

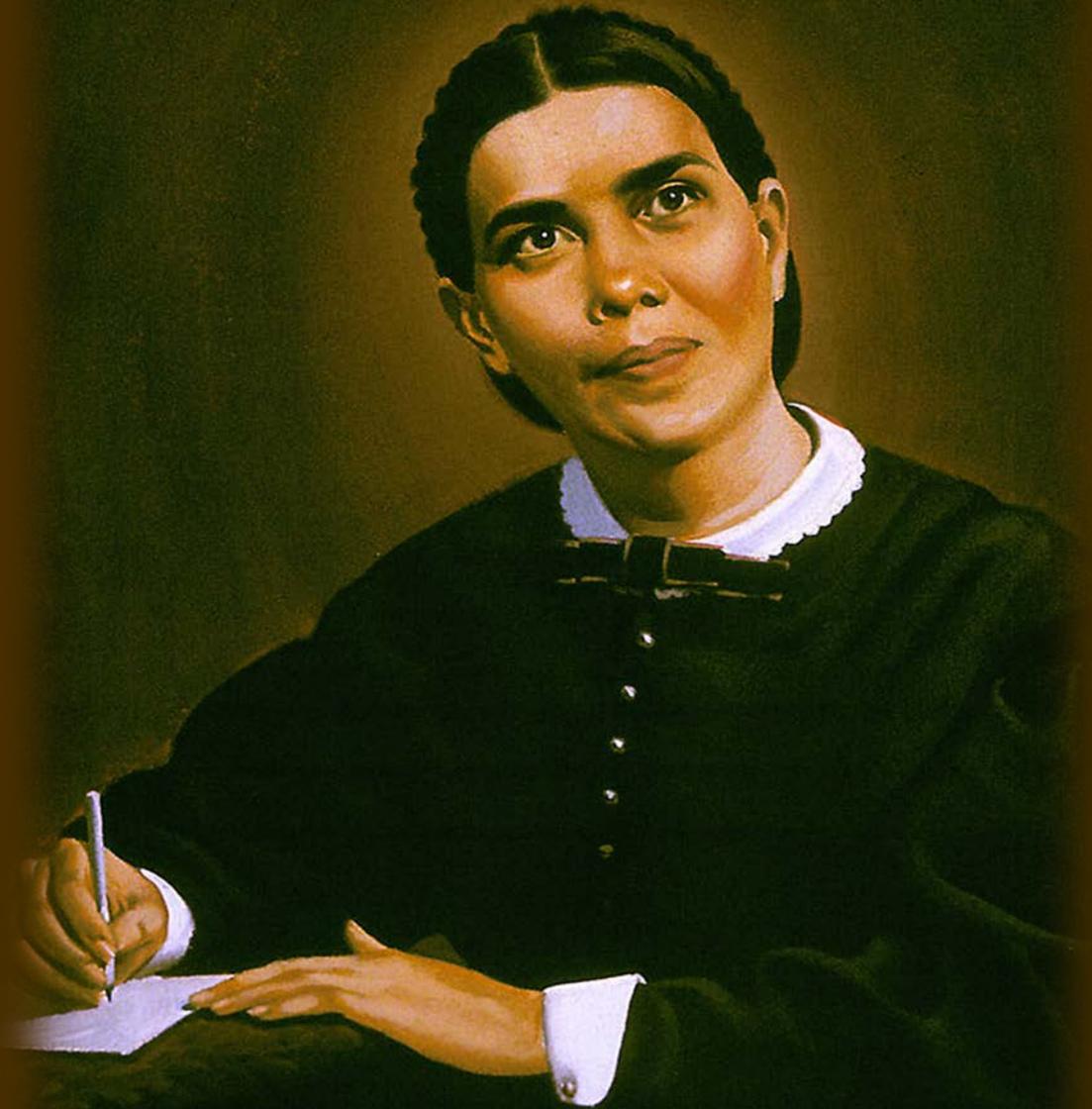
# The History of Sabbath School



Alberta Conference,  
Sabbath School Retreat, 2012

“We have  
nothing to fear  
for the future,  
except as we  
shall forget the  
way the Lord has  
led us, and His  
teaching in our  
past history.”

3SM 162



# A brief history of Sabbath School



THE  
YOUTH'S INSTRUCTOR,

CONTAINING

SABBATH-SCHOOL LESSONS

AND OTHER CHOICE, ORIGINAL MATTER; ALSO, CAREFUL SELECTIONS  
FROM RELIGIOUS BOOKS AND PAPERS, ADAPTED TO  
THE WANTS OF THE YOUTH.

