

THE ADVENTIST MOVEMENT IN TRINIDAD: A CASE-STUDY  
IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

APPROVED:

*Don Edward Beck*  
Major Professor

*Robert C. Berg*  
Minor Professor

*S. V. Holland*  
Chairman, Department of Speech and Drama

*Robert B. Toulouse*  
Dean of the Graduate School

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The problem with which this study is concerned is that of devising methods to assist teachers of Christianity in reaching and attracting a fast-growing and enlightened country. The Adventist church, along with other churches, is being challenged in communicating its message to a populace consisting of varied ethnic groups.

This investigation has a two-fold purpose: (1) to study intercultural communications in order to locate principles which are applicable to missionary endeavors, and (2) to place these principles at the disposal of missionary personnel for their selective use in disseminating the beliefs of Christianity.

In addition to the findings accruing from intercultural communication studies, data has been secured from "The General Conference," East and South Caribbean Conferences of Seventh-day Adventists, and an Emeritus Minister/Teacher of the church. Primary source material has been supplied by the writer who has served in the capacities of Church Pastor, Conference Executive Committee member, and Evangelistic Campaign participant.

The thesis is composed of five chapters, each of which has a bibliography, and Chapters II, III, and IV carry recommendations in direct regard to the particular chapter investigation.

A brief historic account of the country and the movement is given in Chapter I, along with the intercultural problems facing the Adventist church in Trinidad.

Chapter II presents the internal operations of the church as they relate to (a) the method of communication-flow, (b) the social atmosphere, which is a sequel to the level and extent of communication, and (c) the state of the organization in terms of goal-setting and goal-achievement.

In Chapter III, the causes of church-society conflicts are presented, and the solutions to these conflicts are discussed. The chapter stresses that many of the frictions which the church has experienced were avoidable had it not made a self-fulfilling prophecy. An examination of the "social to save" approach is made, and the findings are that social action of the church is the pathway to societal growth.

An investigation of intercultural communication principles is made in Chapter IV. There are many cultures and an understanding of any of these is useful. But a communicator can be misled into conceiving that a knowledge of one culture presupposes knowledge of another. The chapter shows

that a missionary can be a victim of culture shock if he cannot adjust to culture jolts.

Disorganization and conflict are experienced by individuals of a society who are caught in the wave of cultural lags, or uneven change. Very important to missionary endeavors in cross-cultures is the aspect of accommodation. The chapter also points out that while the missionary is a culture change-agent he must not deteriorate to impose his own culture on the local people.

The final chapter is divided into two parts: (1) the conclusion, which summarizes the foregoing chapters, and (2) discussion of areas for future research. The study concludes that missionary activity is most productive when missionary workers in intercultural configurations intelligently and empathically adapt to the native cultures of differing groups.

Ignorance of the basic concepts, principles, and techniques of cultural anthropology, and of native ways and values may be understandable but are not justifiable. Recommendations are made in connection with each chapter with the view to reducing conflict and effecting better communication.

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Augustine B. Noel, B.A.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In the annals of history men have been projecting themselves in the pursuit of forming, developing, and maintaining organizations. Those organizations that have withstood the ravages of time are those which have received revision after revision.

Innovation is the life-blood of organizations. New ideas and practices not only stimulate people but open up new vistas toward the horizons of success. While not all change is progress, all progress necessitates change. Shailer Matthews observes that "A contented man is the most dangerous member of a community. True, he can be counted upon not to head revolutions or even to bolt his party ticket; but he is a millstone around the neck of progress" (2, p. 123).

If this observation was true years ago, its veracity is multiplied manifold in this era of knowledge explosion. Whether the church, as an institution, will survive is contingent upon its ability to cope with the times and to address itself successfully to contemporary events.

This thesis will concentrate on the role of intercultural communication with a missionary perspective. The



Seventh-day Adventist Movement in Trinidad will be used as a case-study in this project.

Chapters Two and Three reveal internal and external interrelationships of the church. In Chapter Four, focus will be given to principles utilized in communication on the cross-cultural level. A statement of conclusion will constitute Chapter Five.

#### Trinidad as a Nation

Trinidad and Tobago constitute an independent state (since August 31, 1962) within the British Commonwealth. These two islands, separated by a 19-mile-wide channel, are situated off the northeast coast of Venezuela.

West Indians of African descent, as well as East Indians, account for the bulk of the population, which is now approximately 1,200,000. The rest of the population is composed of mixed European descent (English, Spanish, French, Portuguese). The main religious groups in the country are Roman Catholic, Hindu, Anglican, Moslem, Presbyterian, Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist, Pentecostal, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

This territory accommodates the local headquarters of the Adventist church, which has a population of 15,678 (1971), and is served by "20 ordained ministers, 20 credentialed missionaries, 14 licensed ministers, 4 Bible instructors, and other types of workers" (1, p. 12).

### The Adventist Movement in Trinidad

The teachings of Seventh-day Adventists came to this country through the publication "Patriarchs and Prophets," by E. G. White. The reading of this book along with correspondence with the International Tract and Missionary Society caused many individuals to espouse the seventh day of the week (as Sabbath) doctrine.

In 1893 Charles D. Adamson went to Trinidad from Antigua and organized a "Sabbath school" group in the city of Port of Spain. The first Adventist minister, A. W. Flowers, went from the United States of America to Trinidad in 1894 and was joined by F. B. Grant. The first Adventist church to be organized in Trinidad was the church at Couva, on November 23, 1895 (3, pp. 1329, 1330).

The church has developed over the years so that today it has ninety-one congregations, apart from school operations. It must now, however, "contend" with strong heterogeneous religious bodies within its society.

Some church practices of the quiet past are inadequate for the stormy present. If the church is to have any worth-mentioning impact on society, it must act in close relationship to society. Gilbert W. Olson points out that "As men become Christians, the reconstruction of society among humane and productive lines becomes more and more possible. The growth of the Church is a necessary forerunner to major

advance in societal structure" (4, p. 17). The church, not being unmindful of tradition, must keep abreast of the times.

#### Intercultural Problems in Trinidad

Some cultural aspects of the Seventh-day Adventist church are different from those of other religious groups. The eating and drinking habits of this church, for example, constitute a striking difference. This church teaches that its members must avoid the use of swine products and alcohol as beverage, but some other church groups make no such distinction in their eating. The eating habits of the Seventh-day Adventists, therefore, are a distinguishing (cultural) mark of this church.

This problem sometimes assumes bi-polarized proportions. On the one side, other Christians see the Adventists as living in Old Testament ceremonialism. On the other side, Adventists brand those Christians as "worldly."

Then there is the ethnic-group versus the Christianity problem. East Indians in Trinidad feel that when their children become Adventists, for instance, they will intermarry with Negroes. Here is both a cultural and racial dilemma. First, from the religious viewpoint, Islam, or Mohammedanism, is not Christianity. Second, East Indians are not Negro. Although they may occupy the same geographical space, the diversity of culture resides in race and religion.

A lay-evangelist of Indian origin seems to appreciate the predicament and allows his East Indian family to

participate in his meetings as far as possible. He also invites Indian Adventists both to attend his meetings and to meet with Indian visitors. The situation is similar with other ethnic groups, excepting that the Chinese may not understand the English language well.

The Adventist church in Trinidad baptized over 1,359 persons between January, 1970 and March, 1971, of whom thirty-one were Hindus, and none from the other races.

Cultural problems emanating from religious as well as ethnic and social differences represent some of the intercultural difficulties extant in the Trinidad society. If "within a given culture," Alfred G. Smith says, "communication has many complex effects, . . . when communication takes place between two [or more] cultures, these effects are even more complex" (5, p. 565).

There is need for new approaches in the communicative role of the church to provide a more successful encounter with a multi-cultural and changing society.

#### Statement of the Problem

From the viewpoints of intercultural communication and the utilization of modern communication methods, Christianity is being seriously challenged in meeting and attracting a fast-growing, enlightened country. The existence of a cultural interface in Trinidad presents a problem to the church in the dissemination of its message. To arrive at more

effective ways of communicating Christianity in a cross-cultural context is urgent and crucial.

#### Purposes of the Study

1. To study cross-cultural communications and to locate principles applicable to missionary activity.
2. To make available to church workers and missionaries, recommendations which can be adaptably implemented for a more effective transmission of Christian teachings.

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## CHAPTER II

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The functions and motions of the church will be dealt with in this chapter. The manner in which communication flows within the organizational framework of the church is described.

Although the church depends upon supernatural guidance, it requires some human figure to help steer the visible dimension of its institutional life.

#### Church Operations

The basic unit of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination is the local church. The local church acts either through its elders, deacons, and other officers constituting the church board, or by the vote of the entire congregation. It takes care of matters of local administration, for example, the admission and dismissal of members, and the election of its officers.

The local church works in close cooperation with its pastor, who has overall charge and responsibility and who is appointed to his post by the conference executive committee. A conference usually constitutes a statewide territory, or a similar territory within natural geographic boundaries.

### Church Membership

In the case of church admission, membership necessitates (1) conversion, (2) acceptance of the principles and doctrines of the church, and (3) baptism. In some instances, "those requesting membership who have been previously baptized by immersion may be received on their profession of faith . . . Seventh-day Adventists whose membership records are unavailable may also be received on profession of faith" (3, p. 253). Church membership, in terms of transfer, requires (1) request from the member intending to transfer to the home church through the church clerk who notifies the minister or local elder who in turn notifies the church board, and (2) consideration by the board and final action by the church.

### Church Administration

Every church member has a voice in electing the local church officers who, with the pastor, lead out in the administration of the church's affairs. The pastor is primarily the spiritual leader of the church but is also leader and advisor of the officers. He ranks above the local elder and usually serves as chairman of the church board. He, with the assistance of the elders and church officers, is responsible for all church activities. The representative administrative body of the local church is the church board, which is elected annually.



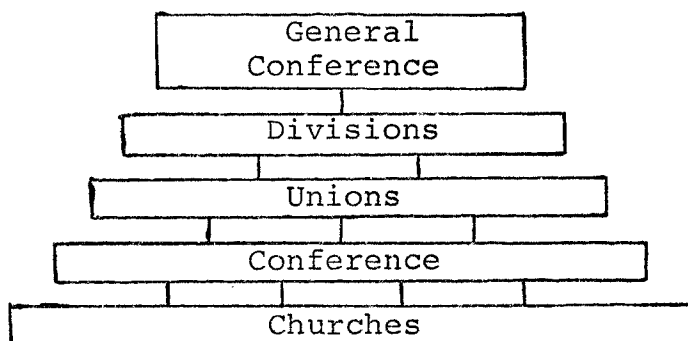
### Denomination-wide Relationships

The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia records that the local church aids its pastor in his evangelism, and under his leadership and under the counsel of departmental leaders from the conference and higher organizations it carries on lay evangelism and other activities . . . . The local church is an integral part of a worldwide organization (3, p. 256).

A group of local churches form a conference (or mission), a number of conferences form a union conference, while the unions, grouped under divisions, form the General Conference organization.

There is a combination of presbyterian and congregational elements in the Seventh-day Adventist church policy. Its authority stems from the membership whose representatives govern through a five-stage organization, namely, the local church, Conference, Union, Division, and General Conference. Beyond the local church level there is limited lay representation in the governing bodies, but the local church has distinct prerogatives of its own. A representative system may well describe the government of the church.

### Organizational Diagram



### Organizational Bottlenecks

The conference president stands at the head of the combined churches in his conference territory. Since he is regarded as the chief elder or overseer of all those churches, much responsibility devolves upon him. But since he occupies such an elevated position, he largely determines what information workers of lower brackets know and have access to. The only counterpart of his on the conference level is that of the secretary-treasurer.

Although these two officers do not necessarily set aside duly appointed workers of the conference, or duly elected officers of any church within their province of jurisdiction, they are empowered to act on behalf of the organization. The quality and quantity of information reaching departmental secretaries as well as pastors, district leaders, and churches, lie in the hands of these men.

Take, for example, a mid-year, or a year-end executive committee which bristles with importance and volume of items. Executive committee members know of the agenda when they meet for committee work. They are unaware of the nature of the agenda before they arrive, and when they arrive they are unaware of much of the facts. When a particular item comes up for discussion, facts must then be given by the president or the secretary who built the agenda.

