeavour to meet the need as the Church seeks to fulfill God's purpose for her in the Ministry of Reconciliation.
7th May, 1974

Mr. Edwin A. English  
Garland Apartments G-5  
Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104

Dear Mr. English:

This letter is in answer to your request about baptisms etc. We have quoted below figures for the past three years.

- Total number of baptisms: 6,412
- Total number of apostasies: 1,022

We are unable to give the breakdown of New Converts (1 - 5 years) and Old Converts (6 - 20 years and over). We can only give the number of apostasies since we do not have a breakdown of adultery, theft, Sabbath-breaking and general apostasy.

We are sorry that we could not be of further help because our records are not up-to-date, due to the failure of our churches not reporting correctly.

Yours in Christ,

Syliva Samper
Sliman Saliba  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

SS:cs
APPENDIX II

SERMON I

The Biblical Concept of the Laos

Introduction

Nineteen hundred years ago a disciple of the Galilean, named Peter, pulled a passage of Scripture from the Old Testament which had reference to Israel and applied it to the Gentile community that was called out by God to service just as the Israelites were. Peter saw in these called-out Gentiles a continuation of Israel, the overcomer. These Israelites had prevailed with God and had gained the victory over the evil one; hence the distinction and designation, the people of God, the Laos. All those who have responded to the call of God and have accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour are the Laos of God.

In this Laos of God there is no distinction between the minister and the parishioners. All were baptized in the name of Christ; hence all are ministers. The minister, because of his ordination, functions as a servant to the Laos as he seeks to train, edify, and help the laity in the fulfilling of their Ministry of Reconciliation.
Body

When God called Israel into covenant relationship with Him, He thereby formed a union with them. This union of the human with the divine stood for a unique relationship between them and God. They were now God's called-out people, His possession, His peculiar possession, for God's call was a call to

1. Status - God's special jewel
2. Function - As servants and sharers of a knowledge of God to the world
3. Activity - Not being static
4. Progress - Advancement
5. Holiness - God's priests to a world of idolaters

But this concept of the Laos being the people of God, took on a uniqueness during the Septuagint period in which the people of God were now a people in union with God.

Peter takes this whole concept of the Laos as a people called of God, elected, selected, and now applies it to the Gentiles, or the Gentile Christians, and tells them that they are now God's own people.

Paul S. Minear in commenting on this particular pericope of 1 Peter 2:9, 10 tells us that Peter shows the progressive steps God took with the Gentiles. The Gentiles, as far as the Jews were concerned, were nonexistent, because they were in darkness. But God in His mercy called them and they responded to His invitation of reconciliation and were now transformed. But with this transformation, there was a vocation given to them, and that vocation was the declaration of this Ministry of Reconciliation to the world.
Note that the people of Peter's day, like the people of Israel, were called out by God, the only difference being that in the time of Israel the calling out was understood to be a calling together; whereas in the New Testament these Gentiles who were the people of God were called-out ones from many nations as we are today. Therefore, in this sense they were God's continuing Israel, called out unto life in Christ Jesus. They, like Israel, had a place of distinction. They were unique. They were God's special religious people, God's Laos. They were God's Church and, as such, they were called to mission. You see, by accepting Jesus as Lord, Master, and Saviour, these Gentiles became His commissioned people. They were saved to save. They were called out of the world and sent back into the world to be Christ's witnesses.

But, Beloved, we too, in these days, claim that we have accepted Jesus as Lord and Master. Therefore, as such, we who have accepted the call are God's Laos. We are called to status. We are God's special jewel. We are called to function as God's priests to a world of idolaters: servants and sharers of a knowledge of Jesus in His Ministry of Reconciliation. We are not called to indolence, neither are we called to remain static.

