

THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY



*Collegiate
Quarterly*

July-September 1982

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Publication



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The Collegiate Quarterly is written by faculty, students and friends of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities throughout North America. This is an experimental publication, organized under the Union College board of trustees, coordinated by Campus Ministry, and published with the approval of the General Conference Sabbath School Department and the North American Youth Ministries Department.

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Collegiate Sabbath School Lessons Quarterly. One year subscription in U.S.A., \$4.80; single copy, \$1.20. One year subscription to countries outside U.S.A., \$5.80; single copy, \$1.45. All prices at U.S.A. exchange. Second-class postage paid at Mountain View, CA 94042, U.S.A. When a change of address is desired, please send both old and new addresses.

Send editorial inquiries to Union College, 3800 South 48th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68506, U.S.A.

Send circulation inquiries to Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1350 Villa Street, Mountain View, California 94042, U.S.A.

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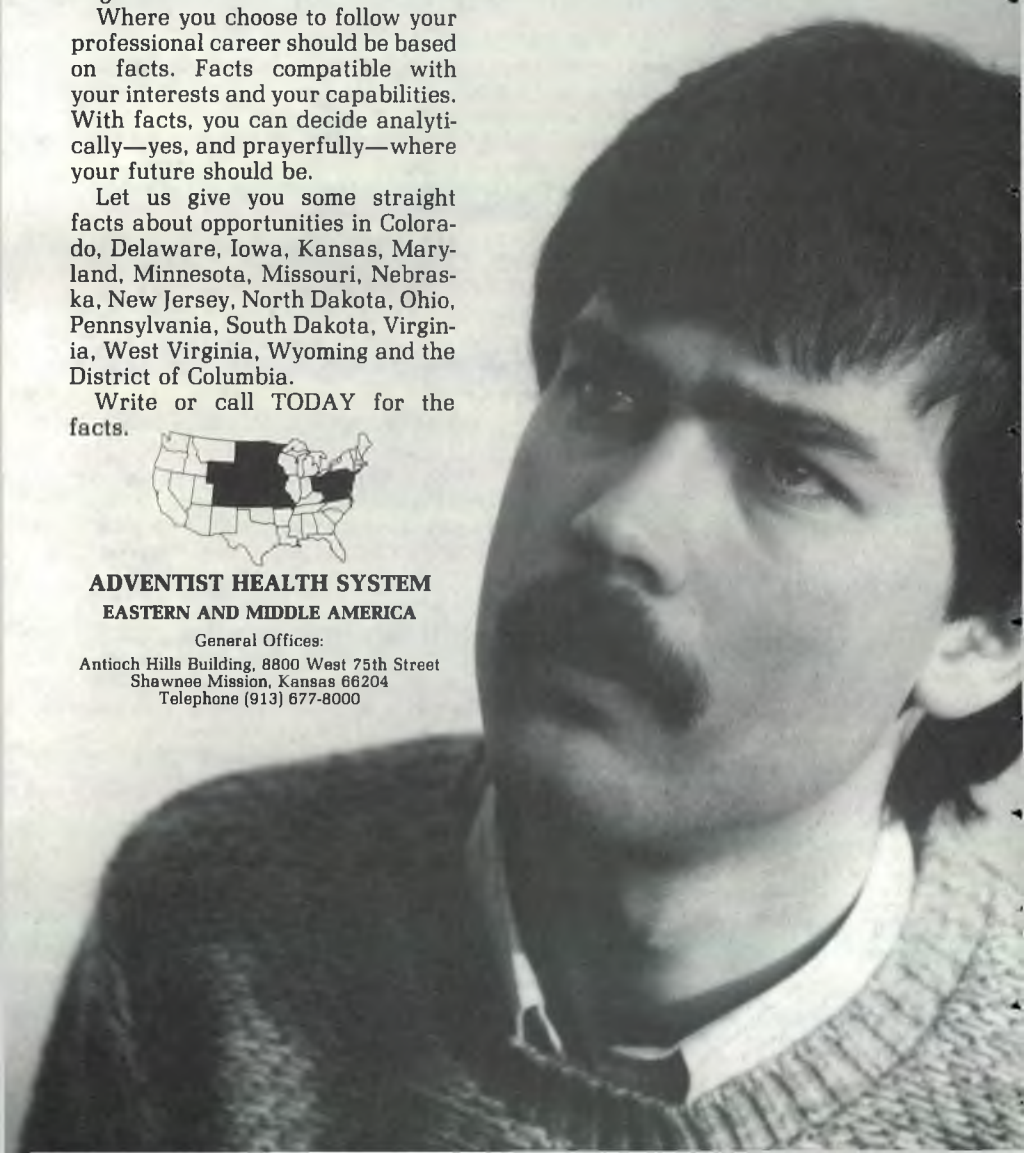
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An Introduction to the Quarter

Dreams, Society, Trampled Empires

"One man with a dream, at pleasure
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample an empire down."

—From *Ode*, by Arthur O'Shaughnessy

Most of us probably find Arthur O'Shaughnessy's tribute to the potency of dreams a little dreamy in itself. Not that many of us really *go forth* with our dreams, much less conquer crowns.

The *Collegiate Quarterly*, however, is indeed a crown conquered by the dream of one man. Not the dream of a General Conference vice-president or committee, but of a college student. Eugene Shirley was perceptive enough to see the need for the quarterly, concerned enough to do something about it, creative enough to produce a challenging, innovative format, resourceful enough to guide the publication from a local campus project to an international circulation of 33,000. He dreamt, went forth and conquered.

Eugene's name no longer appears on the masthead, yet in a very important way the *Collegiate Quarterly* will always be his. He conceived, gave birth to and nurtured it. Though its guidance is now entrusted to others, it will ever bear the identity of its parent.

A meeting of the Collegiate Publications Board in January of this year clarified the organizational structure of the *Collegiate Quarterly* and its sister publication, *College People*. The chart on the adjoining page outlines this structure.

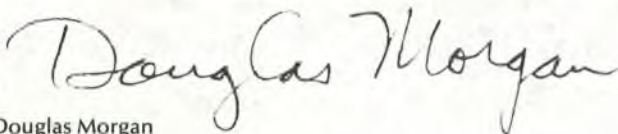
Student editorship is one of the basic concepts behind the quarterly. In keeping with this philosophy, students have been appointed to the editorial positions. The new editor, effective next quarter, is Doug Stuva, associate editor in 1981-82.

The theme of this quarter, "Church and Society," draws attention to a basic question that confronts all who look forward to an imminent second advent: if our primary mission is to prepare ourselves and others for the next world, what should the nature of our involvement with this world be?

A preoccupation with the second coming would seem logically to lead to stance of withdrawal and a message of warning in relationship to society. Yet a thorough examination of the Scripture and the history of our own movement indicates that this isn't the whole picture. Words like penetration and involvement can also be used to describe the Christian's relationship to the world.

As we discuss issues like racial justice, human need, politics, marriage, work, and so on, we will attempt to sort out the complex balance between withdrawal and penetration, warning and involvement. To use the familiar phrase, How are we to be *in* the world without being of it?

If this issue in any way inspires dreams for justice and truth like those of the quarterly's founding editor, it will have accomplished its purpose. Maybe, if we dream together, a new song's measure will be added, and an empire of evil will be trampled down.



Douglas Morgan
Collegiate Quarterly Editorial Director

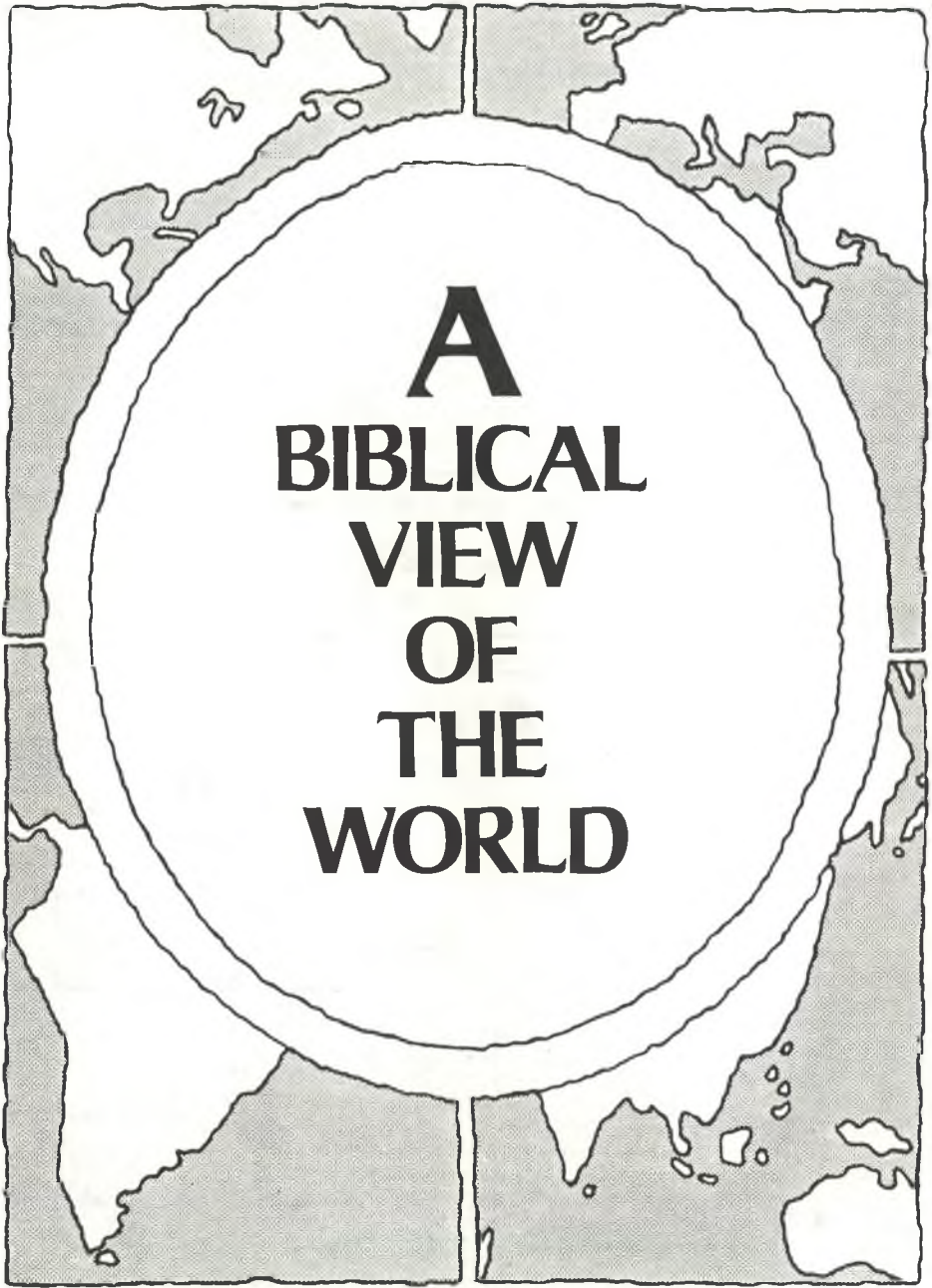
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"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it;"—Psalm 24:1, NIV

Lesson 1, June 27-July 3

With Folks Like Us

In *Shantung Compound*, theologian Langdon Gilkey describes his experience in a Japanese internment camp during World War II. Among the vast assortment of humanity thrust together into the deprivation and boredom of the war camp were many Christian missionaries.

Many of these missionaries were used to associating mainly with only their "own kind." Now, in a crowded war camp they were forced to mix with businessmen, lawyers, barflies, prostitutes and junkies. Gilkey relates an experience which illustrates the discomfort this caused some of the missionaries.

"Taylor [a young British fundamentalist on the same cooking shift as Gilkey] wanted with all his heart to get along with the men there, to be warm and friendly to them, as he knew a Christian should be. All went well for the first few hours or so; no one told a dirty joke or otherwise made life difficult for Taylor. But then when we were ladling out the stew for lunch, a few drops of the thick, hot liquid fell on Neal's hand. Tom Neal was an ex-sailor of great physical strength and brass-bound integrity. Naturally this British tar made the air blue with his curses as he tried to get the burning stew off his hand. When the pain was over, as it was in a minute or so, he relaxed and returned to his usual bantering, cheerful ways.

"But something was now different. Taylor hadn't said a word, nor had he moved a muscle. But he looked as if he had frozen inside, as if he had felt an uprush of uncontrollable disapproval. That feeling, like all deep feelings, projected itself out-

ward, communicating itself silently to everyone around. An intangible gulf had appeared from nowhere, as real as the stew both were ladling out of the cauldron. Of course Neal felt it, and looked up closely and searchingly into Taylor's withdrawn and unhappy eyes. With surprising insight he said, "Hey, boy, them words of mine can't hurt you! Come and help me get this stew to the service line."

Taylor tried to smile; he hated himself for his reaction. But he felt immensely uncomfortable and spent the rest of his time with us on the shift spiritually isolated and alone. He was happy, so he told me one day, only when he was with the other "Christian folk."¹

Can you identify with Taylor? Isn't it true that we Adventists tend to be most happy when we're with other "Adventist folk?" Perhaps this natural tendency is desirable. Certainly it would be tragic if evil were not disturbing to us. Yet we also need to listen to Gilkey's conclusion that the missionaries he observed exemplified "a Christianity which removed itself from men to seek salvation away from the actual life of real people. In their frantic effort to escape the fleshly vices and so to be 'holy,' many fell unwittingly into the far more crippling sins of the Spirit, such as pride, rejection, and lovelessness."²

How do we find the right way in relating to the world? Must we avoid the world's people in order to be untainted by its evil? An understanding of the biblical view of the world is the starting point, and that is the focus of our discussion this week.

D.F.M.

INTRODUCTION

1. Langdon Gilkey, *Shantung Compound* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) p. 187.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

Friends and Enemies of the World

by editors

LOGOS

There is a paradox in the biblical view of the world. James bluntly declares that **"Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God"** (James 4:4, NIV). Yet the central affirmation of the gospel is that in Jesus Christ, God Himself befriended the world in a most dramatic and intense way. **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"** (John 3:16, NIV).

Neither aspect of the paradox should be de-emphasized. The world has rebelled against God, is at enmity with Him and as a result is rather an unfriendly place for all that is innocent, good and true. But God is friendly toward this unfriendly world because it is even yet His good creation, and each individual in it is of infinite value to Him.

The biblical view of the world might be summarized this way:

1) The world was made and is owned by God. **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth . . . and God saw all that he had made and it was very good"** (Gen. 1:1, 31, NIV). Even after millenia of deterioration through sin, the psalmist could rejoice in the fact that this world is God's world. **"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it"** (Ps. 24:1, NIV).

2) The world is human society. The New Testament Greek words *kosmos* and *oikoumenē* both sometimes mean simply the world as human society, mankind as it is organized into groups and institutions (Matt. 5:14; Luke 2:1).