Committee members are faced with information as the officers filter it, and these members are at a disadvantage,

also, because of a time element. In a special sense, these conference officers are "gatekeepers." It cannot be denied that someone must be responsible for passing on the relevant data, but the time, amount, and type of information released put message recipients at a disadvantage.

Men in those positions of trust are usually men of some ability and integrity. Does this, however, preclude the possibility of their expressing things through their perceptive field? There have been instances when executives have given information that was inadequate. It is necessary to insert that, despite the fact that they are well intentioned and honest, they are men. They may "open" or "close" the gate of discussion and investigation according to: (1) their faithfulness and stability in their reproduction, (2) the amount of interest or lack of it they manifest by even unwittingly changing the emphasis of the information, and (3) the amount of systematic distortion (through deliberate bias) or random distortion (through careless or ignorant bias) employed.

Pastor X received correspondence from one of the executors who took enough time to state to the pastor that he would receive certain financial allowances because of a certain type of arrangement. But this executor did not pass on any information which would enlighten the minister on what assistance he should expect. There is a policy which governs that type of employment agreement. The official

did not think it necessary to impart adequate information, and the minister did not have access to the operating policy.

Even though the officer was seeking to engage the minister's services, he was yet controlling the amount and kind of knowledge to be received by the prospective worker. The prospective worker is thus circumscribed. He must wait for, and abide by, whatever information is allowed him.

Departmental secretaries are not vested with administrative or executive authority. Their relation to the field is an advisory one. Many times these workers are given information which is not available to other ministerial workers. When projects and recommendations come from a department of the higher organization, they may be presented to the relevant department of the lower one in an interpretative form. In this area, also, information-filtering takes place.

The receiving department of the local Conference now takes the recommendations and tailors them to fit the needs and framework of the local department. Then this set of information is circulated throughout the local churches via the district pastor or the particular church department. In many instances, the person presenting the project to the church would synopsise and summarize so that certain bits of information are deleted. The omissions may be intentional, based on what the communicator deems significant, or they may be an honest oversight due to (a) misunderstanding of certain

terms of expressions, (b) a cursory reading or limited understanding of the correspondence, (c) limited time to present the project, and (d) even failure to grasp "important" points and communicate them.

Sometimes technical "secrets" are not released on time to ministers of districts. News of importance is at times delayed during some operations, like public evangelism. If the news is transmitted earlier to fellow ministers, more effective contacts will be made. Withholding the news until workers' meeting, for example, limits the amount of success which may come to the ministerial working force of the organization. In this situation there may be direct reluctance on the part of "successful" workers to disseminate information.

#### Intra-religious Climate

The organizational structure of the church permits freedom of movement among members of a congregation in terms of association and social intercourse. Each church group is expected to form a close unit in its various facets of worship and activities. Religious education classes, like the study of the Saturday morning lesson, form an integral part of the church's activities. This period has come to be known as "the church at study."

For the spiritual development of members, services may consist of thought-provoking talks, the relating of some

impressive missionary experiences, and periods of prayer. Missionary endeavors are also conducted on behalf of persons who are not members of the church.

Projects for the social development of members are periodically promoted. It is not unusual for the church group to arrange for events ranging from elocution contests to trips to the sea in the program for social expression.

Statements of satisfaction with the church and its "philosophies" are not unusual for Adventist congregations. Expressions of gratitude to God for helping them find the church have crowded many meetings. The church apparently possesses a high degree of built-in security, happiness, surety of purpose, worthwhile goals, and confidence in a bright future. There seems to be a positiveness in members' minds that if they meet the conditions of personal righteousness, their lives will extend far beyond the grave to a heavenly realm where they live forever in a constant state of unimaginable joy.

Generally speaking, the morale of most church groups appears to be high. Most of the church members regularly attend services and identify with the programs of the church. Very often suggestions from lay members are entertained and sometimes implemented in church departmental operations.

Members, in the main, seem to have confidence in the leadership of their church. This confidence has been shaken though, infrequently, by the demoting or disfellowshipping of

a leader for church violation. However, such disciplinary action toward a church member has resulted in greater "unity" for some churches, since the delinquent is viewed as one being overcome by "the devil and his sophistries." In some other churches the same disciplinary action has not seemed to affect them.

Although a beautiful and accurate picture is painted above, the church has not lived without its imperfections and weaknesses. While measures against some delinquent members have been well accepted, similar measures against others have met with negative reactions such as verbal expressions of displeasure, as well as requests by the dissatisfied persons for transfer to other church localities. There have been times when such persons refused to attend any church services anywhere. The ecclesiastical structure of the church is calculated to help prevent disharmony and to help reduce or remove it should it arise, but the method used has not always worked.

Some departments within the church tend to cater to themselves and "run their own show." "We will run our program, and they will run theirs," has been the statement and attitude at times. This has been seen with departments like the Missionary Volunteers and the Lay Activities. Desire to excel above the other department or church has led to separateness, unwholesome competition, and working at cross-purposes. It becomes difficult sometimes to teach Adventism

to non-members when those within the church cannot freely interact.

When the membership comes together for transacting the business of the church, some occasions are "stormy." Unfriendly behavior sometimes takes place as hurt feelings and hard feelings are defined by hasty, angry words. This may be accompanied by members creating factions to achieve certain ends. Moves to dominate and control the meeting have been seen. It has become necessary for the chairman to employ methods of conflict management. A knowledge of these principles should be available to all presiding officers.

There have been evidences of misunderstandings among workers and members. These disagreements and negative reactions to them have had effects on the functioning of the cause, such as one being "cold" with another, and workers leaving. One top-ranking officer who worked in Trinidad, but now working in another area, said: "the work in \_\_\_\_\_ is a very challenging one but it is interesting, and the working force is a united, good-spirited one. . . . There is a spirit of unity and goodwill among the workers that is perhaps better than that in South Carib." (South Carib is the conference of which Trinidad/Tobago forms the main part.)

The most valuable asset of the church is its present



are visited constantly and invited regularly to services. They are looked for at services and commended when they come. But shortly after they have become members they do not receive the care and attention which was accorded them before they became members. They soon become members anonymous. With some disillusionment they plod on because it is the thing to do, but the romance is gone. Because of the helplessness they feel in moving into a new pattern of life, they need as much friendliness and help as they received prior to their being baptized.

On account of the varying circumstances surrounding their conversion and the different life-styles to which they had been accustomed, many of these persons become discouraged by the new demands on their lives. Since some of these are unable to quickly habituate these new patterns, and since they do not regularly obtain adequate new-converts' help, they revert to their former ways. To illustrate this, the church started out in January, 1963 with 10,217 members and ended 1968 with 14,575, a gain of 4,358 members. Over the same period its losses through apostasies alone figured 1,446 (6, p. 32).

There needs to be a more systematic arrangement for the visitation and fellowship of members, especially the new ones. Then there should be better rapport between old and new members with more constructive comportment on the part of the former.

The divulging of members' confidences to others has produced both fear and the loss of trust. Problems have been created and increased because of this, along with practices of gossip and rumor. It is indeed bad ethics to attack personalities in the delivery of sermons, but a worse effect has been felt where leaders have shown preference to some members and despised others. Because leaders sometimes fail to care for all members on an equal basis, members have expressed feelings of frustration. In the attempt to simultaneously champion both sides of a dispute, pastors have been caught in the middle of the trouble.

### Goals

The primary goal of the church is to make available its message to every person within its geographic confines. Every activity deliberately carried out by the church is expected to be motivated by this goal.

The organization is so structured that various approaches can be made in an effort to bring about the same result--making disciples. These various approaches are represented by the many departments of the organization, each striving to accomplish its purpose. In the process, intraorganizational strain takes place. Some tension and conflict are experienced among these departments in that the same individuals may belong to different departments. Members of the "Sabbath School" department, for example, are

also members of the "Lay Activities" department. These persons must either split themselves equally or show preference for one of the roles. Members of one department may become strong advocates of their own area--thus creating some harmful competition.

The departments may have similar functions and thus call for similar types of missionary activity and reports. The Lay Activities department, for instance, is the adult missionary section of the church, while the Missionary Volunteer Society is the youth's missionary section of the church. But both departments have areas of commonality such as Bible readings, Gospel meetings, missionary visits, and literature distribution.

Whether these departments should work separately and report as individual units, or report together, has created some contention. In seeking to realize the same goal, the problem of competitive recruitment has occurred. The more attractive department wins the larger number of recruits, thus producing a sense of "victory."

The winning of people is the primary goal of the church, but the enthusiasm to travel at high speeds in the pursuit of this objective has created the establishment of numerical goals. In the last biennial session of the church (1969), the Secretary of the Conference proposed as one of the "great objectives to which we should strive during the coming biennium. . .to create a total evangelistic thrust and to aim at a target of 2,500 baptisms each year" (6, p. 29).

Action to achieve the primary goal may carry acceptance, but the effort to accomplish it can be so desperate that a displacement of goals may occur. "Goals for souls" may displace "souls as goal." The priority--souls--may be superseded by the means--desperate effort.

This situation leads to another problem, that of constant measurement. In order to "produce" these souls, a certain pace and vigil have to be maintained, resulting in a swift production of converts. This accelerated method has been partly responsible for the quick loss of some members. Etzioni says that

frequent measuring tends to encourage overproduction of highly measurable items and neglect of the less measurable ones. When a factory puts great pressure on its production people to increase their efficiency, they might well produce more items of a lower quality (2, p. 9).

Goals are necessary to any organization, and they serve many functions:

They provide orientation by predicting a future state of affairs which the organization strives to realize, . . . they constitute a source of legitimacy which justifies the activities of an organization and, indeed, its very existence. Moreover, goals serve as standards by which the members . . . and outsiders can assess the success . . . effectiveness and efficiency (2, p. 5).

Overemphasis of goals has pressured many church workers to accept "half-baked" converts.

In addition, a great deal of promotional work occurs during the church service, in particular, during the worship service. Pep-talks on behalf of "ingathering" or "mission

extension" campaigns, or some fund-raising project, have consumed much time. Many persons, including visitors, develop the impression that the goal of the church is a material one. As Etzioni observes,

A church may initiate social activities to attract members to religious services, but if the social activities . . . become the major focus of the participants' commitments then they undermine the achievement of the religious goal (2, p. 16).

#### Recommendations

The organizational structure of the church has been discussed from the standpoint of its operations. Areas with pressing needs for change have been discussed. In the light of these needs, the following recommendations are presented.

To facilitate more intelligent discussion and better decisions, agendas should be supplied to committee members prior to the day of committee meetings. This procedure does not apply to emergency meetings, but to regular meetings. In order to enhance meaningful discussion, information about agenda items should accompany the agenda.

A second aspect dealing with organizational bottlenecks relates to the careful planning of change. More effort should be exerted by the administration to make working policies more accessible to all workers, even before workers need to use them. Furthermore, verbatim copies of policies from the higher organization should be passed on to all workers along with the local conference applications and interpretations.

There needs to be a greater team-spirit among workers. This should be encouraged by the setting up of regular workshops in which success methods of workers can be recalled and shared. These occasions will lend themselves to an atmosphere of comradeship and thus help to minimize professional jealousy.

Pastors and church leaders need to become more sensitive to the frictions which exist among the departments of the church. By the use of coordination methods these overseers should help effect a greater sense of oneness throughout the departments.

Ministers and other leaders who preside at church business meetings encounter situations in which members come in conflict with one another. The following principles offered by Don Edward Beck are helpful in conflict reduction:

- I. Conflict managers should seek to create both the atmosphere and the methodology for open communication between the groups and, at the same time, promote mutual trust among the individuals involved (1, p. 8).
- II. Conflict managers should attempt to deal professionally with the crucial friction points that exist between the groups involved (1, p. 9).
- III. In specific conflictual situations, the Conflict Managers must enhance the influence of the peacemakers and, correspondingly, negate or blunt the influence of the agitators (1, p. 10).

