

Public Evangelism Level Personal Ministries Instructional
and Enrichment Training Course

This Enrichment Training Course was prepared for the Adult Ministries Department
of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America

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A North American Division Adult Ministries Sponsored Public Evangelism Level Personal Ministries Instructional and Enrichment Training Course

The Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division sponsors a curriculum for the instruction and enrichment of those involved in personal ministries outreach and leadership. This curriculum has three levels of training and enrichment. All the courses are available online at www.nadadultministries.org.

These courses are all self-contained units. If you wish to obtain either the "Qualified Personal Ministries Instructor" or "Qualified Master Personal Ministries Instructor" *Certificates of Accomplishment* you must complete all the required courses in the curriculum outline.

North American Division Personal Ministries Participants Qualification Process and Curriculum

Core Units



CU 101 – The Great Commission- The Call to be Fishers of People
CU 103 – Understanding Your Bible
CU 104 – How to Use the Bible in Personal Ministries Outreach

Essential Skills



ES 01 – The Science of Soul Winning- Methodologies, Resources, Basic Skills
ES 02 – How to Give Bible Studies
ES 03 – The Art of Obtaining Decisions
ES 04 – Relating to People of Various Persuasions

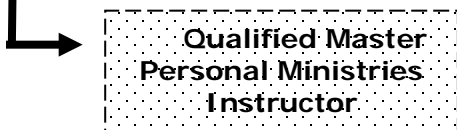


**Qualified Personal
Ministries Instructor**

Member-Led Public Evangelism



PE 1 – The Basics of Evangelistic Sermon Preparation and Delivery
PE 2 – How to Organize and Run an Evangelistic Campaign
Additional courses as needed or requested



**Qualified Master
Personal Ministries
Instructor**

The Basics of Evangelistic Sermon Preparation and Delivery

A North American Division Adult Ministries Sponsored
Member-Led Evangelism Level Personal Ministries
Instructional and Enrichment Course

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Course Description

Personal Ministries is both the name of a department sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist church and a designation for any ministry carried out by individual members, or small groups of people, focused on direct evangelistic contact such as Bible studies, baptismal classes, church member-led evangelistic campaigns, or other methodologies involving direct soul winning outreach.

The Holy Spirit has chosen some personal ministries participants to receive a spiritual gift of public evangelism. Member-led public evangelism has won multiple thousands of people to the Seventh-day Adventists church.

People from all walks of life, occupations, and levels of society have held public evangelistic campaigns both small and large. Some have gone on mission trips. Some have gone into unentered areas of the North American Division; some have held small campaigns in their own churches or attached community centers. Some have become highly proficient and very effective in training others to become involved.

This course outlines some key methodology for evangelistic sermon presentation and preparation.

How to Study this Course

This is one of the online courses sponsored by the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division. When you finish you will receive a Certificate of Completion indicating that you have satisfactorily completed this course via the website www.nadadultministries.org.

This course is composed of a course outline, selected readings, and assignment sheets.

You can download the material if you prefer to study from a printed copy. You can also study it directly on the screen if that is your preference.

Note: *In your study be sure to look up and read for yourself the Bible passages noted. This is important both to build understanding, and to make sure you know exactly what the Bible says on a given subject. Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have looked up and read these biblical passages.*

Vocabulary

Church growth eyes. The term “church growth eyes” is an analogy referring to the ability to recognize how elements of church life relate to the Great Commission. A person with church growth eyes “sees” evangelistic opportunities that others are blind to.

Church/district. Many churches in the North American Division belong to an extended family known as a district. This is usually due to the fact that the local conference can only finance one pastor for various churches. Because this type of arrangement is common, and often the churches in a district cooperate in sponsoring training programs, etc. the term “church/district” is used in this course.

Missiology/Missiologist. Missiology is an academic discipline that studies ways and means of reaching people groups around the world with the Christian message. A missiologist is someone who is trained in this academic discipline.

Personal ministries participant. This phrase refers to anyone actively engaged in outreach activities such as giving Bible studies or leading out in any of the variety of personal ministries activities.

Public evangelism. Public evangelism refers to large group meetings, usually held in some accessible public venue.

Sermon or Message. A sermon or message refers to the presentation given in a public evangelistic meeting. In this course the two words are synonymous.

Witness/witnessing. This term refers to the responsibility of every Christian to relate to others what the Lord has done in his or her life and appeal to people to accept the plan of salvation.

Textbook

The textbook for this course is Ellen G White, *Evangelism*. The book *Evangelism* is a compilation from the writings of Ellen G White dealing primarily with public evangelism. The book is available at any Adventist Book Center or online. It can also be accessed at <https://egwwritings.org>. It is suggested that a personal ministries participant evangelist obtain, read, and study this book.

For this course, you do not have to read the entire book. Assignments are indicated in the study outline. Please also read and study carefully the included readings.

A Personal Ministries participant should develop a personal library of basic reference books she or he can use in preparing Bible studies/sermons, or for any other outreach project.

Textbook Reading Assignment. Read during the duration of the course the following sections from *Evangelism*.

1. “The Message and Its Presentation.” Pages 168 - 216.
2. “Preaching the Distinctive Truths.” Pages 217 – 278
3. “Dealing With False Science, Cults, Isms, and Secret Societies.” Pages 589 - 627

Student Fulfillment Card

At the end of this Study Guide you will find a *Student Fulfillment Card*. This is the record you will forward to the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division (jalfred.johnson@nad.adventist.org) so you can receive your Certificate of Completion.

Types of Study Locations

- If you are studying this class on your own, this online Study Guide will indicate the readings and exercises that you should complete. There are some attached readings and assignment sheets you can print out. They identify the important points of the readings and units of study. It is very important to read these materials and fill in the assignment sheets. They are your way of knowing how you are doing in the class.

- If you are studying in a classroom-type setting, an instructor will lead you through various participatory activities.
- If you are studying in a small group, ideas are included for those studying in this environment.
- There are no examinations scheduled for this class, unless an individual instructor decides to use them.

Course Introduction

The mission of the personal ministries participant is founded on three cornerstones: being, knowing, and doing.

- “Being” means that a personal ministries participant must have a valid and perceptible Christian experience, and be prepared to serve as a spiritual guide for her or his contacts and students and/or audience.
- “Knowing” means that a personal ministries participant must know what the Bible says and have a significant understanding of biblical history, doctrines, and teachings, and know how to study and interpret the Scriptures.
- “Doing” means that a personal ministries participant must have a knowledge of teaching methodology and be willing to invest the time and energy necessary to adequately prepare for whatever type of methodology is being used and/or situation in which he or she is involved.

This course, *The Basics of Evangelistic Sermon Presentation and Preparation*, is primarily a “knowing” and “doing” course. Public speaking is an art. Sermon/message preparation and delivery is both an art and a spiritual activity empowered by the Holy Spirit. A personal ministries participant who speaks in public is delivering a life-saving message that must be configured and presented in ways that focuses the mind and attention of the listener on its content, not primarily on the person delivering the message.

Helpful Resources

The Seventh-day Adventist church has recently produced a limited number of resources about member-led public evangelism. The following are available from AdventSource: (1) Russell C. Burrill, *Adventist Evangelistic Preaching*, (2) Sydney Gibbons, *Preaching Made Simple*.

Some older resources containing sermon outlines are available online: (1) *The Message We Believe and Share*, (2) *Share and Encounter: 20 Outlines and Sermons for Lay Evangelists*, (3) Robert H. Pierson, *What Shall I Speak About*. Many sermon ideas in Pierson’s book are pastoral, but the index in the back categorizes the sermons in a helpful way.

Try Amazon.com and/or AbeBooks.com. as sources for these older books.

Why Is This Course Important?

- It is important to understand the role and methodology of preaching evangelistic sermons.
 - It is important because evangelistic preaching involves both explanation and calls for decisions. A personal ministries participant must learn how to do this.
 - It is important because evangelistic preaching must be developed in a way that always points people to Jesus and the plan of salvation.
 - It is important because some people will only become acquainted with the gospel and the Advent Message through evangelistic preaching.

Course Objectives

- The personal ministries participant will examine and acquire a knowledge and understanding of the basic rules of evangelistic sermon preparation.
- The personal ministries participant will be able to apply these rules in the development and presentation of evangelistic sermons.

UNIT 1

Evangelistic Sermon Presentation

The elements of evangelistic presentation precede the actual preparation of evangelistic sermons. The reason is that the way an evangelistic sermon is prepared depends on the audience that will listen to it. Sermons must fit the audience, not the audience the sermon.

Evangelistic preaching is what preachers are doing when they open the word of God with the purpose of reaching lost men and women and bringing them into a saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.¹ It is a missiological activity. Evangelistic preaching is totally focused on reaching lost people with the saving news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and making them responsible members of the church.

Evangelistic preaching is different from pastoral preaching. Pastoral preaching, what is heard on Sabbath in church, may deal with all kinds of subjects, many of them related to Christian lifestyle, etc. Evangelistic preaching deals mostly with Bible prophecy, Bible doctrines, and calls for decisions.

A personal ministries participant who is involved in public evangelism uses the same sets of skills studied in other courses in this Personal Ministries Instructional and Enrichment Curriculum, and applies them to a soul winning methodology called public (large group) evangelism.

A Spiritual Activity

The way evangelistic preaching is done involves an understanding of the audience and how best to communicate with them. A church pastor on Sabbath morning is perceived as “behind the pulpit,” even if the church does not physically use a pulpit. A public evangelist is perceived as “on stage,” because the environment is different.

A public evangelist is not, however, just an actor “on stage.” Evangelistic preaching is a spiritual activity. No matter what an evangelist’s “stage presence” is, if it is not motivated and empowered by the Holy Spirit, it will probably become just an informative lecture.

The evangelist is communicating a message. The message is what counts. The spiritual power of the Holy Spirit is what makes the message impact the hearing, understanding and decision-making of the audience. A skilled public speaker can motivate an audience to react in many ways, but only the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit can affect spiritual change in a person in the audience.

More Than Oratory

The word “oratory” refers to eloquence in public speaking. Evangelistic preaching is more than oratory. Evangelistic preaching involves oratory, but it is also *teaching* done in a way that calls attention and awakens interest. You don’t have to be eloquent when you are empowered by the Holy Spirit and backed up by intercessory prayer warriors.

Oratory will draw a crowd, but it will not by itself convince many people to follow biblical truth. Someone may say, “That was a great sermon,” and never change their beliefs or lifestyle. The whiskey flask in their back pocket is still there! Someone else may say, “I get

¹Russell Burrill, *Adventist Evangelistic Preaching*, p. 8.

what you mean," but the whiskey flask in their back pocket is still there! Yet another person says, "I get it! 'I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!' (Mark 9:24), and hands the whiskey flask to the evangelist. That is what evangelistic preaching is all about.

