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Bipolar Preaching For Hispanic Evangelism In The North American Division

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ABSTRACT

BIPOLAR PREACHING FOR HISPANIC EVANGELISM
IN THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

by

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Problem

This dissertation deals with the bipolar concept of preaching as it applies to Seventh-day Adventist evangelism in a Hispanic-American context. Bipolar preaching is preaching that focuses on answering human problems or needs by applying eternal truth to the human condition.

In my experience bipolar preaching was missing for many years. This project attempts to make the homiletical theory of bipolar preaching better understood; I hope that it will be integrated into the preaching ministry in general and into evangelistic preaching in
particular. The Hispanic evangelistic sermon seems to be well-anchored in the Word of God, but it does not deal with human needs in important and significant ways. How our evangelistic preaching relates to this situation is a vital issue that needs to be examined.

Method

This work consists of two parts. The first deals with the bipolar concept in homiletical theory and practice. It includes an examination of literature on the bipolar theory of preaching. Bipolar preaching is also researched in Seventh-day Adventist contemporary preaching as well as in the writings of Ellen G. White. Objections to life-situation preaching are met and answered.

The second part concerns the practical application of bipolar preaching in the context of Hispanic evangelism. It includes an analysis and evaluation of bipolar evangelistic sermon outlines used in campaigns conducted for Spanish-speaking people. It gives concrete suggestions for the effective integration and application of this homiletical theory into a family-life approach to Hispanic evangelism.

Conclusion

This study has helped me to expand and refine my own homiletical knowledge in relevant preaching as well as in its application to a life-situation approach in Hispanic evangelism. This work aims at creating an
awareness, especially in a new generation of Hispanic preachers, of the need to be faithful to the two poles: the pole of Scripture, and the pole of human life. It is these two poles that constitute bipolar preaching. It hopes to make Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic preaching more meaningful, fruitful, and rewarding.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

BIPOLAR PREACHING FOR HISPANIC EVANGELISM
IN THE NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

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

by
Eradio Alonso
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To Miriam, 
my lovely wife, 
who for over thirty years has been of 
great support to my ministry 

To our son, 
Dr. Kenneth Alonso, 
and to our daughter, 
Keren Chris
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INTRODUCTION

Justification of the Dissertation

This dissertation deals with the bipolar concept of preaching as it applies to Seventh-day Adventist evangelism in the Hispanic-American context. This homiletical theory and its application in the practice of the evangelistic preaching ministry needs to be better understood and integrated so that preachers may be more effective in communicating the gospel.

A large share of Hispanic Adventist evangelistic preaching has not been relevant to the needs of its audience. Although the evangelistic sermon seems to be well-anchored in the Word of God, all too often it does not deal with human needs in important and relevant ways. How our evangelistic preaching relates to the life situation is a vital issue that is examined in this dissertation.

Purpose of the Dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation is to gather, expand, and refine homiletical knowledge in relevant preaching as well as in its application to a life-situation approach in Hispanic evangelism. This work aims at creating an awareness, especially in a new generation
of Hispanic preachers, of the need to be faithful to two poles: the pole of Scripture and the pole of human life. Bipolar preaching is made up of these two poles. This dissertation hopes to make Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic preaching in the Hispanic-American context more meaningful, fruitful, and rewarding.

**Limits of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is not an exhaustive analysis of homiletical theory and practice in bipolar preaching. It is not a deep exegetical or theological study in the practical area of homiletics and evangelism. Neither is it an exhaustive research on the homiletical philosophy found in the writings of Ellen G. White. Her work is a vast and rich field for any researcher who would like to write on that topic, but it is beyond the parameters of this dissertation. It is not within the scope of this work to present complete sermon outlines, but to give an idea of how to present topics that are interesting to people as well as taught in the Word of God.

**Overview of the Project**

The first three chapters deal with the bipolar concept in homiletical theory and practice, which includes my personal homiletical pilgrimage toward achieving this way of preaching as well as an examination of the literature dealing with bipolar preaching. Also the two poles of bipolar preaching are searched for in the
writings of Ellen G. White, and in the H.M.S. Richards Lectureship on Preaching.

The content of each chapter is as follows:

Chapter 1 discusses my homiletical pilgrimage and how I arrived at the realization of the importance of integrating the truths from God’s Word with the human needs of the audience when preaching. The power of preaching lies in focusing the light from the Word of God onto the problems people face in everyday life.

In chapter 2, which is the core of this study, the bipolar concept of preaching is analyzed. In connection with bipolar preaching, the homiletical heresy of monopolarity is discussed. The sermon as an ellipse is brought to the attention of the reader. Application is seen as the preacher attempts to help people meet their needs with the comforting Words of the Eternal God. The importance of preaching in the context of its relevancy to people’s problems and administering comfort is reviewed. The chapter focuses upon the two categories of human needs: the constant and the changing. As the foundational premise of bipolar preaching, Incarnational Theology is introduced as a theological reflection. Bipolarity in Christ and in the Bible is targeted, and finally, facing some objections that might be raised to life-situation preaching is undertaken.

In chapter 3, I concentrate first on searching for the two poles of bipolar preaching in the writings of
Ellen G. White. The foundational dimension of the Incarnation in divine-human communication is targeted in her works. She describes how Christ focused on human needs and how He used simple language in communicating with people. She also points out that preachers should follow Christ’s example in concentrating on what is interesting and important, using simple language, speaking earnestly and positively, and mingling the practical with the theoretical. In the last part of the chapter, I trace bipolarity in the H. M. S. Richards Lectureship on Preaching.

In chapter 4 the Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic preaching tradition is reviewed. The School of Integral Evangelism is brought to view along with topics that relate to human needs and problems. Finally I discuss the ingredients of bipolar preaching and how to preach doctrines in a bipolar manner.

These are practical, down-to-earth topics to use in evangelistic preaching. In the questionnaire I conducted with pastors from three different Union Conferences, question 5 is: Do you believe that practical Christianity is as important as theoretical theological presentations in preaching? Ninety-seven percent gave a positive answer, indicating that they consider practical Christianity as important as theoretical theological knowledge in evangelistic preaching.
In chapter 5 I give the summary or conclusion of this dissertation as well as final recommendations.
In the fall of 1979 at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey, Dr. J. Randall Nichols was teaching a class on the editing and preaching of sermons. He required each student to select a sermon written by a great preacher, edit it, and preach it to the class. I decided to select a sermon from my favorite preacher, H. M. S. Richards. From his book, Revival Sermons, I chose the sermon: "Jesus, the World's Greatest Character." 1 To me, Dr. Richard's sermons were homiletically perfect, so I was sure I was safe in selecting the preacher and his sermon.

I preached the edited sermon to the class, and Dr. Nichols and Dr. Binner, a member of the Speech faculty, were present to give a critique of every sermon presentation. I was surprised and shocked when Dr. Binner commented: "You have not preached to me at all. Although you did convince me that Jesus is a great character, I am the same man I was when I came in. You did not give me any hope to solve my problems." Speechless, I did not know

what to think or say. Then it dawned on me that although the sermon was well-rooted in the Bible, it did not relate to people's everyday needs.

After that experience I was able to understand Jackson when he says that sermons “root in life, branch in experience, and blossom in that creative interplay of minds that is the ideal preacher-listener relationship.”¹

Sermons should be rooted in the Bible and should help people in their daily struggles of life. Preachers must never forget that, like biologists, they are always working in the laboratory of human existence. Life is their field of concern and endeavor. “To get the attention, sermons must relate to the interests of the people in a fresh way and concern genuine areas of experience.”²

The successful preacher must relate the eternal message to human life in such a way that it brings hope, forgiveness, and consolation to needy souls. No preacher should separate God's word from the world of men and women. Isolating the Bible from human needs is a tragic mistake, and some would even call it a homiletical sin against humanity. Just as the physician must diagnose the sick person before prescribing a cure, so the physician of souls must know the needs and problems people face before

²Ibid., 44.

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applying the appropriate medicine from God's Word.

William E. Hull, provost of Samford University in Alabama, quotes Clyde E. Fant and William E. Puison saying: "Great preaching is relevant preaching."\(^1\) "Relevant" means that the biblical sermon is applicable to the human situation in a particular time frame and cultural environment.

Although this was a bitter experience, it was an eye-opener. More than ever before, the human factor really hit home. A new world appeared on the horizon. Preachers are human, but they are sometimes inclined to lose sight of their own humanity. Often they are so concerned with prophecies, dates, and technical or theological details that they treat the Bible as though it did not have answers to human questions or comfort for excruciating pain.

In college ministerial training courses, professors often give good biblical and theological content, but they sometimes forget that teaching the skill of applying this knowledge to human needs is just as important. In my case, the Scottish pulpit opened up new vistas concerning the integration of God's Word with peoples' needs when I encountered the Warrack Lectures.\(^2\)


\(^2\)The Warrack Lectures on Preaching started in 1921 in Scotland.
The Yale Lectures\(^1\) also gave new insights into this vast and rich field of endeavor. These lectures sharpen the homiletical eye and understanding of how to relate preaching to the issues of life, and preaching becomes fascinating. What Frank Cairns said is true: "Preaching is the most humane work to which a man may give his life."\(^2\) The gospel is more than theory; it relates to life, and religion is not a mere set of doctrines, but a way of life.

If preachers would find their own humanity in the pages of God's Word, preaching would become more meaningful to them. They should not forget that when preaching they are speaking to human beings and the issues of life. According to Fran Cairns: "Nothing is more fatal to effective preaching than to get adrift from human life, and to forget that they are speaking to human beings."\(^3\)

There is nothing like an illustration from real life to attract people's attention and awaken their interest. Arthur Gossip says:

Surely the way to be interesting is to talk of interesting things, of life and its glories and dangers, of the temptations they are sure to meet, of the help that Christ can give them in their struggle,

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\(^1\)The Lyman Beecher Lectures started in 1871 at Yale University.


\(^3\)Ibid., 23.
of God's strange love for them and unquenchable faith in them.1

Many preachers seem to be more interested in the New Jerusalem than in the city where they live and work. Of such a preacher, Dr. Cleland says: "He knows more about Jerusalem than he does about the city in which his parish is located."2

My interest in this topic has been prompted by personal failures in my early ministry. This led me to write this project dissertation on bipolar preaching, and the research was so rewarding that I wanted to share it with my colleagues, particularly with those who work within the community of Hispanic believers in the North American Division.

The preacher should be interested in focusing the message to the audience in the most effective and relevant way. In this awesome hour of crisis, this is such an important matter that it is important for the Christian trumpeter to study it diligently. The glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ has millions yet to reach. How can we win a hearing among these millions for the message of salvation?

There is no question that a gap exists between the pulpit and the pew, between the man/woman of God and God's men/women, between the church's message and the world that


needs that message. To deliver His message to the world's people, God chose human beings. Here Phillips Brooks' classic definition of preaching is in order: "Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. It has in it two essential elements: truth and personality."

Preachers who work for people need to be in close touch with them, learning what they think, how they behave, and what their interests are. As the maxim says: "We need to scratch where people itch." Preachers who are not conscious of the needs of the people they minister to are like army generals who think they can win a war without knowing their soldiers or the territory they must conquer. If people are going to be reached effectively, this gap between the pulpit and the pew, between the church and the world must be closed. Preachers need to be conscious of their own humanity so they may reach the human beings addressed. Dr. Rice of Duke University says: "The power of preaching is in its humanity." This means the preacher should dare to expose the vulnerability of his or her humanity. It means that he or she is not afraid of being a real human being, and that is why the preacher dresses like common people do and talks like any other ordinary person does. Rice also said:

---


The minister who seems different from ordinary man can hardly incarnate the Gospel. . . . It is the human man, the one like the weak man on the cross, revealing the grace of God by revealing his own humanity, who is the message.¹

A dehumanized preacher is a failure as a communicator of the Gospel; he or she cannot touch the strings of the souls of men and women. As well as preaching before the people, the human preacher speaks to the people’s needs. Preaching to people involves dealing with them and their needs.

Many preachers fall into the temptation of thinking they have to be like gods. They fail to understand the theology of the Incarnation and its implications in homiletical theory and practice. Sometimes they fail to grasp the glorious truth that the Word, being one with God, became human flesh so we could behold His glory. Our humanity could create in us a sense of insecurity that we try to hide by playing god, but the human preacher speaks to people’s needs.

In contrast to such pretentious pulpetiers, Dr. Rice points out: "The biblical preachers including Jesus, intending to communicate the experience of faith, spoke to their contemporaries in the concrete images of the world at hand."²

Jesus identified Himself with humanity. He never

¹Ibid., 80.
²Ibid., 2.
tried to be different from other human beings. He was hungry and thirsty like everyone else and was not afraid, as a man, to make His needs known. He taught the truths of the kingdom of God by associating them with the world of men and women. Jesus was intensely human and this explains His effectiveness and success as a communicator. Ellen G. White states: "The Prince of teachers sought access to the people by the pathway of their most familiar associations. He presented the truth in such a way that ever after it was to His hearers intertwined with their most hallowed recollections and sympathies."¹

Preachers should not confuse being in the world with being of the world. Being of the world means belonging to the power of evil. But being in the world means the preacher is acquainted with people as individuals as well as with their frustrations, anxieties, and hopes. He reaches out to satisfy their needs with the consolation of God's promises and the hope given us by a living Christ. Preachers who acknowledge their own humanity will produce sermons rooted in human needs as well as in God's Word. Again Rice says: "The worldly sermon reveals a man who lives where people live."² These worldly sermons are not, by any means, cake given to a diabetic humanity: they are the bread of life to those who are really hungry.

²Rice, 41.
CHAPTER II

BIPOLAR PREACHING

Bipolar Preaching Means Scratching Where People Itch

In 1928, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick wrote the article, "What Is the Matter With Preaching?" whose criteria was accepted in all homiletical circles and is still pertinent in today's world. Even though he was a controversial figure in conservative religious circles in America, Dr. Fosdick was one of the most renowned preachers in the nation. His homiletical philosophy of preaching is condensed in this sentence:

Start with a life issue, a real problem, personal or social, perplexing the mind or disturbing the conscience; face that problem fairly, deal with it honestly, and throw such light on it from the Spirit of Christ, that people will be able to go out able to think more clearly and live more nobly because of that sermon.¹

Fosdick states his criticism of contemporary preaching and preachers in these words:

Somehow or other every other agency dealing with the public recognizes that contact with the actual life of the auditor is the one place to begin. Only the preacher proceeds still upon the idea that folk come to church desperately anxious to discover what

¹Harry Emerson Fosdick, quoted in Halford E. Luccock, In the Minister’s Workshop (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), 51.
happened to the Jebusites. The result is that folk less and less come to church at all.¹

In this article, as well as in his preaching and teaching, Fosdick gave us tremendous insights into the need for sermons that throw the light of Christ onto the problems of everyday life that people face. Some will call this "therapeutic preaching," others "life situation preaching." Dr. Henry Sloan Coffin called it "pastoral preaching."² James T. Cleland calls it "bifocal": "The Word of God is bifocal. It has its head in the heavens, but its feet are on the ground."³

Ian Pitt-Watson of Fuller Theological Seminary refers to this type of preaching as "The two texts: the text of Scripture and the text of life."⁴ He also calls it "the two stories":

The gospel we preach that has come to us through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the telling of two stories, the Christ story and our stories. If we are to think biblically about the Bible and about the revelation of God in Christ which it contains, we must constantly remind ourselves that God has chosen to reveal himself, not in terms of philosophical abstractions and concepts, but in terms of these two stories, his and ours.⁵

¹Ibid., 51.


³Cleland, 45.

⁴Ian Pitt-Watson, Lecture given to ministers in the Southeastern California Conference, June 1983.

