



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DAY

April 25,
2015

Where Is Your Flock?

Objective:

THROUGH Jeremiah 13:20, reflect on the meaning of the salvation of the little ones of the flock.

Introduction

1. Jeremiah was a very audacious prophet. His ministry turned out to be irritating to many people. The people, the king, the court—almost everyone had a complaint about the way Jeremiah rebuked and spoke. Jeremiah's ministry was not popular. He said things no one wanted to hear. If we read his book of Lamentations, we'll see that he even dared say things to the Lord that we would never think of saying.
2. Anyone would think that Jeremiah enjoyed rebuking and making accusations. But the truth is that he didn't want to be a prophet, either. He wanted to give up on the work of being a prophet. But it was impossible (Jeremiah 20:9). He couldn't stop talking on God's behalf nor could he forget the Lord. Jeremiah had been born to be a messenger of God, and his existence responded to it.
3. He paid dearly for his audacity as a prophet. While alive he suffered scorn, mistreatment, and finally, according to tradition, martyrdom.
4. Although dead, Jeremiah continues to rebuke the people of God. Let's reflect on **Jeremiah 13:20**. He makes a declaration and asks a question. The question is quite uncomfortable for leaders and parents.

Lift up your eyes and see

1. The first thing the prophet does in this verse is to call attention in a forceful manner; in English two verbs were used in the imperative voice, "**lift up and see**," to translate what

he said. Jeremiah's expression allows us to draw up a mental picture of the attitude of the people to whom he was speaking. They were distracted. They should have been attentive but weren't. They should have been looking but didn't. They should have been protecting but did not protect. It was a woeful situation.

2. The context that Jeremiah gives us allows us to know that Israel was experiencing a situation of national emergency because of political, economic, social, and spiritual factors. God wanted to bless the nation, but the nation wouldn't allow itself to be blessed. Dangers threatened the country, but the leaders did not discern the situation taking place.
3. Jeremiah draws the attention toward where the danger is coming from: "from the north," which is to say, from Babylon. The attacks, the invasions, the bad influences, idolatry, all that came from the land of confusion. Babylon was the symbol of rebellion toward God. Its origins went back to early post-flood times, when that group of men and women thought they could be stronger, more intelligent, and more powerful than God. However, He showed them how confused they were. They would talk to each other and not understand. They would educate themselves about one thing and end up doing another. Their project failed, as all projects that go against divine must fail.
4. And now Babylon raised itself against the people of God with apparent success. But wickedness can only be successful against God's people if God's people themselves want it to be so. Israel's situation, being at the mercy of Babylon, was not by God's will. It was the

**OPENING
HYMN:**
*Seventh-day
Adventist
Hymnal, no. 82.*

**SCRIPTURE
READING:**
Jeremiah 13:20

**CLOSING
HYMN:**
*Seventh-day
Adventist
Hymnal,
no. 192.*

SERMON

neglect of Israel's leaders. They had dozed off. They were unconscious of the danger the nation was facing. Thus Isaiah's urgent call: **Lift up your eyes and see.** It's as if he said, "Look at the danger, realize what is happening. Notice how difficult the situation is, and do your job."

"Where is the flock that was given to you?"

1. And now comes the question: "Where is the flock that was given to you?" It's an uncomfortable question. The connotation it has is that the flock was not their own. Now they were being asked to account for it. It's a pointed question. It leads us to think that the answer will be more negative than positive.
2. If the leaders were unaware, if there was danger in the north and they were looking toward the south, if they were supposed to be looking up and were looking down, then, what could have happened with the flock? Undoubtedly it would have perished or scattered. The wake-up call was not because of gaunt or sick sheep. The prophet describes the flock in danger as beautiful.
3. Ellen G. White makes the prophet's question current by taking his words to warn us about present situations. The *Adventist Bible Commentary* informs that she uses the question in seven different places. Let's look at only three of them:
 - a. "To every soul a trust is given. Of everyone the Chief Shepherd will demand, 'Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?' And 'what wilt thou say when He shall punish thee?' " (*Desire of Ages*, p. 597).
 - b. "All will be called to render a strict account of their ministry. The Master will demand of every shepherd, 'Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?' " (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 192).
 - c. "The Lord will inquire . . . of the parents: 'Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?' " (*Counsels to Teachers*, p. 170).
4. The way White asks this question places us in a quandary. She suggests that the question is asked at the time of the Second Coming. The Lord asks us about our flock. "Welcome to heaven, but where is your flock?"
5. Church statistics tell us that we're losing fifty percent of the children of Adventists. That, in a very simplistic way, means that half of our children don't accept

Jesus as their personal Savior. The Valuegenesis study shows that the children and young people who receive an education in the church's institutions have a higher probability of remaining in the church.