All members of the church should be regarded as individuals and they should be treated as such by other members, leaders, and administrators. Leonard Sayles states that "Stereotypes and beliefs influence what we hear. A person with strong prejudice is often confronted with information that contradicts it. The prejudice may be so strong that he will twist the information to support it" (5, p. 9).

Not only should members be regarded as individuals, but leaders should recognize that differences in experience and background often influence the type of responses they receive as they communicate with members.

Conference executives should develop a more effective approach in dealing with workers. They should demonstrate friendliness and impartiality toward all members. While criticism is administered, praise should be distributed as well.

New converts experience difficulty in the early stages of their church adjustment. "Helpers" should be provided to assist them during this period. They should be catered to according to their social needs and background experience. Walter Rauschenbusch observes that

Clubs and fraternal societies can pick their material, the church cannot. It must take in all sorts and conditions of men, and has a special call to seek out and draw in the most abandoned and lost. It has to take the material furnished to it by secular society. If that material is degenerate the work of the church is harder (4, p. 306).

In addition to the church procuring help for those new members, these "rescue" workers must be trained and become familiar with the attempts of the new members in order to rally faith and hope in them. The training should include a working knowledge of the way newcomers generally relate to their new religious, social, economic state, and therefore give them supportive assistance. This assistance offered each convert must be based on his individual circumstance.

The subject of goals has been covered in this chapter. More stress should be given to those features which come closest to the organizational goal, that is, the recruitment of new church members. Emphasis should be placed on the virtues, such as love, faithfulness, and cooperation, rather than on high promotion of monetary projects. This will reduce or even preclude any impressions of religious commercialism.

### Conclusion

This chapter has presented the operational pattern of the Adventist church in Trinidad in terms of how it affects personnel and membership interaction. Attention has been paid to the importance this church attaches to goals and the corresponding enthusiasm exerted to achieve those goals.

The measure of communication-filtering that occurs between administration and church members has been described.



Also, the peril new believers face as they espouse their newly found faith has been examined. Recommendations relating to areas needing improvement have been made.

The next chapter will deal with the evangelistic methodology of the church for propagating its teaching among the members of society.

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## CHAPTER III

### EVANGELISTIC METHODOLOGY

While the previous chapter dealt with the functions of the church as they relate to internal affairs, this chapter presents the basic attitudes of that church in its communication contact with the community in general.

This chapter will show what the ethos of the church appears to be and will also delineate the causes of public antipathy toward the organization.

If the church lags behind and deals in outgrown methods, it will lose power over the ablest minds, perhaps the young people first, and all ages later on.

#### Inter-religious Climate

##### Religious Conflicts

Religious wars continue today on the battle field of the churches. Wars between Roman Catholics and Protestants might be somewhat understandable, but there is also a war hotly waged by Protestants with Protestants. Although they are supposedly working toward a common objective, there is intergroup competition and hostility. Protestants are protesting against Protestants.

Admission must be made that, as a church, the Adventists recognize that they have an adversary. They identify that adversary as Satan, but often times, by their behavior, they extend this Satanic circle to include people of other religious persuasions. They reassure themselves of the fact that they are Seventh-day Adventists and because of the nature of their doctrines they must necessarily be in conflict with others. As Rozanne Ridgway said, in addressing a "Woman's Day Colloquium" audience, "we continue to see ourselves with particularized vision--this is our own vision of ourselves. All nations act to promote their own preservation as they see it" (15, p.1).

Members of the church seem to determine for themselves a compulsory conflict with other Christians and, in their behavior, they go about seeking to self-fulfill this prophecy. People sometimes work at cross-purposes, owing to differences in background experience and the nature of the task, but disagreements caused by "unguarded" speech must be avoided.

To advocate unpopular doctrines, like Saturday being the Christians' Sabbath, is in itself a great point of dispute with other Christians. To antagonize people by using unpleasant remarks (as shall be seen under the discussion "Terminologies") merely increases the difficulty of persuading those very same people. Ellen G. White says:

We profess to have more truth than other denominations, yet if this does not lead to greater consecration, to

purser holier lives, of what benefit is it to us?  
. . . God is dishonored by those who profess the  
truth when they are at variance and enmity with  
one another (20, p. 620).

This statement is reinforced by another from the same author: "You have given the people the rich treasures of God's word, but your manner has been so condemnatory that they have turned from them" (18, p. 174). In the conflicts between this church and other religious groups, each group has been critical of the other. Each group sees the other's members and ministers as "sheep thieves," and this condition has led to the one holding the other suspect.

About three years ago special news was received from the top executive of the church. His letter showed both haste and anxiety. He was intimating all local churches that one from another denomination was coming over to the Conference territory with literature and that one had strong influence. The administration's caution was that members avoid literature infiltration, and listening to the expected missionary. This move suggested a closing-in of the church ranks, an effort to tune-out other competing messages. But when a similar action is taken by another religious body against this church, the latter labels the action as uncouth and cowardly. It should be remembered that the test of truth is its ability to survive the market place of ideas. The executive's countermeasures might have stemmed from three factors: a sense of the members' inability to scrutinize

other people's publications and yet be loyal to their church, a fear that members were not well and rightly fed, and the fact the missionary was more qualified and persuasive than were the church's missionaries.

Differences in theological views often cause clashes between pastors of different churches. The failure to cooperate, the refusal to share in another church's service, the public condemnation of another church's organizational structure or the members and minister of that congregation, may be a diatribe against Christianity. If clergymen and church-oriented people fail to get along with each other simply because they adhere to different faiths, how effective will be their witness to prospective members of Christianity?

"The individual may become so engrossed with the internal structure and interpretation of the norms," according to Philip B. Applewhite, "that he loses touch with the outside world" (1, p. 37). Very often one's reference group dictates the way one hears a message. Because members are suspicious of others and vice versa, they tend to hear threats in the message and manifest a closeminded attitude and fear of associating with others. Their activities, whether they be religious or otherwise, are seen as propagandistic. This has been partly responsible for the psychological distance between and among the various churches.

At times people fail to come close enough to hear, and if they come close enough, they may fail to evaluate the meaning behind what they hear. Sometimes members fail to realize that what they are saying has symbolic meaning for listeners. Words mean different things to different people and the emotional state of the mind colors what is being heard. Dale Carnegie remarks:

When dealing with people let us remember that we are not dealing with creatures of logic. We are dealing with creatures of emotions, creatures bristling with prejudices and motivations by pride and vanity. . . . And criticism is a dangerous spark--a spark that is likely to cause an explosion in the powder keg of pride (2, p. 28).

Whenever a communicator arouses anger or resentment by making statements which are regarded as offensive, the audience tends to develop unfavorable attitudes toward both the communicator as well as the group, or the goals with which he is identified.

Conflicting situations have been created by either direct statements or statements which inferred that unless one became a Seventh-day Adventist, he could not be "saved." Little wisdom is displayed when spokesmen of the church leave the impression that priority to the kingdom of God resides in this church. What are the results of this type of polarization? First, within the church, there are feelings of superiority, self-sufficiency, and complacency. Members of this church may be saying like some of the New Englanders and their early preachers said, according to Robert T. Oliver, that "God

had sifted a nation that he might send choice grain into this wilderness" (9, p. 6). Special endowments bring corresponding responsibility.

The second result of such polarization takes on the form of dogmatism. And dogmatism is an anti-social force. To have strong convictions without being dogmatic might be a Christian grace. To be closed minded in thinking and communicating makes the church intolerant of other viewpoints, and erects a "wall" about itself. This predicament puts the church at a tremendous disadvantage and freezes the inter-religious climate.

A person's overt actions are usually based on how he abstracts, how he perceives things. People become members of the church according to the assumptions they bring to the situation. The perceived relevance and strength of their points of judgments determine the attitude they will have toward the proposition. As these persons change over from a church to the Seventh-day Adventist church, or vice versa, confusion and dispute are often generated. This transition is viewed by the "losing" church as the action of a renegade. Animosity builds up between the two church groups to the extent that literal opposition and controversy are practiced in missionary work.

Interreligious problems crop up when members take to "namecalling." This influences both their evaluation of



The Seventh-day Adventist church goads its members on to live up to the name. "They expect it of us" is a common expression. When each religious denomination lives up to its name (and the name carries negative connotations for the other church), it often runs across the other denomination. To some people, the Seventh-day Adventist church equals "Judaism," while to other people the Baptists and Pentecostals signify "excitement."

The Seventh-day Adventist church has been called a legalist group partly because of its constant teaching of what is generally known as "the moral law," and partly because of its members' behavior, which seems to be motivated by strict obedience to that law. In discussing church beliefs with people, a member of this church would unhesitatingly and, perhaps, subconsciously, discuss the need to "keep the law." An early mention of this "need" in a conversation may be both unnecessary and unwise, since this topic irritates some persons of other religious groups. The church teaches some doctrines that are held in common with other groups, therefore, Haney points out that one should "make the habit of distinguishing between labels and things," and he continues, "don't permit the label to obscure the Product" (5, p. 195).

Adventists recognize that they are not the only instruments chosen by God for disseminating the Christian

of superiority or dogmatism, they will reject this important concept. The church must stand guard to exert an influence among other Christians as will be congruent with such a conviction, as well as to avert or reduce conflict with other religious bodies.

Should the members of the church be afraid to associate with Christians of other denominations? If there are fears in doing this, one wonders whether the church is attractive enough, and disciplined enough to allow its members to fellowship with other religious groups and yet retain their loyalty and obedience. Efforts to quarantine members from the "bacillus" of religion will prove ineffective. The salt must mix with the "menu" if it is to be useful and profitable. If it loses its saltiness (either through indiscreet overuse or indiscreet underuse), it will be good for nothing. Henry A. Landsberger observes that the church needs

a laity that is committed to the church on the basis of voluntary choice. . . . An active laity, a responsive laity, a responsible laity, one that is neither defensive in the face of ideological opposition nor triumphal in posture toward less dominant religious groups (7, p. 33).

The principles enunciated here may also apply to church ministers.

## Public Relations

### Social to Save

Love and brotherly concern hold many organizations together. In thinking of communicating messages to a

community, the communicator should consider its social structure, its people, and how the messages could be listened to. Very important is the relationship between the sender and the receiver. Walter Rauschenbusch remarks that

the religion of Jesus had less to fear from sitting down to eat with publicans and sinners than for the immaculate isolation of the Pharisees. It will take care of itself if mixed into three measures of meal, but if the leaven is kept standing by itself, it will sour hopelessly (12, p. 339).

If the church confines itself to theology and the Bible and refuses to relate to the needs of individuals and groups, its theology might soon become mythology and its Bible a closed book.

Time is not wasted in the proclamation of the gospel if the church is devoted to social aspects of the community. Stuber points out that "we are going to be judged not by our position or ecclesiastical status, but by the way we treat our fellowmen on a day-by-day basis" (13, p. 13).

Organized religion is under serious attack from many quarters. It seems propitious, therefore, that religious groups should cease attacking each other and unite forces behind Christian causes in social, educational, and community projects. The church has been concerned about the welfare of people and has moved into the arena of service. "Welfare/Dorcas Services," and "The Good Samaritan" are good examples of the church in action. Activities of this

circles as well as among immediate recipients, but the church needs to associate more with other groups in the cause of society.

The church seeks to disseminate its message not only among the economically deprived but throughout the other strata of society. People must be able to apply their religion in everyday life. Human nature cannot be satisfactorily transformed by preparing people to live in heaven while any supreme disregard for society's improvement is evidenced on earth. Walter Rauschenbusch notes that

when the social relations are dominated by a principle essentially hostile to the social conceptions of Christ, antagonistic spirits of the church and society grapple for the mastery. The more such a hostile principle dominates secular society, the more difficult will be the task of the church when it tries to bring the Christ-spirit to victorious ascendancy (12, p. 309).

The Christian ethic rates bodily needs as the most universally understood language of brotherly love. It is part of the Incarnational character of Christianity. It is perhaps the plainest form of service yet it carries an adequate expression of the highest love. However, the church providing help on a person to person basis is insufficient to give it society acceptance. William Pleuthner says:

The measure of the vitality of any church is in its integration in its own community . . . It must adapt itself to the people about it, drawing from them fresh energy and inspiration, and giving to them the eternal values of life, intelligently and with careful consideration for their own particular needs (11, p. 142).