⁵Ian Pitt-Watson, A Primer for Preachers (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), 25.
I have found designations such as "felt needs," "contextual," "relevant," "two worlds," "practical," and "incarnational." In this dissertation I call it "bipolar preaching," meaning that it has two main poles of concerns: the Word of God and the human condition in desperate need of that Word. Dr. John R. W. Stott in his book quotes Professor Jean Jacques von Allmen of Neuchatel, who in his book, Preaching and Congregation, lays emphasis on the fact that preaching is bipolar. Dr. von Allmen says:

The two poles of preaching; namely, God's Word and our hearers. To repeat from the pulpit, 'Jesus Christ is Lord,' 'Jesus Christ our Lord,' rather as the Ephesians proclaimed the greatness of their Diana, is no guarantee that one has truly preached the lordship of Christ; for this to happen, there must be listeners who hear, understand, relate and respond. But the contrary mistake is also possible: the listeners may assemble and no Word of God be proclaimed. . . . The preacher's task is faithfully to translate the Word of God into modern language . . . and to make it present in our day.¹

Monopolarity: A Homiletical Heresy

The bipolarity of the sermon makes preaching relevant to the human condition in which people find themselves. Cleland goes to the point when he expounds both methods of preaching incarnated in two preachers: "One is Bible-centered, the other man-centered. One spends his time in the Book of God; the other spends his

time in the world of man. Each is guilty homiletically of the heresy of monofocality.\textsuperscript{1}

Stott makes a similar analysis describing the preacher who lives in only one of the two worlds or poles. He states:

If we are conservatives, and stand in the tradition of historic Christian orthodoxy, we feel comfortable and safe. We believe the Bible, love the Bible, read the Bible, study the Bible and expound the Bible. But we are not at home in the modern world on the other side, especially if we have reached or passed middle age. It bewilders and threatens us. Some tend to insulate ourselves from it. . . . But if I were to draw a diagram of the gulf between the two worlds, and then plot our sermon on the diagram, I would have to draw a straight line which begins in the biblical world, and then goes up in the air on a straight trajectory, but never lands on the other side. For our preaching is seldom if ever earthed. It fails to build a bridge into the modern world. It is biblical but not contemporary.\textsuperscript{2}

Monofocality or monopolarity is the homiletical heresy or error of being more concerned with the truth than with those that need to be saved by it. It is failing to bridge the two worlds in a relevant way, and because of this lack of application, the Word of God is not contextualized and the needs of the people are not met. Since this monopolarity is not rooted in the Incarnation of our blessed Savior, it neglects or bypasses the needs of human beings and the comforting Word of God. That which is timeless needs to be incorporated

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1}Cleland, 42.
  \item \textsuperscript{2}Stott, 140.
\end{itemize}
into our time, because without this, the sermon misses its target.

Since existentialism deals with human existence, some theologians call this bipolar preaching "existential." But bipolar preaching not only focuses on human problems, it also gives a solution or consolation from the Bible. The preacher presents truth from God's Word and applies it to the human condition besetting the audience, pointing out Jesus Christ and His Gospel as the truth relevant to their needs. Jesus Himself in His preaching was always dealing with some human problem, integrating eternal truth into the particular situation in which people were involved. The stories of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:30-37; the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-31; Nicodemus, John 3:1-21; and the Woman at the Well, John 4:1-42, are good illustrations of His consciousness of those needs as well as His practical answers to people's questions.

The Sermon as an Ellipse in Bipolar Preaching

Cleland says that the sermon is not a circle, but an ellipse. It does not have a single focus, but two, and both are indispensable. He uses a diagram, as shown in fig. 1, to illustrate the point:1

1Cleland, 44.
The emphasis relevant in the writer’s understanding of the thesis he is presenting in this work is that the sermon must be constructed on two poles, two texts, or two stories, not just one or the other. In the words of Stott, there must be a bridge built between the two. He describes those who concentrate more on the human condition:

I turn now to the characteristic fault in the preaching of those whose theology is "liberal," or, more extremely, "radical" rather than conservative. They find it congenial to live on the contemporary side of the great divide. They are modern people who belong to the modern world. They are sensitive to the current mood and understand what is going on around them. They read modern poetry and philosophy. They are familiar with the writings of living novelists and the discoveries of modern scientists. . . . They are moving with the moving times. So when they preach I would have to draw another straight line on my diagram, although this time in the opposite direction. All their sermons are earthed in the real world, but where they come from heaven alone knows. They certainly do not appear to come out of the Bible. On the contrary, these preachers have allowed the biblical revelation to slip through their fingers.1

1Stott, 143.
It is unfortunate, particularly for God's people and those who will respond to the Gospel in the future, that so much preaching today goes either to the one extreme focusing solely on God's Word, or to the other of focusing only on human problems. Stott calls this one-sidedness a tragedy of our time:

The contrast I have been drawing between the two main theological groupings in today's churches seems to me to be one of the greatest tragedies of our time. On the one hand, conservatives are biblical but not contemporary, while on the other, liberals and radicals are contemporary but not biblical. . . . Each side has a legitimate concern, the one to conserve God's revelation, the other to relate meaning fully to real people in the real word. Why can we not combine each other's concerns?1

Application in Bipolar Preaching

The application is the preacher's attempt to help people meet their needs. Of course, a preacher cannot speak to people's needs unless he or she knows what those needs are. This means that the preacher has to be a real pastor, a visiting pastor, who mingles with people. To accomplish this most important matter of being relevant to the human situation, the preacher goes from investigation to interpretation and finally to the last step of application. Without application there is no real communication. Without it there is no bridge between the divine and the human, the eternal and the temporal.

1Ibid., 144.
Milton Crum, Jr., expounds on how we move from pole A to pole B:

The preacher who begins with the Bible begins with a document written in another age, in another language, to another people, in another culture. If the sermon is to be related to Scripture, the preacher cannot avoid hermeneutical issues. That is, the preacher cannot avoid being a "Hermes" who carries the message from the "then and there" to the "here and now."

Somehow the divine and the human must be in balance. Neither should be left out in the preparation and delivery of the sermon. Russell Dicks, a leader in pastoral care, said of preaching: "The preacher’s task is to bring into the lives of his people the eternal truths. The clergyman who knows human problems but does not know eternal truth, God and the ways of God, fails in preaching." This is why the preacher needs to have in tension the two poles that constitute bipolar preaching. In the preaching event, as well as in sermon preparation, he or she has to be faithful to the two texts: the text of Scripture and the text of life.

Dr. David A. Macclennan states: "One imperative aim should be to give the Christian answers to questions which confront the men and women of this age between the ages."  


He quotes Dr. Donald Soper, pointing out the crisis of the church in meeting the problems of contemporary life: "The church is one institution that gives magnificent answers to questions that nobody is asking." ¹

In his Warrack lectures, Dr. Hutton expresses a very similar thought:

Sometimes what appears to hearers to be the dullness and length of a sermon arises from the fact that the preacher is, so to speak, answering questions which no one is putting. I think, in our days, a great deal of the futility of preaching has precisely this source.²

Preaching should be directed to people to uplift, to redeem, to comfort, to encourage, to heal, and to fill the heart with the glowing hope of the Gospel of Christ. When preaching does not address the basic needs of people, then the future of preaching is in danger. Dr. Hutton continues:

I see no future for preaching unless it deals with obviously necessary things, giving light and motive to human beings face to face with the tragedy which life is. . . . If the substance of our preaching is not something which is necessary, then preaching and Christianity with it is but an irrelevance and a nuisance.³

The Importance of Bipolar Preaching

More than ever before in the history of Christianity, in this time and age, the preacher needs to

¹Donald Soper, quoted in ibid., 12, 13.

²John A. Hutton, That the Ministry Be Not Blamed (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1921), 25.

³Ibid., 31.
beware of the devil's work to destroy human lives. The preacher also needs to know the comforting resources in God's Word that heal people's wounds with the balm of heaven. Christianity and preaching go together; we cannot maximize one and minimize the other. If Christianity is relevant to people's needs, then its preaching must also be relevant. P. T. Forsyth states: "With its preaching, Christianity stands or falls." ¹

In dealing with preaching we are touching on something as important as our faith. There is no future for the faith without preaching. This is why Elder Richards makes a strong declaration when he says: "If preachers ever cease in this movement [Adventist] soon the institutions will come to an end also."²

Great preaching occurs when it links God's great divine resources with man's great needs. Great preaching is needed more than ever before. If preaching is going to survive in this technological and secular age in which we live, we need to address the problems of modern man. This is a great time for preaching because there are great needs in people's hearts. The preacher will have to use God's medicine to cure the wounded souls of men and women;


but he needs to know the wounds as much as he needs to know the medicine. Therefore, the survival of preaching is connected to dealing with and ministering to the perplexing needs of a humanity overwhelmed by anxiety and despair. If the Bible is not incarnated in human beings, it will hardly stir a soul. For this reason, both the human need and the healing medicine from God’s Word must be included in every sermon. In his Warrak Lectures about the sermon, George F. MacLeod says that "every sermon should begin in Jerusalem and end in New York, or, if it begins in New York, it must end in Jerusalem."¹

This is what Cleland terms "the bifocality of the sermon," and Pitt-Watson "the two texts": Jerusalem and New York; the integration of eternal truth into the lives and needs of people; the application of God’s Word to the world of men and women.

It is said that Ian MacClaren exclaimed at the close of his ministry: "If I had my preaching days over again, I would preach much more frequently from the text ‘Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.’"²

Sometimes we preach more about calamities and doom than about the only Good News on this side of heaven. Often we preach more sermons about the great colossus of Dan 2 and the beasts of Daniel and the Revelation than

¹George F. Macleod, Speaking the Truth in Love (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1936), 78.
²Ibid., 32.
we preach about Christ and His saving work for human beings. This kind of sermon can become a bestial one with no consolation, no healing, no Good News. By this I do not mean that we should stop presenting those distinctive prophetic messages. But in every sermon we need to uplift Christ in His power to save and to heal, to uplift Christ as the answer to all the questions of the human drama.

Karl Barth goes to the point when he says that people will hardly find in our churches what they are really seeking. Am I not at least partly right when I say that people, educated and uneducated alike, are simply disappointed? Was the church, in spite of its very best of intentions to meet their needs, too often indulging in secondary utterances.¹

It is, we may say, tragic when we are preaching about so many issues and forget to feed God’s people. Many a time we present food for giraffes and not for sheep. We talk about fossils and historical minutiae and forget the hungry souls of people looking for consolation. Again Karl Barth is correct when he says: "Not until our preaching arises from need will our work become a mission. Mission alone can legitimize preaching."²

Preaching is legitimate when it is based upon the immense and deep-rooted needs of the human soul, needs that Christ alone can satisfy through the preaching of His


²Ibid., 702.
To make preaching relevant we need to concentrate on the two vital elements that are its most important components. George F. MacLeod says:

The two elements in all fruitful preaching: the constant and the changing: the Word that can never pass away, and must at all points control our utterance and yet also its reflections and refractions, in response to changing environment. That appears to be essential if, in fact, the changeless Word is to make contact with the changing lives of men and women. ¹

The changeless and the changing elements are to be taken seriously. Both should be in healthy tension in the construction of the sermon as well as in its delivery. The constant element in the sermon has to be directed to the changing situation of the soul. We need to deal with preoccupations, perplexities, desires, and expectations.

Macleod says, in the context of the bifocality of the sermon, the following: "Wary to speak the truth in love: that is, if we are to be listened to, we must be in sympathy with men and their outlook." ²

In order to sympathize with the world, with the struggling men and women of the world, we need to mingle with people and get some real acquaintance with their lives. Frank Cairns says: "If the prime essential for the Christian preacher be to know the heart of God, that which comes next is to know the heart of man." ³

¹Macleod, 29.
²Ibid.
³Cairns, 73.
The training of ministerial students, both in college and the seminary, should not concentrate only on the divinity of the message, but also on the humanity of the recipients. In his doctoral dissertation, Schmidt explains: "The Christ-centered message, as defined through the Good News of the Bible, must wrestle with contemporary problems."¹

At this point in history, the world's crying needs present a great opportunity for preaching. In times of greatest need, preaching has been the most powerful. John A. Hutton states: "It has always been easy to preach in great times, when there was some urgent necessity moving the minds of men."²

Conditions in our world today give the preacher great opportunities to preach the gospel. The epidemic of venereal diseases, including the AIDS virus, drug dependency, the disintegration of the home, the economic and political situation, the monstrosity of child abuse and many other ills of society get an easy hearing for the preacher. On this subject Dr. James Stewart states:

It is your task to confront the rampant disillusionment of the day, and smash it with the cross of Christ and shame it with the splendor of the Resurrection. What makes your calling in the church so urgent and so critical is the fact that human


²Hutton, 26.
hearts, bombarded with grim perplexities and damaging shadows of despair, are crying as never before. Is there any word from the Lord?¹

The times in which we live constitute an unprecedented opportunity for planting the seed of truth in the hearts of men. People are crying for satisfaction, but they are far from being satisfied. There have never been more toys in the hands of people than today, but toys do not satisfy. What people need is the Gospel of Christ. We have what people need. Frank Cairns says:

This proclaiming of ours is a thing that ministers to the deepest necessities and hungers of their nature, and answers a craving which gnaws at their heart and every now and then cries passionately for satisfaction.²

The men and women of today are seeking for spiritual rest and there is nothing like the Gospel to fulfill their need. James Black said: "The clearest note of hope lies in the very heart of man that is restlessly seeking rest. There never was an age so sure of insecurity."³

The insecurity in which people live creates a craving for the unmovable and eternal. This is a great time for preaching if it penetrates within the psychology of contemporary man. Jesus is relevant for every moment


²Cairns, 13.

of man's life. Frank Cairns states: "This is the function of our preaching, to make our people feel through our sermons that in Jesus Christ there is something for every moment of man's life, his good days and his bad days."

Human nature craves and longs for abundant life, nobler life, beautiful life, eternal life. That need is met in the Gospel. Jesus is the answer for every need. Our preaching, Sabbath after Sabbath, could send people away even more hungry and hopeless than before, or fed and satisfied with the bread and water of life. The Bible is sometimes called the Book of Life. It deals with the misery and hunger of human life apart from God, as well as the satisfaction and joy found in fellowship with God. To be able to speak to the needs of people in the context of bipolar preaching, visitation is imperative. A. W. Buret says: "Let no man despise what is only to be learned in faithful pastoral visitation. Going with God among his people, he will know where the shoe of life pinches them, where and how trouble lies . . . bringing the wealth of God to bear upon particular needs."  

In the light of human nature and human needs, it is true that man has a capacity for God and that the preacher should not be intimidated by circumstances that appear to be gravitating toward the negative. Dr. Buret

1 Cairns, 83.

said: "Let the preacher always remember that in every human heart is hidden that capacity for God."¹

God is rooted in the heart of man; preachers should give Him the opportunity to speak to it with the sound of a loving Father who cares for His children. God is concerned with the well-being of every one of His creatures and wants to benefit every soul. But the love of God cannot be seen the way it should unless the preacher loves the people God loves. The love of God is seen through the love of the preacher.

Raymond Calkins states:

No one has a right to be a Christian minister whose supreme interest does not center in human beings. He may possess all other qualifications, but if he likes books or study, investigation or research, administration or organization ... more than he likes human beings, he will never make a successful minister of Jesus Christ.²

If the preacher grasps the bipolar homiletic theory, he or she will see both God’s Word and the world of man. Preaching is a combination of the vertical and the horizontal. The preacher loves humanity because God loves humanity. Just as God has intervened on man’s behalf, the preacher will want to commit his life to applying healing balm from the Bible to the ills of mankind. Preaching in such a context will be powerful because it deals with both God and man. H. H. Farmer

¹Ibid., 177.

says: "If preaching is not accompanied by some participation in men's personal situations and needs, it loses much of its power to communicate."¹

Farmer goes on to say about the pulpit and love: "You cannot love men from the pulpit. You can only love them in concrete personal situations wherein there is cost."²

The Two Categories of Human Needs

In dealing with the needs of human beings, Farmer makes a further contribution by dividing their needs into two categories: the needs that are inherent in all, and the needs arising from external circumstances.

The life of any man or woman is shaped by two great sets of conditions or influences. The one set of conditions has to do with the unchanging, universal needs of individual human life, one may say, as such. You can not be a human being at all without having just those needs. . . . Whoever he is, he has to face sooner or later, in one form or another, the faces of death, bereavement, disease and pain, frustrations and disappointments of making a living, the strains and tensions of personal relationships, the perplexities of conscience, the persistent pull and downdrag of evil in his own soul.

The other set of factors has to do with the external setting of his life. I mean the social environment and context of his existence, . . . and those invisible influences which are soaking into him all the time and of which he is hardly aware, what we call vaguely "the spirit of the times." . . . The first set of factors has a permanence and a universality which the second lacks. The former abide; the latter change, though always they are in interplay with one another. Men have always died,

²Ibid., 67.
always suffered bereavement; always had illnesses, always had bad consciences, always needed personal forgiveness, but they have not always lived under, say, industrial capitalism.¹

This is great insight into the two conditions that affect human beings and thus affect preaching. The changing as well as the changeless needs must be addressed if preaching is going to be meaningful. But mainly the changeless conditions demand our attention. This is a rich material for study and application in our sermon preparation. To minimize it is equivalent to sinking into irrelevancy and failure in communication. Farmer’s book is a must for the pastor and the evangelist. No wonder he is one of the great names in homiletics.