6. However, the reality we live as a church in the Inter-American Division is that the majority of students in our educational institutions are not Adventist. Our education is unto salvation, but as a church we aren't taking advantage of it as we should for our children. The Lord has granted us the instrument of salvation, but we haven't used it with the degree of responsibility we should.
7. We all long for heaven. As Adventists we pray for the Lord to come. We know that then all things will be resolved—the serious things, the trivial ones, the things that today don't have a solution. God will mend everything. Death will no longer frighten us. But let's think: Have you imagined heaven without your children? Can you think of eternity without seeing their faces, enjoying their hugs, having fun with their jokes? God wants to take us to heaven with our children.
8. If they don't make it to heaven, it's not His fault. He gave us the Lord Jesus as Savior. He taught us to have homes and churches that could support the task of leading our children to His feet. He led His people to have an educational system that could help in the task of preserving the faith of our children and youth. He has done everything. Now it's our turn to fulfill our responsibility.

Conclusion

1. Imagine yourself arriving in Heaven. Everything will be beautiful! Jesus will be waiting at the door for you. Then He greets you and asks:
 2. **Jeremiah 13:20, last part.**
 3. How extraordinary it would be to tell Him, "Lord, here are my children. I taught them Your ways and they decided to surrender their lives to you. My home, my church and my educational institution fulfilled their mission." The next thing you will hear is: "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . Enter into the joy of your Lord."
- Appeal for all to consecrate together with their children.

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ADVENTIST BOOK DAY

May 2,
2015

Publishing in God's Plan

Introduction

THE PRINTING PRESS used by the Adventist Church plays an important and definitive role in the propagation of the gospel. It is the most effective method to reach people so they may know Jesus. The Bible and Ellen G. White's writings both say so.

The servant of the Lord declares, "I have been shown that the press is powerful for good or evil. This agency can reach and influence the public mind as no other means can" (*Counsels to Ministers*, p. 149). She also adds, "The press is a powerful instrumentality which God has ordained to be combined with the energies of the living preacher to bring the truth before all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples" (*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 217).

- The churches that grow the most in membership around the world are those that make wise use of the publications that are produced to disseminate their doctrines.
- The Adventist Church accepts this truth, which Ellen G. White began and developed. Church members in general and canvassers (colporteurs) are chosen to carry out this noble, great work.
- Does publishing work have foundations in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy?

Foundations of publishing work

a. Biblical foundation

- God is the author of publishing work. The Bible says in Exodus 31:18, "And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of

the Testimony, tablets of stone, *written* with the finger of God."

- Two things were done by God at Mount Sinai: first He spoke and then He wrote. This is what publishing work is about: having a message to share and disseminating it in a written form. God was the first publisher, since to be a publisher the following things are needed: a message, a writer, materials, printing press, messengers, and people to whom to deliver the written message.
- God organized the first publishing program. The program's components were as follows: The message: the love of God. An editor: God Himself. The first paper: stone. The first printing press: the finger of God. The first book: the tablets of the Testimony (the law of God). The first colporteur: Moses. The first clients: the Israelites.
- The tablets that God wrote on were technically books. Moses brought them to the people in his hands (Ex. 32:15), and became the first colporteur.
- Publishing work was born in God's mind and its foundation is in the Bible. It is a powerful tool for the propagation of the gospel through its messengers.

b. Foundation in Ellen G. White's writings

- The Adventist Church arose hand in hand with publishing work, and through this means it has grown and developed until reaching the place it occupies today at a worldwide level. Ellen White declared: "I was shown that the publishing work was arranged and

OPENING HYMN:
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, no. 341

SCRIPTURE READING:
Isaiah 30:8

CLOSING HYMN:
Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, no. 74

SERMON

established under the special supervision of God” (*Pastoral Ministry*, p. 53). “Our publishing work was established by the direction of God and under His special supervision” (*Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 7 p, 138).