3) The world is alienated from God. John wrote that the entire world is under the grip of the power that is opposed to God in every way; **"the whole world is under the control of the evil one"** (1 John 5:19, NIV).

4) The world is reconciled by God. The good news is that God has emphatically revealed His friendliness to an antagonistic world. **" . . . God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them"** (2 Cor. 5:19, NIV). The cross has already eliminated the alienation between God and man, making it possible for us to escape the dominion of the evil one and enter the new order initiated by Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Because God already has reconciled the world to Himself in Christ, we are now free to leave the camp of His enemies, and be personally, experientially reconciled to Him.

5) The world should be infiltrated by God's people. Jesus' prayer was **"not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one"** (John 17:15). The believers' life is to incorporate the paradox in the biblical view of the world. Protected from the "prince of this world," we remain in the world, loving and serving it as did Jesus. Throughout this quarter we will explore what specifically it means to live as Christians in the world.

D.F.M.

A Love-Hate Relationship

selected by editors

The paradox in the biblical view of the world is also in the writings of Ellen White. Warnings against the world as a threat to spirituality abound:

"The world is the chief enemy of religion. The satanic forces are constantly at work through the world, and those who are professed Christians, yet associated with the world in close fellowship, are so much one in spirit, aims, and principles or working, that they cannot discern between him who serveth God and him who serveth the world. The enemy works constantly to push the world to the front, to be looked upon as superior to those who believe in Jesus, and who seek to be doers of His word."¹

"I would appeal to the youth to cut the finest thread which binds you in practice and in spirit with the world. 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'²

On the other hand, Jesus' example of loving the world is also upheld. His love led Him to be involved in the life of the world in very tangible ways.

"Jesus saw in every soul one to whom must be given the call to His kingdom. He reached the hearts of the people by going among them as one who desired their good. He sought them in the public streets, in private houses, on the boats, in the synagogue, by the shores of the lake, and at the marriage feast. He met them at their daily vocations, and manifested an interest in their secular affairs."³

We *should* love the world; not because we are allured by its deceptive, hollow charms, but because we desire to participate in its restoration.

"The example of Christ in linking Himself with the interests of humanity should be followed by all who preach His word, and by all who have received the gospel of His grace. We are not to renounce social communion. We should not seclude ourselves from others. In order to reach all classes, we must meet them where they are. They will seldom seek us of their own accord. Not alone from the pulpit are the hearts of men touched by divine truth. There is another field of labor, humbler, it may be, but fully as promising. It is found in the home of the lowly, and in the mansion of the great; at the hospitable board, and in gatherings for innocent social enjoyment.

"As disciples of Christ we shall not mingle with the world from a mere love of pleasure, to unite with them in folly. Such associations can result only in harm. We should never give sanction to sin by our words or our deeds, our silence or our presence. Wherever we go, we are to carry Jesus with us, and to reveal to others the preciousness of our Saviour. But those who try to preserve their religion by hiding it within stone walls, lose precious opportunities of doing good. Through the social relations, Christianity comes in contact with the world. Everyone who has received the divine illumination, is to brighten the pathway of those who know not the Light of life."⁴

TESTIMONY

Key text:

1 John 2:15-17

1. *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 270.
2. *Messages to Young People*, p. 139.
3. *Desire of Ages*, p. 151.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

☐ June 29
Tuesday

Misery and Grandeur of the Home Planet

by James L. Hayward, Jr.

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Genesis 1:1, 31;
Romans 8:22

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:1, 31). When we experience a sunrise, hear a symphony, or embrace a lover, we have every reason to agree. Existence is a privilege. Life is full of grandeur. But when we lose a friend, suffer war, or watch a child die, the good seems overwhelmed. The earth seems cruel or, at best, benignly indifferent to our needs. We agree with Paul that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together" (Rom. 8:22).

The variety of hymns we sing reflects our ambivalence toward the earth. Consider the lyrics of "For the Beauty of the Earth," "Glorious Are the Lofty Mountains," "All Things Bright and Beautiful," and "This Is My Father's World." Life is rich and full, the mountains are monuments to the Creator's greatness, God made all things well, and it is His world.

But now examine the words of "How Vain Is All Beneath the Skies," "Let Others Seek a Home Below," "Weary of Earth," and "This World Is Not My Home." Earthly joys fade, the world will always fail us, and evil is ever with us. We will not pledge allegiance to such a place. We wish to be strangers to the earth, to tear ourselves from its grasp.

Regardless of our intermittent longings to escape, the earth grips us tightly. Try as we might we cannot leave it for long, for we are its children.

Shanna is my five-year old daughter. She is not only my child but also a child of the earth. Calcium in her bones may have once graced a delicate sea shell. Sulfur in her proteins may have spewed from an ancient volcano. Sodium activating her neurons may have been mined from a subterranean salt dome. Carbon in her glucose might have once formed a splinter of coal. Shanna and all other organisms live as vibrant lumps of the earth we tread. This is not mysticism but a basic principle of science. It is also a biblical axiom (Eccl. 3:20).

So despite our changing inclinations we are forced to take the earth seriously. We depend upon it for our sustenance and it depends upon us for our stewardship. What hurts us hurts the earth, and that which destroys the earth also destroys us. We and the earth are one.

It is true that this world is not all that we would like it to be. We long for a new earth and, thankfully, one has been promised (John 3:16; Rev. 21:1). But meanwhile we are temporary earthen vessels commissioned to make our planet a more hospitable place (Gen. 2:15). In this sense we share with our Maker the power to create. It is in the use of this power that we reflect our relationship with Him.

Is "This-Worldliness" Christian?

by editors

HOW TO
Key Text:
Mark 16:15

In this introductory lesson our main purpose is to sharpen our awareness of the biblical concept of the world. The remaining lessons in the quarter are in effect the "How To" for Lesson 1. However, the coexistence of both positive and negative assessments of the world in Scripture presents us with a practical challenge: How do we sort out the paradox and come up with a balanced perspective? Here are some suggestions:

1. Avoid compartmentalizing life into the "sacred" and the "secular." We call church, Bible study and witnessing "religious" activities, and call work, study and entertainment "secular." Our student governments have "religious" vice-presidents along with "social" vice-presidents.

These distinctions may be necessary, but a sharp separation between the religious and the secular only sidetracks us in trying to understand the world biblically. If the world is God's creation and the object of His supreme love, no aspect of life in the world should be viewed as unrelated to God, outside of His realm somehow.

Luther once remarked that God would rather hear the curses of the ungodly than the alleluia's of the pious. This is a hyperbolic way of saying that God is more interested in everyday life where "the rubber meets the road" than He is in pretentious piety.

An integrated, biblical view of the world sees everyday life—work, play, relationships, as important to God as is prayer and preaching.

2. Accept the challenge to "this-worldliness." In one of his final letters from prison before being executed by the Nazis, Dietrich Bonhoeffer commented on the profound "this-worldliness" of Christianity. He wrote, "I'm still discovering right up to this moment, that it is only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith. . . . By this-worldliness I mean living unreservedly in life's duties, problems, successes and failures, experiences and perplexities."¹ In another letter he wrote, "It is not the religious act that makes the Christian, but participation in the sufferings of God in secular life . . . not in the first place thinking about one's own needs, problems, sins and fears, but allowing oneself to be caught up into the way of Jesus Christ. . . ."²

Because God loves this world, the Christian is called to "this-worldliness"—living the way of Jesus in the "secular" world.

3. Don't compromise distinctiveness. Bonhoeffer hastens to explain what he does *not* mean by this-worldliness: "I don't mean the shallow and banal this-worldliness of the enlightened, the busy, the lascivious, but the profound this-worldliness, characterized by discipline and the constant knowledge of death and resurrection."³

Our awareness of God's love for the world, and our commitment to participation in it should never be allowed to obscure the fact that the world also stands under God's judgment. In contrast to the Christian's this-worldliness, there is a worldliness that is demonic, at enmity with God. This contrast should always remain sharp.

Christian this-worldliness does not mean selling-out to the bankrupt values that prevail in the world. It means a distinctive lifestyle lived out *in the world*, rather than remaining physically and psychologically secluded in a religious "fortress."

D.F.M.

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Eberhard Bethge, ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1953) p. 369-370.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 361-362.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 369.

July 1
Thursday

Against Isolationism

by Edward W. H. Vick

OPINION

Key text:
John 17:14-16

Is there such a difference between the world and the church that if we are faithful to the church we can have nothing to do with the world? Can we say that the world is the sphere of ignorance and the church the sphere of knowledge, that the world is the sphere of darkness and evil, and the church the sphere of light and goodness? Can we say that persons in the world are outsiders and we are insiders, that they are the lost and we are saved?

Let us take as our point of departure that this position of radical division between believer and nonbeliever is based on the proper and necessary insight that there is some important sense in which the one is different from, even opposed to, the other. There is separation between believer and unbeliever. But that is only one side of the matter, only half the truth. There is also community between believer and unbeliever. That side of the matter is important, too. The question we need to ask is: *In what sense* separation, and *in what sense* community?

First, we must sort out what we mean by "world," since the term is used in apparently opposite ways. When we look at the world's beauty, we sing, "This is my Father's world." When we look at its sin and ugliness, we call Satan the "prince of this world." Jesus himself said his disciples were to be *in* the world but not *of* the world. They were to be worldly (in-the-world) and not worldly (of-the-world) at the same time. Is there then more than one meaning of the term "world" and of the corresponding adjective "worldly"? It will help if we briefly go to the New Testament and clarify how the expression "world" is used there.

The New Testament uses the term "world" in several senses. We shall distinguish three of these.

1) "World" stands for the **whole created order**. God created the world, that is "the heavens and the earth," the totality of what is. Jesus, according to John 17:5, shared the glory of the Father "before the world was made." "World" here simply means "creation," that which is other than God but which was brought into being by God, and continues to be dependent upon God. In this sense, the term "world" is neutral as far as evil is concerned.

2) The term "world" may also mean **men as they group themselves in social unities and institutions**. The clan or the nation would be examples. It is as men live in such social unities that the demand of God is made on them. They may respond either positively or negatively. Jesus said, "I have come as light into the world that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness" (John 12:47). This is the world of human relationships, united and structured in specific ways. Again, this is a neutral sense of the term. It is the world in which, by virtue of being human, we necessarily participate.

3) When the rejection of Jesus Christ has taken place, the world becomes **the realm hostile to God and independent of him**. Evil permeates the structures of society, human life becomes alienated from God. "World" now comes to mean man unbelieving, man at war with God, man hating and resisting good. In this sense, "world" means sin and sinfulness; it is to be shunned by the disciple. Says the author of First John: "We know that we are of God and the whole

world is in the power of the evil one" (5:19). He also writes: "Little children, you are of God . . . they are of the world" (4:4, 5). Here the term is no longer neutral. World is evil.

This brief reference to certain New Testament passages (and the evidence could be much more extensively examined) indicates that we cannot simply say, "The Christian has nothing to do with the world." We must say this in a certain sense, and yet at the same time we must urge that Christians should participate in the world, again understanding what it is that we are saying.

Why must the believer share in the world's work and participate in its activities? The fundamental theological answer is: "Because it is God's world; He is its creator and goal; there is goodness here." If we ask, Why must the Christian separate himself from the world? the theological answer is: "Because and to the extent that the world is opposed to God, resists his demands and refuses his revelation." When "world" represents what is opposed to the Kingdom of God (the third sense listed above), it stands for all that should be shunned by the believer. It is then simply equivalent to the evil.

As for the former senses of "world," we must remember that whether we are Christian or not we live in the sphere of human relationships. We share in the structures of the world. Unless we live in an artificial subculture our own religious community has created, we have to work in the world in order to live. Not only that, but we *all* willingly share, indeed take for granted, the benefits which the modern world has handed down to us: cars, time-saving devices, medicine, communications, etc. Moreover, we are citizens of this country or that. We pay our taxes and we vote or we refuse to vote, either way participating in the structures of society. We cannot escape our social involvement. To do nothing, to refuse to recognize our involvement, is also involvement, even if it is negative.

So it is extreme, indeed, to hold that believer and nonbeliever have nothing in common. The Gospel says something to our *human* condition, and that is a condition we go on sharing after faith is born.

We shall now briefly expound the implications of the following propositions:

Sin is in the believer.

The believer is in the church.

The church is in the world.

The world is sinful.

The world is in the church.

The church is sinful.

No believer has to be reminded that he has difficulty in doing good. But we may need reminding that the reason for this is that we find it easy to respond to sin, that sin, so to speak, dwells *in* us (Romans 7) *wherever we go*. One of the places we find ourselves is in the believing community, in the church. This means that, as elsewhere, sin manifests itself within the church. So, bearing in mind the different meanings of the term "world," we cannot say simply: world sinful, church holy. And it is naive to think we can diminish or eliminate temptation by withdrawing from the world. By withdrawing, we simply change the context of our sinfulness. We need to remember

By withdrawing, we simply change the context of our sinfulness

these words written to the early Christians, "If we say we have not sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1:8).

Sin takes particular forms in different contexts, but a change of context does not eliminate sin. Indeed, the forms it takes inside the church whether in the individual or in the religious community as a whole, will have striking parallels to those of the worldly community from which we may have tried to flee. Pride, selfishness, lovelessness, unreasonableness, thirst for power, neglect of the feelings of others, injustice, lack of charity, prejudice, greed, monopolizing, cowardice, lust, failure of nerve, indolence, egoistic introversion, self-centered extroversion. They are the same sins wherever they show up.

And sin is no less sin because done by believers. What is the difference between adultery in a believer's bed and adultery in a nonbeliever's? What is the difference between a believer's and a nonbeliever's failure to respect the person of another? What is the difference between the corporate selfishness of a business concern and that of a church community that takes an interest in politics only when its own interests are threatened and has no real care for the wider claims of man for justice, for dignity, or for food?

The New Testament does not endorse the distinction between the church without sin and the world as sinful, even if it might seem to do so upon a superficial reading of the more familiar passages. In the New Testament, the church is constantly to guard itself against its *own* sinfulness. The community's need is to put on Christ, to cast off the works of the flesh—and not to stand aloof in prideful isolation from other men. The world (sin) is in every believer. The world (sin) is in the church. And that is the point of the constant warnings. The church has to fight its own sin!

The danger, then as well as now, is that of making a too-simple distinction between church and world. It is a danger because it leads us astray in two ways: first, to a wrong assessment of where the threat to the church is coming from, and second, to a wrong assessment of how the church is to engage itself in the world in order to make its witness effective.

The question is not whether the church should be in the world or not. The question rather is *how* we are to be there. Once we have overcome the temptation to isolationism, the temptation always to think how we can avoid contact, how we can shape our community so that it never knows how to be among men in a creative and intelligent manner, then we can focus our energies on genuinely creative encounter and participation.