I would like to quote Farmer again in a very striking observation:

The Gospel to multitudes seems, in a way that many would find difficult to put into terms, unreal, remote from the basic and absorbing problems of their life. The fact is men today are not asking primarily, or mainly, "What must I do to be saved?", but "What comfort and strength and light are there for me in bereavement and disappointment and personal failure?" They are asking that; they have always asked it, and always will. These needs, I repeat, are permanent and universal, and we have a grand Gospel for them.²

Preaching should not be remote from human needs or it will run the risk of irrelevancy or the higher risk of losing the audience. When people come to church they come because they are seeking something they have not found in

¹Ibid., 84, 85.

²Ibid., 86.
movies, or theaters, or pleasures. They come for comfort from God's Word in the context of their human needs.

Other churches have committed the heresy of monopolarity by being remote from the Holy Scriptures; Adventists have committed the same heresy by being remote from the world of human needs and expectation. The concept of the bipolar sermon would help the preacher to keep both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions in balance. The result would be comforted people, uplifted and saved not only for eternity, but for this life here and now. The Gospel is not good news only for the future, but for the present. For the preacher who is constantly seeking to honor God by reaching the hearts of men, bipolar preaching constitutes a way of challenging one's self to be more relevant and fruitful in the ministry. As has been pointed out time and time again, it is not enough to know the Bible. David A. Maclennan said:

As an interpreter of the timeless Word of God to men, the Christian preacher must knock windows out of the blind walls of his century. We have a duty to understand not only the truth of Christ, but the world of persons to which we would direct it."

Incarnational Theology and Bipolar Preaching

Although it is not the purpose of this project to write a theology of homiletics, it is foundational that it

present a theological reflection as to the "why" of bipolar preaching.

Since God expressed His divinity through the Incarnation of His Son (John 1:1-3, 14), His ambassadors need to preach in a way that reveals genuine humanity touching humanity with the Word and power of divinity. Karl Barth says: "God who acts and speaks in Jesus Christ expressed His own true divinity precisely in His true humanity."1 The theology of the Incarnation is crucial to the homiletical theory of bipolar preaching. Only when the preacher grasps this essential and basic insight will he or she speak incarnationally or bipolarly. In the letter to the Hebrews the author takes on the task of dealing with Christ's divinity (chap. 1), and also dwells on His humanity (chap. 2). There is an intersection of the divine and the human as the finest way of relevant communication through the God-man.

The mystery of the Incarnation is taught clearly in the Holy Scriptures (John 1:1-3, 14; 1 Tim 3:16; 2 Cor 5:19). The Son of God became flesh at His incarnation. He hungered and thirsted and became weary. He needed food and rest, and was refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of man, craving human sympathy and needing divine assistance. He was tempted and tried, and was touched

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with the feelings of our infirmities. He went through the various stages of growth like any other member of the human race. He wept over the city of Jerusalem, and at the grave of a loved one. Only after taking upon Himself human flesh and sharing human suffering did Christ win the title of man's Helper. He made people's perplexities and agonies His own (Isa 63:9). Cleland says: "Bifocal preaching is a homiletical corollary of the doctrine of the Incarnation."\(^1\) Of our Lord, Paul wrote that He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil 2:7).

This incarnational theology is the very foundation of bipolar preaching, which means the intersection or integration of two poles. George F. Macleod says of our Savior:

>The essence of our Lord's coming was to start with men where men dwell. Instead of visiting the earth in all the panoply of power, He humbled Himself, was content to be born in a stable and die on a cross. If by any means He might save some.\(^2\)

It is clear that when God went to work to save man, He did it by way of a Man. This means that preachers need to understand the human condition and address it with God's Word. As in the manger and the cross of Christ we find the intersection of the divine and the human, the preaching task, having the manger and the cross as its

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\(^1\)Cleland, 57.

\(^2\)Macleod, 24.
models, makes an intersection or integration between the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of divinity and humanity. Using a parallelism, it means that the divine message incarnate in the life of the preacher should also be incarnate in the life of the audience to bridge the gulf between the two poles.

To make it clearer, in Christ the pole of divinity and the pole of humanity are integrated—the God-Man. In the Bible the pole of the divine message and the pole of humanity are integrated in prophet, apostle, or epistle—a divine-human message. In preaching, the pole of the divine message is integrated in the pole of the life of the preacher and the audience—the Word of God preached—bipolar preaching.

**Bipolarity in Christ and the Bible**

In describing both the Bible and the Son of God as being a union of the divine and the human, Ellen G. White writes:

> But the Bible, with its truth of divine origin, expressed in the language of men, is a union of the divine and the human. This union existed in Christ's nature. He was the Son of God and the Son of man. It can be said of the Bible what was said of Christ: 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us'.

Christ's ministry is our model. He is the 'Word made flesh' (John 1:1-3, 14). He is the ultimate bipolar

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Preacher. He combined the two poles in Himself. His preaching has a view to the Word of His Father as well as a view to the needs of the hearts of men and women. Preachers need to learn from the Master Preacher.

Learning and implementing are both rewarding and fruitful as God's people are comforted. Isolating one's self is equivalent to committing a homiletical sin. There is no substitute for a person-to-person relationship. There is no substitute for Christ's method and He is the model for preachers. Luke says of Him: "His word was with power" (Luke 4:32).

In describing Christ's method of approaching people, Dr. Fosdick said: "He went round them like a man sailing round an island, and then sailed in and landed where He could find an opening."\(^1\) And David Maclennan writes:

> He who called us to be His ministers not only looked with compassion upon the multitude; He sought them out, lived with them, identified Himself completely with them in their need and sin, and loved them to the end and beyond. We are not Christ, but by God's grace we are 'in Christ,' and therefore committed to this kind of compassionate service to individuals in their known needs.\(^2\)

As Christ is the bipolar Man, likewise the Bible is bipolar. The Bible is not only the Word of God, but in it we find all the needs of humanity. In it we find the

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\(^2\)Maclennan, *Entrusted with the Gospel*, 70.
jealousy of Saul (1 Sam 19, 20, 21), the loyalty of Jonathan (1 Sam 19:2,3), the courage of Nathan (2 Sam 12:7), the desperation of Jeremiah (Jer 19:19, 20), and the struggles of Paul (2 Cor 12:23-28). In it we find the anguish of Jacob (Gen 32:24), the discouragement of Elijah (1 Kgs 19:4), the suffering of Job (Job 10:1), Isaiah’s depression (Isa 7:5), and Daniel’s determination to be faithful (Dan 1:8). Bipolar preaching makes the preacher aware of all of this, thus enhancing the effectiveness of the preaching ministry in general and the evangelistic preaching ministry in particular. This brings preachers closer to God and closer to men and women.

In chapter 3 the homiletical concept of bipolar preaching in the writings of Ellen G. White as well as in the H. M. S. Richards Lectureship on Preaching is explored.

**Facing Some Objections to Life-Situation Preaching**

Life-situation preaching represents a commendable endeavor to touch people where they are most sensitive. But in their eagerness to preach to the times, some preachers have emasculated the everlasting Gospel. They have to be aware that anthropology must not take the place of Christology, nor should it be isolated from it. Also, some have gone the way of a positive-thinking philosophy based on modern psychology and sociology, forgetting altogether the landmarks of apostolic preaching. In an
article, "Christ and Him Crucified," Robert J. McCracken states:

Life-situation preaching is often criticized because the temptation besetting many who specialize in it is that they become wholly preoccupied with issues of the hour. This is what accounts for the secular and indeed shallow aspects of much contemporary preaching. Its primary sources are the newspaper, the weekly magazines, the digests, and only secondarily, the Word of God. What is said in church on Sunday frequently has the character of editorial comments with a mild religious flavor. It lacks any distinctive Christian insight and emphasis.1

In a review of the book, Preaching to the Contemporary Mind, published in Ministry magazine, G. A. Minchin says:

In the attempt to reach the modern mind, some preachers fall into sensationalism or trivialities. To be modern often means to be witty or crude. Scripture is used either flippantly or is displaced by the newspaper or a psychology textbook as a source of sermon texts.2

This criticism is pertinent to the error of monofocality, in which the emphasis is on the pole of people to the neglect of the most important pole of the Word of God. Again in Ministry we find an article in which the writer states that the Bible is the best source for meeting the needs of today’s generation:

In the Word of God, which is a revelation of Jesus Christ and which tells of Christ’s ultimate plan for humanity, there is food for every hungry soul. When we abandon these great soul-stirring themes for


sermons on current affairs, politics, psychology and the like, we cause our congregations to suffer spiritual malnourishment.¹

These comments hit the nail on the head, so to speak. When the preacher dwells on only one of the two worlds, two stories or two texts, he violates the homiletical principle of bipolarity. Russell Dicks points out the importance of bringing eternal truth into the lives of people or running the risk of failure in the pulpit: "The preacher's task is to bring into the lives of his people the eternal truth. . . . The clergyman who knows human problems but does not know eternal truth, God and the ways of God, fails in preaching."²

The only way to avoid this pitfall is by keeping in balance the bipolarity of the sermon, both in its preparation and delivery. The preacher must be faithful to the two texts: Scripture and life. Another article in Ministry emphasizes the need for remembering the pole of the Gospel:

The great menace to Christian preaching today is the tendency to dwell only on the things of this world. It looks as if in many places the gospel would be pushed out of the pulpit by the so-called application of Christianity to social problems. The true preacher must preach, not only to the times, but to the eternities. When he preaches to the eternities, he is preaching to the times.³


³Ibid.
It is true that some preachers concentrate on today’s world to such an extent that they neglect the Bible. This is the error of monopolarity. The other error is concentrating on the Bible alone, without applying it to today’s needs. To make preaching meaningful, preachers need to bring both poles into their sermons. This highlights the problem of focusing solely on one world or the other. If we take God seriously we need to take His Word seriously.

On the other hand, if humanity is to be taken seriously, it must be appealed to in its own language of suffering, guilt, forgiveness, and hope. It is a homiletical tragedy to create a dichotomy between the two poles, because the problems of human life, the existential questions that plague the human mind, are answered in the Word of God. They are like flesh and bone; they should not be separated. Teaching Bible truth and applying it to people’s lives today go hand in hand.

Some persons hold that life-situation preaching raises false hopes that lead to disappointment. But bringing God’s promises into the arena of human needs and expectations is not misleading them, rather it is placing them in touch with God’s will. A true Christian knows that God’s will must always prevail and submits to that will, believing that what God allows is the best for the soul. To ignore God’s promises is to make the Bible irrelevant and portray God as a Father who is not
interested in or lacks power to bless His children. This would be a fatal distortion of God's love and power. There is no dichotomy between truth and fulfillment. God's truth has the consolation of His people as its purpose. God has the power to fulfill human needs and expectations. So preaching must be need-oriented. As Karl Barth says: "Not until our preaching arises from need will our work become mission. Mission alone can legitimate preaching."¹

The mission of Jesus was to respond to the needs of people: physical, psychological, spiritual, and social. Frank Cairns depicts where preaching is failing when he says:

We have no business in a Christian pulpit at all, unless the gospel we preach can do at least as much for men as Johnson claimed for good literature, namely, 'to teach us how to enjoy life, or to endure it.' If the Christian pulpit is failing and where it is failing to make an appeal to men and women, I am persuaded that part of the reason, at any rate, lies in the fact that it is not dealing with men and women's lives, their common, everyday, work-a-day lives.²

For sure, dedicated preachers do not go into the pulpit to air their own opinions, but to proclaim the faith once delivered to the saints. They do not go to the pulpit to suppress the Gospel or to water it down. But they do want to present the Gospel in the context of the human situation to which it was given. If Bible religion

¹Barth, 702.

²Cairns, 72.
goes hand in hand with human experience, preachers need to remember this important dimension in their sermons. Without application, direct or indirect, there is no sermon; that which is timeless needs to brought into these times, and into this day. Preachers should not become religious commentators on current events, but heralds of God in the context of the human predicament.

**Summary**

Human beings today are fundamentally the same as their parents were, only more complicated. There is a deep-seated sense of helplessness in spite of all that humankind controls and masters. Self-confidence has faded away. The preacher is seeking for ways to respond to life's challenges, to go on presenting Jesus Christ as the answer to people's problems. But unless preaching relates to people's everyday problems, it is irrelevant. The danger is some Protestant pulpits are leaving God's Word aside to concentrate on the world of men and women. In the Seventh-day Adventist homiletical theory and practice as espoused in the H. M. S. Richards Lectureship, as well as in my experience, the danger in concentrating on the Word of God lies in forgetting the human factor to which it was given.
BIPOLARITY IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Bipolarity in the Writings of Ellen G. White

An examination of the writings of Ellen G. White to see how she portrays preaching in general, and the preaching of Jesus in particular, is of great interest to this study. In doing so we definitely find the two dimensions or elements that constitute bipolar preaching in her work. This study concentrates only on what she wrote concerning the human dimension or the second pole of bifocal preaching.

That Ellen G. White was rooted and grounded in the first pole, the Word of God, is a fact that nobody within our community of faith would challenge or deny. Our problem, then, is to focus on the second pole: the human factor—the details and circumstances dealing with the realities of life as lived in the first century and how she applied spiritual lessons from God’s Word to the needs of the people of her day.

Since the scope of this chapter has to be written within the parameters and constraints of time and space, I concentrate on seeking this factor in her comments on the
following: (1) the Incarnation, (2) human needs, (3) time and circumstances, (4) simplicity of language adapted to common people, (5) concentration on what is interesting and important, (6) earnestness and emphasis on the positive, and (7) mingling the practical with the theoretical. Each of these is considered in turn.

The Foundational Dimensions of the Incarnation in Divine-Human Communication

Ellen G. White links the Incarnation to Jesus' ministry in its different phases: "He humbled Himself to take our nature that He might meet men where they were."\(^1\)

As mentioned before in this work, the foundation of bipolar preaching is the doctrine of the Incarnation. In chapter 2 a theological reflection on that doctrine and its bearing on bipolar preaching is presented. Again, Ellen White dwells on this topic when she states: "We can not come in touch with divinity without coming in touch with humanity."\(^2\) And further: "A divine-human Savior, He came to stand at the head of the fallen race, to share in their experience from childhood to manhood."\(^3\)

\(^1\)White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 22.


The Incarnation was the only way God could save fallen human beings. There was no other way. The gulf between God and sinful man had to be bridged, so, taking upon Himself human nature, He met people in their own environment, spoke to them in their own language, and ministered to their needs. This was a fact in the salvific method of communication. To communicate God's saving grace through preaching, teaching, and healing as well as in other areas of ministry, we must mingle with people where they are. To incarnate God's message in people's lives, we must first see how they live and work. Before we can give solutions from the Source of consolation, we need to understand people's problems. Before we can apply the ointment of salvation, we have to be aware of their physical and psychological wounds.

Focusing on Human Needs

In her homiletical understanding of the Master's preaching, Mrs. White mentions His focus on human needs: "He saw the needs of men and women, children and youth, and to all He gave the invitation, Come unto me."\(^1\)

In our understanding of the bipolar homiletical theory, this is an imperative factor. "He saw the needs." This is the first step in the preaching ministry. The second step comes as a corollary to the first: responding

\(^1\)White, *Ministry of Healing*, 19.
to those needs with the satisfying resources of God's Word. She continues:

The Prince of teachers, He sought access to the people by the pathway of their most familiar associations. He presented the truth in such a way that ever after it was to His hearers intertwined with the most hallowed recollections and sympathies He taught in a way that made them feel the completeness of His identification with their interests and happiness. His instruction was so direct, His illustrations so appropriate, His words so sympathetic and cheerful, that His hearers were charmed. The simplicity and earnestness with which He addressed the needy hallowed every word.

What a store of practical homiletical wisdom for the communicator of the Word! Though not phrased in the sophisticated academic vocabulary of the Yale or Warrack lectures on preaching, in very simple words, Mrs. White goes right to the point of applying eternal truth to human needs when outlining the outstanding features of Jesus' preaching. No wonder people flocked to listen to such preaching! Even today people will respond to cheerful, sympathetic preaching that identifies with them and meets their needs in the Gospel message. Just as if she had the modern concept of bipolar preaching in mind, she wrote: "With unwearying patience, and sympathetic helpfulness, He met their necessities." This is a most revealing statement focusing on the goal of preaching as meeting the needs of human beings. This is the foundation on which

1Ibid., 23, 24.
2Ibid., 25.
bipolar preaching is built: giving answers from God's Word to human needs.