Ellen White says that "We can never be saved in indolence and inactivity. There is no such thing as a truly converted person living a helpless, useless life" (PCL, p. 248). Therefore, Beloved of God, like the people of God in Peter's day, we are called to progress, even spiritual progress, brethren. This call is a call of
urgency. This call is a call to advancement, a call to effect change in a changing world. Technology and science have been partly responsible for this change. Old concepts and views are becoming and have become obsolete. Man today is looking for new concepts, new ideas, with some stability, and we who are God's people, called to holiness, have that stability that the world needs. It needs a stability whose foundation is Christ; a stability that gives man hope in this life and in the life to come. Hence we, the people of God, must share this blessed hope. We are God's people of hope, elected, selected, for no other purpose in life than to be God's proclaimers of this everlasting hope to sinners who are in desperate need of hope in a hopeless age.

The question that confronts us tonight is this: "How can this be done?" There is only one way in which this can be done, and that way is by mingling. By mingling, my brethren, with the people of the world, we are given opportunities by God to perform the Ministry of Reconciliation. We must remember that God's first concern is the world (John 3:16), and we are His Laos, His purchased possession, must make this concern ours.

Yet in order for us to mingle effectively, we must also be efficient isolationists. Like Jesus we must make meditation a part of our daily activity so that communion with the Spirit will constrain us to love and good works. We have come apart this week-end to practise, in a unique way, this isolation so that Christ would reveal Himself to us through His Holy Spirit.
Remember, Beloved, this was Jesus' method and it is the only method available to man, men who are called to be God's Laos, to receive spiritual strength and fortitude so that they can go back to the world to mingle among men in order to point them to the Saviour of men.

Apart from receiving power and spiritual courage, Christ, in His love, has given us gifts (Eph. 4:1 - 12). These gifts are given to all, everyone of us. We were given gifts at our baptism when we received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 39). These gifts were given to the Church back in the New Testament times by the Spirit for the

1. Perfecting of the Saints
2. Work of the Ministry
3. Edifying of the body of Christ.

These gifts were given to the Laos; therefore, each member of God's people has a gift given him at his baptism. Consequently, we today who have also accepted the call of God are responsible, as was the Gentile Christians, for the perfecting of the saints. By the use of our gifts, though they may be diverse, we are to help in the perfecting of the Laos of God. We are also responsible for this Ministry of Reconciliation, or, as Peter tells us in 1 Pet. 2:9, we are all proclaimers of this Ministry of Reconciliation. Lastly we are all responsible for the edifying of the body of Christ.

As officers of the people of God, God's Church, we are called to mission, commissioned by God to do the work of this ministry. God, in His mercy through Christ, has given you gifts. Therefore, it
is your duty to discover these gifts given to you for the work of your ministry to one another and to the world.

You have come apart with me this week-end to seek, earnestly, your gifts given to you by the Holy Spirit at baptism. Let us now be honest with ourselves and with God. He is willing to help us find our gifts. He is about to help us find the gift given to us when we became newborn babes in Christ.

Let us now for the next two minutes listen to Christ speaking to us through His Holy Spirit.
God's Priests

Introduction

The Apostle Peter, continuing his address to this Gentile community, calls them a royal priesthood. This same designation was given to Israel of old who was a priestly nation because they were called to holiness by God. Here Peter uses an Old Testament motif, where all Israel was a nation of priests in that they were God's possession. But Israel, though a kingdom of priests, had selected priests whose function was that of priests to a priest kingdom.

We seem to be faced with a problem here, Beloved, for we do not really know exactly what Peter really meant when he called the Gentiles or the Gentile Christians a "royal priesthood." What was he referring to?

Body

In the Aaronic priesthood the service followed a closed system in which they ministered to the priests of their kingdom priesthood. But, on the other hand, Peter seems to think that this Gentile kingdom priesthood are called upon to proclaim. Therefore he seems to see this kingdom priesthood as both mutual and proclamatory—mutual
in that they are to minister to one another: proclamatory in that they are also to share with all mankind God's reconciling grace. Hence with this understanding it would be right to say that Peter seems to be using both the "isolation" and the "mingling motif." These motifs are seen when, as a kingdom of priests, the Church ministers to one another as brothers and when, in proclamation, they mingle with the world in order to make available to man God's reconciling power.