VOLUMES I & II.

PUBLISHED AT THE ADVENT REVIEW OFFICE,  
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

1852.

5109

# Our Sabbath School

- 1852 - James White, a former teacher, publishes the *Youth Instructor*.
- 1853 – The first Sabbath School class is held in Rochester, New York.

# Sabbath School lessons

- 1863 - Adela Patten writes a series of lessons for Children's Sabbath School.
- 1863 - Uriah Smith writes the Adult Sabbath School lessons.





# **Dr. Goodloe Bell**

- **Most of what we do today in Sabbath School was developed by Dr. Bell in 1869.**

# Our Sabbath School

- For example, Dr. Goodloe Bell organized Sabbath Schools for different ages.
- 1877 – Several US States started State Sabbath School Associations.



# Our Sabbath School

- 1885 – *Sabbath School Worker* is published to train teachers and SS leaders.
- 1889 – California Conference begins collecting offerings for missions.



# Our Sabbath School

- 1901- Restructure of our denomination results in a Sabbath School Department
- 1901 – Sabbath School is divided into Senior, Youth, Primary, and Kindergarten classes.





## **Not much has changed in SS since 1901**

- **Even though  
pastors were not  
assigned to  
churches.**
- **Sabbath School  
was often the only  
weekly religious  
service.**

# 1901 Sabbath School Program

- Song service
- Welcome & prayer
- Scripture reading
- Secretary's report
- Superintendent's remarks
- Mission story
- Sabbath School lesson
- Sound familiar?



# Yet, our world has changed since 1901!

- 1905 – Alberta becomes a Province
- 1908 – Model T Ford
- 1927 – First non-stop trans-Atlantic flight
- 1935 – Electricity to rural America
- 1954 – First coast-to-coast color TV broadcast
- 1969 – Man on the moon



Yet, our world has changed in the last 30 years!



“**Remote**” was a secluded spot

“**Cable**” is what supported a bridge

“**High speed access**” was a freeway ramp

“**Airbag**” was one who talked too much

“**Surfing**” was done on a board

# Why hasn't Sabbath School changed?

- Do we travel primarily by foot or horse?
- Do we milk cows before coming to Sabbath School?