**Preaching to the Time and Circumstances**

Another characteristic of Jesus' preaching, according to her views, was the application of His message to the time and circumstances affecting His listeners. She says: "In whatever company He found Himself He presented a lesson appropriate to the time and the circumstances." Both as preacher and teacher, Jesus applied the message from heaven to the conditions of His hearers. Blending the eternal with the temporal was always a major feature of His ministry.

**Simplicity in Language**

In dealing with human beings, whom He Himself had created in the beginning, He talked to them in terms they could understand. On this point, she says: "Ministers should present the truth in a clear, simple manner." In another place, where she speaks about Jesus' way of presenting the truth she writes:

In these words [The Sermon on the Mount] spoken by the greatest Teacher the world has ever known, there is no parade of human eloquence. The language is plain, and the thoughts and statements are marked with the


greatest simplicity. The poor, the unlearned, the most simple-minded, can understand them.¹

As a corollary of bipolar preaching, the language used in communicating the Gospel must be simple and adapted to common people. If the majority cannot understand the language of the preacher, what benefit could there be?

Concentration on What Is Interesting and Important

Another important feature of preaching is capturing the interest of the hearers. Mrs. White counsels:

Set your mind to task, that you may present the truth in a manner to interest them. Seize the most interesting portions of Scripture that you can bring before them, come right to the point, and seek to fasten their attention, and instruct them in the ways of the Lord.²

She believed that appealing to the interest of the hearers is the way to go in preaching. One way of doing this is by using the most appealing portions of Scripture. But we should not neglect what is most important. "We have no time for dwelling on matters that are of no importance. Our time should be given to proclaiming the last message of mercy to a guilty world."³


³White, Testimonies, 8:36.
Earnestness and Positiveness in Preaching

In focusing on the human pole of bipolar preaching we find earnestness and positiveness as two important qualities in dealing with the human mind and heart. She advises:

You do not want to labor in such a spiritless way that the people will go to sleep under your words, but you want to bring earnestness and fervency . . . into your preaching, that you may leave the impression that the sacred truths you are presenting to others are to you a living reality.¹

Those who hear the message may judge its importance by the earnestness of manner in which it is conveyed to them. She continues: "Cultivate earnestness and positiveness in addressing the people. Your subject matter may be excellent, and just what the people need, but you would do well to mingle positiveness with persuasive entreaties."² And again: "A cold, joyless discourse will kill the church. Bring animation into your words and prayers."³

In writing to "Brother A," Mrs. White shows her homiletical understanding in dealing with the human aspect of preaching: "In your preaching you are generally too dry and formal. You do not weave in the practical


with the doctrinal. You talk too long and weary the people. . . . You are slow and tedious in your preaching, as well as in everything else you undertake."¹ It is interesting that she considered it so important to "weave in the practical with the doctrinal" that she included it in her counsel to "Brother A."

In an appeal she makes to ministers, we see the importance she places on fervency in the presentation of the message:

Ministers should become Bible students. Are the truths which they handle mighty? Then they should seek to handle them skillfully. Their ideas should be clear and strong, and their spirits fervent, or they will weaken the force of the truth which they handle. By tamely presenting the truth, merely repeating the theory without being stirred by it themselves, they can never convert men and women from their deathlike slumber.²

A lifeless presentation of the truth does not persuade people to listen. Content is important, but how we apply it is just as important. The preacher cannot ignore the feelings and emotions of the human heart when applying the Word of the living God.

**Mixing the Practical with the Theoretical**

In dealing with the human pole, practical godliness must be mingled with the theoretical. On this topic Mrs. White warns: "There is danger of our ministers

¹White, Testimonies, 2:543.

²Ibid., 337.
dwelling too much on doctrines, preaching altogether too
many discourses on argumentative subjects when their own
soul needs practical godliness.1 Again, in the same
vein:

How needful that the minister of Christ have the
Spirit of God, to go with the truth to hearts, and it
is the mingling of the close, practical preaching with
the theoretical, that keeps the truth warm in the soul
of the minister, as well as keeping the material warm
he wishes to work upon.2

The preacher cannot ignore the God-given laws that
operate in the human mind. Truth must be incarnated in
life, real life, human life. It is easier for the mind to
see faith operating in the life of Abraham than to see it
in a theoretical discourse that is not rooted in life. As
communicators of the Gospel, we all can do better by
following the Master’s example in adapting the message
from God’s Word to the needs and psychology of the people
listening to us. This way we will be practicing bipolar
preaching as we see it through the homiletical lenses of
Ellen G. White.

Bipolarity in the H. M. S. Richards
Lectureship on Preaching

Preaching is highly esteemed by ministers and
members in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Established

1Ellen G. White, Counsel to Writers and Editors
(Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association,
1946), 79.

2Ellen G. White, quoted in Arthur L. White, Ellen
G. White: The Progressive Years, vol. 2 (Washington, DC:
in 1957, the Richards Lectureship on preaching is concrete
evidence of the high importance placed on this phase of
the church's work. In his lectures, Elder Richards
himself emphasized preaching so much that he went on
record as saying: "Preaching is the most important
function of the Christian Church and of the Advent
Message." And further, in connection with the preaching
ministry, he goes on to say: "Preaching must be the chief
work of a man's life or ordination is out of place."

In describing the future of preaching within the
church's marching forward to its climactic and glorious
future, Richards points out the following: "Don't think
that preaching is going to die. It never will not as long
as there are sinners in this world, not as long as the
work of God isn't finished."

In terms of the prerequisites for the preaching
function, Elder Richards maximizes a few elements with
clear distinction. He stresses the importance of
visitation as being the only way to unlock the mysteries
and necessities of every heart to which the arrows of
God's Word should be directed in order to give security
and consolation. Here is his advice: "You can never be a
good feeder of the flock unless you visit the sheep and

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2Ibid., 15.

3Ibid.
know where they are. Get down in the sheep pen and mingle with the sheep."

Even without calling it "bipolar" we can easily detect the two poles of the Word and the people to whom the Word is addressed in Richards's homiletical theory. By pointing out the necessity of visitation and mingling with the sheep, Richards is recognizing the importance of knowing the needs that will be addressed with the eternal Word.

Another "must" for the preacher, says Richards, is his human touch, his sympathy for human beings, and his intense desire to be of help. He comments: "No man can dislike people or be indifferent to their sorrows and be a good preacher."2

The real problem with some contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Hispanic preaching is the lack of encounter between the Bible and the actual human situation. The realities of life on planet Earth, where agony and suffering are the common lot for all people, and the joys and glories of heaven need to intersect in the sermon. Steven P. Vitrano, a professor of homiletics at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, states: "Preaching instructs and informs man

1Ibid., 219.

2Ibid., 239.
with respect to life, what he should do, and how he should do it."¹

Vitrano is right when he connects preaching with life, human life, here and now. Then, the preacher's laboratory is life, human life in all its multiple facets. And he is right when pointing out the need of not minimizing the pole of the eternal Word when he writes: "A sermon that is not an exposition of a Bible truth is not a sermon."²

Taking the two quotations together, we see the two worlds, the two texts, the two stories, or the bipolarity that should dominate our preaching. But in my case, sad to say, for many years as a result of my training and the model preachers and sermons I heard, my own preaching was not bipolar. I was always maximizing the truth and neglecting its application to people's lives. And I was not alone. The homiletical theory and practice of gravitating in the one world of biblical truth has prevailed in our churches. But thankfully now, through observation, research, and practice, we acknowledge the fact that although every sermon should present Bible truth, it must also relate that truth to the hearers. The Bible itself was given in a human context for the benefit


²Ibid.
of human beings. If a sermon that does not deal with a Bible truth is not a sermon, and is a sin against the Giver of the Word, then it is also true that a sermon that does not relate that truth to the people of today is a homiletical sin against the humanity for which the truth is given. In relevant preaching, the "then" of the text and the "now" of the hearers are equally important. Historical events of the past that incarnate eternal truth must be related in a meaningful way to the problems of life today. Otherwise the sermon becomes a mere historical report that has little impact on present-day life. Applying the Word to today's world makes preaching not only relevant but vital.

Henry Grady Davis, a master in homiletical theory and practice, compares the sermon to a tree:

A sermon should be like a tree. It should be a living organism. It should have deep roots. Roots deep under ground. In the soil of life's struggle. In the subsoil of the eternal Word.¹

In this master-stroke illustration, Davis presents the sermon as a living, growing, dynamic creation, rooted in the soil of life's struggle as well as in the subsoil of the eternal Word. This is indeed a creative way of emphasizing the homiletical theory of the bipolarity of the sermon.

R. Edward Turner makes a comment pertinent to our discussion on the theory and practice of preaching in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Turner does not discuss Ellen G. White in the context of the human situation to which the Word of God is addressed, but toward the end of his dissertation he says, "In the post-White era, the church must be willing to develop a viable concept of preaching for the contemporary church situation within a new socio-communication context."¹ To Turner, the human situation is a need that cannot be minimized in our preaching. He quotes Harold A. Bosley as saying: "Through the ages preachers have adjusted their messages to contemporary needs and problems."²

Louis Venden makes a critical analysis of Adventist homiletical theory as presented in the H. M. S. Richards Lectureship. After carefully studying and analyzing all of the lectures, he concludes with a very important observation: "A concern for Scripture in the sermon must be balanced by an equal concern for the hearer to whom the word moves through preaching."³

If his observation is valid and to the point in Anglo preaching, in my understanding, based on my own experience of hearing and reading many sermons delivered

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²Harold A. Bosley, quoted in ibid., 8.
³Venden, 281.
and written within my own actual Hispanic culture, it is even more relevant and to the point.

Adventist homiletical practice lays emphasis on the truth found in the Bible. We are a movement focused on the Bible. But we should not neglect the human factor, the existential predicament. In some of our colleges, the preaching curriculum neglects the human element in the homiletical formula that we have been expounding. Again, in words that could be controversial for some, Venden stresses the human element: "Preaching must be person-centered, not content-centered."¹

With this I do not understand that he is saying that faithfulness to the Word should be minimized or watered down, but that the content of the Word must not be isolated from human life. My research indicates that there must be a balance between both poles or that both poles should be in tension. In giving an analytical evaluation of a large number of sermons, Venden sees as a characteristic feature of Adventist preaching:

The almost complete lack of anything in the lectures or sermons that can be related to a specific time and place in history, society, or culture, gives the impression as an 'other worldliness' or time or timelessness which seems to indicate that Adventist preaching, so far, has not taken seriously the 'real world' in which it occurs.²

¹Ibid., 9.

²Ibid., 297.
Here the writer is saying that the common Adventist preacher flies so high in his or her preaching that even though his or her ministry belongs to this earth, he makes little or no contact with it, or the contact is casual and irrelevant. The sermon, in our traditional way of understanding it, has been a way of exploring and expounding a neglected biblical truth rather than focusing the neglected biblical truth on human needs and applying it to what life is all about.
CHAPTER IV

BIPOLARITY IN HISPANIC EVANGELISTIC PREACHING

Chapters 1 to 3 of this dissertation deal with the homiletical theory of bipolar preaching and the homiletical error of monopolarity. This chapter attempts to integrate this homiletical theory into practice, and concentrates on the presentation of bipolar evangelistic preaching that takes up topics on human needs relating to family life.

Our Evangelistic Preaching Tradition

The Seventh-day Adventist Church possesses a rich tradition of evangelistic preaching. From the very beginning, the Adventist heritage was based on evangelistic preaching, and Hispanics learned and developed from it. The church is deeply indebted to its pioneer preachers. Under the power of the Holy Spirit, they did a wonderful job in their day of bringing thousands into this remnant church. Men such as J. L. Shuler, R. Allan Anderson, Frederick F. Schwindt, Carlyle B. Haynes, Taylor G. Bunch, Harold M. S. Richards, Fordyce Detamore, E. E. Cleveland, and many others forged the path. The church pays them a tribute of respect and admiration for their
service to Christ. Nevertheless, when their sermons are analyzed, we find they are heavily concentrated on prophetic and doctrinal preaching. And the human dimension is left out.

While their sermons are well-rooted in the Bible and in history, their homiletical eye is not focused on human problems and needs, or on how to apply the biblical message to those needs. Their sermons are not bipolar. They are missing the human factor. This factor is neglected or forgotten altogether. The sermon titles seem to be based on the assumption that everyone is deeply interested in religion. They betray a lack of psychological insights into societal values and topical preferences. For example, here are some titles that evangelist J. L. Schuler used in one of his evangelistic crusades: "Peace or Pieces," "What and Where Is Heaven?" "Why Doesn’t God Kill the Devil?" "Armageddon and the Atomic Bomb," "Heaven Split Wide Open," "The Way of Jesus Christ in 194-," "The Destinies of the Four Great Powers," and "Who Is the Antichrist?"¹ There are many other topics, and all follow a similar pattern. When we look at the titles of Fordyce Detamore’s lectures, we find no deviation from the established pattern.²


²Fordyce Detamore, World-Wide Bible Lectures (Keene, TX: College Press, n.d.).
In December of 1939 the Ministerial Association Advisory Council decided to print a two-volume set of evangelistic sermons. A score of able, experienced, and successful ministers were chosen for the task. The first volume came out in August of 1940, and the second in October 1942. The list of the sermon titles reads: "The Dream of World Empire," "Christ the Coming King," "The Bible Millennium," "The One Priceless Book," "The Truth About Heaven," "Why Was Sin Permitted?" Neither the titles nor the content reflect any bipolar consciousness.

In the North American Division, evangelism followed the same pattern through the years, almost without change. For many years, Hispanics in that Division followed the example of their Anglo counterparts as best they could, translating their sermons and copying their methods. Despite their lack of homiletical wisdom, souls were won. The sermons prepared by Anglo evangelists were aimed at White, middle- or upper-class Protestant audiences. Hispanic audiences are made up of predominantly Roman Catholic persons of a low socio-economic strata, and often represent a mixture of races and nationalities. Many of them are people in transition, seeking better life conditions, better education for their

children, and a better political and economic system that will improve their own status and provide a better future for their families.

The School of Integral Evangelism

With the introduction of The School of Integral Evangelism by Walter Schubert in 1938, a breakthrough came for Seventh-day Adventist Hispanic evangelism, especially in Catholic cultures. It was first launched in South America and later in Inter-America and the North American Hispanic Ministry. It brought into focus a more human-oriented presentation of the Gospel especially adapted to the Catholic mentality. Although the topic of bipolar preaching was not even mentioned, Schubert integrated into his preaching and sermons some of the basic elements of this homiletical theory. Not only did he have unprecedented success in soul winning, but he started a new school of fruitful evangelism oriented to Hispanic culture and circumstances. Adapting his sermons to the felt needs of his audience, his approach was positive and relevant. His presentations were tactful, even diplomatic, using an indirect, non-confrontational way of presenting the third angel's message. He did not use the "I am right and you are wrong" or "you have nothing, and I have the truth" method. He presented truth as leading to a more meaningful and desirable way of life.
Schubert was the pioneer of this school of Integral Evangelism. Inspired by his success, a new generation of Hispanic evangelists in the Americas put aside the classical Protestant method of presenting the truth and adapted their sermons to Catholic audiences.

Men like Arturo Schmidt, Salim Japas, Carlos Aeschlimann, Daniel Belvedere, Braulio Pérez Marcio, Milton Peverini, Jorge Grieve, and Harley Roscher from South America followed in the footsteps of Walter Schubert. In Inter-America, among many others, we need to mention the name of Raul Villanueva, a man of extraordinary poetic and oratorical talent as a communicator of God's Word. The Spaniard, José Osorio Braña, is another who has used this method in successful evangelistic enterprise. Hispanic evangelists in the North American Division who followed Schubert's method are: José Espinosa, Eliezer Benavides, Antonio Arteaga, Xavier Soto Valle, Brando Saldía, Victor Collins, Efraín Murillo, and Walter and Donald Cameron. This is only to name some of the many who have been successful in presenting the Adventist message in this people-oriented way and in winning thousands of souls.

Topics Related to Human Problems

In reaching the Roman Catholic mentality, it is more desirable to use a non-confrontational, bipolar method. Topics that relate to the problems people
experience today have proved successful, such as: "How to Have a Happy Home," "The Secret of a Happy Life," "You Can Save Your Marriage," "You Can Keep Your Children from Delinquency," and "How to Raise a Family." It is possible to mix in wisdom from God's Word with these topics. People are interested in having successful marriages and in their children's education, so topics related to these deeply felt human needs awaken interest.