Paul, on the other hand, Beloved, speaking of the called-out people of God, enumerates the gifts given to assist them in their proclamation. To this Laos or called-out ones were given gifts; but remember, Beloved, these gifts were given them to assist them in their Ministry of Reconciliation (Eph. 4:12). Every member of God's Church has a ministry, and, as such, are God's ministers to proclaim to the world the saving knowledge of God. With this understanding, Beloved, you are God's priests, God's ministers, who are called to be mutual ministers and to proclaim, thus fulfilling Peter's declaration that we are a royal priesthood.

These are the steps, Beloved: You are first called to be ministers to your fellowmen, your fellow ministers, as did the Levites, and because of your baptism into Christ (Gal. 3:27), you move beyond your ministry to your fellow believers to be ministers to the whole world, a world about which God is extremely concerned. Unlike the Levites, we are Christ's servants, not only to one another but to all the world. We are called out not for the salvation of our brethren
alone, but for the salvation of the world. Therefore our ministry moves beyond working for our fellow believers to a ministry that includes all mankind. Because of this our call to the priesthood or to be ministers is a call to excellence. As such, we are all equal before God, and this fact is brought to light in our service of humility (John 13:4 - 17).

In our ministry to our brethren, we should always bear in mind his need of (1) Companionship, (2) Encouragement, (3) Counseling at times, (4) Prayer, (5) Strength in weakness. Our service to the world is one of direct confrontation with Christ as we proclaim Him as man's only Saviour.

Let us not forget, Beloved of God, that we are baptized into Christ, and along with this we are given gifts, even the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 39). The Holy Spirit, in turn, has given us gifts to be used for the glory of God.

We who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27). But in putting on Christ we receive of His strength to fight against the flesh (Rom. 13:14). By putting on Christ we were recreated in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24). Above all, in putting on Christ we are to do the work of Christ (DA, p. 111). Christ, after His baptism, went about proclaiming to all the Jews that the kingdom was at hand. We, too, who have put Him on are to be proclaimers, proclaimers of this Gospel of Reconciliation. You see, Beloved, the baptism of Christ is different from all other baptisms. It is not like John's for his was a baptism unto repentance, but our baptism is into Christ. In that way it is unique, for it is a baptism
to status, a baptism to sonship. Above all, Christ's baptism is a
baptism to mission. Ministers of God, you are baptized to do the work
of Christ. The work of sharing the Good News of salvation is your
work. You are to enlarge God's Israel by inviting others to partake
in this spiritual feast. We who by faith have accepted the truth of
Christ's atoning sacrifice must invite others to do the same.

The baptism of Christ did not only make us ministers of
reconciliation, but the salt of the earth, in that we are to defuse
Christ's righteousness to all. By faith we who have accepted Christ
as our Redeemer are qualified to labour for the salvation of souls,
the salvation of all.

Jesus after His baptism and after the wilderness experience,
began His work by proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.
Therefore, we who are baptized into Christ are baptized to this work
of proclamation.

What does Ellen White say about this? She says that we are
ordained to work for the salvation of our fellowmen. (WM, p. 111.)
It would seem to me, Beloved, that Ellen White is referring here to
all baptized members of this Christian community. As people of God
we are ordained into the life of Christ, and that life is a life of
unselfish service for others.

But, my Christian brothers and sisters, I know that you are
puzzled. You are probably thinking of your status as ministers,
wondering how Church members, who have not been ordained by the Church
are ministers. You may be saying, "Where do I come in as a minister?"
God, in calling me out from among you, has called me into the office
of a servant. The laying on of hands added no new grace or virtue to me. It is only an acknowledged form of designation, or an appointment to the office of a servant of servants. I am your under-shepherd, one who is to give you mental and spiritual nourishment while, at the same time, guard and support you in your work of reconciliation. As your servant, I am to train you so that you can utilize your gifts for the glory of God. As your servant I am to train you, by precept and example, in the carrying forward of this Gospel Ministry. In doing so I would seek to bring out all things hidden and latent from the Word of God, so as to equip you as you seek to fulfil the work God has given you to do. In so doing I would be edifying you, thus fulfilling (Eph. 4:12). God requires you to develop greater skill and efficiency in your ministry. He requires you to rightly divide the Word of Truth. He wants you to discover your gift. You are God's servants to the world, and you serve by the proper use of your gifts.