For instance, a famous Seventh-day Adventist evangelist of the past (who later left the church) was once invited to preach a sermon at a fellowship gathering of people from various denominations. He preached on "Our Eternal Home." At the end of the presentation the audience came to its feet, clapped and cheered, and the evangelist took a number of bows.

Sitting outside the auditorium with a friend, he remarked, "If it were not for our unpopular message, I could be a great man." His friend remarked, "D.M. (the evangelist's name was D. M. Canright), the message has made you what you are. If you even leave it, it will leave you exactly where it found you!"

That illustrates the essence of what Seventh-day Adventist evangelistic preaching is all about.

Personal Abilities and Qualities

It takes determined effort to become an effective personal ministries participant evangelist. A key factor is the ability and determination to succeed for the Lord no matter what it takes. Mostly, it takes personal discipline and application to develop these abilities.

A personal ministries participant who engages in public evangelism needs to develop some personal abilities. Persons to whom the Holy Spirit has given the spiritual gift of evangelism may already have these abilities. Nevertheless, anyone who feels they would like to engage in public evangelism should develop these abilities. A great deal can be accomplished through patient effort to develop hidden talents a person may have. Maybe these talents are asleep and just need to be awakened!

Some abilities that are especially useful in carrying out public evangelism are the following. These can all be learned and developed with a little effort, practice, and the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

1. Clear reasoning and logical thinking.
2. Strong passion, in the sense of a calling to preach the message. Russell Burrill makes this point very clear:

In order to effectively communicate passion in your delivery, you will have to allow the sermon to take full possession of your very heart. You have seen and felt the life-and-death issues involved in following Jesus. They have so taken possession of your life that you can say only, 'Woe is me if I don't preach this.'

Passion isn't displayed in what you say, but in how you say it. You feel it. This is sensed by those who hear what you are saying. Your voice reveals that you are passionate about this. Conveying your passion doesn't necessarily mean speaking loudly. It means speaking with feeling and emotion because the Holy Spirit has so gripped your soul that you cannot help yourself—you must reveal that the Holy Spirit is in total control of what you are saying and how you are proclaiming it. The result is passionate, Holy Spirit–induced preaching that moves people to come to Jesus.

A poorly written sermon delivered with passion from the Holy Spirit is far more powerful than the most eloquently fluent, grammatically correct sermon preached with little or no passion.²

3. Dynamic imagination. This is the ability to "see" the images presented in Bible prophecy. To "sit with" the prophet as he sees the heavens opened. This way, the

²Russell Burrill, *Adventist Evangelistic Preaching*, p. 10.

preaching of the message comes alive and the audience also “sees” the message of the prophet.

4. The ability to express yourself. Preaching in public means that the audience will understand and identify with what you are saying. The ability to put together understandable sentences and thoughts is very important. It might take some practice. Use your cell phone or tablet to record yourself and listen to the recording. Did you understand what you yourself said?
5. Careful diction and pronunciation. For instance, some people swallow their words, making it difficult to understand what they are saying. In presenting an evangelistic sermon, you have to practice enunciation and diction. Try the same thing with your cell phone or tablet. Can you understand what you yourself is saying?
6. Sermon style. The ability to develop and adapt sermon styles to the needs of the audience.
7. Measure the audience. Abilities to ascertain and put together sermon content and order of topics that will meet the type of audience targeted.
8. Personal study and development. Abilities to collect and organize resource material useful in sermon preparation.
9. The ability to be a “doctor of souls” even if you don’t have any formal training.

Understanding and Knowledge

Ellen G White makes a significant statement about the understandings and knowledge a personal ministries participant needs to have:

He [God] has given us reasoning powers, and opportunities to educate the mind and manners. And after we have done all we can for ourselves, making the best use of the advantages within our reach, then we may look to God with earnest prayer to do by His Spirit that which we cannot do for ourselves. . . . Never should a young minister (or a personal ministries participant evangelist) rest satisfied with a superficial knowledge of the truth, for he knows not where he may be required to bear witness for God. . . . Those who have only a superficial understanding of the truth have failed to become workmen that need not be ashamed. They will be confused, and will not be able clearly to expound the Scriptures.³

In the following pages of the same book, Ellen G White lists some things a personal ministries participant evangelist should know, learn, and practice:

1. Mental discipline. The reference is to Paul’s counsel to Timothy; “Concentrate on doing your best for God, work you won’t be ashamed of, laying out the truth plain and simple. Stay clear of pious talk that is only talk.” (2 Timothy 2: 15, *The Message*).
2. Human nature and how it works. “It requires a knowledge of human nature, close study, careful thought, and earnest prayer, to know how to approach men and women on the great subjects that concern their eternal welfare.”
3. Continual study. “Those who appreciate the probabilities and possibilities of the work for this time, will seek by earnest study to obtain all the knowledge they can from the Word. . . . A minister (or personal ministries participant evangelist) should never think that he (or she) has learned enough, and may now relax his efforts. His education should continue throughout his lifetime; every day he should be learning, and putting to use the knowledge gained.”

³*Gospel Workers*, pp. 91, 93.

Reading 1

Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have completed this Reading.

Effective Sermon Delivery

Adapted from Derik Morris, *Effective Sermon Delivery*, (*Ministry* magazine), September, 2017.

Elements of effective delivery

In order to effectively deliver a sermon you need to remember the results of a classic communication study by Dr. Albert Mehrabian: only 7 percent of your communication includes the words you speak; 38 percent is the way you say those words, your oral interpretation; and 55 percent is your nonverbal communication.¹ In order to maximize the impact of your communication, the words, oral interpretation, and body language must agree. If they do not agree, people will disregard your words and believe your oral interpretation and/or your body language.

What is the vital lesson for preachers who want to deliver powerful biblical sermons effectively? Do not spend all your preparation time working with words. Your words are vitally important; but if you do not have solid biblical content and relevant application, your sermon will fail. You also need to take time to consider how you will deliver those words, both your oral interpretation and your non-verbal communication.

Congruent oral interpretation

There are four basic elements of oral interpretation: pitch, volume, rate of speech, and pause.

1. **Pitch.** Have you ever heard a person sing a song with just one note? We would describe that person's pitch as monotone. Monotone is boring. That is where we get the English word *monotonous*! Variety of pitch adds interest, where the content of the message is effectively interpreted by the pitch of the speaker's voice. Take a single phrase, like "The Lord is my Shepherd," and say it several times using different pitch for different words. You will notice how the meaning of the phrase changes. The pitch you select for your words not only adds interest but also interprets your message. Listen to successful storytellers and you will be impressed by their effective use of pitch variation to communicate effectively the content of the message.

2. **Volume.** What is more effective—a quiet voice or a loud voice? It depends. If you are announcing, "Lift up the trumpet and loud let it ring," it would be incongruent to say those words in a whisper. The volume of your voice should be informed by the content of the message. Once again, the key word to remember is *variety*. Sometimes a whisper is more effective than a shout. At other times, you need to project your words like an urgent warning to a noisy crowd.

3. **Rate of speech.** People typically hear and vocalize words at 150 to 160 words per minute.² Some speak more quickly, allowing little lag time for the listener to process what is

¹Albert Mehrabian, *Silent Messages* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1971), page 43.

²"Words per Minute," Wikipedia, last modified August 2, 2017, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Words_per_minute.

being said. Others speak so slowly that some in the audience fall asleep before they finish the sentence. But whatever your natural rate of speech, if you lack variety in your rate of speech, you will put your audience to sleep. Have you ever taken an early morning ride on a train? Have you noticed how many of the passengers are sleeping? A consistent rate of speed lulls a person to sleep. The same is true with the rate of speech. Your rate of speech should be varied, sometimes fast, sometimes slow, based on the message you are sharing.

4. **Pause.** Intentional use of silence is important as part of effective oral interpretation. When would it be particularly helpful to pause? Allow some intentional silence after you have asked a question. Pause when you want your hearers to consider something you have said, especially the main preaching idea. Some pauses are brief, others are long, depending on the time needed for reflection. As with other aspects of effective oral interpretation, the key word to remember is variety.

Congruent nonverbal communication

Effective oral interpretation is vitally important, but in addition to the 7 percent of words and the 38 percent of how you say those words, you need to consider your nonverbal communication. What are some aspects of nonverbal communication you should remember when preparing to deliver a powerful biblical sermon?

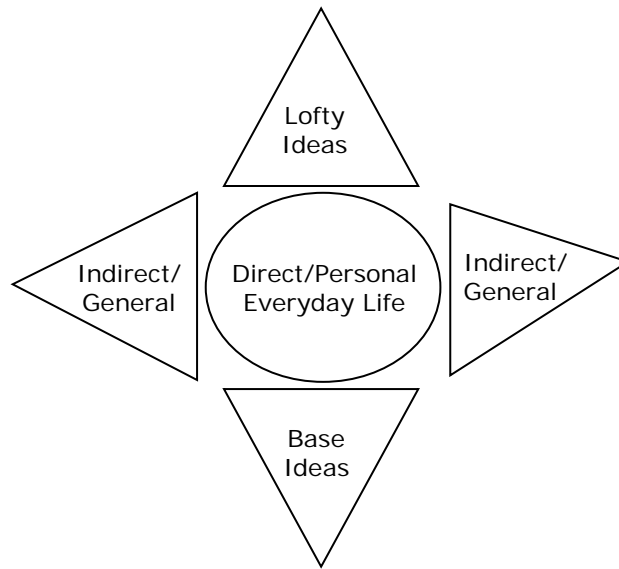
1. **Eye contact.** Connect with your audience through intentional eye contact. Do not scan the group as if you are looking for a lost child, and do not stare at one person until she starts wriggling in her seat. Look at individuals long enough to make a connection. Preaching without notes gives you a great advantage when seeking to establish meaningful eye contact. If you are reading a manuscript, your eye contact with your hearers is seriously impaired. When speaking to a larger group, choose key people in various parts of the auditorium, making sure you do not neglect any sector. Effective eye contact sends the message to each of your listeners that this sermon is especially for her or him.

2. **Facial expressions.** People most naturally look at your face when you are speaking in public. If your face is frozen in one shape, your nonverbal communication becomes hindered. Let your facial expressions reflect the content of your words. When you say, "Jesus loves you," there should be a different expression on your face than when you say, "The wages of sin is death." Be natural, be congruent, and remember the key word for effective delivery—variety.

3. **Gestures.** Congruent gestures are vitally important for effective delivery. Some preachers have a natural repertoire of gestures, but many use neutral gestures without careful thought about the impact upon the listeners. Have you ever seen a preacher who always points at you or pounds a fist on the pulpit? Those gestures might be very effective when describing an angry or defiant attitude, but constantly repeated gestures become meaningless.