With such topics, there is no problem in getting and keeping an audience. Of course, if the evangelist talks only about home, marriage, and family, isolated from Bible-centered truth, then the sermon would fall into the homiletical problem of monopolarity. We are servants of the Word and need to be faithful to it. But experience demonstrates that the indirect way, rooted in human needs, is the best way to teach the Word of God. This also creates confidence in a Book that has been unjustly labeled as a "Protestant Book."

Other good topics that touch on human needs are those related to health. Good health is probably one of the most important human needs. In the Bible there is an immense wealth of counsel on this subject, so it is easy to relate God's Word to this felt human need. When speaking of using health topics, it does not mean presenting only one casual talk on health during the series. In my case, my wife, a health educator, presents a different aspect of healthful living at every meeting,
and offers some medical services such as taking blood pressure, diabetic screening, etc. Previously, we have had a tendency to present health topics separate from Gospel presentations, but they must go together. The right arm of the message should not be disconnected from the main body.

**More Than Teaching Truth**

In his unpublished dissertation, Salim Japas states that the work of the evangelist implies more than the teaching of truth:

> It is not sufficient for the evangelist to teach Bible truth in a stereotyped, cold presentation. The message of the Bible should be made extremely attractive so that the listeners will recognize it as the truth. No evangelist does justice to the Christian message he proclaims if he presents it in a careless, cold or illogical way. It is not enough to love Bible truths in order to communicate them efficiently; it is necessary also to love the people whom he dares to teach. To love people means to know their history, their background, to be sensitive to their feelings, to respect their culture and their personalities. The evangelist must place himself on the mental level of his audience.¹

Although Japas does not deal with bipolar preaching as such, or the human needs of the human drama, he is close to it. The human situation and the particular needs of the individual are present in the mind of the evangelist, and his work is focused on the human condition and imperatives. He presents the teachings of the Bible as

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the most meaningful solution to every craving of the human soul.

Dr. Schmidt, a former teacher at Montemorelos University, is keenly aware of the human situation in the context of contemporary problems. Though he is not dealing explicitly with the homiletical theory of bipolar preaching, it is exciting to listen to a pastor and teacher in one of our Third World institutions promoting the idea of preaching in the context of the contemporary situation:

Even though biblical preaching is not in essence a biblical lecture on Christian living, it must endeavor to convey the text to people's understanding and relate its value to the everyday life. The eternal truth must be applied with challenge and appeal to the contemporary situation.¹

We detect in Latin-American evangelists and pastors, especially those working in the North American Division, a growing consciousness of felt human needs in the context of situations calling for positive and meaningful answers. Schubert and those who followed him made a tremendous impact in evangelistic communication and contributed to the improvement of the presentations of the Gospel to the Hispanic mind and culture. Yet, they were not aware of bipolar preaching and how it is anchored in the doctrine of the Incarnation. This explains the main objective of this dissertation: To expand the concept of evangelistic preaching, and of preaching in general, enhancing

¹Schmidt, 17.
efficiency in the ministry of the Lord by dealing in a more positive way with the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of His people both inside and outside the church.

The concept of bipolar preaching in evangelistic work ought to bring people to an encounter with the Bible and provide satisfaction, happiness, and a closer walk with Jesus as their needs are met through the eternal answers in His Word. The Almighty Father's love for human beings was demonstrated in the Gift of His Son, to show us in His life and work the character of His Father.

How to Construct the Sermon so as to Include the Two Poles

The question now before us is how to go about constructing the sermon so that it integrates the human and the divine, the two stories, the two texts, time with the timeless and how to keep one homiletical eye on heaven while the other is on planet Earth.

Professor James T. Cleland, who was invited to deliver the famous Warrack Lectures on Preaching in his native Scotland in 1964, is very helpful on this point. He says it does not matter which pole preachers begin with, whether with Jerusalem or New York, as long as they do not forget the other dimension involved in bipolar preaching. In his book The True and Lively Word, he describes how the Master Preacher, our Lord Jesus, applied eternal truth to His contemporary setting in Palestine:
Think of our Lord. Part of His secret in arresting the multitudes was that He was able to house the things of heaven amid the furniture of earth. God was seen in the attitude of a Palestinian father toward a run-away boy who came home, maybe back to Nazareth. Love was illustrated by the behavior of a Samaritan to his historic enemy, a Jew. The outgoing of the Word of God was pictured in the analogy of a shepherd hunting for a sheep which had been separated from the flock. No wonder the common people followed Him in droves. It would not be unwise for the disciple to learn from his master.¹

He speaks in a language similar to what Ellen G. White uses to describe Jesus' preaching. How much we can learn from the way in which the Master integrated the two worlds of heaven and earth! Since the pastor and evangelist operate in that most demanding of laboratories, the laboratory of life, they need to acquire skills to deal with the crises and heartaches life brings to all. What do people bring to church or to evangelistic meetings? What do they hope to take away?

In another work, Cleland advises:

Three stages in sermonic construction may be remembered by the use of three key words. Investigation, or exegesis, deals with the Then. Interpretation, or exposition, deals with the Always. Application deals with the Now. And the result? The Word of God is preached.²

In his lectures he states that we have to paint the Good News with local color. We have to let the congregation hear a 'Thus saith the Lord' and not merely 'Thus said the Lord'. If we do otherwise we shall be but echoes of the past, rather than voices speaking for the God who is active today.


²Cleland, Preaching to Be Understood, 77.
and is desiring to be active in us. The eternal Word, discovered by investigation and refined by interpretation, is to become a contemporary word through conscious application. For without application, usually direct, sometimes indirect, there is no sermon. It is when the minister sees that Good News penetrating an immediately contemporary situation that a Word of God is spoken.¹

The author is bold enough to say that without application there is no sermon. And how many times preachers leave God's Word in limbo, in the air, without making relevant contact with the human predicament. How much our Seventh-day Adventist Hispanic preachers need to be aware of the importance of the application of the eternal Word to daily life!

Dr. Edgar N. Jackson gives a list of some of the concerns with which people struggle:

A concern about intensely personal matters, such as the futility of life, insecurity in personal relations, a haunting sense of loneliness, problems that involve marriage and the proper control of the sex drives, . . . the problem of suffering as well as the problem of illness, and the feeling of guilt and frustration.²

With these concerns in mind, as well as many others, the preacher prepares his sermon.

Ingredients of Bipolar Sermons

In writing bipolar sermons, the preacher needs to consider two things: vocabulary and oral style.

¹Ibid., 77.

1. **Vocabulary:** The preacher should use words the congregation can understand at all times. If technical terms are used, they should be clearly defined and explained. Words such as: pericope, demythologizing, eschatology, etc., need to be explained if used.

2. **Oral Style:** The sermon should be written and preached in an easy-to-read, easy-to-listen-to style. The essay style should not be used. Simple language and a simple style are in order. Sentences should be short and repetition avoided. An academic oratorical and philosophical style would not fit the needs and feelings of the sheep.

Now the preacher can concentrate on responding to human needs with divine answers. In dealing with the topics that are of real concern to people, the most important part of the battle is won. We need to keep in balance or in tension their worries and concerns with what God has to say to dispel worries and meet concerns. We need to meet people where they are.

Captivate the attention and arrest the interest of your audience by giving relevant answers from the Bible to their specific needs such as: success, happiness, good health, security, peace, hope, etc. Let no one think for a moment that when the preacher is concentrating on a temporal need, he or she is simply deviating from sacred duty. As long as answers to human needs come from God’s Word, the preacher is on holy ground. Ellen G. White
gives us assurance when she says: "He who taught the people the way to secure peace and happiness was just as thoughtful of their temporal necessities as of their spiritual needs."¹

As long as we remember that temporal necessities are as much a part of the human soul as spiritual needs, or vice versa, we are on solid ground. We should not create a dichotomy between the two.

**Preaching Doctrines Bipolarly**

We have seen so far that there are two kinds of sermon topics: those that are anchored in human needs, and those that are not. Those anchored in human needs are usually bipolar by nature, even though the preacher may be ignorant of that theory. Others, especially those dealing with Bible doctrines, do not lend themselves easily to this type of preaching. The preacher needs to make a special effort to keep human needs in mind when preparing this type of sermon.

In order to preach doctrines bipolarly, we need to give thought to titles. As much as possible, these should relate to human needs so that people will want to attend the meetings. In the old Anglo evangelistic school, we find titles like: "The Dream of World Empire" by Taylor G. Bunch, or "The Destinies of the Four Great Powers" by John L. Shuler. In the context of bipolar preaching, the

¹White, *Evangelism*, 149.
titles should relate more to human needs than to historical or political issues.

In the Latin-American school of Integral Evangelism, titles became more oriented to human situation. For Dan 2 you will find titles such as: "Facing the Future with Confidence," or "Peace in Anxiety." Here are some examples of titles that can be used for bipolar preaching: "The End of All Human Tragedies" for Christ’s second coming; "Hope for a Man Without Hope" for signs of the second coming; "Why Innocent People Suffer" for the problem of sin and suffering; "A Valid Solution for a Guilty Conscience" for forgiveness; "The Best Way to Solve Your Problems" for the topic of prayer; "Ten Rules for Happy Living" for the Ten Commandments. In speaking on the latter topic, we should present each commandment in a positive way. Every commandment is a promise from God to keep those who trust Him out of trouble. Other human-oriented titles might be: "Peace Now and Forever" for the millennium; "The Gospel of Good Health" for the health message is fine, but a better one might be "How to Postpone Your Own Funeral." "The Secret of Financial Prosperity" is a positive way to present the topic of tithes and offerings.

Since evangelistic preaching is necessarily highly doctrinal, the question before us is how to make the doctrinal sermon bipolar and how to prepare it bipolarly. If in preparing the sermon we focus on integrating Bible
truth with some human need, the end result will be a bipolar sermon, which will lead to bipolar preaching. Following are some suggestions for making some main doctrinal sermons bipolar.

Dan 2

Let us begin with the sermon on Dan 2. This is a prophetic sermon on the future from Daniel's time to the end of the world. A good title might be "What Does the Future Hold for Your Family?" How can we identify human needs within this Bible-based subject? King Nebuchadnezzar certainly had a human problem in being so anxious and insecure that he could not sleep well. Do people today have the same problem? Nebuchadnezzar wanted to know the future. Why do people today consult astrologers, palmists, spiritualists, and psychic readers? Why do so many turn first in their newspaper to the horoscope section?

People are naturally anxious about the future, and there is a God who reveals the future in His Word. The human soul longs for security, and only God can provide that security. Politics and government affect life in a very direct way. The political future of the world is in God's hands. The best political system is the coming reign of the King of kings and Lord of lords. The loving Christ, who died and was resurrected for the salvation of the world, will be the King of the world. Love, peace,
and security will prevail. Sickness and death will be banished from the face of the earth. This sermon should not be centered on history, but on Christ. History gives the topic credibility and makes it interesting. But the main topic is not the image of different metals, but Christ, the Christ who will put an end to sin and suffering.

**Christ’s Second Coming**

The greatest consolation found in the Bible is the second coming of Christ. It will signal the end of suffering, sickness, death, bereavement, hunger, exploitation, and political and economic tyranny. The title could be: "The Solution to the World’s Problems." The doctrine of the second coming is God’s final answer to all human suffering. It is the happy ending to the painful drama of human existence. It is the gate through which we go back to the Edenic home of eternal health and happiness. This subject is powerful because it touches human beings in the most sensitive areas of life. This doctrine is firmly anchored in the Bible, especially in Matt 24. It has been the secret of the success of Seventh-day Adventist preaching that the more bipolar we make it, the greater the impact and the results will be.

How will Christ’s second coming affect you and your family? How can you be sure you are ready for it? On the second coming, Ellen G. White writes: "The second coming
of the Son of man is to be the wonderful theme kept before the people. Here is a subject that should not be left out of our discourses.¹

The Millennium

The doctrine of the millennium is an extension of the doctrine of the second coming, and is clearly based on the Bible. The same answers to human needs can be given, plus the fact that human cravings for justice will be satisfied by God in His kingdom of peace and joy. Also we will be able to understand why some of our loved ones can not be saved. "Peace Now and Forever" is a good title.

The Ten Commandments

The topic of the Ten Commandments is a basic Bible doctrine and touches on human needs such as love, peace, and happiness. The title might be: "Ten Rules for Happy Living." Human beings need to love and be loved. Only love can fulfill the requirements of the law. We do not have the power to produce this love, but it is shed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Love is the way to real happiness. Love will cause every human being to live at peace with others, and the result will be joy, security, and happiness. Humanity’s greatest problem is lack of love. Where there is no love, there is no peace or happiness. It was Jesus Himself who summed up the Ten

¹Ibid., 220.
Commandments as love for God and love for our fellow human beings. To present the topic of God's law in its theological context only, without relating it to the psychological need for love, peace, happiness, and security, deprives it of credibility and meaning. God's law must be taught in relation to human life, not as a law of bondage, but as a law of freedom and happiness. Obeying the law through the power of the Holy Spirit brings joy, peace, happiness, and health. People should regard it as a blessing from a loving Father. He gave it as a way to protect His children from this kingdom of suffering, sickness, despair, and death. Everything that God indicates to us in His Word is for our protection and well-being.

The Sabbath

In presenting the Sabbath doctrine, we should follow the same guidelines as with the Ten Commandments. Based on Exod 20:8-11, a good title for this topic could be: "Rest for the Body and Soul." Not only is the Sabbath a sign of God's authority, it is also a test of humankind's obedience. It was given as a special blessing from a God of love. It is life at its best. It was intended for the happiness and health of human beings. It is therapeutic not only for humankind's physical health, but also for its spiritual benefit. In it human beings
find no only rest from labor, but rest in trusting Christ's merits for salvation.

Usually human tragedies and traumas do not come from living in harmony with God's requirements, but from disregarding them. Life is more meaningful and enjoyable when lived in harmony with God's instructions. Presented from the perspective of human need, and not just from a biblical and theological viewpoint, God gave people His law and His Sabbath because He created them with a need for both. Both blessings make life richer and happier.

The State of the Dead

The doctrine of the state of the dead gives the preacher a tremendous opportunity for giving people hope and light amidst shadows and despair. A good title might be "Where Are Your Dead Loved Ones?" Immortality is a supreme need of humankind. For almost 6,000 years human beings have been on a pilgrimage for it. Immortality is a wonderful gift from a loving Father who gave us His Son and His Spirit. Jesus Christ turned death and the grave into conquered foes. He came forth from the tomb to give us the assurance of immortality. The hope of eternal life through the resurrection of the dead is one of the most comforting and encouraging subjects in Scripture. It was a basic component of apostolic preaching, and is an imperative in eschatological preaching as well. Death is banished, and life is brought to prominence. This is one
of the most basic of human needs included in a series of evangelistic lectures.

Health

The subject of health is important to all human beings. "The Gospel of Good Health" is a good title. This topic deals with life and how to make it longer, more meaningful, enjoyable, and rewarding. Since it is rooted in the Bible as much as in the deeply felt desires and needs of the human soul, it is an eminently bipolar topic. It need not be a controversial subject. If presented from the positive viewpoint of the benefits to be enjoyed from a healthful lifestyle, it will appeal to the audience.

Ellen G. White writes:

The principles of health reform are found in the Word of God. The gospel of health is to be firmly linked with the ministry of the Word. It is the Lord's design that the restoring influence of health reform shall be a part of the last great effort to proclaim the gospel message.¹

Some preachers exclude this topic from their lectures altogether, and others treat it only as an incidental matter. But this can be a powerful subject, because it is rooted in a basic and important human need. All normal people want to be happy, healthy, and enjoy life. The evangelist should present God's requirements in a positive way. God is not arbitrary. When He asks

¹Ibid., 261.
something of His children, it is for their own good.

Again White states:

Those who perceive the evidences of God's love, who understand something of the wisdom and beneficence of His laws, and the results of obedience, will come to regard their duties and obligations from an altogether different view. Instead of looking upon an observance of the laws of health as a matter of sacrifice or self-denial, they will regard it as it really is, an inestimable blessing.¹

Tithing and Stewardship

A good title for this subject is "The Secret of Financial Prosperity." When preaching on the subject of tithing and stewardship, we must bear in mind that this is a topic rooted in human need as well as in the Bible. There is a tendency to avoid it for fear of offending people and losing the audience. Some people seem to think the pocket is a "holy cow," and not many dare to touch it. But this topic can be presented with confidence when the correct approach is used.