Beloved, God has called you and ordained you to be His priests, His ministers, His proclaimers of His message of love to this world. How would you respond to His call?
SERMON III

The Gifts of the Spirit

Introduction

Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, told his Jewish hearers who were convicted of sins to repent and be baptized and they would receive two things:

1. They would receive forgiveness of sins
2. They would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

(Acts 2:38, 39).

Peter further emphasized that these two gifts would be extended to their children and to all that the Lord shall call. The gift of the Holy Spirit was a fulfillment of Christ's prediction in St. John 15, 16, in which He promised to give to the Church Another Comforter. The word used here for another is _allos_, because Jesus was talking about another person like Himself, God. But this God, though equal with Christ, has a distinct personality from that of Jesus.

Body

There was a reason why Jesus sent this Comforter, Beloved. The reason is this: Christ was now both human and divine. As such,
He could not be in every place, personally, at all times. The Comforter, on the other hand, was divested of the personality of humanity and, as God, could be in every place at all times. Therefore, it was in our interest that Christ returned to the Father so that the Holy Spirit could descend to the earth for He, Christ, wanted to be accessible to all who earnestly seek after Him.

Another point, Beloved. Christ would be nearer to us in the person of His Holy Spirit, dwelling and abiding in us, than if He were still on earth. In this sense we can all hold sweet communion with Him at all times and in all places, even now, at this moment, for our Beloved Lord is here present in our midst through His Holy Spirit. It is this gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling in you and in me that further gives to us all gifts to be used in this Ministry of Reconciliation.

We who are called out by God are given gifts to be used in our ministry. We who are the Christian assembly of Christ are each given a gift or gifts to be used in showing forth the praises of God who has so graciously called us to mission. As God's priests you have a double duty to perform: (1) to be your brother's keeper; (2) to be a friend to the world. In that sense you are responsible to God for sharing with the world this invitation of reconciliation. As God's Laos your function is one of mission to the household of God, and to God's people, God's flock in the world. In other words, Beloved, because you are baptized into Christ you are commissioned to mission. It is for this purpose and this purpose alone that the Holy Spirit
was given to the Church. You and I being a part of Christ by baptism, are also commissioned to mission. Remember, we exist for no other reason in this world than for mission. In whatever walk of life you find yourselves, and in whatever place, you are commissioned to mission—whether you are an engineer, a trash collector, a teacher, a nurse, or whatever the calling, you are commissioned to mission. You may be an housewife, you may be a maid, you are commissioned to mission. For this purpose we were bought by the priceless blood of Christ, and you and I are no longer our own by right, but we are God's. We are called to do the work that He did in an extraordinary way. We should approach this work with confidence. Why? Because God has not left us to accomplish this work alone. We are given divers gifts with which to fulfil our commission, and with all these gifts we have the Master Gift—the Holy Spirit.

Let us now read together of these gifts given to us in 1 Cor. 12:4 – 13, 14 – 25, 28 – 31; Rom. 12:1 – 3, 6 – 10; Eph. 4:1 – 12. Along with these, Ellen White has given a few more. For example, she speaks of the gift of a ready speaker; a ready writer (letter writing, writing of articles, et cetera); the gift of sincere, earnest, fervent prayer; the power to explain the Word of God; wisdom, knowledge, and faith. To these I may add the gift of humour and friendliness. Brethren, it is possible that some of you here this afternoon would discover, as the Spirit speaks to you, your gift or gifts. You may discover in someone else a special gift that he unknowingly possesses.
In the Church diversity of gifts lead to a diversity of operations. Because we have to meet varied minds with the Message of Love from God, we need this diversity of gifts. Brethren, do not be discouraged when one with a specific gift may fail to impress a life. Another may be able to impress that very life simply because he has the gift that speaks to that mind.