Post-sermon feedback is a helpful tool when evaluating the effectiveness of your gestures. On one occasion, I invited my audience to reach out to Jesus, and raised my hand to illustrate that connection. After the service, my son came to me with some valuable feedback: "Dad, when you raised your hand, your palm was facing the audience and it looked like you were pushing Jesus away. Turn your hand a little." What great feedback! I tried the minor gesture adjustment in the second service and it was much more effective. Such is the value of post-sermon feedback regarding your nonverbal communication.

Here is a simple framework for the positioning of congruent gestures, involving a horizontal and a vertical plane.



A gesture located in the center of the horizontal plane is direct and personal. If you are making an appeal, “Jesus is inviting you to follow Him,” your gesture should be in the center of the horizontal plane, like two outstretched hands right in front of you. Gestures on the periphery of the horizontal plane are indirect and general. For example, you might say, “There are troubles all around the world,” pointing to the outer edges of the horizontal plane. Don’t place your gesture in the center of the horizontal plane—that’s too direct. Stretching out your hands to one or both sides of the horizontal plane reinforces your comment as indirect and general.

When positioning gestures, the vertical plane can be divided into three segments: upper third, middle third, and lower third. What type of gesture should be located in the upper third of the vertical plane? High and lofty ideas, like God, heaven, holiness, and salvation. When you say, “God is thin king about you right now” you might begin by looking up or pointing your hand toward the upper third of the vertical plane. The middle third of the vertical plane is reserved for gestures dealing with everyday life. This is where we live. That’s why the gesture accompanying the comment “Jesus is inviting you to follow Him” is not only in the center of the horizontal plane but it is also in the center of the vertical plane. Your hands are right in front of you at waist level. The lower third of the vertical plane is reserved for gestures related to base ideas like death, sin, failure, and Satan. When you say, “Jesus wants to save you, but Satan wants to destroy you,” your gestures will move from the upper third to the lower third.

Developing a vocabulary of effective gestures will take time and intentionality, but the increased impact on your hearers will be quickly noticed. Effective delivery is never a means of drawing attention to yourself but rather increasing the impact of your biblical message on the hearts of your hearers.

4. **Visual aids.** A variety of visual aids can also be helpful to reinforce content. Those visual aids, like PowerPoint slides, video clips, banners, or objects, should be clearly visible and memorable. The Bible is an important visual aid for a powerful biblical preacher. It might seem more high-tech to read the Scripture passage off your smartphone, but the symbol is lost. Your smartphone is also used to check your email and shop online. Keep your Bible with you as a compelling symbol of a God who has spoken and continues to speak.

Putting the pieces together

If it seems rather overwhelming to put all these pieces together in order to maximize your effectiveness as a powerful biblical preacher; start with a single element. Work on one aspect of congruent oral interpretation: variety of pitch, variety of volume, variety of rate of speech, or effective use of pause. You might also choose to work on one aspect of congruent nonverbal communication: effective eye contact, congruent facial expressions, gestures, or effective use of visual aids. Over time, you will move from awkward implementation to natural integration. Learn from others who are mastering the art of effective delivery. Watch video recordings of your own presentations and solicit feedback from colleagues and members of your congregation. Learning to deliver effectively powerful biblical sermons will take time and energy, but the results will be well worth the effort.³

³For some additional insights on effective delivery, consider *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching* by Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), pages 589-618.

Reading 2

- ***Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have completed this Reading.***

Some Flawed Sermon Delivery Styles

There are some things public speakers do that diminish their effectiveness. Here are a few examples:

1. **The Mumbler.** - This person speaks with his or her mouth closed, or at least gives the impression that he has a potato in his mouth. As a result, it is up to the audience to guess what the mass of unarticulated words actually means. One reason why the Bible says about Jesus that “all the people hung on his words” (Luke 19:48), was that he spoke in such a way that all could hear and understand him.

2. **The Screamer.** - This preacher is exactly the opposite of the mumbler. He/she can be heard two blocks away! There are times during a discourse when it is appropriate to use a higher tone to emphasize a point, or to cement a truth of importance in the hearts of the audience. It is unnecessary, however, to shout the entire sermon. The volume of the voice must be adapted to the size of the local and the nature of the audience.

3. **The Crooner.** – This style of preaching is a kind of humming or rhythmic singsong. The voice rises and falls with serene and rhythmic flow, until it becomes a lullaby for many listeners. No matter how hard they try, they cannot keep their eyes open. The fact cannot be overemphasized that what is required to present the gospel message is naturalness. Whatever the speaker says is the expression of her/his own personality. The preacher must always be natural.

4. **The Monotone.** The voice does not rise or fall. The speaker presents the message as something that must be done as quickly and as painlessly as possible. It does not matter what the theme is: whether denouncing sin, telling about the coming judgment, or asking for a decision to accept the Savior; it all comes across with the same lifeless tone and expression without variation in the speed of pronunciation or pause to break the monotonous rhythm.

5. **The Wordswallower.** This is the habit of lowering the voice at the end of a sentence, reducing it to a whisper. The audience loses some primary points of the presentation. The sermon starts out well. Everyone can hear, and the preacher’s points get across. Then, suddenly, she or he lowers their voice at the end of each sentence to the point that the words do not reach the audience. The point is lost! A personal ministries participant evangelist must cure himself of this habit.

6. **The Repeater.** This preacher persists in repeating his sentences time after time, as if his audience were deaf, or mentally incompetent. In this way a speech of ten minutes is extended to thirty, and the patience of the audience is subjected to a severe test. This style often denotes lack of preparation, and even interest on the part of the speaker. No wonder Jesus said, “They think they will be heard because of their many words” (Matthew 6:7).

7. **The Throatclearer.** This flawed sermon presentation element is when the speaker consistently clears his or her throat or inserts the sound “uh” between words. This affliction is often due to the nerviness of the speaker, or to a natural hesitation that he feels at speaking. Many have been cured of this annoying habit by persistent effort and practice.

8. **The Rambler.** This kind of sermon consists of a series of disconnected thoughts that apparently occur to the speaker on the spur of the moment as they speak. It leaves the audience wondering what the speaker is trying to get across, or if he or she really has anything specific in mind.

He wanders aimlessly, and then wonders why the audience is not interested what he has to say. These ramblings can be remedied only by a careful preparation of the subject. The orderly arrangement of discourse contributes to its orderly preparation. This, in turn, contributes to a positive reception and an orderly recall of the discourse on the part of the listeners.

The motivation behind this learning and study is to develop the ability to present the biblical message clearly and accurately. A personal ministries participant evangelist is not presenting personal ideas. She or he is presenting a message based on what the Bible teaches.

Because an evangelistic message often deals with Bible prophecy, it is necessary to study history and know what happened as Bible prophecy is revealed. The Seventh-day Adventist church has produced a wealth of resources that a personal ministries participant evangelist should utilize in sermon preparation.

Informal vs Formal

You don't have to have an elaborate environment around you to conduct a member-led evangelistic campaign.

An evangelistic presentation is often thought of as "formal." It is done on a central stage, the meetings are carefully arranged, there is often a core of people doing ushering, etc. Other activities involved give the impression of formal organization. The evangelist may dress in an attractive way that intentionally focuses attention on her or his person. The motivation driving these organizational elements is to attract an audience, stimulate their interest, and draw their attention.

All this is part of the methodology of attracting an audience. Once the evangelist begins her or his presentation, however, what counts is the attention and interest of the audience on the message being presented.

The art of communication tells us that the closer a speaker is to the audience, the more they will pay attention. That is why you may have noticed that when a professional public evangelist makes a call at the end of a presentation, he or she will traditionally leave the platform and come down to the same level as the audience. If you were on the platform watching, you would notice that this simple gesture immediately focuses the attention of the audience.

The point is that the more informal you can make the entire format of the evangelistic presentations; the "closer" you can get to the listeners, both physically and psychologically, the more they will pay attention; and their minds will absorb more of the message.

Measuring the Audience

"Measuring the audience" means that the way the message is presented, the content of the presentations, and the order of topics will be designed for the type of people in the audience.

Measuring the audience means identifying the religious context and level of receptivity of the people in the audience. There are some groups who you can expect to see in the audience, and some people who very seldom show up.

A personal ministries participant evangelist must develop presentations and appeals that will be understandable and motivate the categories of people who attend.

Technically, these are called "target" audiences. The target audience will not always be the same, so the presentations must be adapted to the audience, using an understandable and relevant approach.

A famous book on public speaking gives a simple formula of four points that will make your presentation effective. The content of a presentation using these four points can be based on the measure of the audience you are trying to reach.¹ Here is the formula:

1. *Ho Hum!* Your introduction has to start a fire in people's minds.
2. *Why bring that up?* Build a bridge to the listener's interest and concerns. That is why it is essential to "measure" the audience.
3. *For instance!* This is the body of the presentation, the explanation of what is being presented. The "message" of the presentation.
4. *So what?* What's the point? – Ask for action.

¹Richard Borden, *Public Speaking — As Listeners Like It!* (Harper & Brothers, 1935).

Assignment 1

Evaluating Evangelistic Sermons

- **Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have completed this assignment.**

Instructions: Below are two evangelistic sermon outlines about the millennium. Assume that you are in the audience listening to these sermons. Evaluate each sermon using the four-point formula from the preceding page.

Sermon 1 – The Millennium — 1000 Years of Peace or Terror?

Formula	Evaluation
Ho Hum!	
Why bring that up?	
For instance!	
So what?	

Sermon 1

THE MILLENNIUM ---1000 Years of peace or terror?

Text: Rev. 20:1-3

I. What and Where?

1. *Mille-annum* = 1000 years (no suggestion of Utopia).
2. Some say the devil was bound in 1914 (reference to Jehovah's Witnesses). What will it be like when he gets loose?
3. "I've been taught differently!" – not the Bible's fault.
4. "Bottomless pit" (deep, void, abyss). Before = Genesis 1:2. Again = Jeremiah 4:23-26; Zephaniah 1: 2,3; 3:6; Isaiah 6:11.

II. When Starts?

1. Jeremiah 25:32,33 Nobody left to mourn or bury the dead.
2. How brought to this terrible state? Isaiah 24:1,3,14,20; 2:19.
 - a. Italy, 1908 earthquake 10 sec. 75,000 dead. Japan, 2 min., 250,000 dead.
3. Whole earth shaken at His coming! Revelation 16:18,20; 6:14-17.
 - a. Now, people thinking money, friends, success; then: Isaiah 2:20,21.
 - b. Now, jazzy, hilarity, dance: then Matthew 24:30,21.
4. The first resurrection marks the beginning of the Millennium - Revelation 20:4-6
 - a. I Thessalonians 4:16,17—raised and translated. John 5:28,29--Second resurrection.
5. Second resurrection not till end of millennium (Rev. 20:5) II Thessalonians 2:8; Wicked destroyed (Isaiah 13:6,9).