Every person's life is affected by money or the lack of it. It seems to be some kind of economical oxygen that makes life possible. When God talks about money He gives principles that if followed will bring financial prosperity and a more meaningful life. If we place God and His claims first, His blessings will flow constantly and happiness will be the end result. Any individual will gain more in partnership with the Lord than struggling

along on his own. No one close to the Lord has been a beggar. It is a matter of having the Lord’s blessing or having only one’s self to rely on. The fact that in God’s mathematics a little bit less with God’s blessing goes farther than the whole without it is a challenge to human logic. Being in partnership with God brings spiritual as well as financial blessings. Mrs. White tells us:

Every soul converted is to have the light in regard to the Lord’s requirements for tithes and offerings. All that men enjoy they receive from the Lord’s great farm, and He is pleased to have His heritage enjoy His goods; but He has made a special contract with all who stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel, that they may show their dependence and accountability to God by returning to His treasury a certain portion of His own.¹

The bipolar approach to evangelistic preaching has made a major contribution to enhancing the writer’s ministry both in terms of enjoyment and in tangible results. In the first seventeen years of hard work, a little over a thousand persons were baptized. In the next six years, using the bipolar approach, approximately 1,400 were baptized. In the last eight years of evangelistic ministry more than 3,000 have accepted the third angel’s message. Focusing on human problems with the application of the Word of God produces joy and satisfaction for the evangelist as well as souls for God’s kingdom.

¹White, Evangelism, 249, 250.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter reflects my homiletical pilgrimage in theoretical research as well as in the experience of an evangelistic ministry focused on the integration of the two poles of bipolar preaching. Thus the homiletical theory of bipolar preaching was confirmed in my personal ministry, and validated in the following survey conducted among pastors in three different union conferences of the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Survey of Pastors

Family Life Preaching Survey

1. Do you think that topics on the family are of interest to the members of your congregation?

2. Do you believe talks on the family interest persons that do not belong to your church?

3. Do you see any relationship between family subjects and spiritual growth?

4. Do you think the church needs more practical sermons?

5. Do you believe sermons on practical
Christianity are as important as theoretical theological presentations?

6. Do you think presenting the gospel through family themes is more effective?

7. Do you think that family topics are more attractive than prophetic ones in the Hispanic culture?

8. Do you believe bipolar sermons are relevant in Hispanic evangelism?

9. Do you think bipolar sermons focused on family life are appropriate in Hispanic evangelism?

10. Please write any comments you may have on the use of practical sermons in Hispanic evangelism.

See table 1 for an analysis of the responses.

Comments Made by Pastors

"I think this is very good because it is practical."

"Those who want to transform humanity must know humanity. Keep going. We need this material in the churches."

"I find the presentation all right and Christ at the center of everything."

"I am in agreement with the presentation of bipolar themes."

"Your presentation has been very important concerning integrating both poles, the divine and the human."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1. Do you think that topics on the family are of interest to the members of your congregation?</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2. Do you believe talks on the family interest persons that do not belong to your church?</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3. Do you see any relationship between family subjects and spiritual growth?</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4. Do you think the church needs more practical sermons?</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5. Do you believe sermons on practical Christianity are as important as theoretical theological presentations?</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6. Do you think presenting the gospel through family themes is more effective?</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7. Do you think that family topics are more attractive than prophetic ones in the Hispanic culture?</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8. Do you believe bipolar sermons are relevant in Hispanic evangelism?</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9. Do you think bipolar sermons focused on family life are appropriate in Hispanic evangelism?</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"I find the presentation both practical and profitable."

"I think the focus is practical. I believe monopolar preaching is ineffective. Congratulations."

"I have learned the bipolar preaching theory. It makes a lot of sense. You challenge me to integrate reason and emotion. This is wonderful."

"Excellent presentation."

"Everything has been very well presented. Congratulations."

"I think the thesis is wonderful and the way to successful preaching. Personally, without knowing the term 'bipolar' I have been doing it and we have seen a change in the audience."

"The content of the exposition is excellent. Success to you."

The above are just a few of the many comments expressing the same appreciation for the presentation.

Conclusions

When I began my study and did my preliminary research, I felt like a child fascinated by a new toy. As I expanded my homiletical eye by relating my preaching to life's real issues, the results were exhilarating and rewarding. The Gospel became even more relevant to everyday life and evangelistic preaching a joy.

Far from abandoning the world of books and
research, I now seek to integrate the vital truth of the Word to the pressing needs of practical human life. The personal benefit that I have received from this study is immeasurably high, and has enriched and enhanced my evangelistic ministry.

I decided to share my findings with my colleagues in the North American Division, particularly with those who work within the community of Hispanic believers. The gap between the pulpit and the pew must be bridged by a new generation of ambassadors of the Good News. The Word and life must intersect in positive and relevant ways, uplifting Jesus Christ as the banner, not only of eternal salvation but of satisfaction and happiness here and now. The truth of the incarnation of the Word is the platform through which all may avoid any temptation to play gods. Freed from the fear of acknowledging their own humanity, the new generation of preachers can focus on ministering to human needs with God's divine resources. There is no need to re-invent this homiletical wheel; others have done that for us. What is needed now is to apply it in a more practical ministry, in general, and evangelistic ministry, in particular.

It is my hope and prayer that this dissertation will make a significant and positive contribution to the field of evangelistic preaching by integrating the human factor with the divine remedy. This would create a new way to prepare and deliver evangelistic sermons and put
into practice the results of this study.

My final recommendation is that theology students, from college through the seminary, should be taught by their professors to address the human dimension in the context of the divine message. Emphasis on the homiletical theory of bipolar preaching will result in not only avoiding the homiletical heresy of monopolarity, but will contribute to the satisfaction of the needs of God's people through the unlimited resources of the divine Word.
APPENDIX A

SEMINAR ON A HAPPY HOME LESSONS
The home is a divine institution created for the happiness of the human being. It has Heaven's blessings if the spouses consecrate themselves to God. A happy home is an oasis from the stress suffered by human beings and a piece of heaven here on earth.

1. What should and must the home be?

The home should be a place filled with joy, where happiness is revealed in the smiles of the parents and the joy of the children. A place where rudeness, fights and discord abound most of the time between the parents, can not be a place of happiness and joy. The home should be saturated with the fragrance of courtesy, kindness and mutual consideration; then everybody will be happy.

2. With what fragrance should the environment of the home be saturated?

It is not wealth that makes a happy home. It is not costly furniture or appliances.

What Is The Home?
The home is not rocks, it is souls;
Furniture is not gold, it is love...;
Where there is love, how rich are the poor
If there's no love, how poor are the rich
Love invented the homes,
And the love of the birds the nests...
If there's love, how fresh is the water
And the bread, how delicious!
We don't need at the table other flowers
Than the flowers given with love.
-- Unknown Author
The home is:
An enterprise - that we should know how to manage.
A purchase without a discount - if we want good quality, we have to pay the price.
A delicate plant that we should know how to care for.
A race that must be run until the end.
A ship that must reach the port of happiness.

3 What are the ingredients that should always be found in a happy home?

The ingredients that should always be found in a happy home are courtesy and love. The spouses are united to each other with the indissoluble bond of love; and the children respond better when the parents are loving and kind. The happiest spouses are those who love each other the most. The happiest children are those whose parents are most concerned for their happiness.

"Marriage is a building that has to be reconstructed every day." Andres Maurois.


5. Who is the true Bread of the home? John 6:51 (N.T. 111).

Jesus Christ is the best friend of the home. We can trust Him.
He is the best counselor for every anxiety and question.
He is the best physician and the best medicine to cure all the ills that arise in it.

My Request: Lord, help me to be a better husband. Lord, help me to be a better wife.

Signed: ___________________________________________________________
LESSON 2

THE SEVEN PILLARS OF A HAPPY MARRIAGE

The Spanish proverb says "Whoever gets married, wants a home." And the Bible says: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh." In Matt 19:5 our Lord Jesus Christ tells us very clearly that a marriage that is just beginning should have its own love nest. The in-laws should understand this law of married life. We owe respect, love and honor to our in-laws, but they should not interfere in the administration of their children’s homes. The first pillar of a successful marriage is independence. The parents should never criticize what is done in their children’s homes. They are old enough to take care of their responsibilities.

1. What is the first pillar of a happy marriage?

A happy marriage requires adaptability on the part of the spouses. Without it true happiness is impossible. It is necessary to adapt to the spouse's psychology, to his/her habits. In other words, accept him the way he (she) is, as well as the new home and the children when they arrive. The person who does not adapt is psychologically immature and selfish. Selfishness is the direct factor responsible for the incompatibility in marriage that causes so much pain. Accept your spouse as imperfect, recognizing your own imperfection. Combine the condiments of understanding and tolerance with the sauce of love.

2. What is the second pillar of a happy marriage?

An indispensable element in the formula for happiness is kindness. Kindness in married life includes little acts of love; those small acts of courtesy and love that beautify life.
Criticism should be avoided as an enemy that destroys the home. We should look for and recognize the virtues and good points of the spouse and praise them as much as possible.

3. What is the third pillar of a happy marriage?

The privilege of being parents is another factor in a happy home. The children are given to us to make them happy, to educate them well and prepare them for life. The parents should be the best educators, friends and counselors of their children. Besides, the parents have a responsibility of spiritual dimensions to prepare their child to meet God in the kingdom of heaven.

4. What is the fourth pillar of a happy home?

Faithfulness in marriage is a spring of happiness of high and refined quality. Loyalty is the exclusivity in married life that does not tolerate third parties. In their marriage vows the spouses pledge to renounce all other women and men as long as they both shall live.

What is the fifth pillar of a happy home?

Communication is the avenue that maintains the flow of affection running constantly between the spouses. Where there is communication there are no strangers. It is necessary to keep the vehicle of the word adorned with the flowers of love if we want a healthy home. True communication should be from heart to heart. It is productive dialogue; never debate or argument that destroys. It requires listening as well as communicating, not only with the ears, but with the heart.

6. What is the sixth pillar of a successful home?

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Ps 127:1 God cannot be absent from the happy home. "God is love" and those that know God are those who know how to love, understand, and forgive.


My Request: Lord, You be the pillar that supports my home

Signed: ____________________________
1. According to the Bible who is the head of the home? Eph 5:23 (N.T. 220).

The father is the king in the home and he has a great responsibility as the head of the family. The father should not leave the responsibility of the children's education to his wife. Neither should he leave her alone with the burdens and responsibilities that are present in the home. The members of the home rotate around the father.

2. What are the basic virtues the father should have?

The father should portray the virtues characterized in a virility sanctified in the fear of God. These are, for example: Energy, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, diligence and practical usefulness.

3. What is the religious responsibility of the father?

The father is to a certain extent the priest of the home. He represents his family before God. His wife and the children should come around him to study the Bible and sing songs of praise to the Creator. In the morning and in the evening the father should confess his sins to God and also those of his children, if he knows them. This practice will bring a crop of blessings upon the home.

5. According to the apostle Paul what should the husband give his wife? 1 Pet 3:7 (N.T. 82).

Prayers offered by a despotic husband, who is severe and abusive with his wife, are probably not effective. No one who really loves God could mistreat his wife.


The father should not be a tyrant in the home or with his children. Love is the greatest force of the universe. Do not let the problems of your work disturb your family. Do not have a spirit of criticism. The other members of the family should not be condemned because they have small shortcomings.

7. According to the psalmist what are the children? Ps 127:3 (A.T. 651).

If the children are the inheritance of the Lord we have a solemn responsibility in managing His property. God has trusted to the parents the care and education of their children, not only for this life, but for heaven.

8. What should the father give to his children?

Many times there is an abyss existing between the father and the children because they are not together. Father and mother should dedicate some time to their children. The father should take time for his sons, and he needs to spend time with his daughters as well.


A Father’s Prayer

Help me, Oh God, to resist temptation,
To take out of my heart all bitterness,
anger and scandal
Give me Thy gentleness, thy humility...
And above everything else, thy love.
Help me to represent Christ's character
in my home.

If at any time with awkward delirium
I increased in your soul some bitterness
If at any time in criminal madness
with my blind procedure I offended Thee,
Forgive Oh, Father, whom crying comes to Thee
imploring forgiveness on his knees who kissing
your serene eyes wants to ask for forgiveness this way
.-- Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera
The job of the wife and mother is of extraordinary importance. There is no job superior to that of a mother that fulfills the divine plan for the role she plays in the home and in society. She is the queen of the home. But not only that. She is the untiring educator, the molding force of the character that will stand the hard trials imposed by life.


After God, the mother’s power to refine and ennoble the family is the greatest on earth. Society cannot be higher than the mothers that produce it. Great men had great mothers. The mother engraves in the child the greatness of character and virtues that ennobles him or her.


Prudence is a great virtue that beautifies the woman as well as the man. Prudence in talking and acting is a jewel that enhances the character of the one who possess it. What makes the home indestructible is the love of the husband and wife for each other and their children. Chastity, or honoring the vows of loyalty to one another is an indispensable element in the formula of happiness. The care of the home, cleanliness and personal hygiene are jewels of a faithful wife.


In our society there is a fever for exterior adornment that is an indication of lack of
spiritual communication. Christianity is not against beauty but it unmasks vanity and ostentation as vain and therefore, unnecessary.

4. How did the faithful women of the past dress?

If the mother dresses in poor taste in the home she will not attract her children or her husband. Just any old clothes are not good enough to use at home. The woman and mother should keep herself attractive in the home by her cleanliness as well as her appearance.


A good woman is a gift from God—the best of all gifts. The same is true of the man. It is necessary that those who are going to establish homes seek God in prayer asking for orientation, wisdom and intelligence in making such an important decision as is the choice of a life companion.

What has the one who finds a good wife found? *Prov. 18:22* (A.T. 481).

What is compared to a good woman? *Prov. 31:10* (A.T. 489).

What special care should the woman who is going to be a mother take? *Judges 13:2-4, 13, 14* (T. 241).

Prenatal influences are of extraordinary importance for the new being that is forming in the maternal womb. The mother to-be should eat well, avoid vices and keep a joyful and happy spirit. Mothers can go to Jesus for help and orientation. The heavy and difficult burdens of life become very light with His help.

My Request: Lord, help me to be a mother like those women of the Bible.

Signed
LESSON 5

WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT SEX


God performed the first marriage ceremony. The institution of matrimony has its origins in Eden, when there was no sin and its Author is the Creator of everything.

2. How was the woman created? Gen 2:21-24 (A.T. 2).

The marriage union is the most intimate of all unions. This union forms a perfect bond between man and wife, making very plain that monogamy is the only form of sexual union blessed by God.


To consider this intimate union as a sin is to deny the sanctity of matrimony. The bed without blemish is not a sin.

4. What advice does the Lord give concerning the intimacy of the spouses? I Cor. 7:3-5 (N.T. 138).

"One of them cannot, without the consent of the other, make vows of continence, and if he did it would sin, and should not keep the vow, but repent of having done it unduly." Tomas de Aquino, Suma Teologica.
"When you see a prostitute tempting you, say: 'My body isn't mine, but my wife's. The woman must say to those who want to violate her castity: 'My body isn't mine, but my husband's'" Crisóstomo, Homilias XIX. 12.


The seventh commandment is a wall of protection for marriage from which depends the existence and perpetuation of the race. Adultery is unfaithfulness to the marriage vows and the Bible calls it sin.


To have a clean life we need a clean mind. See Matt 15:19, 20. Before it becomes physical every sin is mental. If Christ is in control of the mind sin won't take possesion of you.

9. What does Jesus say to whoever has committed sin and wishes a new life? John 8:11 (N.T.81).

My Request: Lord and Father, help me to seek my spouse's happiness before my own.

Signed ________________________________
Marriage without conflicts is a utopia, an unrealized dream, a flying ideal never to be reached. Somebody said "When love shows up, pain is born."

1. What does the apostle Paul say to spouses who get mad at each other? Ephesians 4:26 (N.T. 160).

   The poison of grudge when conflicts arise must be avoided. When the spouses get angry they should remember that everything can be resolved with love, good will and patience. Life is too short to waste it in fights and constant arguments. The apostolic commandment urges us to resolve the problem before we go to sleep. We must throw our pride out the window.

2. What advice is given by the apostle Paul about marriage to unbelievers? 2 Cor 6:14-18, (N.T. 149).

   Many professing to love God do not listen to His admonition and thereby make their own unhappiness. God cannot bless what He has prohibited in His Word. To marry someone that doesn't love God is to venture onto dangerous ground. Many people sacrifice Christ and are lost for the Master by uniting in an unequal joke with an unbeliever.