There are many other levels of service beside that of providing for bodily needs. There are as many levels of service as there are levels of need, such as education, companionship, and aesthetics. The churchman as a Christian has a responsibility of actively using his influence in support of an adequate, efficient, humane, and non-political administration of social welfare agencies.

When the broader social outlook widens the purpose of the church member beyond the increase of his church, he lifts his eyes and sees that there are others who are at work for humanity besides his particular denomination.

"Common work for social welfare is the best common ground for the various religious bodies and the best training school for practical Christian unity" (12, p. 340), says Rauschenbusch.

Whenever anyone cares for another, that one becomes involved in the other's problems, he responds to his needs, shares his difficulties, weaknesses and pains, and probably even his guilt. The helper is very empathic. In order to relieve a person's suffering, one needs to identify with the person and try to understand what he feels.

One of the church's employees who served as both minister and school teacher has said that he thinks the reason why the church has failed in relating more effectively with the public has been due to its seeming aloofness. This

happens when the church does not identify itself as part of the community in which it exists. He sees the church as having a subculture of its own, exclusive of the rest of the world, and emphasizing "the other world" ideas.

As a religious organization, the church should seek to educate and direct the social impulses both within itself and within society at large. It should not underrate or cheapen its social significance. "The church," says William Pleuthner, "has a recognized theistic (God-centered) philosophy as its basic foundation," and also "it has existing national auspices for its promotion and integration" (11, p. 145).

Because of these characteristics of the social work of the church, it should view itself not merely as a little social group, a microcosm of society, but rather as an integral part of society. In order that its members belong to a church worthy of its name, they should be trained in the art of living both on the social and individual levels.

#### Credibility of the Church

The church exists to communicate. If it is to deliver its message to people, it has no option but to evangelize. If its voice is to be clearly heard above today's message competition, it will be by design and not by accident. Proper lines of communication must be employed if the church will penetrate the barriers of prejudice and apathy. Proper

methods of communication will help the church become more effective and persuasive in its communicative role.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to separate a message from its source, and to treat the message as if it were a disembodied, theoretical abstraction. The hearer perceives and evaluates the message and its source as one. Supposing that the community had negative connotations toward the church, the teachings of the church would very likely be rejected. In short, the message is looked at through the prism of the source.

The way the church is perceived by the public will both determine and reflect the attitudes toward the church. According to Howard B. Weeks, "Whatever the public thinks of the church may be a rude caricature of what the church really is, but whatever the public thinks the church to be, that it is so far as the public is concerned" (16, p. 10).

The Adventist church has enjoyed a certain measure of community reputation in that it has been praised by some for its interest in people, as well as for devotion to a religious cause. But the church has been ignored also by many persons on the ground of self-interest and aloofness. Some individuals have labeled it "a secret society."

When the church communicates it seeks to share its mind with people. Those people, however, must first accept it as an institution that is interested in them. They must see

life's situation. If the church merely gains public attention, this will not necessarily help. Rather, such attention may have a boomerang effect in that it may alienate instead of persuade.

That the church is a friendly, understanding, helping community unit must be communicated to the people. Motives of friendship and public service need to be present and made clear and verified. The church's concern for human beings, its attitudes toward society, its practices of goodwill, help to determine its real character.

As its integrity is shared with the populace, through various communication media, the church will win public confidence and provide the background necessary to deliver its message in appealing, convincing terms. "If effective communication is employed," says Howard B. Weeks, "the church will not be subservient to public opinion. In fact, it will raise public opinion above half-truths, rumors, misunderstandings and speculation" (16, p. 10).

The quality of the church's past performance has significantly affected the credibility of the church's message. This lack of performance quality has been due in part to the dichotomy between members' deportment and the church's teachings, and partly because of the paucity of church-community interactions. Through conscious effort and effective communication, the church can build a sympathetic audience in the community. The church can multiply the number of those who hear when it speaks.



### Message Dissemination

Internal aspects.--Worship situations consisting of departmental programs and church services constitute the church's internal mechanisms of message dissemination. The departments carrying separate responsibilities are: "Sabbath School," "Lay Activities," "Welfare Society," and "Missionary Volunteer" (a youth dept.). Each department, with its duly elected officers and plans, prepares and presents its programs. All activities are intended to convey Adventist Christianity with the intent to lead people to salvation and active church membership.

Church services are held in high regard and apparently generate more reverence than departmental programs. However, Ellen G. White says that "to the humble, believing soul, the house of God on earth is the gate of heaven. . . . When worshipers enter the place of meeting, they should do so with decorum, passing quietly to their seats" (20, pp. 491, 492).

Church leaders believe that every service should give a lift to every worshiper; that no one ought to leave the church cast down and discouraged; and that no one acting a part in the service should do so merely for his personal gratification. They also hold that no feature within the service should be of a frivolous nature because in the audience are persons who need to be lifted "on high" through

prayer and supplication. Some need to be enlightened and challenged by the sermon. Others will gather strength and courage by being in the fellowship of truly religious people.

The church communicates in worship. The content and process in worship must be arranged and rearranged to meet the needs of people. Some persons worship from a sense of duty (deontological motivation) or a desire to do what is right. Others worship from a desire to do what is good (teleological motivation) in order to procure certain ends.

The church leader faces the problem of understanding worshipers' motivations and needs. The leader need not plan an elaborate service although worship from an aesthetic point of view is important. He needs to plan the service with his particular audience in mind.

Leonard Swidler says that "the essence of the liturgical movement of our time is not to make worship fancier, but to make worship a truer reflection of our understanding God's dealing with man both in history and in present events" (14, p. 257). Worship can be a powerful experience. The creation of this power, however, is contingent upon what occurs within the worship experience and to what extent ideas and feelings are clearly communicated.

External Aspects.--In its broad sense, the areas covered in the external evangelistic spectrum include personal

contacts, public meetings, literature distribution, educational programs, and medical evangelism.

If the internal phase of message dissemination does not bring the church into contact with non-members, the external aspect does. While "personal" and "public" evangelism are two distinct fields of missionary effort and can be dealt with separately, they will be approached in this study from a single perspective.

The church has had many "victories" in her evangelistic campaigns. This success has reinforced the belief that she has been divinely called to proclaim a special message of an eschatological nature. Better preparations for communicating the beliefs of the church would both increase the number of converts as well as their level of motivation.

Most of the members who become missionaries do so without much training and direct instruction on methodology. This lack of training and experience becomes a serious handicap and interferes with their effectiveness. Ellen G. White points out that "Members should not let slip even one opportunity of qualifying themselves intellectually to work for God" (17, p. 62). Often times "missionary operations are embarrassed for want of the right class of mind-workers who have devotion and piety that will correctly represent our faith" (17, p. 61).

Another problem relates to the nature of the organization that supports the missionary efforts. The secret of success lies to a large extent in the ability to organize and to maintain harmony. Various situations will demand various approaches, different procedural, or psychological structures. The organization will need to be basically flexible and harmonious in order to deal effectively with the diverse challenges and situations that it confronts. The cause of Christianity as well as the cause of the church would be best served by members working together. As noted by Ellen G. White, "if Christians were to act in concert, moving forward as one, under the direction of one Power (Christ), for the accomplishment of one purpose, they would move the world" (22, p. 221).

All available means of persuasion need to be considered as the church attempts to propagate its teachings. Minister, as well as member, will find it necessary to put forth extraordinary efforts through extraordinary methods in order to attract the attention of people. When the church plans to communicate, it must consider its intention, attention, relationship, medium, and mechanics.

Intention.--What is the purpose of the desire to communicate? What is the church trying to accomplish through a particular rhetorical effort?

Attention.--How best can the desired attention be secured? How interesting must be the presentation? How relevant must be the information? What needs must be recognized, identified with, and met through the various rhetorical strategies.

Relationship.---What barriers exist in the transaction? How can they best be reduced or removed? What is the social and psychological distance or closeness between the sender of the message and the receiver of the message?

Medium.---What communication media are available to the persuaders? Which would best suit the particular purpose within the particular situation? How can any selected medium be most efficiently and effectively used?

Mechanics.---What mental preparations have been made in the process of planning the persuasive effort? What lines of argument are at hand? How will the data be marshalled? What strategies will be utilized? How flexible can the presentation be to adjust to the situation? What compromises can be made? These are some of the aspects and areas to be considered as the church embarks upon communicative evangelism.

Hair-splitting exegesis destroys the very spirit of the gospel and produces controversy instead of persuasion. This controversy has been encountered often enough

to suggest need for a different approach. To calmly conclude that the doctrines as taught by the church are peculiar or strange, and that therefore it can expect opposition, seems a clumsy way of admitting weakness in procedure. Not that differences of beliefs do not exist, however, there is little wisdom in courting opposition when it is unnecessary to do so.

Great care should be exercised in guarding against unnecessary disagreement. Over-stressing of minor points of difference in denominational beliefs could be deleted from doctrinal presentations without sacrificing principles. While Bible workers agree with truth and commend its practice, they will profit by teaching accurately, progressively, forcefully, but never dogmatically. They must teach with authority but never vaunt the authority to teach.

A very significant means of spreading the church's beliefs is that of the literature ministry. Pamphlets, magazines, and books are circulated. The publishing department of the church does much business in selling its publications each year, and more literature evangelists can make a livelihood in this if they concentrate on the job as some do. This department of the local conference reported a working force of forty credentialed or licensed literature evangelists (4, p. 13).

Literature distribution campaigns are conducted as a means of preparing the field for public evangelism. Generally,

great care is taken in the choice of subject-matter discussed in the pamphlets for public distribution. Sometimes, however, there are ideas expressed in these papers which do not coincide with those of other religious beliefs held by the church.

In the conducting of evangelistic efforts, it is not unusual for the evangelist to distribute literature relating to a particular subject. The rationale for the literature ministry is (1) that in the final period of the gospel age "more than one thousand will be converted in a day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications" (18, p. 693), and (2) that a tract may penetrate an area where the living messenger may not go and that angels of God are near to impress the unspoken word upon one's heart.

The circulation of literature has done much good in that it has been instrumental in leading people to a knowledge and acceptance of the Adventist message. Scores of members attest to this fact, including the parents of the writer. Because this method of evangelism is effectual, much more should be done to make more copies available to more people, and in better readable form.

There is the question of the cost of some items of literature. Many persons (members and non-members) have verbally expressed that church literature should be less expensive than it now is. Along with the rationale that

it takes money to print the literature is the statement that "they have the truth in them."

The church is a religious, soul-saving organization, and anything that smacks of extortion and exploitation must be avoided. This statement does not attempt to be overly critical of the organization, but simply to recommend ways to make literature more accessible to the public.

Examine the distribution procedure of Ambassador College. This college of 1400 resident students publishes magazines and books by the millions for free distribution to the public. It operates "without endowment, without government aid, with no grants from foundations" (8, p. 1). This body of people asks members of the public to request publications at no financial cost, and without remitting any contributions for these except they personally desire to do so. From internal financial resources, this college provides written material for the public, and it operates on the assumption that "you can't pay for your own subscription."

The analogy should be clear. The church solicits from the public, in the first place, and it sells most of its printed material, which is "truth-filled," in the second place. In the third instance, the Adventist church has the reputation of the highest per capita giving among denominations (6, p. 2).

Since great inroads in the population can be made through the literature ministry, and since soul-saving is



the objective of the church, every possible attempt must be made to make its religious writings reach the public more easily.

In similar fashion, as the church converges intensively and extensively on the public soliciting funds at "Ingathering" time, it should return to the community expressing thanks and distributing free, meaningful literature, like Signs of the Times magazines. "The great task of the church today," says William Pleuthner, "is by a deepening of fellowship to raise the laity from a preoccupation with finance to the level of religious witness" (11, p. 275).

### Terminologies

A copious supply of denominational terms are found in the language repertoire of the church. When used in purely Adventist circles they may be understood and even taken for granted. The continual use of these terms, however, can petrify prejudice and also lead members to operate on false premises. The concept "they are God's elect," for example, can lead to "I-am-holier-than-thou" behavior.