REACT
Lesson 1

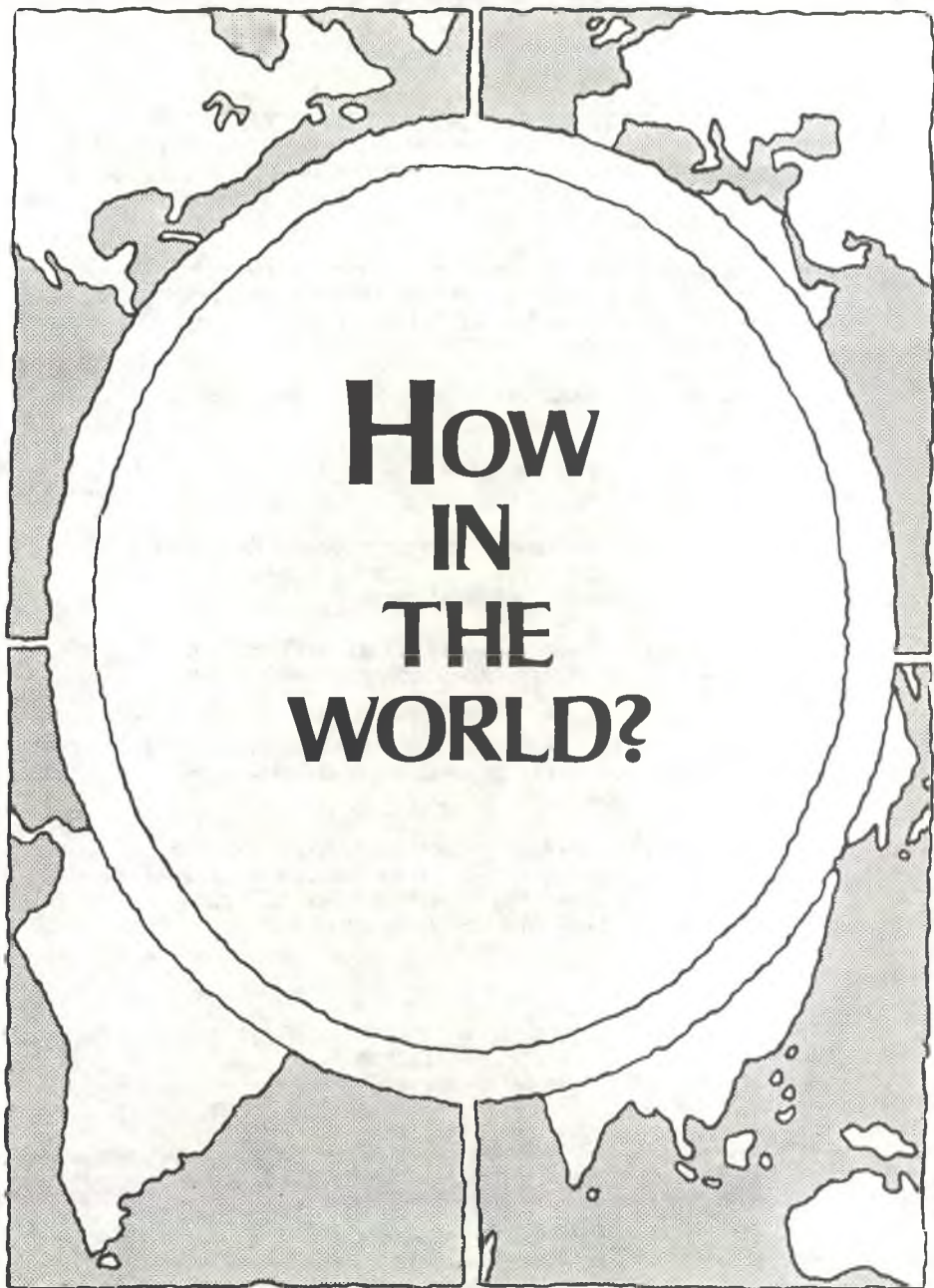
1. James warns against friendship with the world (James 4:4) while Paul calls us to participate in reconciling the world to Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-20). Is there a conflict here? Can these two admonitions be harmonized? How?

Discuss the following activities in terms of their potential danger for creating unwarranted friendship with the world and their potential good for reconciliation of the world to Christ.

- participation in party politics
- joining the military
- involvement in ecumenical church organizations and activities
- attending parties where alcoholic beverages are served
- participation in organized athletics
- dating a non-Adventist

2. Discuss your reaction to the incident related by Langdon Gilkey in the Introduction. Is it possible or even desirable for Christians to feel comfortable associating with “worldly” people?
3. The Evidence article suggests that “we and the earth are one.” Do you agree or disagree? Why? What are the theological implications of your conclusion?
4. Comment on Edward W. H. Vick’s statement in the Opinion article that “it is naive to think we can diminish or eliminate temptation by withdrawing from the world.” Is that really true?

What can we do to, in Vick’s words, “overcome the temptation to isolationism” so that we can know “how to be among men in a creative and intelligent manner?” Is Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s concept of “this-worldliness” (How To article) helpful?



"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God."—1 Peter 2:9, NIV

Lesson 2, July 4-10

Exiles in a Foreign Land

by Lilya Wagner

During World War II Communist armies invaded or conquered several European countries. People fled by the thousands and in time large numbers migrated to America. These refugees, all aliens and exiles from their beloved homelands, reacted differently to the pressures of a different way of life.

Some gravitated toward those of their own kind. They established colonies of people by those who spoke the same language, had the same customs and cultural orientation, and worshipped in the same manner. They protected their identity and clung to the hope of returning to their own country. Their strong ties acted as a fortress: they preferred to remain somewhat isolated and immune to the new world around them.

Some refugees chose to be independent and severed all ties with their past. They wished to forget the trauma of the previous years, and concentrated entirely on their new life. Some even Americanized their names. Most denied themselves the privilege of their own heritage and instead endeavored to become as similar to their adopted countrymen as possible.

Other refugees, however, viewed their new world as a place of boundless opportunity, although they still loved their own homeland and did not discard their culture. They quickly learned the language and customs of their adopted country, while at the same time they practiced their own language and observed familiar customs.

They made friends with neighbors who might have been longstanding Americans or immigrants from other lands, and whenever possible shared their own foreign and interesting ways. While they grappled with the complexities of this new life with vigor, they still remembered and reminisced about their homeland.

A parallel exists between these examples and the ways in which Christians relate to the world. We are all exiles from our homeland and aliens in this world. But how we relate to this state of being makes a vast difference in our relationship to our goals.

Traditionally the church has held two views concerning our sojourn in this world. One view totally separates us from the world. We disassociate ourselves from all secular interests and seclude ourselves in our "fortress," the church. The choice is to either cling to the church and be saved, or associate with the world and be lost.

The other view emphasizes that we should become involved with the world and not spurn the wonders and richness that God has placed here for us to enjoy. We should not be isolated from the rest of the world, but be active participants.

Both of these ways have biblical validity and can be effectively argued. A choice, or compromise, however, should not be necessary. The Bible balances these two views, and this week we will seek to discover that balance.

INTRODUCTION

Lilya Wagner is an assistant professor of English at Union College.

July 4
Sunday

“With It” or “Out of It?”

by editors

LOGOS

In its relationship to the world, the church is to be both “out of it” and “with it.” It is to be “out of it” in that it provides a distinct alternative to the way of thinking and living that the world apart from God offers. It is to be “with it” by penetrating the everyday life of the world with its distinct alternative, rather than trying to shout at the world from a distance.

Peter writes, “you also, like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. . . . But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:5, 9, NIV).

The imagery of “living stones” being built into a “spiritual house” suggests the formation of a church community that is clearly separate from the world. It is the community of those chosen by God, set apart from the world to be uniquely His. Thus, in relation to the world the church is to be “out of it.”

But being set apart and built into a “spiritual house” should not be confused with complacent ensconcement in a fortress, protected from contact with the world. Verse 9 tells us we are set apart so that we may “declare the praises” of the One who brought us out of darkness. Thus, in relation to the world the church is also to be “with it.”

Jesus’ metaphors of salt and light in the Sermon on the Mount further illustrate how the church is to be both “out of it” and “with it.” **You are the salt of the earth. . . . You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden”** (Matt. 5:13-14, NIV). As John R. W. Stott comments, these metaphors show that there is a fundamental difference between the church and the world, they “are as different as chalk from cheese. . . . We serve neither God, nor ourselves, nor the world by attempting to obliterate or even minimize this difference.”¹ Yet, as the salt of the earth, “God intends us to penetrate the world. Christian salt has no business to remain snugly in elegant little ecclesiastical salt cellars. Our place is to be rubbed into the secular community, as salt is rubbed into meat, to stop it from going bad. And when society does go bad, we Christians tend to throw up our hands in pious horror and reproach the non-Christian world; . . . One can hardly blame unsalted meat for going bad. It cannot do anything else. The real question to ask is: Where is the salt?”²

Ultimately though the Christian is never completely at home in this world. The book of Hebrews tells us that the great heroes of faith “were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised, they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on the earth” (Heb. 11:13, NIV). Since we are aliens on earth, citizens of God’s kingdom, another metaphor for our role in the world is that of ambassadors. Paul proclaims that “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:19, 20, NIV).

1. John R. W. Stott, *Christian Counter-culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978) p. 63.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

D.F.M.

Separated But Not Isolated

selected by editors

Throughout history God has called his people to be separate from the world:

"Ancient Israel was especially directed by God to be and remain a people separate from all nations. They were not to be subjected to witnessing the idolatry of those about them, lest their own hearts should be corrupted, lest familiarity with ungodly practices should make them appear less wicked in their eyes. Few realize their own weakness, and that the natural sinfulness of the human heart too often paralyzes their noblest endeavors.

"The baleful influence of sin poisons the life of the soul. Our only safety is in separation from those who live in its darkness. The Lord has enjoined upon us to come out from among them and be separate, and to touch not the unclean thing, and he will receive us, and will be a Father unto us, and we shall be his sons and daughters. If we wish to be adopted into the family of God, to become children of the heavenly King, we must comply with his conditions; we must come out from the world, and stand as a peculiar people before the Lord, obeying his precepts and serving him."¹

After their return from the Babylonian captivity, however, the Jewish nation distorted the concept of separateness into isolation and estrangement from other peoples.

"The chosen people did not become the light of the world, but shut themselves away from the world as a safeguard against being seduced into idolatry. The restrictions which God had given, forbidding intermarriage between His people and the heathen, and prohibiting Israel from joining in the idolatrous practices of surrounding nations, were so perverted as to build up a wall of partition between the Israelites and all other peoples, thus shutting from others the very blessings which God had commissioned Israel to give to the world."²

The separateness to which God's people are called should never lead them to lose touch with society.

"The followers of Christ are to be separate from the world in principles and interests, but they are not to isolate themselves from the world. The Saviour mingled constantly with men, not to encourage them in anything that was not in accordance with God's will, but to uplift and ennoble them. 'I sanctify Myself,' He declared, 'that they also might be sanctified.' John 17:19. So the Christian is to abide among men, that the savor of divine love may be as salt to preserve the world from corruption."³

TESTIMONY

Key text:

Romans 12:1, 2

1. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 109, 110.

2. *Prophets and Kings*, p. 708.

3. *Counsels to Teachers*, p. 323.

The Dangers of Separationism

by John Gladwin

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Matthew 13:33

In his book *God's People in God's World*, Anglican clergyman John Gladwin discusses the dangers of avoiding involvement with the world and suggests some ways Christians should participate in society.

He argues that it is "insufficient to base one's evangelistic work on the principle of conducting dangerous sorties into enemy territory. . . . If our evangelism consists only in occasional ventures from behind our carefully erected defensive barriers the gospel stands in danger of either not being understood at all, or (worse) being totally misunderstood for lack of living contact. Once again, we must learn from Paul in his concern to win the world for Christ. He had learned from his Master what it means to share in the life and experience of the world we have to win. He sought to incarnate the gospel in the different cultures and experiences of the world of his day.

"Secondly, and this is of equal importance, this separationist thinking leads to a real loss of Christian influence upon the developing life of the community. It is all too easy to sit on the touchline and hurl the occasional brick at the participants whenever they seem to be doing a bad job. It is more demanding, and vitally important, to be willing to take part in the game. In our democratic society, people who will not take an active interest in politics and in the state can hardly complain when things are not done to their liking. It is 'not on' for Christians to stand aloof from the community and to live an alternative life, and then to complain about the way the world is going. Separationists can have no effective answer to the accusation: 'It might have been different if you had turned up!' If, on the other hand we do decide to get stuck into the life of the wider community, then we shall need the humility and patience which we can see in Jesus. People are not necessarily going to be falling over backwards to welcome us, especially if they have been sweating it out in hard community work for a long time in our absence. We shall need to learn as we go along. . . .

**People
who drop
out lose
out.**

"Thirdly, people who drop out lose out. The world is the context in which God trains and teaches us in righteousness. It is the place where we learn and grow through testing and obedience in faith. The Christian knows that the world is God's creation and that God loves and cares for his world. He knows that God has given him a special place in the world to order and subdue it in stewardship under God. He knows that human life is made in the image of God, for fellowship with God and for the social fellowship of man and wife, parents and children, family and family, nation and nation. The bodily, material and social experiences of being human are not evil in themselves, but are part of the good and wholesome creation of God in Christ. The Christian will, therefore, want to live in God's world recognizing that the world and his own life within it are God's property. He will want to discover the marks of the King upon the King's property, and discover what God in Christ is doing in and for and with the world of his creation. The world, for the Christian, becomes a place of opportunity in moral and spiritual growth, and a place of service in which faith finds out the practical call to obedience."

Taken from John Gladwin, *God's People in God's World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980) pp. 29-31.

□ July 7
Wednesday

How to Be Good Salt

by Jiggs Gallagher

Salt, in order to make food salty, must be shaken on and mixed into the food. The same is true of us as Christians. While we are not like the non-Christian in belief and practice, we will have no effect on him if we seclude ourselves from him.

How then do we go about making our "saltiness" effective?

1. **Find deliberate opportunities to meet people.** Seventh-day Adventists are especially cut off from our neighbors. We tend to go to our own schools, shop in our own stores, work in our own offices. We do not share the fellowship of the tavern, the dance hall or the union hall. There are good reasons why we don't; but these differences accentuate our "peculiarity." As a result, Adventists often have no common ground in a social setting outside of the subculture. All the more reason to seek out every legitimate opportunity to form alliances with people of all classes and situations. Jesus wasn't afraid to do that; why should we be afraid?
2. **Have a good reason for being different.** We often think of the empty office chair on Sabbath as a witness to others of the vibrancy of our faith. And that is so. But how many times have we used the restraints of our religion as more a weapon than a witness? How many times have we found refuge in the badge of temperance as a rebuke to a companion? There is a distinct danger in crossing the boundary of peculiarity into the sin of pride. Pride in our own superiority because we have chosen the straight and narrow path. A sinful pride that would seek to exalt ourselves by belittling the choice of others. Christ, who ate and drank, who declared all foods ritually clean, who did not fear the tarnishing of His reputation by association—this Christ is not happy when we refuse to sit in the smoking section of an overcrowded restaurant because "someone might not understand."
3. **Don't give up the important differences.** On the other hand, it's far too easy for the college-age student to feel the pressure of conformity to what we call "the world"—its moral, sexual, behavioral standards. When a "thus saith the Lord" stands between you and something you want to have or do, remember which path will bring more lasting joy. Are the consequences temporary or eternal? Those questions will help you decide whether the point of separation is truly important or not.