   Not only is prayer the breath of the soul; it is the life of the home. Through it we communicate with God and His light illuminates the home; His Spirit puts joy in the soul and Christ brings us peace and happiness.

4. What should not exist between those thinking of getting married?
Something that can cause unhappiness and frustration in the home is a great difference and disparity between the ages of the spouses. The younger is the one who suffers most of the time. And death can snatch away one of the parents when the children need them most.

5. What preparation is needed for establishing a successful home?

The young man as well as the young lady planning to get married should know how to preform the practical duties of domestic life. They should be prepared in the following:

Education - Competence for raising and educating the children.
Hygiene - Knowing how to keep a healthy body through good personal hygiene and cleanliness in the home.
Dietetics and Nutrition - Knowing the principles of nutrition and good cooking. Both should know how to make nutritive and appetizing dishes.
Health - They should know the principles of good health and how to treat certain illnesses.
Economy - Economic solvency or financial capacity are of vital importance in holding the reins of the home. They should know the principles of home economics.

6. What can religion do for the home?

Religion in the family life is a positive power for good and happiness. Its absence from it is the cause of weakness and death in many homes. When the hearts of the spouses are filled with the love of Christ they have the capacity to overcome all adverse circumstances. Religion is indispensable in the life of a happy home. Only deep religious convictions chase away the bitterness that sometimes invades married life. Where Christ reigns, love reigns.

MY REQUEST: Lord, my God, move the shadows away from my home; fill it with the light of Christ and your Holy Spirit.

Signed:
LESSON 7

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF A HAPPY MARRIAGE

I

The Man is the Head of the Home

The man is the head of the home Eph. 5:23. Every ship needs a captain. Every enterprise needs a manager. The bees have their queen. The ants have their king. The Church has Christ and the home has the man as its head.

II

Be Faithful to Each Other

Too much familiarity with the opposite sex should be avoided. The circle of the home is sacred and should not be trespassed by third parties. The divine commandment says: "Thou shall not commit adultery." Exod 20:14.
III

Fight for Your Happiness

One spouse should fight for the other; not one against the other.
The best way to be happy is making your companion happy
Making the children happy brings happiness to both parents

IV

Mutual Respect

Have reverence and respect for each other.
Each one should maintain his/her individuality
One must not oppress the other. The soul belongs to God and only He should be in command.

V

Each Must Pay His/Her Marriage Debt

Before demanding happiness you should give it.
Pay Attention to Jesus' words:
"It is more blessed to give than to receive."
And Paul wrote: "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence;
and likewise also the husband..."
Acts 20:35; I Cor. 7:3.

VI

Look for Solutions to the Problems

Do not do anything irreparable.
Do not magnify the problems.
Be rational.
Maintain a positive mental attitude,
Forgive and understand
Be generous and optimistic.
VII

Do Not Speak Against Your In-laws

VIII

Do Not Be Selfish

Selfishness brings unhappiness and incompatibility
It destroys human relations
Be sure to practice the golden rule

IX

Be Appreciative

Appreciate each other
Reward virtues with praise
Treat your husband as a hero
and your wife as a heroine.

X

Do Not Nag

Many dig the grave of their marriage with their tongues
You catch more flies with honey than with gall
SEMINAR ON A HAPPY HOME
Prepared by Professor Eradio Alonso

LESSON 8

IMPORTANT FACTORS IN MARRIAGE HAPPINESS

Many years ago a magazine in London, England, conducted a survey. The question for the readers was: "What is the home?" From all the answers, the following seven were the most interesting:

1. Home means a world of difficulties outside and a world of love inside.
2. Home is the place where the small are big and where the big are small.
3. Home is the kingdom of the father, the world of the mother, and the paradise of the children.
4. Home is the place where we complain most and where we are treated best.
5. Home is the center of our affection; around it we see our best wishes fulfilled.
6. Home is the place where our stomach receives three meals a day and our heart receives a thousand.
7. Home is the only place on earth where the faults and failures of humanity are kept hidden under the soft robe of charity.

Ways to a Happy Family and Home

1. What is the golden rule for interpersonal relations? **Matt 7:12** (N. T 5).

Selfishness is the root and mother of innumerable disasters in life and the direct cause of many home failures that end in divorce. Selfish persons cannot be happy, because they are unable to make their spouses happy. They want everything for themselves.

2. According to the Bible, who is the head of the family? **Eph 5:23** (N.T. 161).

The Bible says very clearly that the husband has the responsibility of being the head of the
home. The husband should be subject to Christ, because if he is a spiritual and loving husband, his wife will be subject to him.


There are many husbands that consider it a weakness to be loving and demonstratives with their wives. Love will not last if is not expressed. A home where there is a lack of love is a sick home. Nothing is more noble than to love and be loved. The husband who wants to dominate and oppress his family by brute force will not have a happy home.

5. What decision should be made by those who want to succeed in their marriage? Joshua 24:15 (A.T. 184).

If Christ is God and Lord in the home, He will give His blessing to the home and it will be a corner of heaven here on earth. Where the loving God lives, there is love. Where the Prince of Peace lives, there will be peace. Where the Light of the World is, there will be light.

6. What does Jesus say to spouses that want to succeed? John 15:15 (N.T. 89).

The marriage enterprise cannot succeed where the leading hand and blessing of the Lord is not present.


Jesus wants to enter into your home to dine with happiness. He won't force the door. He will come in if the spouses invite Him: "Come in, Jesus, this is your home."

Signed:
"The education of children should begin in the home. Their first school is the home. There, having their parents as teachers, they should learn the lessons that will guide them through all their lives: lessons of respect, obedience, reverence, self control. The educational influences of the home are a decisive power for right or wrong.

1. Where should children's education begin and who should their first teachers be?

A solemn responsibility rests upon the parents for the education of their children and this responsibility should not be considered lightly. **The father and the mother should be the first teachers of their children.**

2. What should children have as their first text book?

**The Bible should be the first text for children.** Parents should teach wise instructions from this book. The greatest of them all is that God is their Father. The lessons of the Bible have a moral and religious influence on their character.

3. Which other text book should children study?

**Besides the Bible, nature should be our great text book.** Nature is filled with the knowledge of God; it overflows with divine instruction. It is an inexhaustible fountain of instruction and delight. God's name is written on each leaf in the woods, on each rock in the mountains, on each bright star, on the sea, on the sky and on the earth. However, nature needs an
interpreter. Even in the natural world we find manifestations of evil. In the bramble and the thorn, ... and the tare the evil that withers and disfigures represents sin. In the singing of the birds and the bud that opens, in the rain and the sunlight, in the breeze and soft dew nature speaks to us of the love of God.

4. What is one of the first lessons children should learn?

Obedience is one of the first lessons that children need to learn. They should be taught to obey before they are old enough to reason. Obedience to parents leads to obedience to God.


True education prepares for this world as well as for the world to come.

PROMISE FROM THE PARENTS: With God’s help we promise to educate our children, not only for this world, but for eternal salvation.

Signed:

Father------------------------------------------Mother------------------------------------------------------
LESSON 10

HEALTH IN THE HOME


God is not only concerned for our spiritual prosperity but is also interested in our health. A healthy body and mind result in the health of the soul.

2. How does God present Himself in Psalms 103:3-7 (A.T. 632).

God forgives and heals and heals and forgives. He is the Great Physician of the soul and the Great Physician of the body. His love is the heavenly medicine that heals the sinner from the deadly disease of sin.

3. What promise has God given to His people and under what conditions? Exod 15:26 (A. I. 73)

Promise. __________________________________________________________
Condition __________________________________________________________

Disease, suffering and death are the works of the power of the enemy. Satan is the one who destroys. God restores. Mental and physical health are in direct line with our obedience to the laws of God. The violation of the natural and moral laws of God bring, as a result, disease, suffering and death.


In her book, The Ministry of Healing, Ellen G. White says: “Christ came to put away the
In her book, *The Ministry of Healing*, Ellen G. White says: “Christ came to put away the weight of illness, misery and sin. His mission was to offer men complete restoration; He came to give them health, peace and perfection of character...In every city, village and town that He visited He put His hands upon the sick and healed them. Whenever hearts were ready to receive His message, He consoled them with the assurance that His Heavenly Father loved them."

5. What are natural healing remedies?

Pure air, Abstinence, Sun, Rest, Water, Exercise, Good nutrition, and Trust in God are powerful healing remedies.


All vice that paralizes the intelligence and destroys the body should be thrown out. The Holy Spirit communicates with the believer through the mind. Whatever destroys the mind, destroys the body and vice versa.


When eating and drinking the Christians do not glorify themselves, but their Creator. They will not do anything that will dishonor their Lord by destroying their body or mind. Correct habits result in mental superiority, physical strength and longevity. Lots of grains, fruits, nuts and vegetables constitute the diet chosen by God for us His children. These foods prepared as natural as possible, are the most nutritive and healthy.

MY REQUEST: Lord, my Owner, Give me health for my body and prosper my soul to love and obey Thee!

Signed:
APPENDIX B

SERMON OUTLINES
The Life Situation Approach

In an evangelistic series for Hispanics it is best to begin with topics based on human needs intertwined with the light from the Word of God and the wonderful person of Jesus Christ. From the very first night, Jesus Christ is presented and the Bible is quoted. Because the word "Bible" sounds Protestant to Catholic ears, when referring to the Bible, it is called "The Word of God," "The Sacred Documents of Christianity," or "The Sacred Scriptures."

On the opening night, the topic might be "Happiness," and the different concepts having to do with that subject. The sermon might go as follows:

I. How to Be Happy and Enjoy Life

A. Some think happiness can be bought with money, but that is impossible. Luke quotes the divine Teacher as saying: "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" Luke 12:15, NIV. In seeking happiness through money and what money can buy, many lose their health, their marriage, their family, their honor, or even their relationship with God and their eternal life. Paul stresses the fact
that "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." 1 Tim 6:7-10.

B. Others think happiness can be found in pleasure. Some even worship it as a goddess. Never has there been a generation that goes after it like this one does. And paradoxically, never has there been a generation more frustrated than the present one. In our day there is more suicide, divorce, venereal diseases, guilt complexes, anxiety, fear and despair than ever before. In the Book of Ecclesiastes, the wise man says: "All is vanity." And the poet Manrique says "How soon pleasure fades away, how soon it gives pain and remorse." In the book of 1 Thess 5:16, the apostle Paul says: "Rejoice evermore."

C. Some of the ingredients in the recipe for happiness are:

1. Good health: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual
2. A happy home
3. Good friends
4. A religious faith
5. Healthful recreation
6. A job you enjoy

Then we enter into the discussion of each of the above.

After presenting the topic of a happy life on the opening night, in the second lecture we go on to the
subject of a happy, successful home. Following that are other sermons on the home and family that we have found very successful in using a life-situation-approach in Hispanic evangelism:

II. Marital Satisfaction: A Happy Home
A. One of the most commonly-held expectations that people have of life is to have a good, happy, and solid marriage.\(^1\) Several studies report that, compared to single persons, married people have better physical and psychological health.\(^2\) Among the many terms used synonymously with satisfaction are: "adjustment," "success," "consensus," "equity," "harmony," "integration" and "happiness;" all of which synonyms are reflective of the happy qualities of marriage.\(^3\) The home is a divine institution created for the happiness of human beings. No success in life can compensate for a failure in the marriage relationship. A happy home is something we have to build and rebuild every day. It is not a gift that we receive the day we get married.


\(^2\) Ibid., 10.

\(^3\) Ibid., 11.
B. Twelve Areas of Marital Dissatisfaction

1. Lack of communication
2. Constant arguments
3. Unfulfilled emotional needs
4. Sexual dissatisfaction
5. Financial disagreements
6. In-law trouble
7. Infidelity
8. Conflict over children
9. Domineering spouse
10. Suspicious spouse
11. Alcoholism
12. Physical attacks

C. Like an oasis in the desert, the home should be for the family members:

1. A piece of heaven here on earth. There the smiles on the faces of both children and parents express the joy in their hearts.
2. A place where kindness and understanding reign; a home where rudeness, fear and discord between parents prevail is not a true home.
3. A place where the fragrance of courtesy, kindness and mutual consideration permeates the air.

Poem

“IT IS NOT WEALTH THAT MAKES A HAPPY HOME
IT IS NOT COSTLY FURNITURE OR APPLIANCES

^bid., 15.

1Ibid., 15.
The home is not bricks, it is souls
The furniture is not gold, it is love
Where there is love, how rich are the poor!
If there's no love, how poor are the rich!

Love invented homes,
And the love of birds, the nests...
If there's love, how fresh is the water!
And the bread, how delicious!
There is no need at the table of more flowers
Than the flowers expressed by the lovers.”
--Unknown Spanish Author

D. The home is also:
1. An organization we should know how to manage.
2. A purchase without a discount. If we want good quality, we have to be willing to pay the full price.
3. A delicate plant we should know how to care for.
4. A race that must be run to the finish.
5. A ship that must reach the port of happiness.

E. Two ingredients that are always present in a happy home are courtesy and love. The spouses are united in an indissoluble bond of love, and the children respond better when the parents are loving and kind. The happiest spouses will be those who love each other most. The happiest children will be those whose parents care most for their well-being.

F. What is Jesus to the home? John 9:15
1. Jesus is the Light of the home
2. Jesus is the best Friend of the home.
3. Jesus is the best Counselor, the best Physician, the best Medicine for curing all the ills that arise in the home and in the soul.

G. At the end of this meeting the first altar call is made. Couples are invited to come forward. A prayer is offered for all the families present and a special blessing is pronounced on all couples in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. A rose is given to every husband, and he gives the flower to his wife. Then they kiss each other and the whole service ends in a beautiful atmosphere of love and joy. Topics on the home have proven to be excellent for preparing the way for more religious subjects. They gain the confidence of the people in the evangelist and pave the way for presenting truth.

III. The Seven Pillars of a Happy Home

A. A Spanish proverb says: Whoever gets married wants a home." And the Scriptures say: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" Gen 2:24.

B. First Pillar: The first pillar of a successful marriage is Independence. In Matt19:5 Jesus says clearly that a newly married couple should have its own love nest. Both sets of parents should understand this law of married life. We owe respect, love and
honor to our parents, but they should not interfere in the administration of their children's homes.

C. Second Pillar: Adaptability. Without it there is no real happiness. It is necessary for each spouse to adapt to the psychology of the marriage partner. The person that does not adapt to his/her spouse is immature and selfish. Selfishness is responsible for incompatibility in marriage and creates a lot of pain and human tragedy. Accept your own spouse as imperfect, recognizing that you too are imperfect. Combine the condiments of understanding and tolerance with the sauce of love.

D. Third Pillar: Kindness is the third pillar in a happy marriage. Kindness in married life means little acts of love; those small courtesies that increase love and beautify the interpersonal relationship. Criticism should be avoided as the plague. It has the capacity to destroy homes. The recognition of the virtues and good attributes of the spouse is essential, as well as praising him or her as much as possible.

E. Fourth Pillar: Parenthood: The privilege of being parents. Children are given to parents as gifts of God, so that we may make them as happy as possible, educate, and prepare them for life. The parents should be the best educators, friends and counselors to their children.
In addition, parents have a responsibility of
spiritual dimensions: to prepare their children to
meet God in the kingdom of Heaven. Cooperating in the
task of child-rearing strengthens the bonds of
marriage.

F. Fifth Pillar: Faithfulness and Loyalty are a source
of happiness of a high and refined quality. Loyalty is
the exclusivity in the marriage relation that does not
tolerate a third party. The promises, the vows, and
the pledges of the spouses are to renounce all other
women and men as long as they both live.

G. Sixth Pillar: Communication is the avenue that
maintains the flow of affection running constantly
between the spouses. It is necessary to keep the
vehicle of the word adorned with the flower of love if
we want a healthy, happy home. True communication
should be from heart to heart. It is productive
dialogue; never debate or argument that destroys. It
demands a receiver as well as a transmitter person; a
listener as well as the speaker; a listener who
listens not only with the ears, but with the heart as
well.

H. Seventh Pillar: The Lord—"Unless the Lord builds
the house, its builders labor in vain" Ps 127:1. God
can not be absent from a happy home. "God is love"
and those who know God are the ones who know how to
love, understand and forgive.
IV. The Husband and Father

A. According to God’s Word who is the head of the home?

Eph 5:23.