- In August 1846, when Ellen G. White and her husband read Joseph Bates’ pamphlet, they began to keep the Sabbath. Two years later, in November 1848, Ellen G. White received the vision from God regarding publishing work. She describes it like this, “Afer coming out of vision, I said to my husband: ‘I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world’ ” (*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 125).
- From 1847 on, James White printed *The Present Truth*, which contained the biblical message that the Adventist Church began to propagate. God prospered the publishing work from the very beginning. Today, the Adventist Church has more than sixty publishing houses, thousands of canvassers, and millions of members who believe in the Bible truths and spread them in order to fulfill the mission through publications.
- For more than 163 years the Adventist Church has been guided by God’s powerful hand and through publications. Ellen G. White had said: “The publishing branch of our cause has much to do with our power” (*Counsels to Ministers*, p. 446).

Publications work and canvassing

a. God’s mandate:

- The OT records that God gave specific commands to His prophets. He ordered Isaiah, “Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and note it on a scroll, that it may be for time to come, forever and ever” (Is. 30:8). The prophets Jeremiah and Habakuk received a similar command (Jer. 30:2, Hab. 2:2, 4), and John received the order to write in a book the vision of the message to the seven churches (John 1:10, 11).
- God’s command to His prophets is an order that the Adventist Church has preserved as a legacy from God. The Bible is the main written message, and the

spirit of prophecy is the lesser light. From the principles recorded in these two luminaries books are written with topics on health, the home and family, children and youth, and doctrinal topics, fulfilling God’s mandate to the church to disseminate His message in written form.

- Ellen G. White stated about the value of a book: “A sermon may be preached and soon forgotten, but a book remains” (*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 381). She also adds: “It is true that some who buy the books will lay them on the shelf or place them on the parlor table and seldom look at them. Still God has a care for His truth, and the time will come when these books will be sought for and read” (*Counsels to Ministries*, p. 150).

b. The objective

- Present Christ. The main objective of publishing work is for canvassers and church members to present Christ’s love and salvation by faith to the world and bring those souls to the feet of Jesus.
- The Lord’s messenger indicated that church members must give or sell publications, (*Manuscript 126*, 1902). The church’s publishing houses produce quality books and magazines to spiritually nourish church members and offer them various materials to be used in evangelism.
- Church members give away the books when they share their beliefs with neighbors, friends, and family members. The faithful colporteurs sell them while visiting all types of people in every place, helping the spiritually needy, praying for the ill, and teaching the principles of health in order to bring them to Christ. “The canvasser whose heart is meek and lowly can accomplish much good. . . . Going out two by two . . . they carry the message of truth. Thus they come into close touch with the people, and find many opportunities to speak of the Saviour” (*Counsels to Ministers*, p. 38).
- About the reach of publications, Elen White asserted that “Our publications should go everywhere. . . . There are many places in which the voice of the minister cannot be heard, places which can be reached only by our publication” (*Counsels to Ministers*, p. 4).

Nature and importance of canvassing

- Canvassing is a sacred work: “The canvassing work should be considered as sacred, and those who have

unclean hands and defiled hearts should not be encouraged to enter upon it. The angels of God cannot accompany the unconsecrated to the homes of the people; therefore all those who are not converted, whose thoughts are corrupt, who will leave the taint of their imperfections upon everything they touch, should refrain from handling the truth of God" (*Counsels to Ministers*, p. 29).