Some of these terminologies may be understood and accepted by other Protestant bodies, but may not be known by non-Protestants. Other terms used by the church are offensive to all non-members and the employment of these terms exudes an odor of self-righteousness and religious eliteness. They appear to place the church on a higher pedestal

than other Christians when factually they are fellow Christians striving toward perfection.

Although no evil has most likely been intended, the use of certain expressions in communication detracts from the message and makes listeners antagonistic. This has happened many times in different places. One visitor to one of the churches said a couple days subsequent to her visit to church service that she was not returning to the church. When asked for a reason she remarked that the speaker made allusions to non-Adventists as "outsiders" and "people who are lost." She was not of the Christian religion.

The church exists to win people, not to drive them; to persuade people, not to antagonize them. It must "use wholesome speech to which none take exception. This will shame any opponent, when he finds not a word to say to our discredit" (Titus 2:8 N.E.B.). And the opponent may be attracted to the point of listening favorably.

The following terminologies have been compiled according to their strength of acceptance or rejection. Category "A" consists of those terms which are used to describe non-members and which are offensive to them. Category "B" consists of those terms which are used to describe members and the church. In some cases non-members take objection to some of these because the exclusive usage by Adventists savors of selfishness. Category "C" consists of those terms which are generally unfamiliar to non-members since they are

Adventist colloquialisms. Some of these may carry no special connotation for non-members.

A	B	C
Strangers	Sheep of His pasture	Sojourners
Worldlings	God's people	Sister White
Unbelievers	Abraham's seed	Newborn babes
Heathen	Servants of God	Missionary Volunteers
Outsiders	Citizens of heaven	Pilgrim pathway
Unholy people	Salt of the earth	Watery grave
Outcast	Light of the world	Running the Christian
	Ambassadors of Christ	race
	Stewards	The Ordinances
	Children of the King	The preached word
	Daughters of Zion	The mercy seat
	Sealed of God	Spirit of Prophecy
	People of Zion	Advent Movement
	Chosen people	Advent message
	God's elect	Advent people
	The called-out people	
	A sanctified people	
	We the people of God	
	We the remnant	
	People with the truth	
	for these last days	
	Sabbath keeping people	
	Covenant keeping people	
	Peculiar people	
	Beautiful flock	
	Spiritual Israel	
	Household of faith	
	Fold of God	
	Ark of safety	
	Remnant church	

In communicating messages, the adoption of the "third-person-attitude" will help the speaker to follow the principle of objectivity. He should avoid strange denominational terms which have little meaning or tend to generate animosity. If it becomes impossible to avoid the use of unfamiliar terms, then they should be explained. "M.V.'s," for example, means Missionary Volunteers but of course the outsider wouldn't know that.

The church must be able to wrap up its message in an attractive package and compete for the attention of the eyes and ears as well as the minds and hearts of the multitudes. If the voice of the church cannot be understood, then it will do little good. Stanley I. Stuber remarks that

theological phrases must be rephrased in ordinary speech. The ecclesiastical language of a generation ago cannot be grasped by the younger generation of today. We must again sit at the feet of the Master and learn to tell the gospel story in simple yet vivid language (13, p. 34).

#### Recommendations

The church is a part of society and has a stake in the social crisis of the times. It must, in practical terms, help stay the disintegration and decay of society or be carried down with it. The church will enjoy new status and increased impact if it plays a more realistic role in society. It needs a vital and continual interest in the total of human life.

To help the church play a more effective role in society, the following are recommended. The church should have special programs and projects that relate to special events in the nation, and to other current interests. Here are some examples: special days as "Temperance," "World Prayer Day," and "Independence Day" should be observed. These special days' observances will serve to identify the church with the community.

Lecture series should be given on topics of church and public interest such as physiology, sociology, religious freedom, alcohol and society, religion and health, Christian education, television and morality, and youth-objectives and motivations. Speakers with some expertness on the topic can be featured. This will be regarded as a public service and will have a ring of authoritativeness by virtue of special studies that have been made or at least by the unassailable qualifications of those speakers (16, pp. 86, 87).

Special services or perhaps social receptions featuring visiting missionaries, new pastors, or visiting church dignitaries should be conducted. Invitations could be circulated to persons actively interested in field work as represented by the visitor.

Health clinics may provide charity medical service or medical service at reduced cost. Educational programs on healthful living can be conjointly conducted by some church groups, as have been sponsored by Seventh-day Adventist churches in Sydney, Australia, Hyattsville, Maryland, and Los Angeles, California (16, p. 90).

The church should organize, or help to organize, a "United Churchmen's Club." This club represents the union of men's efforts of various churches. It attempts to bring men together in Christian fellowship and action, and helps laymen to render more effective Christian service in their everyday

lives and occupations. The club encourages churchmen to strengthen the life and work of their local churches.

Beyond these purposes, the United Churchmen's Club provides an effective means for sharing successful experiments within the different communions. William A. Pleuthner says that a club like this "fosters interdenominational community cooperation between both the clergy and the laity throughout the nation" (11, pp. 49, 50).

Another area where the church can make a contribution relates to the institution of a Ministerial Association. One phase of the Association can take the form of a seminar involving discussions of an intra-church ministerial character while the other phase can accommodate inter-church ministerial interests.

Ministers and workers of one denomination should know those of other religious groups as personal friends and brothers of one great family. Friendship and love break through barriers. Pastors have many great concerns in common in that they are concerned with great Christian principles like brotherhood, peace, goodwill, and social justice. As they collaborate for a common interest, they develop a sense of oneness, and, as a result, personal animosities are decreased.

In addition to the church's initiating contact with ministers outside its working force, it should encourage its workers to attend other religious conferences and conventions

and, as far as possible, participate actively in the meetings. "Love thy neighbor as thyself" may for churches be paraphrased "love other religious groups as you love yours." Interaction will provide new friendships, new experiences, new capabilities, and new horizons. As a means of providing the opportunity for personal meditation, an "open door" plan should be organized. A section of the church may be opened daily to the public in order to accommodate those individuals who are interested. Some type of self-selective music system could be designed so that a facilitating atmosphere could be created.

As visitors enter the vestibule they may choose to contemplate on scriptural themes, as "The Sermon on the Mount," or they may decide to listen to music like "A Mighty Fortress." It may be that they will want to intersperse readings and hymns. This community service can be advertised through various news media. On the outside of the church may be placed a sign which reads "Church Open for Meditation," or "Select Your Own Music." The Chula Vista Adventist church in California has this type of program and became known as a friendly church, a church offering its sanctuary as a place of community worship. The membership of that church has doubled in two years (16, p. 86).

The utilization of the local radio is another avenue for the church to communicate with the community. The world is undergoing a communications revolution. There seems to

be a battle for men's minds perhaps more significant than the struggle in Vietnam and the Middle-East. The church regards the conflict for the domination of the human soul as one which has eternal implications.

Time is running out so that what was not communicated yesterday must be communicated today for there may be no tomorrow. The church should "let every advertising agency be employed that will call attention to the work" (21, p. 36).

If the church used the radio several purposes would be served. First, it would win listeners to the Adventist faith. Second, it is a means of instructing in Christian living, and third, programs can be presented which would familiarize people with the life, language and worship of the church. Through this message medium the church can become a friend of the community.

While continuing to be in touch with the man in the street, the church must make positive, direct efforts to communicate its teachings to leaders, professional people, the higher classes, and the influential. Ellen G. White observes that

those who bear heavy responsibilities in public life--physicians and teachers, lawyers and judges, public officers and business men--should be given a clear, distinct message. . . . And there are some who are especially fitted to work for the higher classes (21, pp. 78, 81).

Some of these men are endowed with special powers of organization which are needed in the execution of the work



of the church. The enlistment of such people will exert a favorable influence on others of their caliber.

Until now the literature which is circulated by the church caters for the spiritual needs of the average populace. The organization should take a step forward by providing special literature that will meet the spiritual needs of the more intelligent, sophisticated class of society. Ellen G. White says that "the truth should be presented in a manner that will make it attractive to the intelligent mind" (19, p. 414).

Among the professionally trained ministers of the local Conference, there are those who can perform this type of literary service to the community. A. R. Tippet points out that "the value of academic training lies not in mental exercise or in mere interest, but in its ultimate validity and applicability in a missionary ministry" (10, p. 148).

The church should make more conscious effort to train its active missionary laity in the principles of communication pertinent to evangelism. Respect for other people should be developed regardless of their religious affiliation. Talking with people rather than talking down to them must be the attitude of workers. Although differences of opinion are held, there should be an acceptance of the other's viewpoints as much as is possible.

Perception varies from person to person. The same object may be perceived differently by two observers. The difference

of perceptions rests with the observer and not the observed. Each person's perception of an object is a highly specialized abstraction of that thing so that no one should claim ability to see all things.

Instead of trying to win an argument, the missionary communicator should seek to win the goodwill of people. It is better not be conqueror and maintain friendship than to be the victor of a Pyrrhic battle.

### Conclusion

This chapter has identified conflictual or competitive situations which exist among different religious groups. It has shown that a constellation of forces has been at work to militate against the expected unity of Christian bodies. Religious groups are composed of and administered by men. Consequently, even a "spiritual" organization can be victimized by human error and weaknesses.

The chapter revealed the concept that by being integrated with society, the church will experience a high credibility which will enhance its effectiveness in transmitting its message. The recommendations are an attempt to reduce or isolate friction.

The following chapter discusses the complexities in culture and how misunderstandings among individuals of different cultures can result in communication loss. The chapter also presents solutions to intercultural problems.

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CHAPTER IV

COMMUNICATING CHRISTIANITY IN A  
MULTICULTURED SOCIETY

The differences of race and culture have, through the centuries, divided mankind into many groups. Although modern communication has put the rest of the world at our doorstep, it has not united the various cultures and sub-cultures. Some difficulty is experienced when one person from one country tries to enter into the background of another country.

What seems very obvious to a person from one country or group may not be immediately accepted by an individual from another area. Friction and misunderstanding can easily develop. In seeking to understand people, great effort and skill must be exercised. We need to put ourselves in the other person's particular historical and cultural background in order to understand his frame of reference and resulting behavior.

In a sense, human characteristics are more "in-bred" than "in-born." When we think of one's temperament, personality, interests, and character, we almost simultaneously begin to think of where he grew up, what people he was associated with, and what his habit-patterns and norms happened to be.

### Intercultural Communication and its Barriers

Whenever a message is communicated across cultural boundaries, it is encoded in one context and decoded in another. When a message is despatched across those boundaries, the possibility exists of receiving it in a manner that was not intended. Various cultures possess various modes of thinking, which, of course, would be reflected in their respective communicative system. Because of the tremendous importance of intercultural relationships in modern society, it is necessary that we achieve a better understanding of the ways different cultures communicate.

Intercultural communication processes are not only contaminated by the particular situation and the task involved in the message transaction, but by the traditional standards and traditional expectations of the cultures involved. Alfred G. Smith says that "the difficulties in intercultural communication vary with the differences in social organization between the cultures and also with the content of the message communicated" (8, p. 566).

Every culture has its individual manner of thought and its preferred interest areas which provide the subject matter for its thinking. The barriers that separate nations and ethnic groups do not so much stem from language differences as from cultural differences. In short, the traditional thought patterns contained in cultural systems are even more restrictive and "foreign" than vocabulary and

grammar. In order to communicate effectively one must penetrate down into the substratum of people's thoughts and feelings.

### The Nature of Culture

It is unwise for us to assume that we are fully cognizant of what we communicate to someone else. Because of the tremendous distortions existing in our world today, meanings differ as men try to communicate with one another. Edward T. Hall says that "one of the most effective ways to learn about oneself is by taking seriously the cultures of others. It forces you to pay attention to those details of life which differentiate them from you" (1, p. 54).

Culture provides a design for living, a plan according to which society adapts itself to physical, social, and ideational environments. Cultures, then, are but different answers to essentially the same human problems. What culture generally does for a particular group of people is that it brings a distinct lessening of tensions and provides the organization, balance, security, and satisfaction necessary for its existence.