III. During the Millennium = Tyrant—Satan reigning.

1. None to deceive, these Satan bound (Revelation 20:3) for 1000 years.
2. Contemplates 6000 years of successful deception.
 - a. Also remembers those almost held by drink, job, relatives, pride.
3. Righteous with the Lord—not He with us. I Thessalonians 4:17; John 14:3
 - a. 1 Corinthians 6:2,3 (Revelation 20:6) Saints investigate and satisfied by records.

IV. End of the Millennium

1. Revelation 20:5,7 Wicked raised, naturally Satan loosed to deceive again.
 - a. Billions alive then--bad to be with the majority then!
2. Revelation 21:2,3,10 - New Jerusalem descends (Zechariah 14:2,3).
 - a. "With thine eyes see the reward of the wicked."
3. Wicked behold the reward of the saved
 - a. Picture husband looking at wife and daughter. Tries to pray
 - b. "If Jesus would only give me a chance to surrender now."
4. Rally to the attack!--Vs. 9 Picture Panorama!!
5. Fire descends and consumes sin. Malachi 4:1,3
 - a. Revelation 21:4 No more worry of unemployment, hunger, cold, war--
FOREVER ENDED
6. Be sure your name in the Book of Life - Revelation 21:27; 22:14
7. Signs nearly finished yet many say: "I hope to come to the Lord by and by."
Which group represents YOU?

Sermon 2 – The Future Unrolled for 1,000 Years

Formula	Evaluation
Ho Hum!	
Why bring that up?	
For instance!	
So what?	

Sermon 2 The Future Unrolled for 1,000 Years

- Millennium -

Introduction:

We are now in the last days of the world.

1. The second coming of Christ is the event that ushers in the millennium. The millennium is not, as many suppose, a thousand years of glory and peace on earth. It is not an age of progress. It does not result from the conversion of the world as a whole; no will the world be converted during that period. Neither Christ nor His people will be on the earth during the thousand years. That period does not offer a second probation to any.
2. The end will come suddenly. Mark 13:35-36.
It is when men least expect the end that it comes. Matt. 24:44; Luke 21:34-36.

I. THE MILLENNIUM AND EVENTS SURROUNDING IT -- Rev. 20:6.

"The word millennium is not a scriptural word. The word itself is not found in the Bible. It is a contracted Latin word, derived from two words, *mille, annus*. The two words mean a thousand years. The words 'thousand years' are found in the Bible only ten times. (Ps. 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8; Rev. 20:1-7; Eccl. 6:6.) By the plain, simple reading of these texts, it will be noted that the Scriptures do not speak of a glorious period for everybody, and a good time for the world." --F. C. Gilbert, *Practical Lessons*, pp. 273-276.

II. THE ORDER OF EVENTS

A. Opening events of the millennium.

1. The seven last plagues. Rev. 15:1; 16:1-21; 18:1-8; Dan. 12:1. These plagues are not universal, or the inhabitants of the earth would be wholly cut off. Yet they will be the most awful scourges that have been known to mortals. In that day, multitudes will desire the shelter of God's mercy which they have so long despised.
2. The second coming of Jesus. Rev. 14:14-16; Matt. 25:31-33 Rev. 1:7. This is the event that ushers in the millennium.
3. The living wicked die. 2 Thess. 1:7-11; Isa. 2:17-21. "The wicked who are living at the time of Christ's coming will be stricken dead by the glory of His appearance, to remain unconscious in death throughout the millennium. Paul says, 'Our Lord is a consuming fire.' (Heb. 12:29) Sin and sinners cannot live in His presence, for His unveiled glory consumes them in a twinkling." -- A. L. Baker., *Hope of the World*, p. 331.
4. The first resurrection. 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 20:5, 6; John 6:44, 54.
5. The righteous translated. 1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4: 15-17; Isa. 25:9. The righteous have long awaited this event. The opening of the heavens permits the descent of the shining, glorious angels of the heavens. Christ comes for His people. Blessed event!
6. All the righteous gathered. 1 Thess. 4:17, 18; Matt. 25: 34-40; 24:30, 31.

B. "The Great Day of the Lord."

1. Christ reigns. Rev. 20:6 (last part); Haggai 2:21,22. "Then it is that the children of God shall see the Father's face, and they shall be personally introduced by the Lord Jesus to the God of Heaven." F. C. Gilbert, *Practical Lessons*, p. 295.
2. Saints in heaven. Rev. 20:4, 6; Dan. 7:22.
They are not in the new earth yet; that comes later. These one thousand years are to be spent in heaven itself.
3. The saints sit in judgment. Rev. 20:4; Acts 24:25; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Jude 6.

Satan bound in chains. Rev. 20:1-3.

Earth lies in chaos. Isa. 24:1, 3; Jer. 4:23, 24.
The earth lies in ruins, the great cities are broken down. There are no inhabitants except Satan and his evil angels.
There is no man left. Isa. 24:20-22; Jer. 4:25, 26; 25: 31-33.

C. The Closing Events.

1. The descent of the Holy City. Rev. 21:2-5; Zech. 14:4, 9.
2. The second resurrection. Rev. 20:5 (first part).
3. Satan released from his prison. Rev. 20:7.
4. The Holy City attacked by Satan and his host. Rev. 20:8, 9.
5. The final destruction of the wicked. Rev. 20:10, 13-15.
6. The earth purified by fire. Rev. 21:1.

APPEAL: Where will you spend the 1, 000 years?
In heaven or on earth? Rev. 22:14, 17.

People Who Attend Evangelistic Meetings

Research and experience show that certain categories of people most commonly attend public evangelistic meetings.¹

1. **Church members.** Many church members will attend evangelistic meetings. They will bring friends and non-attending family members. They will also expect to get a blessing for themselves. An evangelistic series is also a type of revival for many church members. They may not learn anything new, but will enjoy hearing about Bible prophecy and other doctrines. It is not uncommon to hear comments such as, "We don't hear about the Second Coming much anymore in church." What that statement often really implies is that "We don't hear much about how current spectacular news events relate to Bible prophecy." Hearing about Bible prophecy in a systematic and accurate mode during an evangelistic series reconfirms their faith and reinforces their faith in the Advent message.

One evangelist mentions a critical point. "Many church members," he notes, "don't have a close walk with Jesus. I have seen many people who I assumed were very faithful Adventists discover a whole new relationship with Jesus during the course of a series of meetings. Preach to these people. Many also haven't been converted and will respond to the call to accept Jesus as their personal Savior."²

2. **People who accompany members.** These are friends and family members. Most decisions and baptisms come from this group. They are the products of friendship evangelism. Since they already have a good relationship with some members of the church, joining the church is less of a challenge.

This audience has certain characteristics that the evangelist must measure and become acquainted with. Some attend out of courtesy because of a member's invitation. Sometimes something sparks their interest, and they attend regularly.

These may be people who have taken Bible studies led by personal ministries participants. Some are enrolled in media program Bible courses.

3. **Non-Attending Adventists.** The North American Division territory has many non-attending Adventists. Many of them are receptive to returning to church. Many of these people have dropped out because (1) Their lifestyle became so hectic they got out of the habit of coming to church, and (2) they had a personality clash with someone in the church and dropped out as a result. Research shows that sometimes as many as one-fourth of the people baptized during a series of meetings are former or inactive members.

As one evangelist notes, "They just need the message rewarmed in their hearts, and they will respond with great joy."

A primary factor in "measuring" this target audience is to accept them with open arms. They may even be well-known to the congregation. Comments such as "What is he/she doing here?" are totally out of place.

Some people who attend are non-attending members whose names are still on the church books. The Holy Spirit impresses them to attend and they gain a new dedication to the church as a result.

4. **People who are attending church, but haven't been baptized yet.** These are husbands and wives of church members, children in Sabbath School, members of baptismal classes, etc. Some people may not even realize they are not "official" church members. They enjoy hearing about church beliefs, and only need to make a decision for baptism.

5. **Those who come because of advertising.** As a personal ministries participant evangelist, you may or may not use advertising. This is one of the costliest parts of an evangelistic budget. There are independent Adventist ministries that produce excellent

¹An excellent resource is Russell Burrill, *Adventist Evangelistic Preaching*.

²Ibid., p. 37.

advertising materials. You can find them in *Ministry Magazine* (General Conference) and online. Statistics show that even with extensive advertising, you can expect about a 1 or 2 percent response.

Many of those who come because of the advertising are Christians who belong to other denominations. This is especially true to those interested in Bible prophecy. When they discover, however, that the Adventist view is different from, for instance, dispensationalism and the secret rapture idea, they often quit attending.

Many in this group will quit attending when the Sabbath is presented. Some have never heard of Seventh-day Adventists before, and the Sabbath message is so different and startling that they simply drop out.

6. **Unchurched.** Many unchurched people are actually quite religious. They just don't trust "organized" religion. Sometimes they have had bad experiences in church and have dropped out, but what they hear in an evangelistic meeting appeals to them.

Some unchurched people are interested in the introductory presentations that may deal with social problems, personal and family issues, archeology, etc., but drop out as soon as doctrinal issues begin to be presented.

Typical Characteristics of Those Who Attend Public Evangelism Meetings

1. **Believe the Bible.** A significant number of people who attend believe that the Bible is the Word of God. That is why they are interested in the topics presented. As one successful evangelist notes, skeptics seldom come to evangelistic meetings.³ Some who attend have only a superficial understanding of the Bible, but they are not unbelievers. They just want to understand the Bible better.

2. **Interested in prophecy.** The popularity of books and movies such as *Left Behind* series indicates an interest in prophecy and last-day events. The continual "wars and rumors of wars," and terrorist events have also spawned interest in Bible prophecy. Many people interested in Bible prophecy have never heard anything except the so-called secret rapture idea. A personal ministries participant evangelist must study and understand this theory so that it can be refuted. There are ways to organize the presentations so that people will begin to see from the Bible itself that there is no such thing as a secret rapture.

3. **Accepting Jesus as Savior.** Many people who attend may be "religious," but have never accepted Jesus as a personal Savior. You cannot assume that people are Christians or even religious. Presentations about the plan of salvation and personal acceptance are a vital part of evangelistic presentations.

³Russell Burrill, *Adventist Evangelistic Preaching*, p. 42. For an interesting anthology of experiences of an evangelist who deliberately targeted skeptics see Earle Albert Rowell, *Prophecy Speaks* (Review and Herald Publishing Association).

Assignment 2

Evaluating Those Who Attend

Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have completed this assignment.

