“How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good news,
Who proclaims peace,
Who brings glad tidings of good things,
Who proclaims salvation,
Who says to Zion,
“Your God reigns!””

Isaiah 52:7

**Purpose:** Learn about and practice ways to get the Advent message to people.

**Introduction**

In the 1840s, a few people sat on some old chairs and bales of hay in a barn in a part of the United States known as New England. They were studying their Bibles and trying to put together a biblically based set of common beliefs, having no idea what the results would be. They came across the number 144,000 in the book of Revelation and thought maybe that was the literal number of people who would make up “those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” and would be ready for Jesus’ second coming (Revelation 14:12).

The words included in the first angel’s message “to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6) sort of bounced off the minds of that little group who saw themselves as the only “remnant” in existence. No one in that tiny group had even dreamed of an international church with over 22 million members!

**I. Who’s the Target Audience?**

Every pastor, Bible worker, and personal ministries participant knows that they need to find a target audience. Target audiences are people who have something in common: language, social position, lifestyle, level of education—whatever it may be.

**A. Target Audiences**
A target audience refers to the people you are addressing. Each target audience is different. The way in which you present the topic being studied depends on the target audience you are addressing.

   b. A high-ranking Roman soldier (Acts 10).

2. As an example, let’s take a closer look at the story of Phillip the evangelist and the Ethiopian statesman (Acts 8:26-39).
   a. This Ethiopian statesman had become a one-person target audience, although neither he nor Phillip knew that at the moment. The Holy Spirit was aware of the interest in the mind of the Ethiopian and led Phillip to him.
   b. This story tells us that Bible study with receptive individuals is a key factor in leading people to accept Jesus as a personal savior. Whether the target audience is only a single individual or a larger group, the truth of the biblical message will reach their hearts and lead them to acceptance and conversion.
   c. This state official was in contact with the Jewish religion of the times, and he was impressed with this religion. He had a Hebrew Old Testament Bible and was reading it as he traveled back to Ethiopia.
   d. The Ethiopian was confused about something he read. He didn’t understand the identity of the person mentioned in Isaiah 53:7, 8. In fact, a lot of people are confused about this. They may have heard the many ideas expressed but never studied for themselves what the Bible says.
   e. The Holy Spirit sent Phillip to meet the Ethiopian and explain the meaning of the text. This is how the Ethiopian statesman was introduced to Jesus. He accepted on the spot and was baptized. Not everyone moves this fast, but it is amazing what the power of the Holy Spirit can accomplish.
   f. No one knows exactly how wide-ranging or influential his new teaching was. In fact, all kinds of myths grew around him in both Christianity and the writings of Islam. Nevertheless, this statesman from a foreign country is an example of a one-person target audience who exerted an influence when he returned home.
   g. Church history informs us that the Christian religion in Ethiopia was for many centuries much closer to the original teachings of Jesus and the apostles than were the brands of Christianity that developed in other parts of the world.

3. **Early Adventist target audiences.** The early Seventh-day Adventists had a specific target audience in mind. These early Adventists had been participants in the Millerite movement of the early 1840s. After what they called the “Great Disappointment” on October 22, 1844, the Millerite movement broke up into various groups. The target audience of that small group gathered in the barn focused on former Millerites, known collectively as “the brethren.” They contacted, visited, preached to, and studied with former Millerites.

4. **The early Advent message.** The message this little group preached was made up of three parts:
a. The date October 22 was not wrong. They had misunderstood what the word “sanctuary” in Daniel 8:14 referred to.

b. The sanctuary referred to was in heaven, and Jesus was inaugurated as our heavenly High Priest in that heavenly sanctuary.

c. They discovered, through contact with Seventh Day Baptists, that the correct day of worship is the seventh day Sabbath, not Sunday.

5. They were surprised when a new target audience appeared. People who had not been followers of William Miller, who had not even heard his name before, also accepted the message they were preaching and teaching. Like the experience of the apostle Paul in New Testament times winning non-Jewish people, in early Adventist history, unexpected people accepted the seventh-day Sabbath and became what are known today as Seventh-day Adventists.