Paul Kleppner says that

any society or societal system consists of a variety of analytically distinguishable, but functionally interrelated, subcultures. The operation of the system as system depends upon the relationships which exist between each substructure as well as upon those of substructures (2, p. 1).

No two cultures are identical, while it is theoretically possible for two cultures to carry the same content. In each cultural situation the content is organized differently, just as it is possible to have two buildings of the same material but each having a different appearance.

In dealing with culture and intercultural relationships, we need to note that there are both overt and covert cultural manifestations. Overt culture envisages "all the shared ideas or patterns that become externalized through movement and muscular activity, while covert culture includes the latent patterns of belief, thought, and evaluation" (3, p. 63). The ideal as well as the real culture, the theoretical standards as well as the actual behavior, constitute the entirety of a life-style. Hence, the difficulty looms up in fully understanding what we as participants are communicating to others and what others are communicating to us.

In organizing the cultural pattern, experience and laws are needed. Experience is not formed in the abstract, as a mode, separate and distinct from culture. Experience is something man projects upon the outside world as he gains it in its culturally determined form. There are laws governing patterns: laws of order, selection, and congruence. Man, as a cultural being, is bound by hidden rules and, typically, he is not the master of his fate. Man is bound



as long as he remains ignorant of the nature of the hidden pathways that culture provides for him (3, pp. 143, 144).

### Assumptions of Culture

All human cultures, in spite of their diversity, have, basically, a great deal in common. "These common aspects," says Frank Moore, "are susceptible to scientific analysis" (4, p. 42). Founded on scientific analysis, the following seven basic assumptions have been formulated.

Culture is learned.--Culture is not instinctive or innate or transmitted biologically, but is composed of habits that are learned tendencies to react, acquired by each individual through his own life experience.

Culture is inculcated.--All animals are capable of learning, but man alone seems able in any considerable measure to pass on his acquired habits to his offspring. Inculcation involves not only the imparting of techniques and knowledge but also the disciplining of the child's animal impulses to adjust him to social life.

Culture is social.--Habits of the cultural order are not only inculcated and thus transmitted overtime; they are also social, that is, shared by human beings living in organized aggregates or societies and kept relatively uniform by social pressure. They are group habits. The habits which

the members of a social group share with one another constitute the culture of that group.

Culture is ideational.---To a considerable extent, the group habits of which culture consists are conceptualized (verbalized) as ideal norms or patterns of behavior.

Culture is gratifying.---Culture always, and necessarily, satisfies basic biological needs and secondary needs derived therefrom. Its elements are tested habitual techniques for gratifying human impulses in man's interaction with the external world of nature and his fellow man. Culture consists of habits, and habits persist only so long as they bring satisfaction. Gratification reinforces habits, and strengthens and perpetuates them. Lack of gratification results in their disappearance or extinction.

Culture is adaptive.---Culture changes, and the process of change appears to be an adaptive one, comparable to evolution in the organic realm but of a different order. Culture tends, through periods of time, to become adjusted to the geographic environment, as the anthropogeographers have shown, although environmental influences are no longer conceived as determinative of cultural development.

Culture also adapts through borrowing and organization to the social environment of neighboring people. Finally, cultures tend to become adjusted to the biological and psychological demands of the human organism.

Culture is integrative.--As a product of the adaptive process, the elements of culture tend to form a consistent integrated whole. Integration takes time--there is always what is called a "cultural lag" (4, p. 47)--and long before one process has been completed, many others have been initiated.

### Plural Culturalism

There is no one basic unit or elemental particle, no single isolate for culture, for culture is not one thing, but many. To have a previous acquaintance with one culture may be of great help in understanding a similar culture. However, such acquaintance can become a source of preconceived ideas and, as a result, can be misleading. "The uniqueness of cultures," says Louis T. Luzbetak, "must be kept in mind. Cultural similarities are not cultural identities, similar form does not imply identical meaning, function and usage" (3, p. 69).

In intercultural communication experiences, communicators sometimes "trip over cultural ropes" (8, p. 565) because of enculturation (cultural indoctrination which makes one blind to other possible ways of behaving). This enculturation can be said to be a habit formation which aims at making a person the master of his society's plan for living. Then the culture of his particular group becomes to him a sort of second nature.

Communicators across cultural lines encounter cultural jolts, such as the "strange" eating or hygiene habits of a people or their "unpleasant" forms of etiquette. A proper adjustment to these jolts is expedient for the communicators. On the other hand, if these cultural surprises are improperly handled, they can deteriorate to cultural shocks for the communicators. Whenever a communicator is "tossed about frantically and hopelessly until he succumbs to cultural frustrations (jolts), and suffocates" (3, p. 84), cultural shock occurs.

Two patterns of behavior usually characterize one who is culturally shocked. He would take flight in either (1) clinging blindly and immovably to his original ways, or (2) blindly and indiscriminately renouncing his former ways and values in favor of the ways and values that are attributable to the cultural shock to which he is yielding. In either case he suffers a "breakdown" resulting from improper adjustment to cultural frustration. Any reaction that is blind and unreasoned, and any reaction that is but a subconscious escape from culturally disagreeable environment leads to cultural shock. Comparable to cultural shock for the intercultural communicator is "shell shock" for the soldier, and "stage fright" for the stage actor.

The locus of culture, however, is in the mind and is not in the external world. Nevertheless, culture reflects how "reality" is perceived and understood. Culture is

dynamic and changing because the bearers of culture, "the architects of the cultural blue print," are alive and making constant changes in the accepted norms.

In addition to culture being a changing mirror of "reality," it is a societal possession, thus making it supra-individual. Individuals of society cease to exist but society continues. While a person is not a society, he is more than an individual. He is a member of an interacting group, and as such, he is affected by group influences. Messages across cultural boundaries will need to be despatched in terms of the cultural patterns, norms, standards and regularized guidelines for behavior.

Mass communicators would do well to keep in mind that cultures are frequently divided into subcultures, each with its peculiar content, structure and inner logic. In forgetting that it is quite possible to reach a limited subgroup without in the least influencing the rest of a society, the mass communicator will be making a grave mistake. A message intended for an entire society because of its nature or style may reach the educated class while, simultaneously, the masses may be overlooked. Again, city people may be reached while the farmers may be forgotten. Unless communication is geared to the life-way, underlying assumptions, values and goals of either a culture or subculture, it will fail to inform, convince, and persuade the group.

The following examples will serve to illustrate the diversity that exists within various cultures.

Japan.--Very rarely do the Japanese have to wonder what to do when faced with the question of being loyal to the family or to the Emperor. "Japan never lacked for a flow of eager volunteers for Kamikazi duty, even though dying for the Emperor meant leaving a family destitute back home" (7, p. 81). Obedience, conformity, and the fulfilling of obligations are codes of preference, not individuality or the pursuit of happiness.

Burmese interpersonal behavior.--To instill the meaning of authority, the attitudes toward the exercise of authority, and the role of individuals in personal conflictual situations, the following are some of the guiding principles:

Clear-cut conflict is to be avoided. Authority is not to be directly challenged, unless one is ready for battle and the eventful outcome of either total victory or total defeat.

When there is trouble, an outstanding grievance, or a sudden attack, catching the antagonist unawares is the way to proceed. . . .

To get or use power requires coalition formation, and allies are sought against figures of power, for numbers outweigh authority.

To get a decision implemented or a request fulfilled with which an individual is reluctant to comply, force must be used. Any challenge to authority requires coercion (5, p. 273).

Buddhism.--"The goal of every individual life is to lose its uniqueness through entrance into Nirvana--the blessed

state in which independent existence is no longer a necessity" (7, p. 148). Countries like the United States of America, place cultural emphasis on the individuality of every person.

Latin America, North America and other countries.---

The time-communication. If a Latin American made an appointment with a North American there could be quite a difference in arrival due to a difference in culture. The former would arrive forty-five minutes after the given time and find nothing wrong with that, while waiting beyond five minutes of the appointed time would exasperate the latter. Alfred G. Smith says,

In the American (U.S.A.) culture discussion is a means to an end: the deal. You try to make your point quickly, efficiently, neatly. . . . For the Latin American, the discussion is a part of the spice of life. Just as he tends not be overly concerned about reserving you your specific segment of time, he tends not as rigidly to separate business from non-business (8, p. 568).

Time schedules are closely followed by Americans. They indicate priorities. Not meeting these deadlines carries penalties such as unreliability and lack of integrity. "But to mention a deadline to the Arab may be "like waving a red flag in front of a bull."

The space-communication. Sometimes Americans talk about foreigners being "pushy." All this may mean is that foreigners are not handling space relations "properly." In the United States, the standing distance for an adult male

is about two feet. For the Latin American this distance impresses him with "coldness." Edward T. Hall, in The Silent Language says that

the flow and shift of distance between people as they interact with each other is part and parcel of the communication process. . . . one person trying to increase the distance in order to be at ease, while the other tries to decrease it for the same reason, neither one being aware of what was going on (1, p. 205).

The place-for-everything-communication. In America "business can be discussed almost anywhere, except perhaps the church. One can even talk business on the church steps going to and from the service" (8, p. 570). In India, one might jeopardize his chances of effecting a satisfactory business relationship if he talks business while visiting a person's home.

It is a traditional law that political subjects should not be discussed by a politician when speaking on university grounds. Mr. Nixon (then Vice-Pres.), had made plans, in American traditional culture, to improve relations with the University of San Marcos through face-to-face discussion. His interpreter was dressed in full military uniform at a time when some Latin Americans had recently overthrown military dictators. But this procedure was unacceptable to the University of San Marcos, Peru (8, p. 571). Failing to meet cultural demands creates cross-cultural misunderstandings. Without a removal of cultural frictions, further



problems can arise thus leading to potentially violent confrontations between countries.

Messages may be accepted (in whole or in part), distorted, or rejected. Each response of the person or group is largely based on the frame of reference, and every response is calculated to maintain or regain homeostasis. Adjustment for balance is based on the selection of certain ways of thought, attitudes, and actions. This selection is not haphazard and is usually in harmony with the "soul" of the culture. Further modifications of those selections are sometimes made in accord with the particular gestalt configuration, as perceived by the individual.

The dominant premises, values, and goals which permeate the various aspects of a culture give that culture "oneness." In order to communicate effectively with people of different cultures, Luzbetak gives a useful list of clues to the underlying set of themes in almost any given culture. Inquiring into the following will be valuable:

1. The self-image of the society and whom it considers to be a good person.
2. The violent resistance to innovation.
3. The native educational context and motivation, the lessons and warnings given to small children, the instructions given to youths during initiation rites.
4. Arguments between tribesmen, husband and wife, etc.
5. The scoldings, reprimands, praises, given especially to youth.
6. The factors that contribute to feelings of security.
7. The factors that contribute to a preferred status.
8. The content and motivation contained in the arguments of native agitation.

9. The reasons for dissatisfaction and criticism.
10. The object of violent hate and condemnation.
11. The assumptions, motivations, general line of reasoning observed in meetings and court sessions.
12. The behavior which the more severe sanctions aim to control.
13. The type of sanctions feared most.
14. The more serious worries.
15. The severest insults and the most painful type of ridicule.
16. The chief aspirations.
17. Occasions of war.
18. Motives of suicide (3, p. 160).

In his communicative role, the messenger needs to modify his approach to the local set of themes. Subsequent to ascertaining authentic information of actual cases in the above stated clues and others, he may want to draw up a list of such themes and tentatively assume that they represent what he has been referring to as the people's "strange mentality."

To a large extent the communicator's speech and interaction with people of a culture, other than his own, should come as close as possible to their local configurational system. Let us use the Middle Wahgi (New Guinea) mentality as an illustration of the theme-theory.

#### Some underlying themes.

Assumption 1: The ultimate norm for "good" or "bad," "right" or "wrong," is the clan.

Corollary A: "Outsiders" have no rights.

Corollary B: The clan is always right.

Corollary C: Personal rights and advantages are subservient to the clan.

Assumption II: Security is found in the clan alone.

Corollary A: Good prosperity and prestige is all important.

Corollary B: Every clan member is vitally important to the clan.

Assumption III: Successful living consists in close cooperation among all clan members, as well as the departed and those yet unborn.

Corollary A: Cooperation among the living is emphasized.