The father is the head or king of the home and he has a great responsibility as the head of the family. The father should not leave the responsibility of bringing up their children to his wife alone. Neither should he leave her alone with the burdens and responsibilities that are present in the home. The members of the home rotate around the father. The father should portray the virtues characterized in a virility sanctified in the fear of God. These are, for example: energy, integrity, honesty, patience, courage, diligence, and practical usefulness.

B. What is the religious responsibility of the father?

The father is to a certain extent the priest of the home. He represents his family before God. His wife and children sing songs of praise to the Creator and Savior. In the morning and in the evening the father should confess his sins to God and also those of his children, if he knows them. This practice will bring a crop of blessings upon the home.

C. What advice does the apostle Paul give to husbands?

Col 3:19.

D. According to the apostle Peter, what should the husband give to his wife?

1 Pet 3:7.
Prayers from a despotic husband, severe and abusive with his wife and children, will not reach the throne of the Heavenly Father.


The father should not be a tyrant in the home or with his children. Love is the greatest force in the universe. Do not let the problems of your work darken your home. Do not have a spirit of criticism. The other members of the family should not be condemned because they have small shortcomings.

F. According to the psalmist, what are the children? Ps 127:3.

If the children are the inheritance of the Lord, we have a solemn responsibility in managing His property. God has entrusted to the parents the care and education of their children, not only for this life, but for the next one as well.

G. Often there is a generation gap between the father and the children because he does not take time to communicate with them in a meaningful way. Both father and mother should dedicate time to their children. It is important for the father to make time for both sons and daughters.


A Father’s Prayer
"Help me, Oh God, to resist temptation. 
To take out of my heart all bitterness, anger and 
scandal. 
Give me Thy gentleness, Thy humility . . .
And above everything else, Thy love. 
Help me to represent Christ's character in my 
home."

Poem

"If at any time with an awkward delirium 
I increased in your soul some bitterness 
If at any time in criminal madness 
with my blind behavior I offended thee. 
Forgive, Oh Father, whom crying comes to Thee 
imploring forgiveness on his knees 
Who kissing your serene eyes 
Wants to ask for forgiveness this way."
--Manuel Gutierrez Najera

V. The Wife and Mother

A. What is the advice the apostle Paul gives to married 

There is no doubt about the extraordinary 
importance of the wife and mother's task. No other 
work she could engage in is of such importance as that 
of following the divine plan for her role in the home 
and society. She is the principle educator and molding 
force of the strength of character her children will 
have such need of in facing the hard trials life will 
bring. After God, the mother's power to refine and 
ennoble the family is the greatest on earth. Society 
can not rise higher than the mothers it produces.

Great men had great mothers. The mother engraves on

1Ellen G. White, The Adventist Home (Nashville, 
the child the greatness of character and virtues that ennoble them.


Prudence is a great virtue that beautifies the woman as well as the man. Prudence in talking and acting is a jewel that enhances the character of the one who practices it. What makes the home indestructible is the love of a wife for her husband and children as well as the husband’s love for the wife and children. Chastity, or the honoring of the vows of loyalty, is an indispensable element in the formula for happiness. Cleanliness in her person and home, are jewels that enhance the good character of a faithful wife.

C. How should a Christian woman dress? 1 Tim 2:9, 10.

In our society today there is a fever for exterior adornment that is an indication of the spiritual crisis in people’s souls. Christianity is not against beauty, but it unmasks and condemns vanity and ostentation as being in poor taste. On the other hand, if the mother dresses carelessly in her home, she will be unattractive to her husband and children. Just any old clothes are not good enough to wear at home. The mother should take care for her appearance at home as well as when she goes out.
D. From whom does the wise and prudent woman come? *Prov 19:14.*

A good woman is a gift from God. She is the best of all gifts in the life of a man. The same is true of a good man for a woman. It is most important for those who plan to establish a home to seek God in prayer asking for orientation, wisdom and intelligence in such a delicate matter as is the choosing of a spouse.

E. What has the man found who has a good wife? *Prov 18:22.*

F. What is a good woman compared to? *Prov 31:10.*

G. What special care should the woman who is going to be a mother take? *Judg 13:2–.*

The prenatal influences are of extraordinary importance for the new life being formed in the mother’s womb. The mother-to-be should eat well, avoid the vices that bring weakness and illness and maintain a happy spirit. And Jesus is ever near to give mothers the help and strength they need. With His help, burdens are made light.

VI. What God Says About Sex

A. What commandment did God give to the first couple in the Garden of Eden? *Gen 1:27, 28.*
God performed the first marriage ceremony in the Garden of Eden. Marriage was instituted in Eden when there was no sin by the Creator of every good thing.

B. How was the woman created? Gen 2:21-24.

The marriage tie is the most intimate of all unions. Marriage forms a perfect bond between man and wife, making plain that monogamy is the only form of union consecrated by God with His blessing.

C. What does Paul say about the marriage bed? Heb 3:4.

To consider the intimate union between husband and wife as a sinful act is to deny the sanctity of matrimony. The bed without blemish is not sinful, but a blessing designed by the Creator.

D. What advice does the Lord give about the intimacy of the spouses? 1 Cor 7:3-5.

"One of them can not without the consent of the other make vows of continence, and if he or she did, it would be a sin, and he or she should not keep the vow, but repent having done it unduly." Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Teologica*

"When a prostitute tempts you, say: 'My body isn’t mine, but my wife’s.' The woman must say to those who want to violate her chastity: 'My body isn’t mine, but my husband’s.'"¹

¹Crisostomo, *Homilias*, XIX, 12.
E. What advice does Solomon give to spouses? Prov 5:15, 18, 19.

F. What does the wise man say about the strange woman? Prov 5:3-5.


The seventh commandment is a wall of protection for institution of marriage, and on it depends the perpetuation of the race. Adultery is unfaithfulness to the marriage vows and is condemned in God’s Word as sinful and thus punishable by death.

H. What did Jesus say about adultery in the Sermon on the Mount? Matt 5:27, 28. To have a clean life, we need a clean mind. See Matt 15:19, 20. Before it becomes reality, every sin is first a mental exercise.

I. What does Jesus say to whoever has committed sin and wishes a new life? John 8:11

VII. Practical Advice for the Home

A. What does the apostle Paul say to spouses who get mad at each other? Eph 4:26.

Marriage without conflict is a utopia, an unrealistic dream, a flying ideal never to be reached. Somebody said: "When love shows up, pain is born." But conflict should not result in holding grudges which poison marriage. When the spouses get angry they should remember that everything can be resolved with love, good will and patience. Life is too short to be wasted in crazy fights and constant arguments.
The apostle urges us to resolve problems before going to sleep. We must throw pride out the window!


Many who profess to love God do not listen to His admonition and build their own unhappiness. God can not bless what He has prohibited in His Word. To marry someone that does not love God is to venture onto dangerous ground. Many people sacrifice Christ and are lost for the Master by uniting in an unequal yoke with an unbeliever.


Prayer is not only the breath of the soul, but the life of the home. Through it we communicate with God and His light illuminates the home; His Spirit puts joy in the soul, and Christ brings peace and happiness to families.

D. What shouldn’t exist between those planning to get married?

A great disparity between the ages of the spouses can bring unhappiness and frustration in the home. Usually, the younger one suffers for it. And death can snatch away one of the parents when the children need them most.

E. What preparation is needed to establish a successful home?
Practical Knowledge

Both the young man and young woman should be acquainted with the duties of domestic life.

Education

Besides their formal education, both should be competent in the area of raising and educating children.

Hygiene

Keeping a healthy body depends on good personal hygiene and cleanliness in the home.

Dietetics and Nutrition

Both should know the principles of nutrition and good cooking. They should know how to prepare nutritive and appetizing dishes.

Health

They should know the principles of good health and how to treat certain diseases.

Economy

Both should have knowledge of how to manage family finances. They should know how to make a budget and stick to it!

F. What can religion do for the home?

Religion in family life can be a positive power for good and happiness. Its absence is the cause of weakness and death in many homes. When the hearts of the spouses are filled with the love of Christ, they have the capacity to overcome all adverse
circumstances. Religion is indispensable in the life of a happy home. Only deep religious convictions chase away the bitterness that can sometimes invade married life. Where Christ reigns, love reigns.

VIII. The Ten Commandments of a Happy Home

I. THE MAN IS THE HEAD OF THE HOME

The man is the head of the home (Ephesians 5:23). Every ship needs a captain. Every enterprise needs a manager. The bees have their queen. The ants have their leaders and workers. The Church has Christ as the head, and the home has the man.

II. BE FAITHFUL TO EACH OTHER

Too much familiarity with the opposite sex should be avoided. The circle of the home is sacred and should not be trespassed.

III. FIGHT FOR YOUR HAPPINESS

Every spouse should fight for the other, and not against the other. The best way to be happy yourself is to make your companion happy. Also, making your children happy brings happiness to both spouses.

IV. MUTUAL RESPECT

Have reverence and respect for each other. Each one should retain his/her individuality. One must not oppress the other. The soul belongs to God and only He should be in command of it.
V. PAY THE MARRIAGE DEBT ONE TO THE OTHER

Before demanding happiness for yourself, you should give it. Remember what Jesus says: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And Paul wrote: "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence; and likewise also the wife." Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 7:3.

VI. LOOK FOR SOLUTIONS TO YOUR PROBLEMS

Do not do anything irrational or irreparable. Do not magnify the problems. Be rational, maintaining a positive mental attitude of forgiveness and understanding. Be generous and optimistic.

VII. DO NOT SPEAK EVIL AGAINST YOUR IN-LAWS

VIII. DO NOT BE SELFISH

Selfishness brings incompatibility and unhappiness. It destroys human relations. Be sure to practice the golden rule.

IX. BE APPRECIATIVE OF YOUR SPOUSE

Mutual appreciation should be practiced. Recognize the virtues of your spouse with praise and gratitude. Treat your husband as your hero and your wife as your heroine.

X. DO NOT NAG

Many dig the grave of their marriage with their tongues. You catch more flies with honey than with gall.
IX. Important Factors in a Happy Home

A. Many years ago a magazine in England conducted a survey. The question for the readers was: “What is the home?” From all the answers, there were seven that were the most interesting. Here they are:

1. The home means a world of difficulties outside and a world of love inside.
2. Love is the place where the small are big and where the big are small.
3. Home is the kingdom of the father, the world of the mother, and the paradise of the children.
4. Home is the place where we complain most and where we are treated the best.
5. Home is the center of our affection; around it we see our best wishes fulfilled.
6. Home is the place where our stomach receives three meals a day and our hearts receive a thousand.
7. Home is the place on earth where the faults and failures of humanity are kept hidden under a soft robe of charity.

B. What is the golden rule for interpersonal relationships? Matt 7:12.

Selfishness is the root and mother of innumerable disasters in life and the direct cause of many home failures that end in divorce. The selfish person can not be happy, because he or she is unable
to make his or her spouse happy. Selfish people want everything for themselves.

C. Who does God’s Word say is head of the family? Eph 5:23.

God’s Word clearly says that the husband has the responsibility of being the head of the home. The husband should be subject to Christ because if he is, a spiritual and loving husband, his wife and children will defer to him.

D. What advice does the apostle Paul give women? Titus 2:4, 5.


There are many husbands that consider it a weakness to be loving and demonstrate their love to their wives and children. Love will not last if it is not expressed. A home where there is a lack of love is a sick home. Nothing is more noble than to love and be loved. The husband who wants to dominate and oppress his family by brute force surely will succeed in ruining his home.

F. What decision should be made by those who want to succeed in their marriage Josh 24:15.

If Christ is God and Lord of the home, Christ will give His blessing to the home and it will become a piece of Heaven here on earth. Where the loving God lives, there love reigns. Where the Prince of
peace lives, there will be peace. Where the Light of the world is, there will be light.

G. What does Jesus say to those who want to succeed? **John 15:15.**

Marriage can not succeed where the leading hand and blessing of the Lord is not present.

H. What is Jesus saying to every home? **Rev 3:20.**

Christ wants to enter your home to give you a supper of peace, joy and happiness. But he won't force the door. He will come in if the spouses tell Him, "Come in, Jesus. This is your home."

X. The Education of the Child

A. Where should the child's education begin?

The education of the child should begin at home. The first school is the home, and the parents are the teachers who instruct their children in the basic lessons of life so important to their future: lessons of respect, obedience, reverence to God, honesty and self control. The educational influence of the home is a decisive factor for good or evil. The education of their children is a responsibility parents should not take lightly.

B. What should be the children's first text book?

The Word of God should be the first text book for every child. The parents can teach the wise lessons from this wonderful Book in simple language the child can understand. The first truth is that we
are all children of the heavenly Father, and that He sent His own Son to save us. Lessons from the Bible have a moral and spiritual influence on the development of character.

C. What is the second text book for the child?

Nature should be the child’s second text book. It is filled with the knowledge of God and overflows with divine instruction. It is an inexhaustible fountain of knowledge and delight. God’s name is written on each leaf in the woods, on each rock in the mountains, on each bright star in the sky, each wave of the sea. His name is written in heaven and earth. However, nature needs an interpreter, for even in the natural world, there are manifestations of evil. In the bramble, the tare, the thorn and withered flower we see the results of sin. But in the singing of the birds, the opening bud, the rain, the sunlight and the gentle breezes, we see God’s hand of love.


Obedience is one of the first lessons that children need to learn. Before they are old enough to reason, they should be taught to obey. Obedience to parents leads to obedience to God.

E. What advice does the Bible give parents? Eph 6:4.

F. How faithfully should the parents teach their children? Deut:6, 7.
G. What can the Holy Scriptures do for those who accept and practice its teachings? \textit{1 Tim 3:15}.

H. What are the words of Solomon about the permanence of the child’s education? \textit{Prov 22:6}.

True education prepares the child for this life as well as for the life to come.

XI. Health in the Home

A. What does God want for His beloved children? \textit{3 John 2}.

God cares not only about our spiritual well being, but also for our health. A healthy body and mind result in the health of the soul.

B. How does God present Himself in \textit{Ps 103:17}? 

God’s forgiveness is healing. His love is the eternal medicine that heals the sinner from the deadly disease of sin.

C. What promise has God given His people and under what conditions? \textit{Exod 15:26}.

Disease, suffering, and death are the works of the power of the enemy. Satan is the destroyer. God restores. Mental and physical health are in direct proportion to our obedience to God’s laws. Violating God’s natural and moral laws brings suffering, disease and death.


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"Jesus came into this world to take away the weight of illness, misery and sin. His mission was to offer men and women complete restoration. He came to give them health, peace and perfection of character. Every city, village, and town that He visited He put His hands upon the sick and healed them. Whenever hearts were ready to receive His message, He consoled them with the assurance that His Heavenly Father loved them."

E. What are the natural remedies for healing?

   Sunlight, pure air, water, moderation, rest, exercise, good nutrition, trust in God.

F. Why is the body of the believer sacred? 1 Cor 6:19.

   If the Holy Spirit is to dwell in the body, every habit that paralyzes the intelligence and destroys the body must be discarded. The Holy Spirit communicates with the believer through the mind. Whatever destroys the body, destroys the mind, and vice versa.

G. What high principle should govern our eating and drinking habits? 1 Cor 10:31.

   In eating and drinking the Christian should glorify his Maker rather than please himself. A dedicated Christian will not do anything that will destroy harm his body and thus dishonor his Creator. Correct habits result in mental superiority, physical strength and longevity. Lots of fruit, grains, nuts
and vegetables constitute diet chosen by God for us, His children. When prepared in the natural way, they are the most nutritious and healthful.
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D.Min., 1997

DENOMINATIONAL SERVICE
Assistant Pastor, West Cuba Conference, Cuba, 1965-1968
Assistant Pastor, Spanish Conference, Spain, 1968-1969
Pastor and Coordinator, Florida Conference, 1973-1974
Spanish Coordinator and Evangelist, New Jersey Conference, 1974-1980
Asst. To the President for Spanish Ministries and Evangelist, Southeastern California Conference, 1981-1985
Asst. To the President for Hispanic Ministries, Pacific Union Conference, 1985-1990
North American Division, Associate Director, Ministerial Association, 1991-

BOOKS PUBLISHED
Bautizado con Fuego (Baptized With Fire)
Creo en los Diez Mandamientos (I Believe in the Ten Commandments)

CASSETTES
Have produced four cassettes with my own music and lyrics

PERSONAL
Born: Cuba, October 17, 1939
Married: Miriam Gonzalez, M.P.H., P.A.
Santa Clara, Cuba, 1964
Children: Kenneth, 1966; Karen, 1972