Instructions: Assume that you are initiating an evangelistic campaign. Make a list of the percentage of type of categories you expect to see in the audience. Beside each category comment on what you will keep in mind as you develop and present your sermons during the campaign.

Category of Persons	Comments

UNIT 2

Evangelistic Sermon Preparation

An evangelistic sermon is designed to gain attention to a certain subject and lead the listeners to follow a progression of thought that leads to a conclusion based on biblical evidence. It leads to some type of decision on the part of the listeners. It is a given that this process be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Proof Texts and Exegesis

There is always a discussion about the difference between proof texts and exegesis.

The phrase "proof texts" simply means that a sermon on a topic will use a series of texts from various parts of the Bible that refer to that topic.

Exegesis is a Greek-based word that means "to lead out." Applied to sermon construction it means explaining what a section of the Bible, a book, a chapter, or a paragraph means. The explanation comes from those connected texts found in one place in the Bible.

Both methods are used in evangelistic sermon construction. For instance, a sermon about Bible prophecy based on the image outlined in Daniel 2 will be mostly exegetical. You will go through the chapter and explain what the various parts of the image mean.

A series of sermons about the Sabbath, on the other hand, will use proof texts. There is no single chapter in the Bible that outlines and explains everything about the seventh-day Sabbath. You have to put the various texts and passages of scripture together to get the full picture.

The opposite of exegesis is *eisegesis*, a Greek-based word that mean "to put in." This refers to the practice of adding one's personal opinion to what the Bible says. An evangelistic sermon must not attempt to make the Bible say what the evangelists would personally like it to say, or wishes it would say. Evangelistic sermons are not the place to "put in" one's opinion. Effective evangelism means that the Bible speaks for itself.

An excellent resource for proof text information and exegetical outlines of key biblical doctrines is *Bible Readings: Straight Answers from God's Word*, (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2008).

Historical Information

Many evangelistic sermons require the speaker to use historical information to illustrate or confirm what the Bible is communicating. The principal issue is that the information be accurate.

Seventh-day Adventists understand that Bible prophecies have been, and are being, fulfilled throughout the course of world history. As a result, evangelistic sermons often include historical information and reference to events. An excellent resource for church history information is the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962, Volume 9 of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* series). This book contains historical quotations and information that has been researched for accuracy. In addition, the exact source of a quotation or historical confirmation is included so that the information can be accurately transmitted to the audience.

Accurate and up-to-date information is especially important when quoting the beliefs of various churches. For example, when preaching about the role of the Papacy in Bible prophecy many Seventh-day Adventists sermons quote a book titled *The Converts Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* (Peter Geiermann, 1942). The information it contains is accurate, but an audience may be more impressed when the speaker quotes an up-to-date source. The Roman Catholic church published a new *Catechism* in 1994 that supersedes former Catechisms. Quoting from this new Catechism is always more authoritative in the hearing of many in the audience than using an older edition. Another source often quoted is Bertrand L. Conway, *The Question Box* (Paulist Press, 1960). It contains some very useful

information, but *The Catholic Source Book: A Comprehensive Collection of Information about the Catholic Church* (Peter Klein, Harcourt Religious Publishers, 2000) is more up-to-date.

As another example, assume that there are a significant number of Pentecostals in the audience. Simply quoting what some Pentecostal TV personality says is not as impressive as using information from an authoritative source such as *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Regency Reference Library, Zondervan Publishing House, 1989).

Attack or Explain?

The world around us is filled with all kinds of belief systems. There are teachings in the Bible that directly attack many erroneous beliefs. Many Seventh-day Adventist doctrines contradict what people have been taught and have heard in their churches.

A personal ministries participant evangelist will be faced with the decision at some point of whether it is best to attack, or to explain in a way that makes the message lead to a decision.

Truth cannot be covered up. It must be taught. Sometimes it is necessary to come straight to the point. A sermon based on Revelation 17, for instance, has to deal with "a great prostitute seated on many waters . . . drunk with the blood of the saints;" identified in Revelation 18 as "Babylon the Great," that God's people should "come out from." All these assorted powers must be identified, and some people in the audience will not like what they hear!

On the other hand, Ellen G White notes: "The manner in which the truth is presented often has much to do in determining whether it will be accepted or rejected." —*Evangelism*, p. 168. "The calm, earnest reasoning from the Scriptures," she notes, "is precious and fruitful. Here is the secret of success, in preaching a living personal Saviour in so simple and earnest a manner that the people may be able to lay hold by faith of the power of the Word of life." —*Evangelism*, p. 170.

Writing to one then-famous evangelist, she notes:

"In the past you have presented the truth in a fierce way, using it as if it were a scourge. This has not glorified the Lord. 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. You have not taught the truth in the way that Christ taught it. You present it in a way that mars its influence. —*Evangelism*, p. 173.

Putting Together an Evangelistic Sermon

The focus of an evangelistic sermon is on the EAR. If you use PowerPoint® slides along with the spoken word, the focus is on both the eye and the ear. Nevertheless, the people in the audience must HEAR what they see and SEE what they hear. *It is amazing that often what the evangelist says is not what the people in the audience hear.*

A general rule is: You have to repeat something at least three times before people "hear" it correctly.

For instance, assume you are preparing a series of sermons about the Sabbath. After a sermon on the Sabbath, a speaker might be totally astounded when someone say to her or him, "Those are good thoughts. I'm going to tell my pastor that we need to make our Sunday services more like the Bible describes the Sabbath." What that person heard was not what the evangelist wanted them to hear!

The evangelist can compile information, connect the dots of the various texts, and put together a logical progression of sermons proving biblically that the Sabbath is the seventh-day of the week. Nevertheless, the phrase "seventh-day" must be repeated consistently throughout the series to make sure the people in the audience "hear."

The human mind does not always think logically. Emotions are involved. Thinking patterns very different from those of the speaker are present. The meaning of words may even be understood differently.

Someone once said about a disorganized discourse they attended: "The audience did not retain a word of what was said. When they left they carried with them a mass of indistinct observations, assertions, or exhortations that no one could organize in their memories. The impression left with the hearer was 'I never did get exactly what the speaker was talking about.'"⁴

The point is that the sermon must be organized in way that will help people *understand*, but also in a way that they will not *misunderstand*.

Building Topics and Arguments

"Arguments" here means the logic and reasoning built into an evangelistic sermon. Ellen G White's writings contain some general principles.

1. Why clear, well-organized reasoning is necessary:

Arguments against the sacred truth, subtle in their influence, affect minds that are not well informed in regard to the strength of the truth. The moral sensibilities of the community at large are blunted by familiarity with sin. Selfishness, dishonesty, and the varied sins which prevail in this degenerate age, have blunted the senses to eternal things, so that God's truth is not discerned. In giving publicity to the erroneous arguments of our opponents, truth and error are placed upon a level in the minds of the people, when, if they could have the truth before them in its clearness long enough to see and realize its sacredness and importance, they would be convinced of the strong arguments in its favor, and would then be prepared to meet the arguments urged by opposers. — *Gospel Workers*, p. 379.

2. Stick to the Advent Message:

The truth, pure and unadulterated, must be presented to the people. It is the third angel's message that bears the true test to the people. Satan will lead men to manufacture false tests, and thus seek to obscure the value of, and make of none effect, the message of truth. — *Evangelism*, page 211.

3. Well thought out arguments.

It is important that in defending the doctrines which we consider fundamental articles of faith, we should never allow ourselves to employ arguments that are not wholly sound. These may avail to silence an opposer, but they do not honor the truth. We should present sound arguments, that will not only silence our opponents, but will bear the closest and most searching scrutiny. — *Evangelism*, page 166.

⁴From M. Coquerel, a French Protestant minister. Quoted in Alfredo Aeschlimann, *Homilética*.

Reading 3

Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have completed this Reading.

Logic and Systematic Reasoning in Evangelistic Sermon Preparation¹

Alfredo Aeschliman

This is a technical article that is very important. Evangelistic preaching uses argumentation extensively. A personal ministries participant evangelist needs to know how to develop it in sermons and use it effectively. Evangelistic sermons often deal with prophecy and historical facts. In teaching a biblical doctrine, it is often necessary to build a well-organized case using facts and a series of biblical texts. Argumentation refers to the way the facts and explanations in a sermon are organized.

The importance of argumentation in evangelistic preaching

The word “argumentation” refers to the logic and reasoning used in a sermon. Most evangelistic sermons deal with doctrinal exposition and explanation. How the argument and explanation is developed in a sermon is very important. As one successful evangelist notes:

In evangelism all sermons must be persuasive. Every sermon preached must persuade people to take some action or believe some doctrine.

Persuasive preaching demands that the sermon be clear. This demands an intelligent, purposive structuring of ideas. In short, the preacher must be able to write good, persuasive outlines.²

Logical argumentation is an important aspect of evangelistic sermon preparation.

There are those who are of the opinion that it is not necessary to use reason and logic in sermon preparation. They feel that appealing to the heart and feelings is sufficient. Others believe that evangelistic preaching ought to be mostly hard-hitting and authoritative.

We must always consider that many people have serious doubts, and want to understand the reasons for our faith before they accept the truths that we preach.

For instance, it is not sufficient to just tell people that they ought to keep the Law of God without carefully explaining that the Bible teaches that God’s law is still in force. It is not sufficient to just tell people that they should keep the seventh-day Sabbath. They must be convinced that this is what the Bible teaches, and that it does not recognize any other day as the Sabbath.

Therefore, argumentation and logic used to show what the Bible teaches is one of the means we can use, under the blessing of the Holy Spirit, to bring people to a true understanding and living faith.

As a general rule, people are interested in truths that can be proven. Teachings clearly shown to be biblical put down much deeper roots in people’s thinking. Thus, it is important to understand the role of argumentation, reason, and logic in sermon preparation.

¹Adapted from *Homilética para Ud. que quiere ser predicador* (Homiletics for Those Who Wish to Preach), 1991.

²K. S. Wiggins, *Soul Winning Made Easier* (1975).

The personal ministries participant evangelist does not intentionally provoke objections and arguments. Nevertheless, it is necessary to know the basic principles of putting together consist argumentation in presenting biblical doctrines and the meaning biblical prophecies

Opposition attacks

Enemies of the truth employ all kinds of astute arguments that make error look like truth. On the other hand, some people who know what is true present the truth using such feeble and confused reasoning that people are left with some serious doubts.

Therefore, personal ministries participant evangelists must cultivate and exercise their reasoning powers and develop correct argumentation. It would be a good idea for every personal ministries participant to read a book or two about logic and how it works.

Some cautions

An evangelist who does not know how to use argumentation correctly should learn how to do so. On the other hand, a person with a tendency to be overly logical needs to curb his logic and not misinform himself and others with incorrect or perplexing arguments.