As a Church, in order for us to be effective, we must all be willing to unite, for in unity there is strength, and in strength there is victory. Our unity would prove to the world that our religion is true, because our hearts are not only united with Christ but with one another in a most tender union of love.

In the book Positive Christian Living, p. 293, Ellen White gives us a statement which reads thus: "The special gifts of the are not the only talents represented . . . . It includes all gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual. All are to be employed in Christ's service." So as far as Ellen White is concerned, Beloved, whether that gift is original or acquired, natural or spiritual, we are to use it in the cause of Christ. Your gift may be that of kindly affections, generous impulses; yours may be a quick apprehension of spiritual things, but all are to be used in God's service.

God calls you, as He did me, to service. As mentioned before, structurally, there is no difference between us. I am not to labour while you sit around and admire me. We must all be engaged in this work of mission. We are all God's Laos, His called-out people, His special possession, purchased, elected,
selected, commissioned to mission. The difference between us is one of function, but we both need each other as we effect or perform this Ministry of Reconciliation.

As your minister I have erred in that I have not rightly trained you to perform the work to which you were originally called. I have failed in that I have not trained you to execute the work of this ministry. You, Beloved, have erred in that you have allowed me to administer your work for you. We have both come short, and both need forgiveness in this serious matter. We need the Lord's forgiveness, and we need to turn around and together accomplish His work for sinners.

Beloved, do you think that in yourself you are capable? Not one of us can do this work all by Himself. We both need each other and we both need the infilling of the Holy Spirit if we are to succeed in this Ministry of Reconciliation.

The Apostle Paul spoke of his eyes and feet (1 Cor. 12:15 - 24). Have you thought of the coordination between them? Have you thought of their dependence upon each other? Have you given thought to the extent of your need of the Holy Spirit? Brethren, we all need a daily baptism of the Spirit, for this is the primary gift of God and the source of all others. Beloved of God, magnificent would be the work of Christ when this need is conceived of and when we all give ourselves up to the control of the Holy Spirit of God. Our need of the Spirit speaks to the urgency of this matter. Hence we need to receive a daily washing of regeneration and renewing of that Holy Ghost.
Beloved of God, would you like to know and recognize your gift given to you by the Holy Spirit? Would you now take the slips of paper given to you at the beginning of this service and indicate on them the gifts that you desire most?

May God, through His indwelling Spirit, answer our requests as we seek to discover our individual gifts given to us by Christ's Spirit at baptism.
APPENDIX III
A GUIDE TO THE DISCOVERY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

FRIDAY EVENING LECTURE
Topic: "The Concept of the Laos"
(15 - 20 mins.)

SABBATH SERVICE
Circular Position
Topic: "God's Kleros"
(20 mins.)

SABBATH AFTERNOON
LECTURE
"Responsibility of Gifts"
(20 mins.)

SUNDAY MORNING
LIST OF GIFTS
Buddy Names Gifts
Acknowledgement
of Gifts
Responsibility for Use
Lay Training
For Use of Gifts

PREPARATION
for RETREAT

LUNCH AND
REST PERIOD
(2 hrs.)

GROUP DISCUSSION OF LECTURE
(20 mins.)
Silence: (2 mins.)
Prayer: (20 mins.)
Short Reading: Holy Spirit

QUESTION AND ANSWER
PERIOD
(5 mins.)
Prayer: (20 mins.)
Group Discussion: (20 mins.)
Silence: (3 mins.)

 Silence: (4 mins.)
Group Discussion
(20 mins.)
Prayer
(20 mins.)
Reading:
"The Holy Spirit"
(2 mins.)

QUESTIONS:
"Gifts Desired"
(Write List of Goals)
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A. Books


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