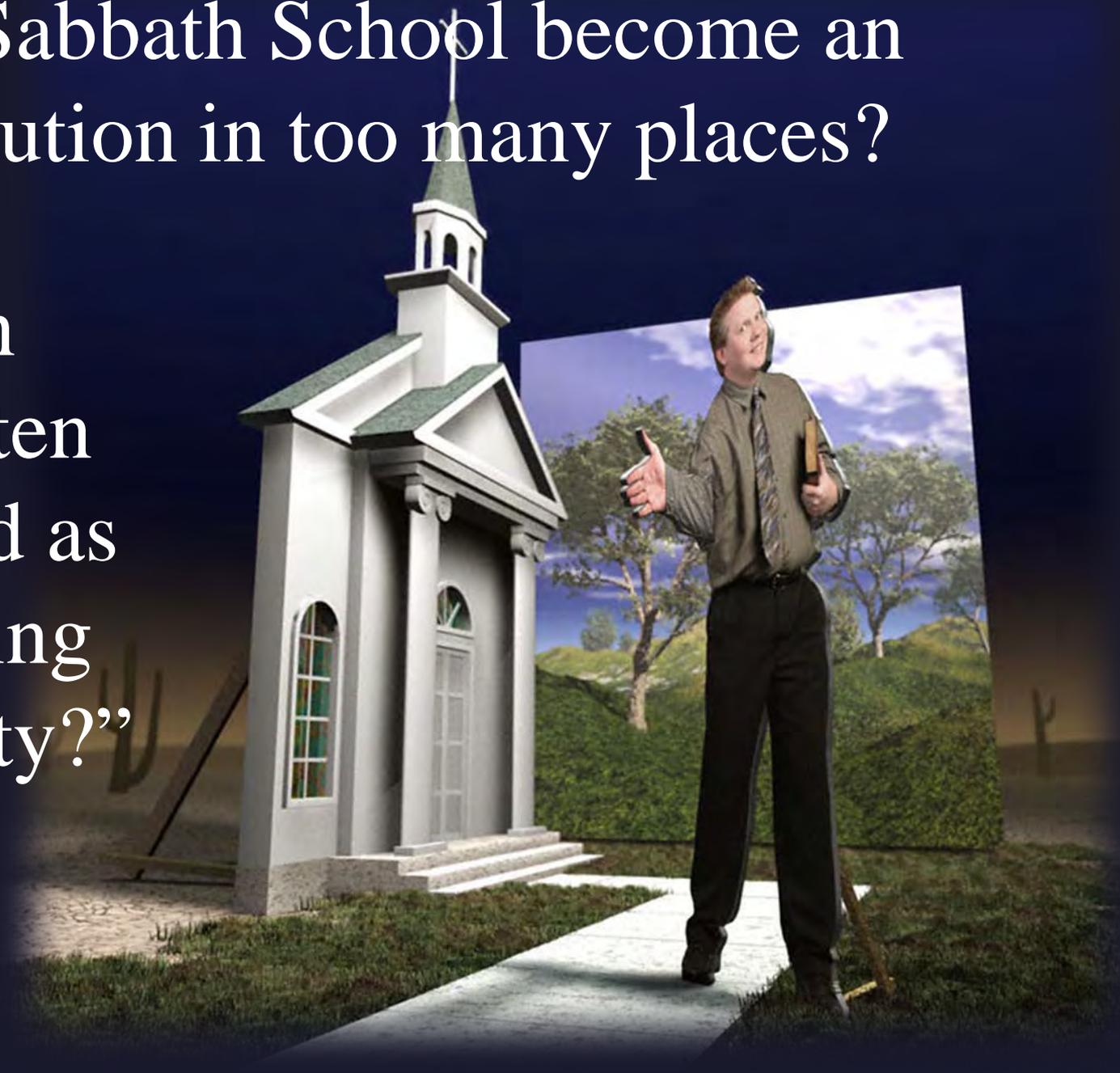


In 2003, at the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sabbath School, Elder Jan Paulsen, our then General Conference President said,

“Sabbath School isn’t an institution. It’s an experience. As a discipling tool, Sabbath School is an invaluable instrument.”

# Has Sabbath School become an institution in too many places?

- Is Sabbath School often being used as a “discipling opportunity?”

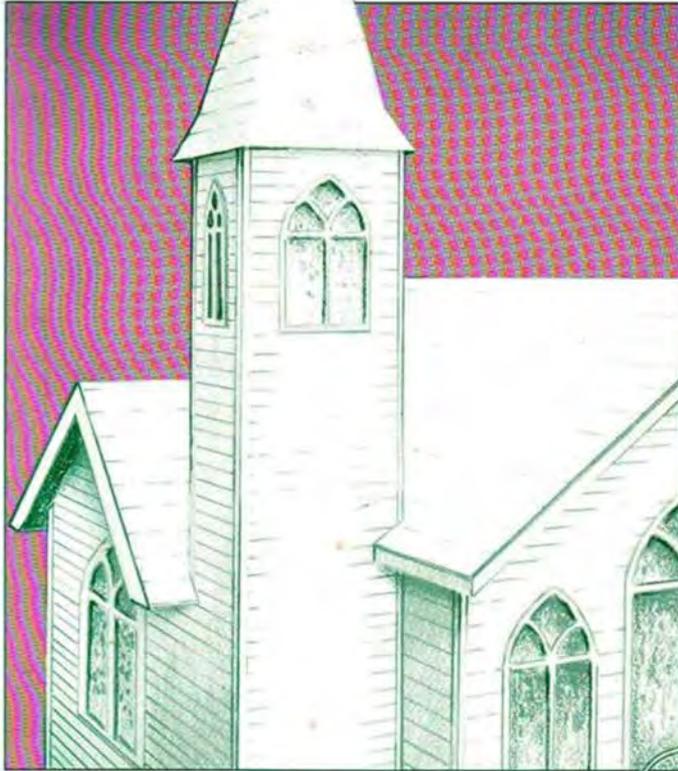


# The 1980's Pacific Union study of Sabbath School



- The most common descriptive word was...
- Sabbath School Revitalization published in 1990.

# Sabbath School REVITALIZATION



Adult/Youth  
Sabbath  
School  
Opinion  
Survey



- ## Sabbath School Revitalization
- In the early 1990s the General Conference adopted most of their suggestions.
  - “Four Goals of Sabbath School”

# Four Goals of Sabbath School



- Fellowship
- Outreach
- Learning
- Application