Corollary B: The living members are utterly dependent upon the departed.

Corollary C: The departed clan members are dependent upon the living for their happiness in the ancestors' land, the other world.

Assumption IV: Man's most important material possession is the pig. Without the pig native life would be impossible.

It will be perhaps superfluous to say even once that any "foreign" communicator attempting to communicate in his homestyle to a community as cited above courts failure. A missionary whose religious persuasion both prevents him from dealing with pigs and permits him speaking against them does

to the minds of those Middle Wahgi people, special effort will have to be made to tailor his message to fit them. Any ignorance on the part of the messenger in this respect will be an unpardonable sin with them.

### Culture Change

As was stated before, the locus of culture is in the mind, in the ideas one has. It would then be necessary to propagate new ideas if there is a desire to effect a change of culture. The one who is expected to change his culture, must change his assumptions. His mental constructs, the strength of his cognitions, and the perceived relevance of his points of judgment, must be changed. If the influence of his cultural context is overpowering, then his desire for receiving "outside" communication will be frustrated. Any messages that must be transmitted to him must be sent through the channel to which he is tuned.

All messages create a response. Some responses are visible while others are not. Feedback enables the communicator to know whether the response from the message receiver is favorable or otherwise. Some responses may not give an accurate picture of the person's intention since people operate on both the implicit and explicit levels of meaning. But the messenger, if he has no way of differentiating them, will have to go ahead and treat them as a whole, as a message package.

If the messenger discovers that his message is not accepted or if the communication is short circuited (or crossed), he will need, through the monitoring process (cybernetics), to adapt his message. The nature of the reply will give him a clue to making the appropriate methodological adjustment to bring about a change in response.

In seeking to introduce change through cultural or intercultural communication, the communicator needs to recognize that change is usually resisted by people who desire to persist in their "old" ways. Cultural change may be dealt with from different angles: (a) extent of change, (b) rate of change, (c) object of change, and (d) manner of change. The communicator must recognize the type of change these people are ready to make and be able to persuade them if he so desires.

Extent of change.--(persistence and change)

General persistence. In this instance, the people of a particular culture make efforts either to limit change or resist change in a wide area of cultural life.

Sectional persistence. This type of change affects only certain "hard parts" of the way of life. A group may be in favor of technological change, but this takes place only in certain areas of cultural group.

Token or partial resistance. This form of resistance is a special form of sectional persistence. For example, a wake is now held in a funeral home rather than in the parlor

of the relatives. The latter was formerly the custom. The use of horses is now generally restricted to military funerals.

Survivals. Innovations of this type are culture traits, or complexes that have, with the passage of time, changed their function and have become mere convention or formality. An example of this form of "survival" is the continued use of buttons on coat sleeves although they no longer have functionality.

#### Rate of Change.

Revolution. Revolution is a form of change which is suddenly precipitated with more or less violence, affecting a considerable portion of a culture. This change is often generated by the lack of monumental change over a long period of time.

Style. This type of change, in contrast to revolutionary change, is rather short-lived and consists of insignificant modifications in a single cultural element. The annual but relatively minor auto changes which occur in our society illustrate this type of change.

Long-term trend and cultural trend. In the case of the former trend, an insignificant modification takes place in a single cultural element but over a long time. In the case of the latter trend, the process exists where minor alterations slowly change the character and form of any way of life,

but where the continuity of the event is apparent. This may be contrasted with historic accidents--the more abrupt innovations.

Object of change.--Culture changes may occur in content, structure, or configuration. It may affect the form, meaning, use or function of the trait, complex, institution, or of even a wider range of customary behavior.

Manner of change.

Substitution. Traditional elements are dislodged by new ones--the gas light has been dislodged by electricity. Substitution may be complete or partial.

Loss. The dislodging of a traditional pattern is effected without simultaneously providing a substitute.

Incrementation. This takes place by introducing additional elements into the culture without a corresponding displacement.

Fusion. This is the amalgamation of an innovation with an analogous traditional pattern--the Neo-Melanesian or "Pidgin-English," a true language that has resulted from a communication between the native and the white man in Melanesia (3, pp. 198-202).

Culture-change Processes.--Culture does not consist of individual actions but of socially approved standards and norms. Deviations from socially shared patterns may come

through individuals but the deviations must be given social approval before they emerge into norms.

Aspects of change.--There are three aspects of change. They are: primary, secondary or integrative, and terminal. The primary aspect consists of two types: origination and diffusion. In origination, changes arise through processes from within a society, while in the case of diffusion, changes stem from processes outside the society.

Diffusion is of many kinds: (1) the stimulus which occurs when an idea is borrowed, (2) the gradual or rapid, (3) the objective or technical, in which instance the object itself may diffuse, or the technique of producing the object may be adopted, and (4) the strategic or non-strategic, which depends on whether or not there is the need for extensive preparations.

Furthermore, diffusion may assume active or passive forms. This type of diffusion depends on whether the borrowing society must participate in or merely enjoy the novelty. Example: Trinidad steel-orchestra music in the United States is a passive diffusion, while Americans--eating Trinidad cassava--constitutes an active diffusion.

Diffusion, like origination, may take place in regard to form, meaning, and usage or function. In addition, its object may be a simple trait, a complex system, an institution, or even a combination of institutions.



Mechanical disruptions in communication equipment can be a source of transmission problems. The system itself may fail to function properly, thus bringing hardship on either the sender or the receiver of the message. Difficulties can be experienced because of an electrical failure in the power supply or in the reception system.

But these are not the integral problems which really cause communications setbacks either on the cultural, societal, or intercultural level. The core of the problem lies within the style, attitudes, and presumptions of the communicator on the one hand, and the attitudes, values, and group-concepts of the communicatee on the other. The misunderstandings in communication are more psychological and attitudinal than physical and mechanical.

#### Teaching Christianity Without Imposing Culture

Irrespective of his particularized task, the missionary can be considered a professional "builder of a better world." Like other builders, he constantly needs "his tools--his plumbline and his level--lest the building which he is constructing get out of line or even collapse" (3, p. 4). The plumbline may be likened unto his particular understanding of truth in the various forms--theological, scientific, and philosophical.

The communicator who functions as a Christian missionary does so within cultures other than his own. "He does

not deal with culture in the abstract," Luzbetak notes, "but with individuals (psychological aspects) who live in a given society (sociological aspects) and share a common way of life (culturological aspects)" (3, p. 5). As he operates within cultures which are foreign to him, he needs to be on guard not to contaminate his message with his own culture which is foreign to the local society. A missionary typically seeks to modify some behavioral aspects of the particular cultural group with whom he is working. This alteration, however, should reflect the purity smeared with the ways of his own ethnic and domestic culture of his message and not the unique features of his own ethnic and cultural background.

For example, if an American missionary is working in India, he should produce "India" Christians instead of Americanized Indian Christians. A missionary from Trinidad would be over-reaching his boundaries if he attempted to make Portuguese converts into "Trinidad" Christians. Any given society has a right to its own national distinctiveness and its own unique culture, no matter how strange they may appear to be to others.

Missions and missionary communicators must, therefore, be conversant with how the mind and ways of a people change. They should know how such change might be predicted, directed, and maintained, as well as how changes could be introduced with a minimum of cultural disorganization.

### Cultural Implications of Conversion

The turning of one's back on the "old" ways and the espousing of "new" ways is one approach to the defining of Christian conversion. This change presumes more than the acceptance of externals and theoretical creeds. It involves a wholehearted embracing of new ways, new premises, values and goals. It affects the convert's social and domestic life. In fact it touches on every sphere of his daily activity. The transition, therefore, becomes a living part of his cultural organism.

Since culture change is a complex process, the communicator should implement the principles of "cultural relevancy." He has to change as well as preserve traditional ways. He will have to be an expert with respect to culture in general, and a specialist in regard to the habits and values of prospective Christian groups in specific.

In order to be effective, a missionary needs more than personal piety. A knowledge of what to accommodate is vital. All the why's, latent and manifest, objective as well as the supposed and attributed, must be investigated. Basic to effective social action are the following steps by Luzbetak (3, pp. 13, 14): First, a missionary should have a proper understanding of the socio-cultural context of a particular country. This means both knowing what the particular society or group does and why it does it. Sometimes the why is more difficult to arrive at than the what. Sometimes

the attributed functions are not really objective. The reason given sometimes for wearing a charm is that it saves the wearer from drowning. Objectively, the charm will not keep the wearer afloat. In spite of this, the charms serve an objective purpose in the given culture in that it inspires self-confidence and functions as a source of security.

Second, a missionary, in order to be effective, should adjust his approach to local ways and values. Social action must be relevant to what the local people believe in, what they value and do. Their needs, their values, and assumptions, and not the missionary's, should, within all possibility, determine his interpersonal and professional approach toward the socio-economic betterment of the people. The adjustment requires recognition, appreciation, and sometimes adoption of some of their "shocking" attitudes and practices. Self-sacrifice will be often required of the missionary. It will take some tolerance to accept the "grotesque" local art and music (like the "shango dance" and "Indian hosein" in Trinidad) as do the local people. Even the "filth" and "smell" of "Shanty Town" will require the missionary's appreciation.

True native leadership and local cooperation should be sought by the missionary. The "natives'" acquaintance with the socio-cultural situation in which he finds himself should be solicited. This step should be taken whenever possible and whenever prudence will allow.

Facilitating conversion within a cultural context, then, calls for understanding, accommodation, and self-denial of the missionary communicator.

### Christianity Through the Cultural Context

The missionary is seeking to teach Christianity within a given culture instead of attempting to force change. There must be a desire on the part of the people for change. There must also be meaningful communication if conduciveness to change takes place. Meaningful communication here relates to the transmission of messages on the proper "wave-length" of the people.

Very generally, messages sent from an "outside" culture are structured in terms of that culture. In intercultural communication, the receiving society may try to interpret those messages in terms of the sending society. This, however, is hardly the case in regard to the missionary's message. It is usually interpreted and misinterpreted within the cultural experience of the receiving society. There is a substantially greater chance of the message remaining unaltered and being properly understood if the communication takes the receptor's cultural background into account.

Conviction, persuasion, and effective argumentation are needed by the missionary but not the cultural premises, values, and motives of the missionary. In wishing to communicate the Gospel, he must proceed from the known to the

unknown, from the felt to the still unfelt, from the wanted to the unwanted. The use of culturally pertinent "starting points" of reasoning, feeling, and motivation are needed in bringing about conviction and persuasion.

Throughout all the action and interaction of the missionary communicator, the focus must be on the group's or tribe's cultural propensity to accept Christian doctrine. The basis of missionary empathy is the understanding of the culture as an adaptive system. The culture of any people, however "pagan" it may be, is an attempt by that people to cope with the peculiar problems they confront.

The missionary who views culture with proper understanding will cease to see the particular people and their customs as strange and ridiculous. He will be less inclined to become discouraged in the presence of opposition, lack of cooperation, and scant courtesy. However unscientific and untheological the non-Christian adaptive system happens to be, it is the way of life with which that society has had experience and can therefore really trust.

Suspicion, resistance, rejects, and self-preservation may be generated by natural and normal drives and desires instead of ill-will. Although the Gospel is designed for all nations, it may be natural for a society to suspect and resist the missionary's message than to gladly accept it.

Regardless of the type of information the missionary is attempting to communicate, the local culture and not

"foreign" culture must be the point of concentration. The following guidelines may illustrate this concept more clearly. First, the message should be presented as a suggestion that can perfect and complete the traditional adaptive system, and not as an isolated, arbitrary set of laws, or a dangling, competing system.

Second, Christianity should be explained as a method of assisting mankind in adapting itself to the problems of life in a meaningful and successful way. In this sense, doctrine should intermesh with, and not be separated from the fuller development of life itself.

Third, missionaries should study the traditional adaptive system of a particular culture in order to locate the people's felt needs. They will accept only that part of the overall Christian message that relates to their own needs and fits within their own cultural framework.