Not everything in a sermon needs to be proven. There are some things in the Bible that cannot be proven by argumentation and logic. There are things that do not need any logic to back them up. Those that have already been proven can be take for granted.

Overly elaborate argumentation and logical progression causes confusion and gives birth to doubts. On the other hand, the evangelist can only speak with authority when she or he can prove their assertions with biblical evidence as the circumstances may require.

The authority of the Bible in argumentation

For an evangelist, a clear declaration from the Word of God must be decisive, above any other type of argumentation. When doctrines are being considered, an "It Is Written" is the most powerful argument.

There are always people, of course, who do not accept the authority of the Bible. Therefore, we need argumentation to present evidence of the divine inspiration of the Bible. There are also matters that are not as clearly defined as some others. For instance, health reform issues (the Bible says nothing about tobacco. People in biblical times had never heard of it!) and some lifestyle questions. In cases like these, some argumentation is necessary to clarify them.

Nevertheless, we must always treat the Bible as the supreme authority, and when its statements are clear and definitive, that is the last word.

Some guidance from Ellen G White

1. "The best way to deal with error is to present the truth, and leave wild ideas to die for want of notice." —*Evangelism*, page 166.

2. "It is not the best policy to be so very explicit, and say all upon a point that can be said, when a few arguments will cover the ground, and be sufficient for all practical purposes, to convince or silence opponents." — *Evangelism*, page 482.

3. "In this age, when pleasing fables are drifting upon the surface and attracting the mind, truth presented in an easy style, backed up with a few strong proofs, is better than to search and bring forth an overwhelming array of evidence; for the point then does not stand so distinct in many minds as before the objections and evidences were brought before them. With many, assertions will go farther than long arguments. They take many things for granted. Proof does not help the case in the minds of such." — *Evangelism*, page 482.

4. "Some in the preparation of their discourses, arrange every detail with such exactness that they give the Lord no room to lead their minds. Every point is fixed, stereotyped, as it were, and they seem unable to depart from the plan marked out. This is a grave error, and if followed, will cause ministers to become narrow-minded, and will leave them as destitute of spiritual life and energy as were the hills of Gilboa of dew and rain." — *Gospel Workers*, page. 165.

So, we need to walk in the middle of the road. Do not go to extremes in argumentation, but at the same time, use argumentation correctly in the preparation of evangelistic sermons.

General suggestions

1. The most effectual elements of argumentation are clarity, precision, validity, and dynamic presentation. A simple elegance is the most acceptable argumentation delivery.
2. Do not try to prove something you yourself are not convinced about. If you are not persuaded that something is true, don't preach about it!
3. Start the argumentation in a sermon with something that the audience probably already believes and will agree to.
4. Use an argumentation that people will listen to, can understand, and that will make an impression on their thinking.
5. As a general rule, rely on biblical arguments rather than those of commentators or other authorities.
6. Don't attempt to say everything in one sermon. Choose the most important point and build the argumentation around that point and use the most effective arguments.
7. Avoid formalism. Do not become a slave to the argumentation itself. Sometimes in a sermon presentation the evangelist has to *ad lib* (adapt to the situation), or the Holy Spirit tells her or him to do something spontaneous.

Using argumentation in a sermon

1. Announce clearly, early in the presentation, the issue for which evidence will be presented. It is useless to try and prove something that has not been presented to the audience.
2. Explain the vocabulary and possibly ambiguous terms used in the argumentation. For example, "necessary," "unnecessary," "possible," "impossible," "church," "reason," "good," "evil," etc. It is surprising how many people do not know the meaning of terms that are familiar to the speaker.
3. Explain what is included in the argumentation and proofs to be presented. It is important to point out what it is that needs to be proven. For example: "Tonight we are going to see how the Bible, many centuries ago, actually outlined before any of it happened, the assorted political histories of some parts of the world. We will see that the Bible prediction (means 'telling the future') is accurate. This is called 'prophecy.' By the time we are finished, you can decide for yourself; what is more accurate, the Bible or your daily horoscope reading?" (This is, of course, an introduction to Daniel 2).
4. It is the obligation of the one presenting the argument to present the proof. That is why it is so important to develop adequate argumentation in an evangelistic sermon.
5. Positive affirmations need proof, for example, "The Bible says . . ."
Negative affirmations cannot be proven because they just say that something "cannot." Proof is needed for something that "can." Sometimes a statement such as, "The Bible does *not* say . . ."; and proven true by a lack of any evidence anywhere in the Bible, is a good argument. Usually, however, "the Bible says . . ." is better.
6. Indirect proof. Sometimes there is no direct proof of something, so you must use indirect proof by showing that something contrary to the argument you are using is absurd. For instance, "If the Bible says over and over that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath, it is absurd to say that it is not."

Types of argumentation

Types of argumentation often have Latin names that indicate their purposes. It is a good idea to learn these names.

1. **Argumentation "a priori."** This means arguing from something previous to something later. It is also called reasoning from cause to effect. A *prior* argumentation begins with something that seems to be generally accepted. "Everyone knows that . . .," is an *a priori* statement.

This type of argumentation is often weak, dangerous and defective. The validity of an *a priori* argument is based on the validity of the first statement. "For example, "Everyone knows . . ." What proof do you have that "everyone" knows? Has someone interviewed every inhabitant on Planet Earth to get their opinion? It is better to say, "It is commonly assumed . . ."

2. **Argumentation "a posteriori."** This refers to the part of the argument that follows the *a priori* statement. For example, "Everyone knows that . . ." The "that . . ." is the *a posteriori* argument based on the *a priori* "everyone knows . . ."

3. **Argumentation a fortiori** – meaning "with stronger foundations." It is used to express a conclusion for which there is stronger evidence than for a previously accepted one. The Bible uses this type of argumentation in many places. Here are a few examples:

- 1) Matthew 7:11 "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"
- 2) Luke 12:28 "If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you— you of little faith!"
- 3) Luke 23:3 "For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"
- 4) Romans 8:32 "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all— how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

4. **Argumentation ex concessio.** This is an argumentation based on a prior admission or confession of one's opponent — something that was already admitted being true. This type of argumentation can be useful to establish some point, or to refute an objection.

For example, Elijah used this in his own way when he taunted the prophets of Baal. These prophets believed and proclaimed that Baal was a god. Elijah just told them to back up their belief with some action. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened" (1 Kings 18:27).

5. **Argumentation ad hominem.** This is argumentation directed against a person rather than the position they are maintaining. It is used primarily when something is being refuted. A personal ministries participant evangelist must be careful about using this kind of argument. For instance, it is common to hear the phrase, "The Pope says . . ." when the speaker is actually refuting to the papal system, not a particular Pope.

6. **Argumentation based on testimonies.** There is a clear difference between a witness and an authority or expert in some subject. A personal testimony usually only states a series of facts. An authority adds judgment and opinion. Both testimony and authority are recognized as evidence in an argument.

A point made through testimony argumentation must consider two things:

- 1) the character and number of witnesses.
- 2) the character of whatever is being testified about.

The testimony of a truthful, intelligent witness who has had the opportunity to know the facts will have value. For instance, the apostle John wrote, "I, John, am the one *who heard and saw* these things" (Revelation 22:8). "That which was from the beginning, which we have *heard*, which we have *seen* with our eyes, which we have looked at and our *hands have touched*—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life" (1 John 1:1).

Many witnesses testifying about something will make a case stronger. For instance, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a *great cloud of witnesses*, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles" (Hebrews 12:1).

Argumentation based on many witnesses must consider that groups of witnesses see things differently. Details many vary.

For instance, in his gospel, Matthew reports that “a rooster crowed” during the experience of Peter’s denial of Jesus (Matthew 26:74). Mark, on the other hand, records that the rooster crowed “twice” (Mark 14:72). Luke backs up Matthew and records that “the rooster crowed” (Luke 22:60). No one here is right or wrong. They just remembered things differently. On the other hand, the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* points out that “roostercrowing” was a common expression identifying a certain daily time period, so maybe there wasn’t even a physical rooster around.³

Unlikely happenings and experiences need more evidence than common occurrences to be believed. Miracles and prophecies fall into this category. They must have valid testimony. For example, the testimony of the man born blind who was healed by Jesus. He simply said: “One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” (John 9:25). His parents gave the same testimony: “We know he is our son, . . . and we know he was born blind” (John 9:20). Some of the religious leaders of the time did not believe, but that was their problem, not the problem of the witnesses.

7. Arguments by adversaries. The witness of adversaries is a valuable point of argumentation. For instance, opponents of Christianity who try to explain away miracles involuntarily confirm these same miracles because they try to explain them. That testifies that the miracles actually happened.

For instance, the Roman Catholic church openly recognizes that it changed the Sabbath to Sunday. That is an open admission that Jesus did not make the change. However unintentional their testimony may be, it verifies the facts of what happened.⁴

8. Inductive argumentation. Inductive argumentation means to draw a general rule based on a sufficient number of particular facts. Using this reasoning method, you start with a possible idea, then you gather some facts, then you test the idea. If it works, it is probably true.

This process is valuable in sciences such as chemistry and physics, but is less valuable in matters of morality and religion. That is because the Bible is “propositional.” It already tells us what the truth is. It does not have to be proven correct.

For instance, many people believe you can do anything you want if you don’t “hurt” other people either physically or psychologically. This is called “situation ethics.” You act according to the situation you find yourself in. Your actions are neither right or wrong, just “OK to do.” According to the Bible, however, certain ethical acts are either right or wrong, no matter what the situation is.

It is convenient to know about this inductive type of argumentation because it is very popular, and even ingrained in people’s thinking. An evangelist will use this kind of argumentation to show that the Bible *is true*, not to decide *if* it is true!

9. Deductions from established truths. Deductions refer to the process of taking an already established truth and showing that it contains additional truths. You can explain it, amplify it, take it apart to study or explain its various parts, but you cannot change it because it is already true.

To use this argumentation correctly, one must be sure that the original proposition or statement is true. The truth of the original deductions used in sermon preparation are controlled by the true statements and/or teachings of the Bible.

A personal ministries participant evangelist will take the teachings of the Bible as being true, and may “deduce” other elements of truth from the original. Lessons may be “deduced” from the original general truth.

³*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. Vol. 5, page 524.

⁴For the specifics on this argument, see Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday* (1977) and Kenneth A. Strand (ed.) *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (1982).

10. Argumentation using analogy. An analogy is a comparison between two things, typically for the purpose of explanation or clarification.

Analogies are used to explain the similarities between things. Nevertheless, an analogy does not mean that two things are identical. The leg of a table and the leg of an animal have more or less the same purpose — they both help the object to stand. They are similar in purpose, but not analogous in character.