Communal groups throughout history have tried to improve the lot of humanity by strict separation. Monks and nuns pray endlessly for the salvation of the world. Even the practitioners of Transcendental Meditation claim they can lower the crime rate in a given city if enough people meditate in the prescribed fashion.

But these efforts are doomed to failure by the lack of meaningful interaction between the supplicant and the object of his attention. Coming back to the salt analogy—what good is even new salt if it stays on the shelf? Perhaps we need more emphasis on the prepositional phrase "in the world" in this week's text.

HOW TO

Key text:
Matthew 5:13

How many times have we used the restraints of our religion as more a weapon than a witness?

The Red Banana Problem

by Duane J. Fike

OPINION

A banana once became associated with a small bunch of apples, and before very long the apples began to influence the banana. They let it be known that red was preferable to yellow, and that round was "in" and long was "out." The banana tried to accommodate his new friends first by dyeing his skin and later by compacting himself into a more globular profile. His apple associates were slightly more friendly, even though the dye had made the banana look a rather strange orange, and the inner squashing had left him somewhat lumpy.

It was after these massive over-hauls that the banana began to look a little more closely at the apples. He discovered that they weren't without their blemishes—ugly brown spots just below the surface—and they weren't very nice to their other apple friends—sort of rotten to the core! Such a revelation only upset the poor banana, who by now had a peel that was quite unappealing. When he finally realized that he was neither banana nor apple, he turned a musty brown and quietly slipped away.

The banana's problem was that he did not realize his own worth.

Some readers will recognize that this tale reveals how quickly a person can become tainted through association with others. Trying to be "one of the group" has always involved risk, usually the loss of self-identity. The banana's problem was that he did not realize his own worth.

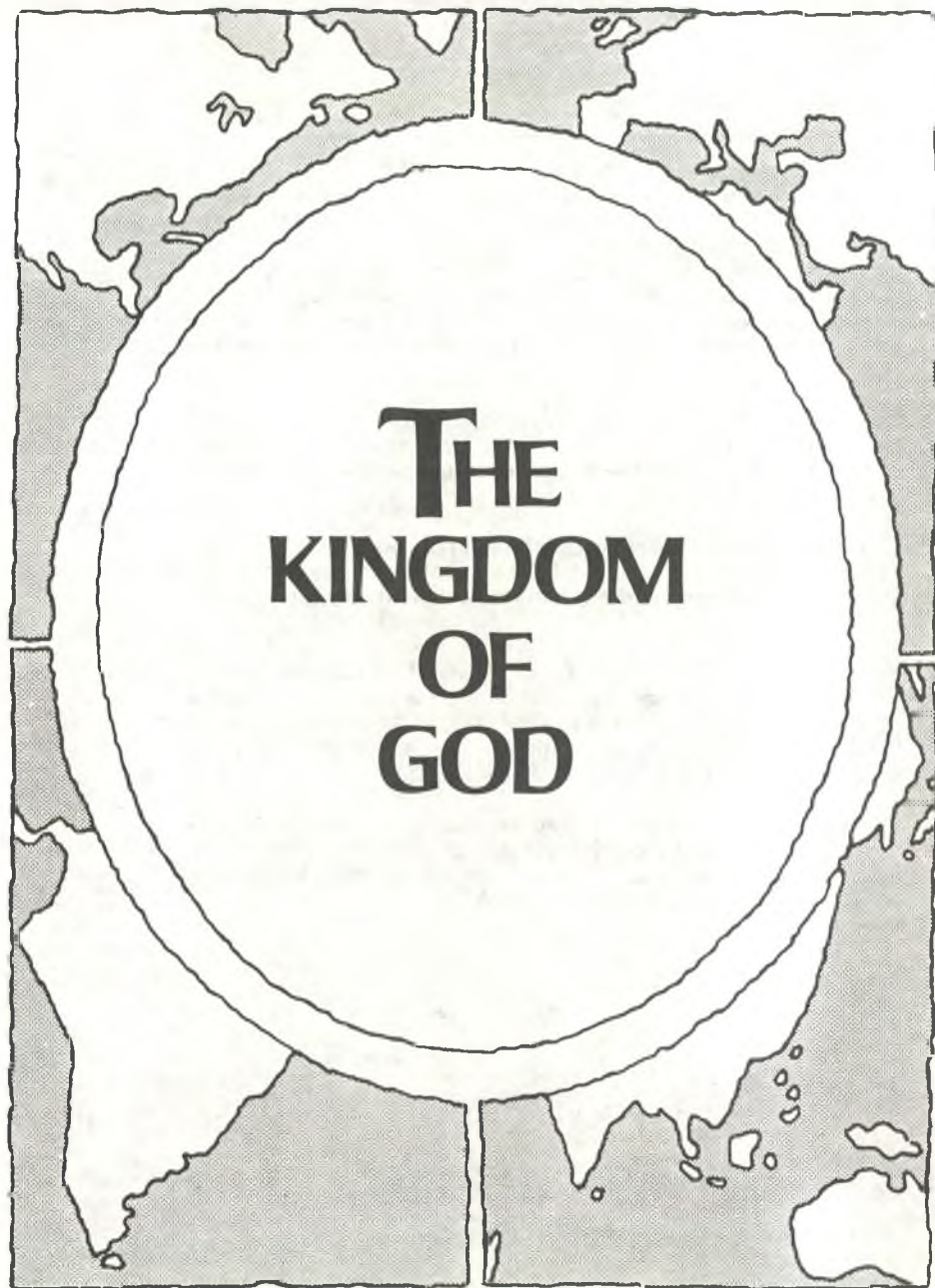
The question of how to be in the world but not of the world is related to personal integrity. The ancient Greeks were familiar with the expression, "Know thyself," and from Shakespeare comes the line, "To thine own self be true." For the Christian, such statements can be interpreted to mean that we should be in daily contact with the Holy Spirit in order to guide actions, to confirm beliefs, and to love neighbors. Through prayer and study, Christians learn to know themselves and to discern what influences are evil and what behavior is good.

But once "in the church," such respect for self and respect of others must continue. Church members lacking self-assurance or failing to accept others at face value will soon begin to intimidate rather than to inspire. Such a condition offers another interpretation of the above fable. It might prove enlightening to re-read the story, but, instead of apples, substitute the phrase, "bad Christians," those who are not as interested in guiding others to the next world as they are in pushing everyone to view this world from their perspective. Christ, our example, loved God, believed in Himself, respected others, and guided rather than pushed many sinners "of the world." His faith helped Him to know (in modern slang) "where He was coming from," and He also knew where He was going.

Thus it appears that a dedicated Christian, unlike the banana, will find joy in being a unique part of the body of Christ, and not be bothered about joining up with the world, a world that has too many blemishes to be worth much envy. At the same time, unlike the apples, accepting Christians know that being in the world provides unlimited opportunities for witnessing to those tired of the world. Once more, the ageless advice of Christ still holds: Love God and love your neighbor as much as yourself.

REACT
Lesson 2

1. Ellen White suggests that the very exposure to evil that comes in a worldly environment has a deadening affect on the Christian experience (4T 109-110). On the other hand, she states that our separation from the world should involve principles and interests, not geographic isolation (CT 323). How do you relate to this apparent contradiction? Is it possible to dwell in a location geographically remote from society without being isolated? Is it possible to live in worldly society without inevitably experiencing spiritual declension?
2. The author of the "How To" section comments that we Adventists are "especially cut off from our neighbors." Do you think this is true? Is this desirable or undesirable? If undesirable, what can be done to change it?
3. Can you correlate tendencies in the church today with "The Red Banana Problem" (Opinion)? Is the greater danger today too much compromise with the world or too little involvement in the world?
4. 1 Peter 2:5-9 and other passages tell us that the Christian community is called out from the world to be a special, distinctive group—"a people belonging to God." What do you think are the three most important ways in which God's people need to be distinct from the world? Why?
5. This week's Evidence author suggests that it is inadequate to base our work in the world on the concept of living in secluded outposts and then making occasional "dangerous sorties into enemy territory." Do you agree or disagree? Why?



"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."—Mark 1:15, RSV

Lesson 3, July 11-17

A Vision of the Kingdom

selected by editors

The Vision

On the second night I had a dream, and behold, there came up from the sea an eagle that had twelve feathered wings and three heads. . . . And I looked, and behold, the eagle flew with his wings, to reign over the earth. . . . And I saw how all things under heaven were subjected to him. . . .

And I looked, and behold, a creature like a lion was aroused out of the forest, roaring; and I heard how he uttered a man's voice to the eagle, and spoke, saying, "Listen and I will speak to you. The Most High says to you, 'Are you not the one that remains of the four beasts which I had made to reign in my world, so that the end of my times might come through them? You, the fourth that has come, have conquered all the beasts that have gone before; and you have held sway over the world with much terror, and over all the earth with grievous oppression . . . you have judged the earth, but not with truth; for you have afflicted the meek and injured the peaceable; . . . And so your insolence has come up before the Most High, and your pride to the Mighty One. And the Most High has looked upon his times, and behold, they are ended, and his ages are completed! Therefore you will surely disappear, you eagle, and your terrifying wings, and your malicious heads, and your most evil talons, and your whole worthless body, so that the whole earth, freed from your violence, may be refreshed and relieved, and may hope for the judgment and mercy of him who made it.' "

The Interpretation

"The eagle which you saw coming up from the sea is the fourth kingdom which appeared in a vision to your brother Daniel. . . .

"And as for the lion whom you saw rousing up out of the forest and roaring and speaking to the eagle and reproving him for his unrighteousness, and as for all his words that you have heard, this is the Messiah whom the Most High has kept until the end of days, who will arise from the posterity of David, and will come and speak to them; he will denounce them for their ungodliness and for their wickedness, and will cast up before them their contemptuous dealings. For first he will set them living before his judgment seat, and when he has reproved them, then he will destroy them. But he will deliver in mercy the remnant of my people . . . and he will make them joyful until the end comes, the day of judgment, of which I spoke to you at the beginning." (2 Esdras 11:1, 5, 37-46; 12:11, 31-34)

This apocryphal vision was probably written by a Palestinian Jew around the end of the first century A.D. It is representative of the Jewish expectations of the Messiah, the kingdom of God and the judgment, all of which Jesus claimed to fulfill.

Did Jesus fulfill the expectations about the kingdom of God found in 2 Esdras? Were some aspects deferred for a later fulfillment? Or did Jesus reinterpret the symbols and teach a different kind of kingdom altogether? What are the implications for the church's relationship to society today?

INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom Challenge

by editors

LOGOS

Jesus began his ministry with this dramatic proclamation: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15, RSV). In the person and mission of Jesus, the kingdom of God became a dynamic reality in human history. We, as God's people, are called to bear witness to the kingdom, lead individuals into its dominion, and point forward to its consummation when Christ will appear the second time.

The gospel writers reveal several aspects of the kingdom which Jesus inaugurated, and the church is to participate in and extend each aspect (see John 17:18).

Jesus gave perhaps the most succinct summary of his mission to Zacchaeus: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10, NIV). He gave a more specific statement of the "platform" of his kingdom to the synagogue of Nazareth. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18, 19, NIV). Then, to the amazement of His hearers, He declared, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). With this declaration Jesus was announcing "a new regime whose marks would be that rich would give to poor, the captive would be freed, and men would have a new mentality (*metanoia*), if they believed this news."¹ Thus, the good news of the kingdom means not only personal salvation from sin, but a new social order characterized by freedom, justice and generosity.

Another aspect of the good news about the kingdom is Christ's victory over the devil. "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8, NIV). By His teaching, deeds, and most powerfully by the cross (Col. 2:15), Jesus exposed the devil as the source of all suffering and oppression. And in so doing, he made liberation from the devil's power possible.

The present reality of the kingdom relates to the ultimate destiny of men and women. "Jesus said, 'For judgment I have come unto this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind'" (John 9:39, NIV). Judgment is based on how one responds to the good news of the kingdom. The church participates in the work of judgment because it is entrusted with the proclamation of the good news.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14, NIV). In its preaching and in its corporate life, the church is to bear witness to the kingdom's present reality and its future consummation. Through the church, the world must hear the good news and see its effects demonstrated.

D.F.M.

1. John Howard Yoder.
The Politics of Jesus
(Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972),
p. 39.

A Kingdom Built by Grace

The "kingdom of God" which they [the disciples] had declared to be at hand was established by the death of Christ. This kingdom was not, as they had been taught to believe, an earthly empire. . . . As used in the Bible, the expression "kingdom of God" is employed to designate both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. This kingdom of grace is brought to view by Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews. After pointing to Christ, the compassionate intercessor who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," the apostle says: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace" (Heb. 4:15, 16). The throne of grace represents the kingdom of grace; for the existence of a throne implies the existence of a kingdom. In many of His parables, Christ uses the expression "the kingdom of heaven" to designate the work of divine grace upon the hearts of men.

So the throne of glory represents the kingdom of glory; and this kingdom is referred to in the Saviour's words: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all the nations" (Matt. 25:31, 32). This kingdom is yet future. It is not to be set up until the second advent of Christ.

The kingdom of grace was instituted after the fall of men, when a plan was devised for the redemption of the guilty race. It then existed in the purpose and by the promise of God; and through faith, men could become its subjects. Yet it was not actually established until the death of Christ. Even after entering upon His earthly mission, the Saviour, wearied with the stubbornness and ingratitude of men, might have drawn back from the sacrifice of Calvary. In Gethsemane, the cup of woe trembled in His hand. He might even then have wiped the blood-sweat from His brow and have left the guilty race to perish in their iniquity. Had He done this, there could have been no redemption for fallen men. But when the Saviour yielded up His life, and with His expiring breath cried out, "It is finished," then the fulfillment of the plan of redemption was assured. The promise of salvation made to the sinful pair in Eden was ratified. The kingdom of grace, which had before existed by the promise of God, was then established."

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Hebrews 4:15, 16;
Matthew 25:31, 32

**Even in
Gethsemane
He might
have wiped
the blood-
sweat from
His brow
and have
left the
guilty race
to perish.**

Taken from *The Great
Controversy*, pages 347,
348.

□ July 13
Tuesday

The Age to Come— Already and Not Yet

by Ralph E. Neall

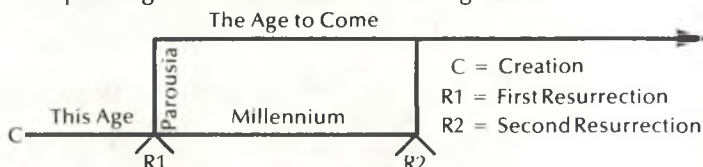
EVIDENCE

Key text:
Matthew 4:17;
25:31

Biblical statements about the kingdom of God present a complex picture. On one hand we find statements which teach that the kingdom is present: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17, RSV). "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt. 12:28, RSV).