6. Today’s target audiences. Target audiences come in all sizes and shapes. Some are made up of “tribes and tongues and peoples” who have never heard about Christianity, much less the Advent message. There are people on the streets of every major city of the world who know nothing about religion of any kind and couldn’t care less. There are criminal elements of every brand who are astounded when they hear the gospel for the first time; and an increasing number accept the Advent message.

II. Another New Target Audience—Preaching to the World

A. As the original group of Seventh-day Adventists grew in numbers, someone began talking about finding ways to spread what was commonly called the Advent message around the world. This seemed impossible to the still small group of church members. The number 144,000 still rang a bell in Adventist thinking.

1. The editor of the Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald, Uriah Smith, came up with an idea. The population of the United States, he said, is made up of people from all over the world. If you convert one person originally from someplace around the world, he added, you have automatically “spread the message” to the entire population of wherever that person came from.

B. Sending out the message.

Fast forward to 1869, around 20 years later. A well-known Adventist pioneer named Stephen Haskell and his wife, Mary, felt that the Advent message ought to go “to all the world.” He and his wife started the Vigilant Missionary Society, made up mostly of women in their local church. They began sending out Adventist literature on ships going all around the world. These bundles of tracts were instrumental in establishing groups of Sabbath keepers that were later discovered by missionaries and organized into Seventh-day Adventist churches.

C. World mission today

Seventh-day Adventist world mission flourishes. The United States still provides significant funding for world mission, but the country with the most Seventh-day Adventists is Brazil, with two-thirds of Seventh-day Adventists living in Africa or Latin America. The General Conference Office of World Mission offers many stories and mission opportunities your church can use to promote the cause of Adventist world mission (AdventistMission.org).
III. Tools for Mission Outreach

The World Seventh-day Adventist church offers a multitude of tools to use in world mission projects. The world church and its cooperating ministries build churches, provide literature, sponsor “pioneers” who go into unreached areas, and provide media programs targeted to receptive and unreceptive audiences. These are tools your local church can use. Here are descriptions of some available tools. Contact your division or local Bible school to see what materials are available for you to use.

A. Bible Courses. Bible courses, like those offered by the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries departments of the world divisions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, are incredibly effective tools. They are designed for many types of target audiences.

B. Bible Lessons. Bible lessons that cover the basic teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are available in many languages. They are designed for people who may not know much, or very little, about the Bible. They usually include three decisions points: (1) accepting Jesus as a personal Savior, (2) accepting the seventh-day Sabbath as the day of worship, and (3) deciding for baptism as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

C. Prophecy Study Guides. These study Bible prophecies include those in the books of Daniel and Revelation.

D. Unique Bible Study Guides. Your area of the world will probably have unique Bible study guides available in specific languages and for specific target audiences. An example of a specific targeted-audience series of lessons are the ones used in the North American Division directed toward the Native Americans. The approach of the lessons and the graphics used have proven unexpectedly attractive to target audiences far beyond the Native Americans, including young people. Your World Division Bible School may have some Bible Study Guides of a similar nature available.

E. Online Bible Schools. A local church, or a Sabbath School class, or a youth group can sponsor an online Bible school in a local church or district. If available, your division-wide or local Bible school team can provide information on how to set up and run an online Bible school. Within a short time, you will have contacts from all over the world attending your online Bible school.

F. Adventist Media Programs. Adventist media programs (Adventist World Radio, Hope Channel, etc.) reach all kinds of audiences. One of the unique tools commonly used is what is called the “God Pod.” A God Pod is a solar powered audio player that contains the entire Bible, plus all kinds of sermons and Bible studies. Thousands of people in varied environments have been won to the Lord through listening to the Bible-based messages on a God Pod.

IV. Conclusion

God’s Advent message is on the move. The tools to do the job are in place and available. You know what your target audience is. The tools to reach exactly that kind of target audience are available. All it takes to get the message out – is YOU!