Analogies are useful for illustrations. Jesus, for instance, often said, “The kingdom of heaven is like . . .” The kingdom of heaven is “like” a mustard seed because they share some characteristics (both “grow” for instance), but the mustard seed is not the kingdom, and the kingdom is not a mustard seed.

Analogies are good as illustrations, but not of much use in proving a biblical doctrine or to verify truths.

11. Arguments showing a dilemma. This type of argumentation presents two alternatives and then presents a solution. For example, Gamaliel’s speech before the Sanhedrin: “For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God” (Acts 5: 38,39). His conclusion: “Leave these men alone.”

This type of argumentation is often more useful for refuting some opposing point of view than for proving a point.

11. Argumentation that reduces something to the level of the absurd. This type of argumentation is often used to refute another argument by proving that the current argument is reasonable.

For example, it is sometimes argued (believe it or not) that we should not preach to non-Christians, because if they hear the message and reject it, their guilt and punishment will be greater.

This, of course, is ridiculous. The person who believes this must see his or her argument reduced to being absurd according to biblical teachings. Any argument shown to be absurd is also untrue.

The weight of authority in an argument

There is a difference between the testimony of a witness, and the personal opinion or judgment call of someone who is an authority on a particular subject.

An authority has to do with facts, opinions and judgment calls. For instance, when the writings of the Early Church Fathers (the first Christian writers after the time of the apostles) talk about which of the early church writings belong in the canon of Scripture, they are authoritative. On the other hand, when they interpret, or comment on what they think these same books of Scripture teach, they are giving personal opinions and making judgment calls. They may be experts in their fields of knowledge, but influenced by pagan philosophies, social prejudices and fondness for the allegorical method used by many pagan and even Jewish theologians of the times.

For the personal ministries participant evangelist, the Bible is the authority. Whatever it “testifies” to as truth is true. Whatever the Bible testifies as true and real is beyond discussion. Historical, archeological or other types of proof are offered only as endorsements, not because the Bible needs to be proven.

Refutation argumentation

The best way to refute an error, either one that is frequently encountered and accepted by many people, or is presented as a strong opposing idea, is to present the truth. This, however, is not always possible. Sometimes it is necessary to destroy the arguments that exist in the mind of the audience or that an opponent may present.

The apostle Paul had little patience with people who caused trouble and used erroneous arguments: “For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, . . . They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach” (Titus 1:10,11).

In the areas of religion and moral lifestyle it is not always possible to refute every argument that comes up. Some objections are so vague and weak that trying to refute them is like chasing a shadow.

The proof in favor of a religious or moral issue is to present the truth and ignore the objections. If necessary, take the time to refute valid or honest objections that can be satisfactorily answered or refuted. On the other hand, don't waste time trying to refute pointless objections that would probably never trouble the listeners' minds anyway.

1. How to refute an objection or erroneous belief. Show that the terms of the objection are ambiguous, based on false premises, distorted reasoning, or an unjustified conclusion. It is often convenient to divide the objection and refute it piece by piece. Take the offensive and use the objection itself to turn it into evidence for the truth. A refutation that is too elaborate and heated can be counterproductive. A smiling refutation will win the sympathy of the listeners.

Sometimes the best approach is to show how some believe originated. The change of the Sabbath to Sunday is a case in point.

A good approach is to show indirectly that an objection is absurd. For example, Jesus did this when he was accused of being an agent of the devil: "Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges" (Luke 11:19). The apostle Paul did the same thing: "Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?" (1 Corinthians 15:29). He showed that it was absurd to do what some people were doing if their believe system was already wrong.

Order of argumentation

It is not enough to have good arguments, you have to know how to use them in the right way and at the right time. Here are some suggestions about the order of argumentation.

1. Keep the diverse types of arguments separate. Consider the natural relationship between the distinct types of argumentation. By their very nature, some must be presented before others. Some carry weight if they follow others, but if they stand alone, they are of little value.

2. Evidence derived from the original proposition itself must be presented first. For example, *a priori* arguments almost always precede *posteriori* argumentation.

It is usually best to present the weakest argument first, followed by the strongest one. Sometimes you have to forgo a logical order and follow the order imposed by the needs and understanding of the audience. Argumentation based on the teachings of the Bible are conclusive, and should be presented after those from other sources. That is done so that the audience will more easily remember and retain the biblical argumentation.

3. Objections may be dealt with in the following ways:

- 1) If the objection is already covered at a point of the sermon, it can be briefly refuted at that point. If this would require too much time, it is better to bypass the objection until a later occasion.
- 2) If some objections directly dispute the topic of the sermon, it is better to deal with the objections before the sermon rather than during it. This is the reason many evangelists provide a question box where people can deposit their questions and concerns. Sometimes, if an issue raised requires more time to deal with, it might be dealt with at the end of the sermon, or in an aftermeeting.
- 3) Sometimes when a serious objection or argument is raised, it is a good idea to present one or two common strong answers before giving a Bible-based answer. This shows that other people have struggled with the objection and have come up with some good answers.

Well-organized and appealing argumentation is important in evangelistic preaching.

Sermon Organization

There are various ways to organize an evangelistic sermon. As a personal ministries participant evangelist gains experience, he or she will begin to develop an organizational plan that fits them personally.

The most common is to use a three-part plan: (1) Introduction, (2) Body, and (3) Conclusion.

Introduction. The purpose of the introduction is to capture the attention of the audience. It opens the door to the sermon itself. A second purpose is to prepare the hearers for the topic of the sermon itself. An introduction may be a Bible text, a story, a narrative, an illustration, etc. Sometimes the title of the sermon itself may be the takeoff for an introduction.

Here are some examples of types of introductions:

1. **Psychological introductions.** Psychological introductions deal with things such as life situations, an interview with someone, or explanations of social problems such as insecurity, health issues, etc.

This may be the statement of some lifestyle problem, indicating the sermon will deal with how to solve the problem: "Tonight, we are going to discover seven secrets of what real happiness is all about."

2. **Bible text introduction.** This may be a statement such as: "Tonight we are going to study Daniel, chapter 2. This is about a dream that a pagan king had. Everybody has dreams, but this one was different. The king did not know what it meant; in fact, he couldn't even remember the dream itself. The spirit guides of his astrologers and horoscope readers had no answer. Only one man came up with the answer. I wonder what happened?"

3. **A dramatic event.** This might be something such as: "The biggest hurricane in recent history just wiped out a large city, as we all know. The Bible says that in the last days there will be dramatic events like this hurricane. Tonight, we are going to look at some startling Bible prophecies. Are you ready?"

It is always best to use some illustration based on known or current issues or events, rather than something historical, unless the historical event or statement fits in with the topic of the sermon.

On the other hand, be careful with sensational remarks and sensationalizing current events. Current events may be general signs of the times, but newspaper headlines or mass media notices and news broadcasts are not all fulfillments of prophecy!

4. **A personal experience.** This introduction presents a personal experience related to whatever the subject of the sermon is. The story gets the attention of the audience.

5. **A famous statement.** "Abraham Lincoln once said '. . .' I wonder what he meant by that?" That gets the attention of the audience. The sermon will deal with whatever the topic is.

The Body of the Sermon

The body is the main content of the sermon. This section of the sermon contains the explanation, or argument, or chain of texts, or outline of the topic. It may be designed to illustrate, solve a problem, explain a text, give information, or lead into a call for a decision. In whatever way you physically outline the sermon on a piece of paper or computer monitor, each section should be one of the "thought blocks" we looked at.

Ellen G White has some excellent observations:

The Lord wishes you to learn how to use the gospel net. Many need to learn this art. In order for you to be successful in your work, the meshes of your net—the application of the Scriptures—must be close, and the meaning easily discerned. Then make the most of drawing in the net. Come right to the point. Make your illustrations self-evident.
—*Evangelism*, page 174.

Preach the Word so that it will be easy to comprehend.
—*Evangelism*, page 178.

A few forcible remarks upon some point of doctrine will fasten it in the mind much more firmly than if such a mass of matter were presented that nothing lies out clear and distinct in the mind of those ignorant of our faith. There should be interspersed with the prophecies practical lessons of the teachings of Christ. —*Evangelism*, page 171.

Logic, Illustration and Application. Logic has to do with how a thought is put together so that it follows a path that leads to an end point. Illustration refers to ways and means of attaching the logic to real life in ways that are familiar to the hearer. Jesus did this through his use of parables. Application refers to what actions a hearer should do as a result of the logic and the illustrations.

Sermon Conclusion

The third part of the sermon is the conclusion. The conclusion is the “Therefore . . .” part of the sermon. It is the personal application of the topic of the sermon. Sometimes it includes a call for a specific kind of decision. Sometimes it is a review in a more informal way of what has been presented in the sermon.

Order of Subjects

Three elements should be included in the subjects presented:

1. The plan of salvation — accepting Jesus as a personal Savior.
2. Personal applications and biblical counsel about lifestyle and human problems.
3. Distinctive Seventh-day Adventist doctrines.

Burrill lists 25 topics (not in order) that need to be presented during public evangelistic outreach.¹ They may be in sermons, or be covered in accompanying Bible classes. A personal ministries participant evangelist needs to develop at least one sermon for each of these topics.

¹Russell Burrill, *Adventist Evangelistic Preaching*, pp. 46,47.

The Deity of Christ	Trust in the Bible as the Word of God	The plan of salvation
The assurance of salvation	The importance of obedience	The historicist system of interpreting Bible prophecy
The 2300 days (Daniel 8)	The sanctuary and the judgment	The law and the gospel
The Sabbath/Sunday issue	Death	Hell
The health message: unclean foods, smoking, alcohol, etc.	Baptism	The literal second coming compared to the secret rapture
The seal of God and the mark of the beast	Christian standards and lifestyle	Tithing
The remnant church	Ellen G White role as a prophet/messenger	The uniqueness of Adventism
The importance of belonging to a church	Spiritual gifts	

A key consideration in deciding about presentation is the point at which the distinctive beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventists should be introduced.

General Principles

The order of presentation depends on the audience. A secular, non-religious audience made require the presentation of sermons about religion in general and why it is important. An evangelical audience interested in Bible prophecy, but schooled in secret rapture ideas may need a different order of subjects. A primarily Roman Catholic audience will require yet another order of subjects.

Contemporary audiences do not have long attention spans. It is difficult for them to follow involved logical arguments. One successful Seventh-day Adventist evangelist suggests mixing heavy doctrinal presentations with lighter lifestyle sermons. For instance, he suggests as an example the following:

1. Doctrinal sermon
2. Doctrinal sermon
3. Lifestyle/sociological sermon (for example, "Love, Courtship and Marriage")
4. Doctrinal.
5. Personal application, for instance "Conversion and What it Means."
6. Doctrinal.
7. Interest: What is spiritism and demon spirits all about?
8. etc.