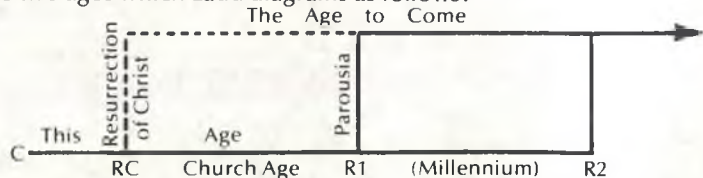
On the other hand, we find statements which teach that the kingdom is future: "When the Son of man comes in his glory, . . . then he will sit on his glorious throne" (Matt. 25:31, RSV). "Hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64, RSV).

George Eldon Ladd has analyzed these texts under the rubric of "This Age" and "The Age to Come," with the addition of the millennium separating the second and third comings of Christ:



The two ages are mentioned in Matthew 12:32—"Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come." This Age is marked by sin, suffering, death and conflict. The Age to Come is marked by righteousness, health, life, peace, the Holy Spirit, and fellowship with God.

This diagram does not yet explain the kingdom-present verses, however, Hebrews 6:5 shows that in This Age we have already "tasted . . . the powers of the age to come." While Satan is still the god of This Age, yet we taste the powers of the Age to Come. "This taste is real. It is more than promise; it is realization; it is experience," comments Ladd.¹ In 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; and Ephesians 1:13, 14, we find that the Holy Spirit has been given to us in This Age as a "guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it" (Eph. 1:14). The Holy Spirit is God's down payment to assure us that He will finally give us the remainder of our inheritance. Although it is not the whole price, the guarantee is perfectly good currency; it is a real part of the whole. In the Spirit, the powers of the Age to Come have reached back into This Age. There is thus an overlap between the two ages which Ladd diagrams as follows:



1. George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom, Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959.) p. 41. Diagrams taken from p. 38 and p. 42.

Justification by faith, which brings peace with God, is one of the blessings of the Age to Come which every believer has already received in This Age (Rom. 5:1). Eternal life, the life of the Age to Come, is the present possession of everyone who believes in Christ (1 John 5:11, 12).

Ralph Neall teaches theology at Union College.

□ July 14
Wednesday

Becoming Kingdom People

by Sieg Roeske

In contrast with the common Jewish expectation that the kingdom of God would involve an immediate, dramatic conquest of the Roman oppressors, Jesus established a kingdom that would initiate its conquests in the hearts of men and women. He compared His kingdom to a tiny mustard seed. "It [the kingdom] is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade" (Mark 4:30-32, NIV).

Christ's kingdom begins by the planting of truth and righteousness in the hearts of men. The fruition of that seed will be the complete destruction of sin and the kingdom of Satan.

The process of becoming a citizen of this kingdom Jesus established is an all-important transaction. I would like to compare it to the steps involved in becoming a citizen of a country in this world, based on my own experience of becoming a Canadian citizen.

1. **Study the Preparation Manual.** All candidates for citizenship receive a preparation manual, "A Guide to Canadian Citizenship." The first two lines read, "This booklet has been especially prepared for those who will soon file their application to become citizens." The book went on to say, "You may find this booklet helpful in preparing yourself for the examination by the court. In this booklet you will find information on history, geography, and natural resources of Canada, the Canadian people and how they live, the system of government, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens."

A preliminary hearing with a government representative is held to examine the applicant's knowledge of the country's laws and customs and to assess his willingness to live by them. It was emphasized that "Good citizenship in a democracy is based on a sense of responsibility." All privileges carry with them corresponding responsibilities.

2. **Appearance Before the Judge.** This is the most solemn and difficult part of the whole process. Here in the presence of the mayor of the city, the clerk of the court, a minister of the gospel, and other candidates for citizenship, the applicants publicly denounce loyalty to their native countries and pledge allegiance to the authority of the new land.

I experienced some anxious moments as I pondered the serious implications of this decision. But I made my decision, and even though I still had an accent and some other left-over peculiarities from my former country, I was now a citizen of Canada.

The parallels of this experience to citizenship in Christ's spiritual kingdom are clear. The Preparation Manual is God's Holy Word. It needs to be thoroughly studied. We must be well informed as to the nature of God's kingdom, its people and its customs, its privileges and responsibilities. Secondly, we must be willing to denounce our love and loyalty to this sinful world. We must pledge our full allegiance to the authority of Jesus Christ as Sovereign Ruler of our lives. Although we may still have some minor external accents and peculiarities to overcome, although we are living in a foreign land in order to do service for our King, our citizenship and our loyalties are with the King of heaven.

HOW TO

Key text:
Mark 4:30-32

Citizens by Grace

by Dean L. Hubbard

OPINION
Key text:
Matthew 6:9, 10

The expression "Kingdom of God" (or "Heaven") is used nearly 100 times in the New Testament and was the central theme of Jesus' teaching. Yet, it is never precisely defined. Rather, it is continuously illustrated. A study of these illustrations highlights the paradox: The Kingdom is at one and the same time past, present and future in application while being both global and personal in focus.

After reviewing both Old and New Testament usage of the expression, William Barclay suggests this definition: "The kingdom is a state of things on earth in which God's will is as perfectly done as it is in heaven."¹ That definition matches the parallelism contained in Jesus' model prayer—"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). But it raises certain questions about the present achievability of the kingdom.

If Barclay's definition is correct, the complete realization of the kingdom can have only a past and a future: past in the life of Jesus because He perfectly obeyed the Father, and thereby embodied the kingdom in His person; future, at the close of the millennium, when harmony is restored to the universe.

Where does that leave us? We are bidden to "seek first" the kingdom (Matt. 6:33), because it is worth any sacrifice, including dismemberment of the body (c.f. Matt. 5:29, 30). We are warned that riches can be a major impediment to entering the kingdom (Matt. 19:23, 24), and that only those with a childlike spirit are reckoned among its citizens (Matt. 18:3). How many of us fully meet these qualifications?

Surely, then, if the kingdom is to have a present, it must be through grace. Justification through faith is our passport signifying citizenship. And what does that do to all of the behavioral demands associated with participation in the kingdom? One thing is certain: the social benefits of the kingdom will never fully be realized even by "saved" Christians who are still falling short of the mark. But we can never be satisfied with a social order that falls short of the biblical ideal. The Christian has an overwhelming desire to integrate even the minutest principle of God's will (law) into life. God's generous gift does not blur our vision of a better life and a better world.

In fact, grace intensifies the believer's quest for perfect obedience. Edward Heppenstall beautifully describes the relationship from our side and from God's: "We cannot bring to God a nature with sin completely eradicated. But we can bring a love and devotion to Christ and His righteousness that *can never be satisfied with less*. God then accepts and regards what we really mean, desire, and intend as though it were really accomplished." This is the kind of commitment and loyalty which led Job to declare, "Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him" (Job 13:15, NIV). When we as individuals and as a church are that committed to reflecting God's will in our personal and corporate lives through the grace of Christ, surely He will be able to trust us to preserve His kingdom throughout eternity.

1. William Barclay, *The Mind of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1960), p. 60.
2. Edward Heppenstall, *In Touch With God* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1975), p. 132. Emphasis supplied.

We can never be satisfied with a social order that falls short of the biblical ideal.

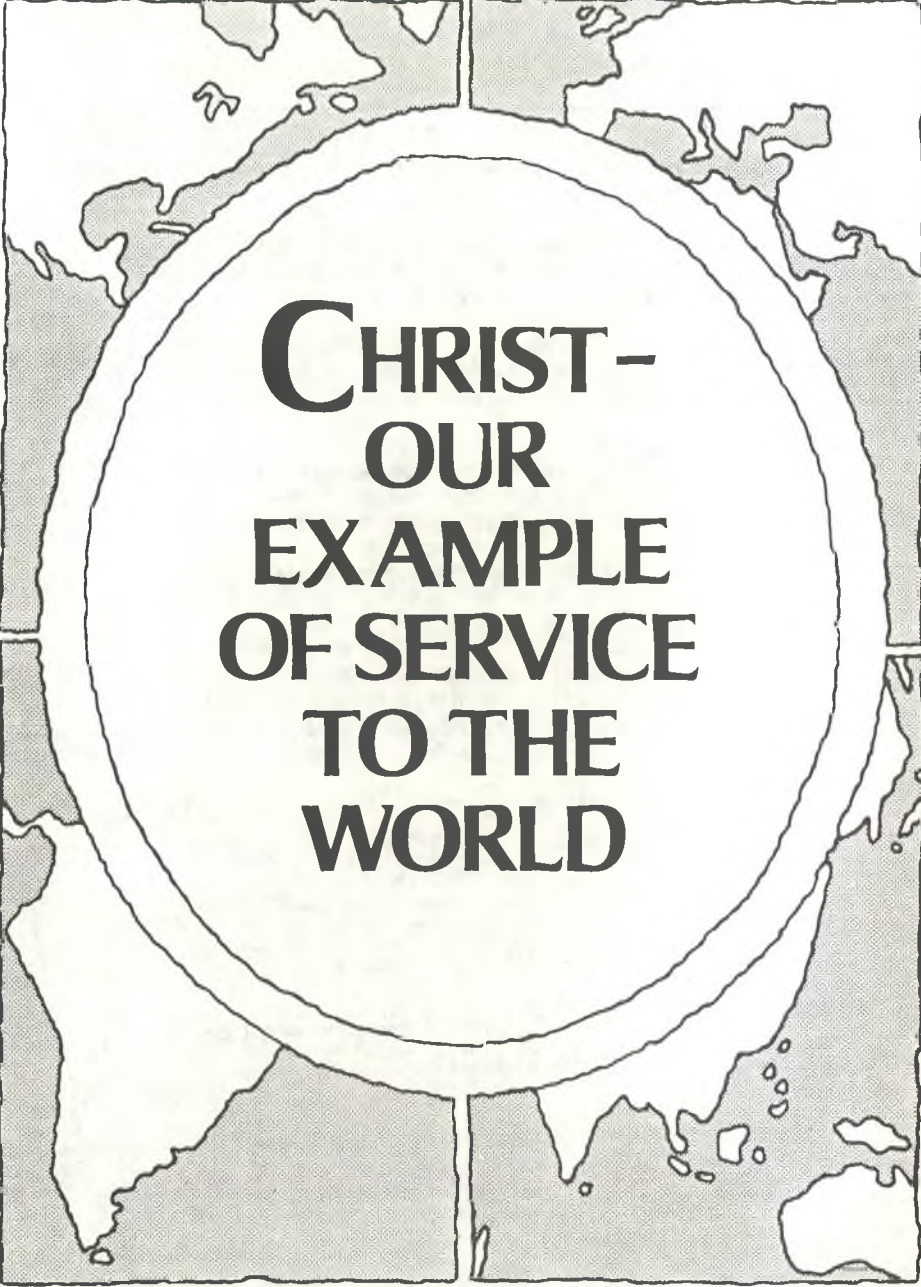
□ July 16
Friday

Dean L. Hubbard is the President of Union College.

1. Compare and contrast the N.T. understanding of the kingdom of God, the Messiah and the judgment with the passage from 2 Esdras in the Introduction.
2. Do you agree with the Logos author's statement that the kingdom of God became a dynamic reality in human history at the first advent of Christ? If not, why? If so, explain how this is true.

Where is the kingdom of God located now? In heaven? In believers' hearts? In the Adventist church? How do Ellen White's distinctions between the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory fit into the picture?

3. The Evidence article for this week claims that through Christ, the "Age to Come" can be a present reality for the believer, even while we are still in "This Age." Does this breaking into the present of the Age to Come have any experiential implications for our lives? For how we relate to society? If so, what are they? Be as specific as possible.
4. According to Matthew 24:14, we are to testify to all nations about the good news of the kingdom before the end will come. Rate the following on a scale of 1 to 10 in terms of their value in testifying to the good news of the kingdom. Be prepared to give reasons for your rating.
 - ___ public evangelistic series
 - ___ small group Bible study
 - ___ Five-day plan
 - ___ involvement in community groups (United Way, etc.)
 - ___ theological research on the doctoral level
 - ___ involvement in peace and human rights organizations
 - ___ door-to-door literature distribution
 - ___ participating in acceptable social activities with non-Adventists
 - ___ individual Bible studies
 - ___ humanitarian outreach to the suffering and starving
 - ___ Christian radio and television programs



**CHRIST-
OUR
EXAMPLE
OF SERVICE
TO THE
WORLD**

"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."—John 13:15, NIV

Lesson 4, July 18-24

The Adventures of Brother Juniper

selected by editors

Few, if any, Christian groups have taken the challenge of following the example of Christ as seriously and literally as have the Franciscans. This monastic order, founded in the 13th century by the beloved St. Francis of Assisi, devoted itself completely to the way of Christ in poverty, humility and service.

Few, if any, Franciscans, were more radically committed to those ideals than was Brother Juniper. This story is told of how Brother Juniper would give whatever he had to the poor for the sake of Christ:

Brother Juniper has so much pity and compassion for the poor that when he saw anyone who was badly clothed or bare, he would immediately rip off his sleeve or cowl or some piece of his habit and give it to that poor man. And so the guardians ordered him under obedience not to give all or part of his habit to anyone.

A few days later it happened that he met a poor man who was almost naked and who begged Brother Juniper to give him something for the love of God. And Juniper said to him very compassionately: "My dear man, I have nothing to give you except my habit—and my superior has told me under obedience not to give it or part of it away to anyone. But if you pull it off my back, I certainly will not prevent you."

He was not speaking to a deaf man, for he immediately pulled the habit off, inside out, and went away with it, leaving Brother Juniper naked.

When he went back to the Place, the friars asked him where his habit was. And he answered: "Some good person pulled it off my back and went away with it."

And as the virtue of compassion grew in him, he was not satisfied with giving away only his habit, but to the poor he used to give books and ornaments of the altar

and cloaks of other friars and whatever he could lay his hands on. . . .¹

As Christ humbled Himself and endured suffering, so Brother Juniper was determined to experience humiliation:

Once Brother Juniper, wishing to humiliate himself thoroughly, stripped himself completely naked. He put his breeches on his head and tied his habit into a bundle with his cord and put it around his neck. And he went into Viterbo that way and went to the market place to be mocked. While he sat there naked, some children and boys understandably thought he was insane and mistreated him a great deal, mocking and insulting him, throwing mud and stones at him, and pushing him back and forth. After being derided and tormented by them for a long time, he went back to the friary, still naked.

Now when the friars saw him, they were profoundly shocked and angry at him, especially because he had gone through the whole town like that, with his bundle on his head. They scolded him very severely and shouted serious threats at him. One of them said: "Let's put him in prison!" Another said: "He should be hanged!" And others: "He should be burned at the stake!" And others: "No penalty could be too great for the shocking example he has given today of himself and of the whole Order!"