An example of this problem has been encountered by this writer in Trinidad and, no doubt, the situation has occurred in many other places as well. Many among the East Indians of Trinidad feel no sense of guilt in terms of sin from the Christian standpoint. To initiate a Bible lecture series on the "Redemptive Aspect of Christ" would be very disconcerting and meaningless to Muslims. But the very Person of Christ may have values they can quite easily identify with. This is especially true of his humanitarian qualities. These

people do not see they need the Christian's Christ as a Savior, but they would be interested in Him as a good man. What is the missionary's task then? He should deliberately and intelligently start from the aspect favorable to them and move on to the culturally more difficult and less appealing aspects of Christology.

Communication through the cultural context must be expanded to include the subcultural segment. Roman Catholicism and Protestantism of Trinidad constitute religious subsocieties. The point may be further complicated when Trinidad Adventism is declared a subculture of the Protestant subsociety. Each of these is a subculture of the subcultural forms of Trinidadianism.

In explaining Adventist views to Catholics or to other Protestants, or even when attempting to bring about a highly desirable unity among Christians, the missionary communicator faces a serious challenge. He must recognize that in such an activity, one is obliged to cross subcultural boundaries even if that one does not leave the Trinidad shores.

People are separated not only in religious faith but also in religious culture. Consider a typical case. In Trinidad some Indian people would kneel in their yards and turn in the direction of the sun as they pray. There is a difference of religious faith and also a difference of religious culture. Again, when Mohammedans go to their mosque to worship, they take off their shoes at the entrance of the



service building. This is another case of not only different faith but of a different culture. And all is performed on the same island.

In order to understand these and other people, and to be effective in communicating with them, the same anthropological principles and techniques should be used as are applied to people of a foreign country. Each genuine group speaks its own cultural language.

The communicator who fills the capacity of a missionary must use his mind and the mind of the local people as he strives toward cultural integration. Here are some criteria for judging the thoroughness of cultural integration and for indicating to what extent the missionary has become a part of the native life-style (3, pp. 181, 183, 188).

First, the number of linkages that exist between the missionary's message and the people's life experiences is an important factor. Severed functions must never be ignored, otherwise the corresponding needs will be filled in some other, un-Christian (usually traditional) way.

Second, there is the matter of the degree of consistency that emerges. A major missionary task is to "engineer" or direct this unavoidable "nativizing" or "paganizing" tendency so that during the process no necessary element of Christianity is lost or distorted. Accommodation here, however, is a two-way procedure: on one hand, mission and missionary adjusting to the local life, and,

on the other, the "new" Christians adjusting to the ways of the church.

The extent of reciprocity is the third important factor. The extent of reciprocity between essential Christian ways and the native patterns will indicate how thoroughly or how superficially Christianity has been integrated into the local culture. The greater the reciprocity, the more integrated is the culture. Reciprocity should be encouraged by the policies and techniques adopted.

Integration of the ideas from one culture into the experience of another will not always follow a comparatively smooth path. Cultural disorganization sometimes occurs thus rendering both the work of the missionary and native acceptance of it critical. Frustration may be experienced. The local group may demonstrate a type of reaction formulated through nativism--the effort to restore group integrity, self-respect, and solidarity.

The missionary faces the responsibility of helping to restore cultural organization. The disorganization may be caused by contact with a vastly different life-style, urbanization, and industrialization or migration. This is a tremendous task which the missionary cannot handle alone, but he must aid in finding a solution to the problem. He needs to seek help from sources such as government, philanthropic foundations, the mission staff, anthropologists,

and other helpers. Any appropriate source of help should be sought whenever and wherever possible.

Social as well as personality conflicts may emerge from uneven social change and cultural lags. Lapses into traditional ways, which are contrary to the missionary's teachings, may occur. The convert may be torn between two loyalties in an "approach-approach" configuration. On one hand, he must be loyal to the new Christian principles, and, on the other, to his tribe or kin or country.

The convert may be torn by a conflict not easily appreciated by one outside the experience in particular and the culture in general. The missionary may have difficulty understanding a particular personal problem of a convert because the problem is culture-related instead of being a universal one. The missionary, in a counseling experience, could have to be cautious about providing too quick or too easy a solution.

#### Recommendations

The missionary serving in intercultural communication capacities is vulnerable through cultural shock. Because of this, the new missionary should be given an orientation into the psychology of the particular mission territory prior to his commencing any work among a people whose basic assumptions, values, and goals may differ from his.

The mentality of the local people should be frequently discussed with missionaries, government officials, and other foreign workers who have spent a considerable amount of time in the particular area. To aid him in properly assessing the mentality of the particular people, the missionary should gear his approach to the local set of themes. A list of these themes appears earlier in this chapter.

In areas where people operate as groups, missionaries should present Christian beliefs and practices in terms of group-concepts and group-values since the various assumptions and themes of these people are group-centered. The following will serve as examples.

Instead of referring to the "church," the missionary should say "Christ's clan." In place of "church members," or "Christians," use "members of Christ's clan."

The natural clan includes not only the living but those in the other world. The missionary can talk about "Christ's militant clan" (the present stage of the church); "Christ's suffering clan members" (church members now dead); and "the triumphant clan members" (the ultimate meeting of the past, present, and future church members).

The "saints" are the "clan heroes" some of whom died (martyrs) while others were outstanding through their singular attachment to their clan-ideals. Faith could be expressed as a clan obligation. An obligation of being interested not only in self, but in actual members, and in those still unborn should be stressed (3, p. 167).

In order to build communicative relationships between two opposing cultures, certain approaches should be used. First, the rhetoricians should locate areas of agreement which can be used as a background for the acceptance of differences that are causing friction and tension.

Second, the participants in the missionary effort should become sensitive to differences, accept the existence of uniqueness, and recognize the existing similarities. People think differently and their thought patterns are reflected in their behavior. Intercultural communicators need an awareness of other cultures not only in terms of what they think but also "how they formulate their ideas" (7, p. 86).

Jawaharlal Nehru remarked that "if we wish to convince them, [people of other countries] we have to use their language as far as we can, not language in the narrow sense of the word, but the language of the mind" (6, p. v).

Third, the communicators should instigate a controlled exploration of the types of presentation that will increase understanding. In this connection, Robert T. Oliver points out that "if we would communicate across cultural barriers, we must learn what to say and how to say it in terms of the expectations and predispositions of those we want to listen" (7, p. 154).

Fourth, indigenous leadership should be utilized where it is possible and wise. The missionary should encourage

are a number of special advantages. First, native leadership is culturally conditioned for the environment in which he operates. Local converts understand the people, speak the local tongue and share the local way of life. Second, the problem of effective communication disappears, as well as the problem of using premises and motivations that have force and meaning to local people. Third, the problem of having to make adjustment for the people's life-style, such as food, dress, entertainment, and social relationship ceases to exist.

Finally, the church should provide (a) evangelistic workers for the ethnic-groups represented by the foreign languages extant in the country, and (b) literature in the languages of those ethnic groups.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to show that (1) there are many cultures and subcultures within any given society, (2) culture is learned, therefore, it is teachable, transferable, and changeable, and (3) in bringing about desired changes in morality and religion, it is necessary to affect changes in other aspects of culture. Some cultural habits reside in the core attitudes, and are virtually impossible to change.

The second part of this chapter demonstrated that while missionary communications are cultural change agents. their

paramount duty as such is to adapt their messages to the cultural system of the people and not to impose their culture instead of the purity of their messages.

The final portion of the chapter offered suggestions which could be used by missionaries and others involved in cross-cultural communication.

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## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

For over three quarters of a century the Seventh-day Adventist church has been in Trinidad. From the day the first Adventist minister put foot on Trinidad soil to the day when the church has over 233 workers within the territory, the church has been striving towards the realization of its goals. The church has been rising and falling in terms of successes and failures, both in terms of planned projects and making converts.

The experiences which the church has been having from the religio-sociological point of view are common to all human organizations. To a greater or lesser degree, this church has stayed alive because of the built-in confidence and security it possesses in the minds of some dedicated workers.

This study has sought to locate and identify the factors relating to the church's effectiveness in the prosecution of its missionary task. The purpose of this final chapter is (1) to briefly summarize the information contained in this thesis, and (2) to make suggestions for future research. The second portion of the summary makes suggestions for future research.

### Summary of this Thesis

This thesis has been divided into two sections. The first section, covered by Chapters II and III, attempted to project the image of the church in the context of a many-cultured nation.

That the church faces problems has been shown in Chapter II. The first locus of problems is within the church itself. Within the organizational framework there is considerable information loss due to the existence of gatekeepers. The presence of this form of communication-filtering has interrupted free thought and, in some instances, prevented the making of more intelligent decisions on both the executive committee level and the individual member-worker level.

The sub-division dealing with the climate within the church demonstrated that although there are signs of member-satisfaction and high group morale, there are behavioral patterns of discontent and hostility.

Attention has been given to the question of would-be converts and post-baptismal converts. Observation was made of the fact that new converts soon become "members anonymous," and this circumstance partly accounts for their apostatizing.

The last part of the chapter was concerned with the setting of goals and the hazards which are attached to that process. While goals are useful and relevant to the operation

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of any social unit, displacement and over emphasis of goals affect the real goals as well as the quality of the product.

Chapter III was broken down into two portions. In the first portion, sharp focus was given to (1) the church in conflict with other religious groups, (2) the need for the avoidance of deliberate and unwise activity which resulted, quite often, in unnecessary group friction, and (3) the presence of high ego involvement has brought on polarization.

The second portion of the chapter examined the relevance of the "social to save" approach. Inasmuch as men must first learn to live and practice living harmoniously on earth before they can live in a celestial society, this portion of the chapter stressed the church's need to teach the practical aspects of everyday Christian living. This last area of the chapter hypothesized that if the church in its public relations exercised more selectivity in evangelistic methodology and terminology, it would elevate its credibility and augment its membership more rapidly.

Chapter IV concentrated on (1) the principles of intercultural communication, and (2) the "accommodation method" to be followed by the missionary communicator in teaching Christianity instead of imposing his culture on the potential converts.

The chapter contended that unfamiliarity with a particular culture, more often than not, results in communication breakdowns. It was also shown that cultural lag and uneven social change may produce social and personality conflicts.

Finally, the chapter discussed the importance of precise and well-designed messages in maximizing the impact of a communicative effort.

#### Areas for Future Research

In our western society each individual is encouraged to make decisions on his own. This is especially true among Protestant bodies. This cultural trait is reinforced through the breakdown of family ties and greater mobility. For this type of social structure the emphasis on individual conversions would be recommendable.

But taking full cognizance of the fact that some ethnic groups within the western world retain distinctive cultures, an area for future study of "People Movements" is essential. Kenneth Scott Latourette notes that

more and more we must dream in terms of winning groups, not merely individuals. Too often with our Protestant . . . individualism we have torn men and women, one by one, out of the family, village or clan, with the result that they have been permanently de-racinated and maladjusted (1, p. 18).

Men respond to the Gospel invitation in various ways. These responses are dependent upon the people's social background and customary manner of making decisions. The East

Indians in Trinidad, for example, usually make decisions in groups. There is solidarity and interdependence. Decisions are usually made after consultation with others, and there is less social alienation and more reinforcement through social cohesion to stand up under persecution.

Two examples from this writer's experience in Trinidad will illustrate this point. The Mykoo family, consisting of nine individuals, heard and accepted the Adventist teachings. They may have had problems of adjusting to a new life-way, but they were able to withstand a considerable amount of external social opposition.

David Charan, also an Indian and an intelligent man, accepted the Adventist teachings but was taunted, despised, and considered inferior by his relatives. Not only did he leave the traditional religion to join another, but he also adopted a new set of cultural habits reflected in different eating, drinking, and worshiping habits.

The experience of missionaries in attempting to communicate theological and social systems from one culture to another may provide us with the insights necessary to promote understanding and progress between and within nations. Cultural anthropologists have called our attention to the dangers of ethnocentrism both at home and abroad. An understanding of message diffusion within a culture or sub-culture could eliminate a number of friction-points that are more or

less the product of the failure to recognize the uniqueness and importance of cultural norms.

In short, the missionary experience of a number of religious groups should be carefully and systematically examined. The principles of intercultural communication that would emerge could serve to increase our skill and ability to deal with various types of intercultural situations--political, social, and economic, as well as religious.

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