Adventist Distinctives

The Adventist doctrinal distinctives (specific Adventist beliefs), sometimes called within Adventism "The testing truths," that must be presented are:

1. The Law and the Sabbath.
2. The historicist perceptive of Bible prophecy.
3. Conditional immortality, known to Adventists as "The state of the dead."

Examples of Order of Presentation

Some evangelists use subjects of social interest or curiosity as the opening phase of an evangelistic series. These include topics based on subjects such as archeology, current events, or sociological/personal lifestyle issues. The number of topics below each category are only examples.

A sociologically based introductory topics. These are topics, not sermon titles:

1. How to have a happy marriage.
2. What the Bible says about raising children.
3. Does good health make you happier?
4. How to overcome harmful habits.
5. The secrets of getting along with people.

(Transition to biblical teachings)

6. How God helps solve your problems

(From here on the topics shift to biblical doctrines).

A health-based introductory topics. The evangelist may include medical personnel in the presentations. This introductory series is usually based on the eight elements of good health used extensively in Adventist presentations.

1. Good health is important.
2. Why good diet is important.
3. Things that promote good health.

(Transition to biblical teachings)

4. What the Bible says about good health.

A series for a Roman Catholic audience.

1. A few sociological and health-related subjects.

(Transition to biblical teachings)

2. Topics about the plan of salvation. The point is to shift Roman Catholic perspectives of religious authority from the church, the Virgin Mary, and the saints, to Jesus.

(From here on the topics shift to biblical doctrines).

A prophecy-based series

1. Daniel 2 – prophecy speaks, and it is accurate.
2. Does history tell us anything?

(The series is based on the prophecies of the second coming, Daniel and Revelation).

Transition Points and Decisions

The three major decisions people in the audience will face are: (1) Accepting Jesus as a personal Savior, (2) accepting and keeping the seventh-day Sabbath, and (3) baptism into the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Assignment 3

Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have completed this Reading.

Attack or Explain?

Assume you have several Roman Catholics in the audience. The following is an example of two evangelistic sermon outlines about the change of the Sabbath to Sunday. Both are accurate in the facts they present. Both end with appeals to keep the Sabbath. Study the two outlines and answer the questions included.

Sermon 1	Sermon 2
<p>Introduction: Sunday bears the mark of paganism. We will discover in our study of the prophecies that what we see in Christianity today is the result of a subtle campaign by the "prince of this world" to substitute his day for God's day.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prophecy shows that an attempt would be made to change the law of God.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. The papacy is the "man of sin" and the "little horn."2. The rise of the papacy<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. The true head of the church.b. Where did the apostasy begin?c. The spirit of exaltation.d. The exaltation of the bishop of Rome.3. The exaltation of the day of the sun4. The Roman Catholic Church admits to its participation in the change5. Sunday is of human origin<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Its origin is in the "mystery of iniquity" <p>Conclusion: Obey God by doing His will.</p>	<p>Introduction: Astronomy governs days, months, and years, but there is no basis in astronomy for the week. The week was established by God at creation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The apostolic sabbath<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Jesus, the law, and the Sabbath.b. The Virgin Mary always kept the Sabbath.c. The apostles and the Sabbath.2. Emperor Constantine misleads the church with a different day.3. (Review of the events during the time of Constantine. The identity of the papacy as the little horn becomes self-evident as the sermon progresses. People draw their own conclusions. <p>Conclusion: Hebrews 4:9. A rest (Sabbath) remains for the people of God. This is a serious matter that demands a serious decision.</p>

1. Which of these two outlines do you think will be most effective?
2. Why?
3. Which one would you prefer to use?
4. Why?
5. Explain why there might be an occasion to use one or the other of these sermon outlines.

Assignment 4

Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have completed this Reading.

Preparing an Evangelistic Sermon

Chose a topic and develop an evangelistic sermon. Include an introduction, a sermon body and a conclusion. Describe the audience you will probably preach to with this sermon outline.

Reading 4

Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have completed this Reading.

Building an Evangelistic Sermon for the Ear

Most people hear what they *want* to hear, not what they *ought* to hear! An evangelistic sermon needs to be developed in a way that will make people *want* to hear what comes next, and *want* to hear what they should do about it.

Seventh-day Adventist evangelist Sydney C. Gibbons suggests a system of developing “thought blocks.” “Authors,” he notes, “write in paragraphs and follow rules of grammar to reach a reading audience.” Evangelists, on the other hand, “write in thought blocks using words and other symbols designed to reach a listening audience.”¹

Many ideas have been developed about how to do this. Most come from the academic disciplines of psychology and how to organize public speeches.

A biblical “thought block” example

A sequence recorded in the Bible is Jesus’ approach to the woman at the well in John 4. This was not a public evangelistic sermon, but the sequence is applicable to sermon design.

1. Interest. He aroused her interest. “Will you give me a drink.”
2. More interest. He intensified her interest. “If you knew. . . who it is that asks you for a drink. . . .”
3. Desire. He stimulated her desire. “Who drinks of the water I give will never thirst again.”
4. Implanted conviction. “Go, call your husband. . . .” This was a call for a decision.
5. Intensified desire and conviction. “The time is coming”
6. He got action. The woman said, “Come see a man”

Following this sequence produced several types or levels of desire in the thinking of this person. These are the same elements of desire that an evangelistic sermon seeks to achieve.

“Give me a drink”	Desire for approval, in this case social approval as a Samaritan to whom a Jew rarely spoke. A unique occurrence.
“If you knew”	Desire for knowledge, to “know.” No one wants to be ignorant.
God has a gift for you	Desire to acquire, plus curiosity. What is this gift?
“Who it is that speaks to you.”	Desire for identity.
“Give you living water”	Desire for something better.
“Whoever drinkswill never thirst again.”	Desire for permanent satisfaction.
“The water I give”	Desire to get something free.
“A spring of water eternal life”	Desire for something beneficial.
“Eternal life.”	Desire for self-preservation.
“You have well said. . . .”	Desire for reputation.
“Worship what you do not know.”	Desire for identity.
“True worshippers.”	Desire for self-worth.
“The kind of worshipper the Father seeks.”	Desire to know God and remake life into what it ought to be.

¹Preaching Made Simple: Developing the Art of Evangelistic Preaching (AdventSource, 2014), page 88.

Another example is called the “Monroe Motivated Sequence.” This was designed by Alan H. Monroe, a professor of Speech from Purdue University. The sequence has five steps:

1. **Attention:** Include in the introduction anything that will get the audience to sit up and take notice.
2. **Need:** Convince your audience there’s a problem. This set of statements must help the audience realize that what’s happening right now isn’t good enough – and it needs to change.
3. **Satisfaction:** Introduce your solution. How will you solve the problem that your audience is ready to address? This is the main part of your presentation. It will vary significantly, depending on your purpose.
4. **Visualization:** Your goal is to motivate the audience to agree with you and adopt similar behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs.
5. **Action:** The final step is to leave your audience with specific things they can do to solve the problem.

Sydney C. Gibbons outlines an example of how this sequence can be employed in developing “thought blocks.” The example is based on the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3.²

Step	Function	Section of Sermon Outline
Attention	Motivate audience to listen to the message	Introduce the setting – an interview.
Need	Body of the sermon. Develop a need the audience will feel.	The sinner’s need of Christ. “You must be born again.”
Satisfaction	Body of the sermon. Tell audience how to fill the need.	Steps to Christ – the new birth process. Outline the steps.
Visualization	Sermon conclusion: Lead the audience to see benefits a positive decision.	The meaning in the interview of “wind” and “conversion.”
Action	Motivate the audience to take action.	Invitation to accept salvation (Pray sinner’s prayer with listeners).

The power of a story

There is a moment to use logic and develop an argument point by point in a sermon. A key methodology for motivating attention, however, is called “narrative” preaching. It means telling a story. If you have an opportunity, sit on the platform during a sermon on Sabbath or during an evangelistic campaign. Watch the reaction of the audience when the speaker says; “Let me tell you a story. . . .”

The story might be an experience, an illustration, an historical event, etc. It can be the relating of a biblical event or example in the form of a story. Even reading a biblical event in a modern language version will captivate the audience.

For instance, there was this man who was supposedly some kind of New Age guru. He was hired to curse somebody, but he came up with the idea of modifying the message just a bit. He sold the man who hired him on the idea, and took a shot at delivering the modified message. It didn’t work. He tried hacking the original message again, but it still didn’t work. . . . We know that this is the story of Balaam related in Numbers 22, but the audience will

²Gibbons, page 88.

pay attention to every word because it is told as a story that sounds all too familiar to their own experiences.

An illustration or story can be used as the introduction to a sermon. It can be used in the body of the sermon to illuminate a concept of teaching. The phrase, "There was once this Roman emperor named Constantine who claims he saw a cross in the sky like a UFO or something . . ." will always get more attention than the phrase, "The historian ____ tells us that in 330 A.D. the Roman Emperor Constantine . . ."

An evangelistic sermon, even if used in conjunction with visual aids and PowerPoint® slides, is always designed for the ear more than for the eye.

Student Fulfillment Card

The Basics of Evangelistic Sermon Preparation and Delivery

Name: _____

Church/District _____

This Fulfillment Card is the record that you have successfully completed the Member-Led Public Evangelism class *The Basics of Evangelistic Sermon Preparation and Delivery* of the North American Division Adult Ministries Department *Personal Ministries Instruction and Enrichment* training curriculum. When all the items are completed, have the Fulfillment Card signed by the appropriate person (your class instructor, your Internet instructor, a person in charge of Personal Ministries in your church/district, your pastor or someone from the conference in charge of personal ministries or evangelism training).

Check the items completed

- I have read the two Units of the Study Guide.
- I have looked up and read the Bible passages included in this Study Guide.
- I have read the assigned pages in *Evangelism*.
- I have read the following:
 - Reading 1: "Effective Sermon Delivery."
 - Reading 2: "Some Flawed Sermon Delivery Styles"
 - Reading 3: "Logic and systematic Reasoning in Evangelistic Sermon Preparation."
 - Reading 4: "Building an Evangelistic Sermon for the Ear."
- I have completed Assignment 1: "Evaluating Evangelistic Sermons."
- I have completed Assignment 2: "Evaluating Those Who Attend."
- I have completed Assignment 3: "Attack or Explain?."
- I have completed Assignment 4: "Preparing an Evangelistic Sermon."

_____ has satisfactorily completed the course *The Basics of Evangelistic Sermon Preparation and Delivery*.

(Signature) _____ Date _____

Position _____

Please submit to www.nadadultministries.org