And Brother Juniper listened cheerfully and answered humbly and with great joy: "You are right. I deserve all those punishments and still greater ones for giving such scandal."²

It's easy to say glibly that Brother Juniper went too far in trying to follow Christ's example. But do we go far enough? This week, we will discuss what the example of Christ means for how we relate to society.

INTRO- DUCTION

1. *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* (New York: Image Books, 1958), pp. 226, 227.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

The Serving King

by editors

LOGOS

For Christians, the life of Jesus is the reference point for understanding how one should relate to the world. Jesus' life in the world reflected two fundamental concerns: to glorify God and to serve people.

Jesus declared to the Father, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4, NIV). Barclay points out that it was by His acceptance of the cross that Jesus completed the destiny to which he was called and thus glorified God: "Jesus had come into this world to tell men about the love of God and to show it to them. If he had stopped short of the Cross, it would have been to say that God's love said: 'Thus far and no farther.' By going to the Cross Jesus showed that there was nothing that the love of God was not prepared to do and suffer for men, that there was literally no limit to it. . . . He [Jesus] finished the work God gave Him to do; he made men forever certain of God's love."¹

Giving glory to God is a theme central to the first angel's message, which the Adventist movement has been specially called to proclaim: "Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, 'Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water'" (Rev. 14:6, 7, NIV). As Jesus faithfully accomplished His task of giving glory to God revealing His infinite love, the church is called to lead humanity to glorify God. It does this by forcefully proclaiming the "eternal gospel" of what Jesus has accomplished, and by demonstrating the renewal that the gospel brings to lives.

A second purpose of Jesus' life in the world was to serve people. Jesus' disciples were preoccupied with traditional understandings of power and prestige. They constantly bickered about who would be the "greatest" in the new kingdom. But Jesus turned those traditional values upside down. His role in the world was to serve and to give, not to dominate or coerce, and it is to be the same with His followers. "Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many'" (Mark 10:42-45, NIV).

As Jesus lived to serve redemptively the world, the church exists for service. The church's resources and programs are all to be for the purpose of service, not for achieving prestige, prosperity or a comfortable respectability in the world. The church is called to be as radically faithful to the concept of self-giving service to the world as was Jesus—faithful to the point of death. "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance like a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Phil. 2:5-8, NIV).

D.F.M.

1. William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 2. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), p. 206.

A Covenant to Serve

selected by editors

Jesus graphically demonstrated the principle of self-giving service when He washed the disciples' feet at the Last Supper. Ellen White comments on the significance of this act: "No one was so exalted as Christ, and yet He stooped to the humblest duty. That His people might not be misled by the selfishness which dwells in the natural heart, and which strengthens by self-serving, Christ Himself set the example of humility. He would not leave this great subject in man's charge. Of so much consequence did He regard it, that He Himself, One equal with God, acted as servant to His disciples. While they were contending for the highest place, He to whom every knee shall bow, He whom the angels of glory count it honor to serve, bowed down to wash the feet of those who called Him Lord. He washed the feet of His betrayer.

"... Jesus was given to stand at the head of humanity, that by His example He might teach what it means to minister. His whole life was under a law of service. He served all, ministered to all. Thus He lived the law of God, and by His example showed how we are to obey it. Again and again Jesus had tried to establish this principle among His disciples. When James and John made their request for pre-eminence, He had said, 'Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister' (Matt. 20:26). In My kingdom the principle of preference and supremacy has no place. The only greatness is the greatness of humility. The only distinction is found in devotion to the service of others. . . .

"To those who receive the spirit of this service, it can never become a mere ceremonial. Its constant lesson will be, 'By love serve one another' (Gal. 5:13). In washing the feet of His disciples, Christ gave evidence that He would do any service, however humble, that would make them heirs with Him of the eternal wealth of heaven's treasure. His disciples, in performing the same rite, pledge themselves in like manner to serve their brethren. Whenever this ordinance is rightly celebrated, the children of God are brought into a holy relationship, to help and bless each other. They covenant that the life shall be given to unselfish ministry. And this, not only for one another. Their field of labor is as wide as their Master's was. The world is full of those who need our ministry. The poor, the helpless, the ignorant, are on every hand. Those who have communed with Christ in the upper chamber, will go forth to minister as He did.

"Jesus, the served of all, came to be the servant of all. And because He ministered to all, He will again be served and honored by all. And those who would partake of His divine attributes, and share with Him the joy of seeing souls redeemed, must follow His example of unselfish ministry.

"All this was comprehended in the words of Jesus, 'I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.' This was the intent of the service He established. And He says, 'If ye know these things,' if you know the purpose of His lessons, 'happy are ye if you do them.' "

TESTIMONY

Key text:
John 13:1-17

**The only
greatness
is the
greatness
of humility**

The Desire of Ages, pp.
649-651.

July 20
Tuesday

Discipleship and the Cross

by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

EVIDENCE Editor's note: In the ultimate sense, following the example of Jesus means accepting the cross as He did. Basing his comments on Mark 8:31-38, Bonhoeffer explains what it means to take up one's cross and follow Christ.

Key text:
Mark 8:31-38

Here the call to follow is closely connected with Jesus' prediction of his passion. Jesus Christ must suffer and be rejected. This "must" is inherent in the promise of God—the Scripture must be fulfilled. There is a distinction here between suffering and rejection. Had he only suffered, Jesus might still have been applauded as the Messiah. All the sympathy and admiration of the world might have been focused on his passion. It could have been viewed as tragedy with its own intrinsic value, dignity and honour. But in the passion Jesus is a rejected Messiah. His rejection robs the passion of its halo of glory. It must be a passion without honour. Suffering and rejection sum up the whole cross of Jesus. To die on the cross means to die despised and rejected of men. Suffering and rejection are laid upon Jesus as a divine necessity, and every attempt to prevent it is the work of the devil, especially when it comes from his own disciples; for it is in fact an attempt to prevent Christ from being Christ. It is Peter . . . who commits that sin, immediately after he has confessed Jesus as the Messiah. . . . That shows how the very notion of a suffering Messiah was a scandal to the Church, even in its earliest days. That is not the kind of Lord it wants, and as the Church of Christ it does not like to have the law of suffering imposed upon it by its Lord. Peter's protest displays his own unwillingness to suffer, and that means that Satan has gained entry into the Church, and is trying to tear it away from the cross of its Lord.

Jesus must therefore make it clear beyond all doubt that the "must" of suffering applies to his disciples no less than to himself. Just as Christ is Christ only in virtue of his suffering and rejection, so the disciple is a disciple only in so far as he shares his Lord's suffering and rejection and crucifixion. Discipleship means adherence to the person of Jesus, and therefore submission to the law of Christ which is the law of the cross.

Surprisingly enough, when Jesus begins to unfold this inescapable truth to his disciples, he once more sets them free to choose or reject him. "If any man would come after me," he says. For it is not a matter of course, not even among the disciples. Nobody can be forced, nobody can even be expected to come. He says rather "If any man" is prepared to spurn all other offers which come his way in order to follow him. Once again, everything is left for the individual to decide. When the disciples are half-way along the road of discipleship, they come to another cross-roads. Once more they are left free to choose for themselves, nothing is expected of them, nothing forced upon them. So crucial is the demand of the present hour that the disciples must be left free to make their own choice before they are told of the law of discipleship.

"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself." The disciple must say to himself the same words Peter said of Christ when he denied him: "I know not this man." Self-denial is never just a series

**Just as
Christ is
Christ only in
virtue of his
suffering and
rejection,
so the
disciple is a
disciple only
in so far
as he shares
his Lord's
suffering.**

□ July 21
Wednesday

38

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, one of this century's most influential theologians, was executed in a Nazi prison camp in 1945.

of isolated acts of mortification or asceticism. It is not suicide, for there is an element of self-will even in that. To deny oneself is to be aware only of Christ and no more of self, to see only him who goes before and no more the road which is too hard for us. Once more, all that self-denial can say is: "He leads the way, keep close to him."

"... and take up his cross." Jesus has graciously prepared the way for this word by speaking first of self-denial. Only when we have become completely oblivious of self are we ready to bear the cross for his sake. If in the end we know only him, if we have ceased to notice the pain of our own cross, we are indeed looking only unto him. If Jesus had not so graciously prepared us for this word, we should have found it unbearable. But by preparing us for it he has enabled us to receive even a word as hard as this as a word of grace. It comes to us in the joy of discipleship and confirms us in it.

To endure the cross is not a tragedy; it is the suffering which is the fruit of an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ. When it comes, it is not an accident, but a necessity. It is not the sort of suffering which is inseparable from this mortal life, but the suffering which is an essential part of the specifically Christian life. It is not suffering *per se* but suffering-and-rejection, and not rejection for any cause or conviction of our own, but rejection for the sake of Christ. If our Christianity has ceased to be serious about discipleship, if we have watered down the gospel into emotional uplift which makes no costly demands and which fails to distinguish between natural and Christian existence, then we cannot help regarding the cross as an ordinary everyday calamity, as one of the trials and tribulations of life. We have then forgotten that the cross means rejection and shame as well as suffering. The Psalmist was lamenting that he was despised and rejected of men, and that is an essential quality of the suffering of the cross. But this notion has ceased to be intelligible to a Christianity which can no longer see any difference between an ordinary human life and a life committed to Christ. The cross means sharing the suffering of Christ to the last and to the fullest. Only a man thus totally committed in discipleship can experience the meaning of the cross. The cross is there, right from the beginning, he has only got to pick it up; there is no need for him to go out and look for a cross for himself, no need for him deliberately to run after suffering. Jesus says that every Christian has his own cross waiting for him, a cross destined and appointed by God. Each must endure his allotted share of suffering and rejection. But each has a different share: some God deems worthy of the highest form of suffering, and gives them the grace of martyrdom, while others he does not allow to be tempted above that they are able to bear. But it is the one and the same cross in every case.

The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death—we give over our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise godfearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning

**Jesus Christ
and his
call are
necessarily
our death
as well as
our life.**

of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow him, or it may be a death like Luther's, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call. Jesus' summons to the rich young man was calling him to die, because only the man who is dead to his own will can follow Christ. In fact every command of Jesus is a call to die, with all our affections and lusts. But we do not want to die, and therefore Jesus Christ and his call are necessarily our death as well as our life. The call to discipleship, the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ means both death and life. The call of Christ, his baptism, sets the Christian in the middle of the daily arena against sin and the devil. Every day he encounters new temptations, and every day he must suffer anew for Jesus Christ's sake. The wounds and scars he receives in the fray are living tokens of this participation in the cross of his Lord.

Taken from Dietrich
Bonhoeffer, *The Cost
of Discipleship* (New
York: Macmillan Pub-
lishing Company, 1959),
pp. 95-99.

Living the Way of Jesus

How do we follow the example of Jesus in our interaction with society? Perhaps an effective way to answer this question is to simply listen to what the New Testament writers have to say:

1. Identify yourself with the death and resurrection of Christ

"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless. . . . Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. . . . The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:6-11, NIV).

2. Forgive as God has forgiven you

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Eph. 4:32, NIV).

3. Love indiscriminately as God does

"But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:35, 36, NIV).

4. Serve others as Christ did

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you should also wash one another's feet. . . . I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor a messenger greater than the one who sent him" (John 13:14-16, NIV).

5. Accept others as Christ did

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God" (Rom. 15:7, NIV).

6. Accept suffering without complaint as He did

"But if you suffer for doing good as you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:20, 21, NIV).

7. Put the interests of others first as He did

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:2-5, NIV).

HOW TO

Key text:

John 13:12-17

Adapted from John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 1972), pp. 115-134.

July 22
Thursday

Can Christ be Cloned?

by H. Ward Hill

OPINION

Key text:
1 Peter 2:20, 21

The idea of Christ as the role model for the Christian hardly seems open to challenge. After all, did not Peter say that Christ had left us an example that we should follow His steps (1 Peter 2:21)? And did not John say that we should walk even as He walked (1 John 2:6)? Raymond Hull, in developing a self-serving theme in *How To Get What You Want*, clearly endorsed the role-model principle when he wrote:

Get a picture of some person whose character and deeds you admire. It can be a prophet, saint, scientist, educator, athlete, statesman, or philosopher—anyone you choose. Stick the picture in your notebook or purse, or some other convenient place where you will see it often, in connection with your self-development program. Everytime you see the picture of X, say to yourself, "What would X think of my conduct today?" Or, in a different situation, look at the picture and say, "What would X do in my place?" (p. 126).

Letting Christ live within us is the essence of the sanctified life. Yet our behavior will never duplicate Christ's example with absolute precision. Nor should it in certain areas.

Christ cannot be cloned. There will ever be some slippage between the performance of the one who imitates and the Original. We cannot equal the Pattern.¹ To some extent we may give a creative, Christian response to a situation and yet this may not be precisely what Christ would have done. The variety of ways in which Christ may inspire us to act is suggested by the very nature of our brain. It has been estimated that the number of possible interconnections and patterns among the ten billion or more neurons in the brain is ten followed by 800 zeros. The vastness of such potential is underlined by the fact that the number of estimated atoms comprising the universe is only ten followed by 100 zeros.²

None of us will ever be precisely in the same circumstances as was Christ. Thus, some adjustment in the performance would need to be made in order to appropriately fit the current demands. Thus the question moves from "What did Christ do?" to "What would Christ do?" And even closer still, "What would Christ have me do?" For my age, my sex and other factors in my background may suggest elements in my conduct which are uniquely my own.

We must admit that Christ did some things which we would not wish to do. Surely there were certain religious ceremonies or celebrations in which Christ participated in which we would hesitate to engage today. We may not wish to forego formal schooling as He did nor do we feel obligated to labor at the carpenter's bench for most of our working career. We might even go so far as to say that what Christ ate and drank and wore were lodged within a cultural setting and hence may have involved specifics not recommended for us today. Of course, we may escape the limiting power of particular incidents to some extent by lifting the acts of Christ's life to a higher level of generality where we declare our adherence to His example in principle if not in detail.

Christ would have our praises ascend to Him marked by our own individuality. They have been inspired by His perfect life, by His sacrificial death and by His resurrection and heavenly ministry. My particular action needs to be Christ-like. But it may have this quality and yet be something that Christ never did nor ever would have done.