- "The canvassing work, properly conducted, is missionary work of the highest order, and it is as good and successful a method as can be employed for placing before the people the important truths for this time" (*Counsels to Ministers*, p. 6).
- The work that canvassers do is similar to that which the pastor does: "Canvassers must go out into various parts of the country. The importance of this work is fully equal to that of the ministry. The living preacher and the silent messenger are both required for the accomplishment of the great work before us" (*Counsels to Ministers*, p. 8). "The ministerial evangelist who engages in the canvassing work is performing a service fully as important as that of preaching the gospel before a congregation Sabbath after Sabbath. God looks upon the faithful evangelistic canvasser with as much approval as He looks upon any faithful minister" (*Counsels to Ministers*, p. 45).
- The spoken gospel and the written gospel are represented by the pastor and the canvasser. The work they carry out mutually complements. Just as the pastor expresses God's message from the pulpit, the canvasser expresses the same message visiting homes and leaving the written message.
- Angels supervise the content of books and the printing presses. From an editor's desk to the books that reach the hands of people, God's angels are in charge. Ellen G. White affirms, "I have seen the angels of God passing from room to room, noting the articles that were being published" (*Pastoral Ministry*, p. 60). "The angels of God have supervision of the work. If the eyes of those who run the machinery could be opened, they would discern the heavenly guardianship" (*ibid.*).

The promise

- The Holy Spirit qualifies. When canvassers receive God's invitation to perform the task of evangelizing and accept it, the Holy Spirit qualifies them.

- The prophets spoke on God's behalf, and "as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20, 21). Jesus was strengthened by the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16) and gave Him power to carry out His ministry: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound" (Isa. 61:1).
- The power that guided Jesus and the prophets will do the same with canvassers. "Let canvassing evangelists give themselves up to be worked by the Holy Spirit. Let them by persevering prayer take hold of the power which comes from God, trusting in Him in living faith. His great and effectual influence will be with every true, faithful worker" (*Counsels to Ministers*, p. 106).
- Angels will accompany them. Every time canvassers go through the cities preaching the gospel, the angels will help them: "Entering the homes of your neighbors to sell or give away our literature, and in humility to teach them the truth, you will be accompanied by the light of heaven . . . hearts will be touched by the influence of the Holy Spirit. . . . We may enjoy the companionship of the heavenly angels" (*Counsels to Ministers*, p. 90).
- Canvassers carry the fragrance and presence of Christ: "As they went from house to house, they could converse with the people, carrying with them the fragrance of Christ's life" (*Counsels to Ministers*, p. 44). "As canvassers go forth into the field with humble hearts, full of earnest activity, they will find many opportunities to speak a word in season to souls ready to die in discouragement" (*The Colporteur Evangelist*, p. 36). "The Lord Jesus standing by the side of the canvasser, walking with them, is the chief worker" (*The Colporteur Evangelist*, p. 107).

The results

- The publishing work and canvassing will never fail. God will use this means until the task of preaching in this world is completed. This work does not only consist of selling books, but in leaving in the hands of readers the transforming power of the word. God will see about completing the evangelizing task through His Spirit.

- The servant of the Lord declares, “More than one thousand will soon be converted in one day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications” (*The Colporteur Evangelist*, p. 151). “The silent messengers that are placed in the homes of the people through the work of the canvasser will strengthen the gospel ministry in every way; for the Holy Spirit will impress minds as they read the books, just as He impresses the minds of those who listen to the preaching of the word” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 315).

The invitation

- Every church should have at least one canvasser. The presence of these people of God means a great blessing for the church and the members. “The Lord calls for many more to engage in the canvassing work” (*Counsels to Ministers*, p. 18). “God asks for literature evangelists from every church.” (*Letter 124*, 1902).
- The men and women who accept the invitation to canvass and take the message to those who don’t know Christ will be greatly blessed and transmit that blessing to all people.

Conclusion:

- The publishing work was established by a divine mandate and has strengthened the Adventist Church for more than 163 years. James and Ellen White bolstered it for the good of the church. This work will continue having success under God’s care.
- With hearts and minds committed to serving God and His cause, canvassers will continue doing this work by faith until Christ returns to earth.
- The Lord advises church leaders at every level to love and support the canvassing work. He admonishes through His servant, “If you lay your hand upon the publishing work, this great instrumentality of God, to place your mold and superscription upon it, you will find that it will be dangerous to your own souls, and disastrous to the work of God. It will be as great a sin in the sight of God as was the sin of Uzzah when he put forth his hand to steady the ark” (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 462)

May God bless the publishing work that is being celebrated worldwide on this day, as well as all the faithful canvassers and the members so they may support this blessed work.

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