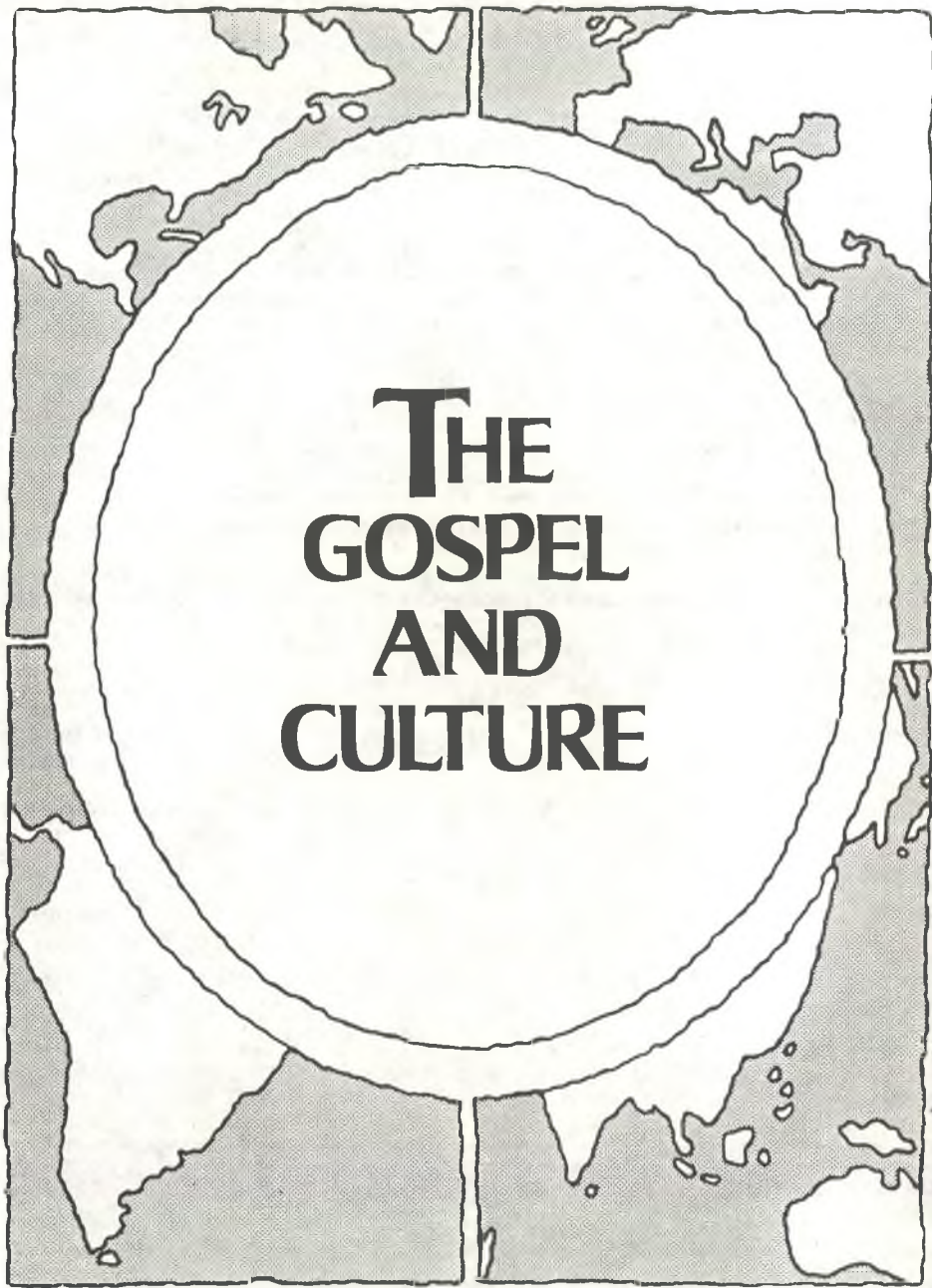
1. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 549.
2. Tony Buzan, *Use Both Sides of Your Brain* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1974), p. 16.

July 23
Friday

H. Ward Hill is chairman of the Division of Humanities at Union College.

REACT
Lesson 4

1. What is your reaction to Brother Juniper's approach to following the example of Christ (Introduction)? Is there anything we can learn from Brother Juniper's style?
2. The church is called to follow Christ's example in being a servant to the world. How faithful is the church today in living up to that calling? Discuss the effectiveness of current church programs as means of service. Can you think of new ways of serving that the church has not yet implemented?
3. Do you agree with Ward Hill's assertion (Opinion) that "our behavior will never duplicate Christ's example with absolute precision. Nor should it in certain areas."? Why or why not?
4. Examine the many ways in which the N.T. writers urge us to be like Christ (How To). Discuss how these ways can creatively be lived out in contemporary society.
5. What do you think it means today for a Christian to take up his cross? Is suffering a necessary component of Christian experience? If we are not suffering for the sake of the gospel, does that mean that we aren't truly following Christ?



"I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb."—Revelation 7:9, NIV

Lesson 5, July 25-31

Christ, Cultural Norms, and Conflicts

by Ruthita Fike

Recently I cleaned out my two children's closets. My two-year-old girl's closet is filled with pink, lavender and light blue dresses covered with lace. In contrast, my six-year-old son's closet boasts of dozens of jeans and a variety of brightly colored, but certainly not frilly shirts.

I would never consider asking my little girl to wear the majority of hand-me-downs from my son. His clothes are much too masculine. Intellectually I know that my daughter could be comfortable in some of my son's clothes, but I choose to dress her differently because it's "what's done." Furthermore, I'm selective in buying my son's clothes; I stay away from pink and velvets or other soft materials.

I do not have those biases without reason. My upbringing, my culture, dictates my buying habits. If I were living in another country I would undoubtedly dress my children differently. There are hundreds of other examples that I could cite in what we eat, where we live, what we do for recreation, and even what we say.

How should striving young Christians relate to this powerful dictator of behavior which we term culture? The answer may come from reviewing an experience of the apostle Paul recorded in Acts 21:17-40.

Paul was pressured by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem to participate in a ritual of the ceremonial law. He was reluctant however, because he knew that God considered the ceremonial law no longer necessary since the death of Christ. Nonetheless, he finally consented because he was anxious to reduce the prejudice of the Jews toward

his work with the Gentiles. He thought his participation in the ritual might help toward that end.

It was his purpose "to become all things to all men so far as he could without sacrificing principles."¹ Consequently, Paul took part in the Jewish cultural ritual along with four other Jewish men. The result, however, was disastrous. Other Jews in the temple, knowing of Paul's work, assumed that the men Paul was with were Gentiles. According to Jewish law it was a crime punishable with death to have an uncircumcised person enter the temple. Although the charge was false, the accusations brought out the popular prejudice and before long an angry throng surrounded Paul, demanding his death.

Paul's decision to pattern his behavior after the popular or accepted cultural behavior, was an unwise one, even though technically there was nothing sinful about the actual ritual. The problem was that he endorsed a cultural behavior which God had declared was no longer necessary.

The lesson Paul learned is what the Christian must learn about culture. The best way for a Christian to decide whether or not to act according to cultural norms, is to determine whether those norms interfere with a biblical standard.

Many cultural norms are amoral and consequently are not a problem to the Christian. But in those instances when culture clearly stands in conflict with the law and teachings of Jesus, the Christian must prayerfully and courageously take his or her position on the side of right.

INTRODUCTION

1. *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 405.

Ruthita Fike is assistant to the president of Union College.

□ July 25
Sunday

Creatures of Culture

by editors

LOGOS

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image. . . .' " (Gen. 1:26, NIV).

Being in the image of God, humans are unique among the world's creatures in having the ability to create and transmit culture. That is, man alone has the ability to reason and to communicate his thoughts through symbols—speech, writing, art, etc. And, as anthropologist Clifford Geertz points out, we are inevitably cultural creatures, we are "incapable of directing our behavior or organizing our experience without the guidance provided by systems of significant symbols . . . We are, in sum, incomplete or unfinished arrivals who complete ourselves through culture—and not through culture in general but through highly particular forms of it: Dobuan and Javanese, Hopi and Italian, upper-class, and lower-class, academic and commercial."¹

Since culture to a large degree shapes our thoughts and actions, and since there are highly diverse forms of human culture in the world, the relationship between the gospel and culture is a complex one. What in Christianity is universal, applying to every culture? What is bound to a particular culture, and is thus dispensable in other culture?

God's command to Moses, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5, NIV) reflects a particular culture. In modern Western culture, awe and reverence are expressed in ways other than the removal of footwear. Paul's recommendation about "holy" kissing and the silence of women in church (1 Cor. 16:20; 14:33-35) are New Testament examples of the same thing. In these instances the principles of reverence, friendly interaction among Christians and orderliness in church remain constant, while the cultural forms those principles take may change.

It's not always simple, however, to distinguish between eternal principles and nonessential cultural particulars, and inevitably conflicts arise in the Christian community (such as the circumcision controversy in the New Testament). Acts 15 suggests that an elected council of church representatives is a divinely-approved method of resolving these conflicts.

But how do we decide about those gray areas (dress, entertainment, wedding rings, etc.) on a personal level? Paul gives us this counsel: "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is beneficial, "everything is permissible"—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others . . . So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble. . . . I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved" (1 Cor. 10:23-24, 31-33, NIV).

With over 80 percent of the membership of the Adventist church now outside of the United States, Americans in particular need to be aware of the diversity of cultures that exist within the church. This cultural diversity is healthy. The Bible does not uphold one culture as the universal norm. But, each culture is bound together in unity through common faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and allegiance to Him as Lord.

"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." (1 Cor. 2:13, NIV).

D.F.M.

1. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973), p. 49.

Missionaries, Wedding Bands and Parties

by Kent Giacomozzi

Ellen White makes little explicit comment on the relationship between the gospel and culture. But in her exhortations regarding mission service there are specific and general counsels that relate to a discussion of the gospel/culture problem in an indirect way.

"The people of every country have their own peculiar distinctive characteristics, and it is necessary that men should be wise in order that they may know how to adapt themselves to the peculiar ideas of the people, and so introduce the truth that they may do them good. They must be able to understand and meet their wants."¹

"Young men are wanted. God calls them to missionary fields. Being comparatively free from care and responsibility they are more favorably situated to engage in the work. . . . Furthermore, young men can more readily adapt themselves to new climate and new society, and can better endure inconveniences and hardships. By tact and perseverance, they can reach the people where they are."²

The problem of wedding bands provides an enlightening example of how Ellen White viewed the relationship of cultural customs to proper Christian conduct.

"Americans can make their position understood by plainly stating that the custom is not regarded as obligatory in our country. We need not wear the sign, for we are not untrue to our marriage vow, and the wearing of the ring would be no evidence that we were true. . . . In countries where the custom is imperative we have no burden to condemn those who have their marriage ring; let them wear it if they can do so conscientiously; but let not our missionaries feel that the wearing of the ring will increase their influence one jot or tittle."³

Finally, the example of Christ shows that Christians are not to remain aloof from culture. Within the bounds of propriety, they are to reach their fellow humans by participating with them in the activities of society.

"In every religious denomination, and in almost every church, are to be found erratics who would have blamed him [Christ] for his liberal mercies. They would have found fault with him because he ate with publicans and sinners; they would have accused him of worldly conformity in attending a wedding feast, and would have censured him unmercifully for permitting his friends to make a supper in honor of him and his disciples. But on these very occasions, by his precious teachings, as well as by his generous conduct, he was enshrining himself in the hearts of those whom he honored with his presence. He was giving them an opportunity to become acquainted with him, and to see the marked contrast between his life and teachings and those of the Pharisees. As professed followers of Christ, we have much to learn. There is with many an icy chilliness, a reserve like that of the Pharisees, that must be broken down."⁴

TESTIMONY

Key text:

Galatians 2:11-21

1. *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 213.
2. *Gospel Workers* (1892 edition), p. 295.
3. *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 180-181.
4. *Gospel Workers* (1892 edition), pp. 319-320.

Kent Giacomozzi is a recent graduate of Union College, with majors in journalism and English.

☐ July 27
Tuesday

China's Jesuit Century

Part 1

by Joseph S. Sebes, S.J.

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Romans 10:
12, 13

Editor's note: The following article describes how Jesuit missionaries to China in the 17th century came to grips with the question of how to relate the gospel to a new culture, and will serve as both the Evidence and How To sections for this week. Publication of this article does not imply endorsement of all the approaches used by the Jesuits. It is presented to provoke discussion on how to deal with the complex issues involved.

On a crisp September morning in 1583, Matteo Ricci stood at the prow of a junk loaded with sheep and pigs and poultry. Portuguese Macao, its houses built low for protection against typhoons, slipped by astern as the vessel nosed its way up the Pearl River, and the young priest wondered whether he would be a fourth time rebuffed in his attempt to enter China, the Celestial Kingdom. By training he was a Jesuit and thus a man of learning; but he was also a man of God, and it is, in a sense, as a parable that his story has come down to us. . . .

Stepping ashore at Chao-Ch'ing, Ricci could not know that through his own exertions China would finally emerge into its "Jesuit century." Rejecting the condensation of his fellow Europeans and recognizing in China a civilization more ancient, and in some respects more advanced, than his own, Ricci would accommodate the rites, customs, and philosophies of the Chinese within the structure of his own religious beliefs. By doing so, he would win the confidence, and sometimes the souls, of his Chinese hosts. But the welcome extended to this Western scholar in the East found no counterpart among theologians in Europe; short years after the Jesuits' most signal successes—including the Emperor's Edict of Toleration—his tactful, balanced approach succumbed to Papal condemnation. In the end, the West was to show itself incapable of accepting China as a cultural equal. . . .

Architects of Accommodation

China, in the 16th century, represented a closed society in a fantastical kingdom known to most Europeans only as a land of strange beasts and gunpowder, of paper money and printing. Aware of Western misconceptions and recent commercial and missionary setbacks, Alessandro Valignano used his appointment in 1573 as Superior of Jesuit missions in the Far East to devise a new approach. A man of rare gifts and vision, a doctor of civil law and aide to Pope Paul IV, he realized that cultural differences within the East could be quite as pronounced as those that divided, say, Flemings and Poles in the West. Moving between Japan and Macao, Portugal's peninsular bastion on the Chinese mainland, Valignano set about formulating the China policy Ricci would take with him to China.

Valignano believed that the Chinese would respond better to a show of respect than to self-righteousness. Intensely proud of their ancient culture and holding intellectual accomplishment in high esteem, the Chinese, he felt, would be impressed by Jesuit scholars who accommodated themselves to the Chinese way of life. Accordingly, he insisted that his missionaries "Sinicize" themselves by obtaining sound knowledge of the Chinese language and the Confucian classics—something no European missionaries had done before.

□ July 28
Wednesday

48

Joseph S. Sebes, S.J., is professor of Far Eastern history at Georgetown University.

In the years preceding his departure for China, Ricci underwent intensive training in Chinese language, manners, and customs—so successfully that grammatical errors in his diary reveal a man more at home with Chinese than with his native tongue. When he arrived in Chao-Ch'ing, he adopted a Chinese name (Li Ma-tou) and donned the robes of a Buddhist *bonze* to indicate that he was a man of God. (He later switched to Mandarin dress, when he realized that it conveyed higher status.)

Valignano's cultural-accommodation approach was marred by none of the paternalism common among his Western contemporaries. In essence, his message to his aides was: Become Chinese. Equally simple was his strategy: Work from the top down. As scholars, the Jesuits had a natural affinity with the literati and educated officials, whose influence would afford the missionaries a measure of protection.

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The task facing Matteo Ricci, Valignano's first emissary, was a difficult one. The country itself was enormous and uncharted (the first reliable atlas of China would be produced by the Jesuits in 1717)—a land of perhaps 150 million inhabitants, dispersed over 3.5 million square miles and torn by conflicting strains of Confucianism. From the first, Ricci adapted himself to the Chinese way, performing the kowtow to officials (three kneelings and nine prostrations) and carefully stressing scholarship over religion to avoid conflicts with Chinese sensibilities.

Ricci had studied under Italy's celebrated Christopher Clavius, called the Euclid of the 16th century, and was himself an accomplished mathematician, astronomer, and cartographer. To complement his skills, he had brought with him an assortment of scientific and astronomical devices as well as prisms, clocks, and other evidences of Western technology. Impressed by his devotion, tact, and ability and fascinated by his instruments (as the Chinese would be fascinated by my Polaroid camera 400 years later), the bureaucrats and literati of the southern provinces took kindly to Ricci and provided him with land for a house and church.

Tongue and Brush

Though still far from Peking, the administrative center in the north, Ricci had nevertheless secured a foothold, and as he established missions in the southern cities, he called for reinforcements to man them. Between the late Ming and early Ch'ing dynasties—that is, from around 1590 to 1680—more than 600 Jesuits would undertake the hazardous and often fatal passage from Europe to China. Only 100 actually made it. "All the rest," wrote one survivor, "had either been destroyed by shipwreck, illness, or murder, or captured by pirates or other robbers." Meanwhile, Ricci made his way through the provinces toward Peking. It would take him 18 years.

With his preaching and scholarly writing—with "tongue and brush" as the Chinese put it—Ricci at every stop made the acquaintance of the local elites and spoke to them of science and philosophy, hoping these would lead to higher things. One Jesuit later noted that Ricci used the secular aspects of his training as a kind of oil "where-with to grease the wheels of affairs that they might roll more softly."

The key to Ricci's success lay in his learning and consummate tact.

Instead of contesting Confucian doctrine, Ricci used it as a complement to Christianity, stressing the common elements in both.

And softly they rolled indeed. Hsu Kuang-chi, later to become Grand Secretary to the Emperor, was baptized in 1597. His power and learning proved invaluable to the Jesuit cause. Through Hsu's efforts, other influential Chinese—such as Li Chih-tsao and Yang T'ing-yun, both of whom became presidents of the Supreme Court—embraced Christianity.

The key to Ricci's success lay in his learning and consummate tact. He refused to condemn ancestor worship, adopted a Chinese term, T'ien-chu (Lord of Heaven), for God and adapted the liturgy to China. Aware that the Chinese, like the Europeans, mingled superstition with orthodoxy, he showed the same tolerance in this regard that Rome showed to Europeans. Moreover, instead of contesting Confucian doctrine, Ricci used it as a complement to Christianity, stressing the common elements in both.

Ricci's insight into Chinese attitudes was apparently boundless. The first book translated from Latin into Chinese by the Jesuits was not the Bible or the Lives of the Saints but a compilation of selections from Cicero's *On Friendship*—friendship being one of the five basic Confucian relationships. And when Ricci was asked to draw a map of the world, he ensured his fame throughout China by informing the Chinese for the first time of the existence of many other civilized nations. Moreover, by placing China at the map's center, he reinforced (pandered to, some said) the Chinese conception of the Middle Kingdom as literally and figuratively the center of civilization.

The Forbidden City

Peking, as Ricci found it in 1601, was a city of 700,000 and the nerve center of the empire, connected to the rest of China by the Chichou and Huit'ung canals and by a web of roads created by the Mongols. If the Jesuits wanted friends in high places, it was here among the mandarins and the concubines that they were to be sought. The techniques that had won Ricci friendship and respect in the provinces, along with several thousand converts, served him well in the Forbidden City.

The Wan-li Emperor was fascinated by Ricci's gifts and scientific instruments, which included a pearl-studded cross, a world atlas, several ringing clocks, and a clavichord. The Emperor's eunuchs, naturally enough, were unable to repair the clocks or play the clavichord, so Ricci was asked to remain in the imperial capital—as he had hoped. The tacit understanding from the beginning seems to have been that the Jesuits would serve as technical advisers to the Emperor; the Chinese, in turn, would tolerate the presence of Jesuit missionaries as long as the foreigners' services were deemed useful.

Converts during this time included 14 mandarins of the first class, a cross section of intellectuals of academic standing (10 Doctors, 11 Licentiates, and 300 Bachelors), 140 members of the imperial family, and 40 of the Emperor's eunuch advisers. When news of this astounding progress was reported in Europe, many Westerners entertained hopes of the conversion of the Emperor and spoke of a "Chinese Constantine." The Jesuits in China, however, did not take such talk seriously, for as one of them noted wryly, "In order to convert the Emperor to Catholicism, you must first find a loophole in the

Catholic morality of sex that would allow him to keep his 200 concubines."

Meanwhile, Ricci continued to supervise missionary work in the provinces. More Jesuits entered China, sustaining missions in Soochow, Nanchang, and Nanking. By the time of Ricci's death in 1610, there were 13 European missionaries in China, several native Jesuit brothers, and some 50,000 Christians. Within 30 years, 31 missionaries were serving a congregation of nearly 150,000, with mission houses, colleges, schools, and churches scattered throughout China. . . .

A Grateful Emperor

When [later in the century] the Yellow River overflowed its banks, it was to the Jesuits he [Emperor K'ang-hsi] turned when it came time to disburse the funds for flood relief, for K'ang-hsi was only too aware of corruption among his own officials. When he fell ill from malaria, he turned to the priests for quinine, the newly discovered drug known in China as Jesuit's bark. It was K'ang-hsi who commissioned the fathers to map his empire, and it was he who appointed Jesuit Ignaz Kogler to the Board of Rites, the first European to hold that key position.

For these and other services, K'ang-hsi was grateful. The work of the Jesuit missionaries culminated in 1692 with his famous Edict of Toleration, which at once removed Christianity from the list of "obnoxious religions" and accorded it "indigenous" status (as had been done with Buddhism many centuries before). The Jesuits profess "no disorderly or disturbing tenents," K'ang-hsi declared, "neither do they allure the people with treacherous doctrines nor provoke disturbances with strange theories." The Edict was followed in 1700 by the Emperor's "Declaration" approving the Jesuit interpretation of the Confucian classics, thereby ratifying the Jesuit position with regard to the Chinese Rites. If the Pope had shown as much tolerance as K'ang-hsi—indeed, if he had simply refrained from "provoking disturbances with strange theories"—the Jesuit century might have run longer.

Jesuit Cultural Contributions

The role of the Jesuits in China was clearly a pivotal one—that of translating the cultures of East and West, one to the other. This mediating position is perhaps best symbolized by the Treaty of Nerchinsk, which the Jesuits helped to arrange with Russia in 1689. With its official text in Latin, the treaty represents the first accord between China and a European power. Other accomplishments included the introduction of higher mathematics into the Middle Kingdom (Chinese mathematics had declined after the introduction of the abacus in the 13th century) and the technique of perspective drawing. The paintings of Jesuit Giuseppe Castiglione were so highly regarded that they came to be thought of as *Chinese* art treasures, and as such Chiang Kai-shek took them to Taiwan when he fled from the mainland in 1949.

China's Jesuit Century

Part 2
by Joseph S. Sebes, S.J.

HOW TO
Key text:
1 Corinthians
9:19-23

Christian Rivalries

In 1622, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Propaganda Fide*) was established to coordinate the work of European missionaries abroad. Thus, in China, there appeared the first challenge to Jesuit hegemony as missionaries from the Church's other orders arrived to spread the faith. The cracks would widen when the Vicars Apostolic of *Propaganda Fide* took titular control over all missionary operations in China.

To the newly arrived mendicant friars, as well as to some Jansenist-influenced *Propagandist* Vicars, Ricci's accommodating approach to Chinese culture—the so-called Chinese Rites—appeared idolatrous and intolerable. The friars, unaware of Chinese feelings about bare feet, were horrified by paintings depicting Christ and the Apostles wearing shoes. They attacked traditional Chinese observances in honor of Confucius, ancestors, and the recently dead, and charged the Jesuits with failure to preach “Christ the crucified.” (The Jesuits, mindful of Chinese aversion to violence, had stressed “Christ the glorified.”)

**Critics
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The critics didn't stop there. They condemned Jesuit adoption of Chinese dress and manners, refused to accept the Chinese name for God, and contended that Confucius was in hell. (Friar Domingo Navarrete proved this with a syllogism: All infidels are in hell. Confucius was an infidel. Therefore Confucius is in hell.) Finally, when the Jesuits refused to abandon their Chinese Rites, they were accused of disobedience, and after K'ang-hsi's Declaration approving the Rites, of having “appealed to Caesar” for rulings on matters better left to God.

The attitude of the newcomers threatened to undermine the work of a century, and the Jesuits fought back hard. They had studied China for many lifetimes, they argued, and looked upon the Chinese Rites as tokens of respect, not homage to false gods. Cultural accommodation, they added, had made it possible for intellectuals and high-ranking officials to embrace the faith, for among the upper classes Confucian observances were as much a matter of good citizenship as of religion. Abandoning the Rites, they concluded, would force such higher-ups—the backbone of the Chinese Church—from the faith. It should be noted that the Jesuits themselves drew the line on some of the Rites (certain burial practices, for example, were forbidden), but they never tried to force their positions on others. The Jesuit attitude was best expressed by a contemporary who wrote: “There is danger [to orthodoxy] in admitting the Rites, but a greater danger in suppressing them.”

An Uneasy Peace

The infighting among the competing missionaries quickly grew more virulent, and when the friars in 1645 submitted the dispute to Rome, the *Propaganda Fide* issued a decree condemning the Rites. The Jesuits immediately appealed, and in 1651, after apprising the *Propaganda* of no less than 42 distortions in the friars' petition, won a decree permitting the Rites. No attempt was made to reconcile the contradictory pronouncements, and for a time an uneasy peace reigned. Unknown to the Jesuits, however, the friars and the Vicars

Apostolic continued to press their case in Rome, to which end the Vicar of Fukien had engaged the crafty papal lobbyist Charmot.

The Jesuits were lulled by a false sense of security. When they finally defended themselves in several lengthy written arguments to the Vatican, among them, the famous *Peking Xylograph*, it was too late. For the Pope had decided in 1701 to send a legate to China to settle the matter. His choice for the mission was a French bishop, Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon.

The End of the Affair

De Tournon arrived in China in 1704, scarcely a decade after the Edict of Toleration and only four years after K'ang-hsi's Declaration in favor of the Chinese Rites. In a few weeks, however, he was well on his way to undoing a century's work. A young man of 34 (the Pope had not considered the Chinese respect for age) who lacked diplomatic experience, a man of nervous temperament and Jansenist tendencies who made up in strong opinions what he lacked in tact, de Tournon was an unhappy choice for such a mission. He was received politely by the Jesuits, but his arrival spelled disaster.

The Jesuits had prepared materials for de Tournon to help him make an equitable decision on the Rites controversy. What they did not know was that he had come not as an arbiter but as a promulgator of a papal decree. Unfortunately, the decree had not yet been published, and de Tournon did not know its contents. Nevertheless, in Nanking in 1707, after the emperor had enjoined him from discussing the subject, de Tournon issued his own decree—a condemnation of the Chinese Rites. The Pope was forced to uphold his legate.

Angered at the insult, K'ang-hsi expelled the Frenchman from China. "Reading this proclamation," he declared, "I have concluded that the Westerners are small indeed. . . . It seems their religion is no different from other small, bigoted sects of Buddhism or Taoism." In the wake of the legate's departure, the whole structure of accommodation between China and the West collapsed. The Jesuit century had ended. Although the Jesuits would remain for many years in China as technicians, painters, architects, and musicians, they had lost both their capacity to act as protectors of provincial missions and their influence as a link between East and West. When the Edict of Toleration was effectively revoked in 1707, the missionaries in China again experienced severe persecution—now without imperial protection. . . . The sentiments of the last survivors may be gathered from the words of the French Jesuit Amiot, who, after surveying the ruin of his order and the destruction of the China mission, left this epitaph:

Go away traveler,
congratulate the dead,
console the living, pray for all
marvel, and be silent

Is there a possibility of reaching a new accommodation today? If so, how long will it take? I cannot answer these questions, but if there is any lesson to be learned from the Jesuit accomplishment of four centuries ago, it is that nothing will be achieved until Westerners accept the Chinese as cultural equals.

**Nothing
will be
achieved until
Westerners
accept the
Chinese as
cultural
equals**

Excerpted from *The Wilson Quarterly*, Winter 1978.

The Church's Influence on Culture

selected by editors

OPINION

Key text:

Matthew 28:19, 20

Editor's note: The following is excerpted from the Willowbank Report, a statement on the gospel and culture by several leading evangelical scholars. The study was sponsored by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.

We deplore the pessimism which leads some Christians to disapprove of active cultural engagement in the world, and the defeatism which persuades others that they could do no good there anyway and should therefore wait in inactivity for Christ to put things right when he comes. Many historical examples could be given, drawn from different ages and countries, of the powerful influence which—under God—the church has exerted on a prevailing culture, purging, claiming, and beautifying it for Christ. Though all such attempts have had defects, they do not prove the enterprise mistaken.

We prefer, however, to base the church's cultural responsibility on Scripture rather than on history. We have reminded ourselves that our fellow men and women are made in God's image, and that we are commanded to honour, love, and serve them in every sphere of life. To this argument from God's creation we add another from his kingdom which broke into the world through Jesus Christ. All authority belongs to Christ. He is lord of both universe and church. And He has sent us into the world to be its salt and light. As His new community, He expects us to permeate society.

Thus we are to challenge what is evil and affirm what is good; to welcome and seek to promote all that is wholesome and enriching in art, science, technology, agriculture, industry, education, community development and social welfare; to denounce injustice and support the powerless and the oppressed; to spread the good news of Jesus Christ, which is the most liberating and humanizing force in the world; and actively to engage in good works of love. Although, in social and cultural activity as in evangelism, we must leave the results to God, we are confident that He will bless our endeavors and use them to develop in our community a new consciousness of what is "true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honourable" (Phil. 4:8, TEV). Of course, the church cannot impose Christian standards on an unwilling society, but it can commend them by both argument and example. All this will bring glory to God and greater opportunities of humanness to our fellow human beings whom he made and loves. As the Lausanne Covenant put it, "churches must seek to transform and enrich culture, all for the glory of God" (para. 10).

Nevertheless, naive optimism is as foolish as dark pessimism. In place of both, we seek a sober Christian realism. On the one hand, Jesus Christ reigns. On the other, He has not yet destroyed the forces of evil; they still rampage. So in every culture Christians find themselves in a situation of conflict and often of suffering. . . .

While energetically labouring on earth, we look forward with joyful anticipation to the return of Christ, and to the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness will dwell. For then not only will culture be transformed, as the nations bring their glory into the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:24-26) but the whole creation will be liberated from its present bondage of futility, decay and pain, so as to share the glorious freedom of God's children (Rom. 8:18-25, TEV).

Taken from *Down to Earth*, Robert T. Coote and John Stott, eds., (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 335-336.

July 30
Friday

REACT
Lesson 5

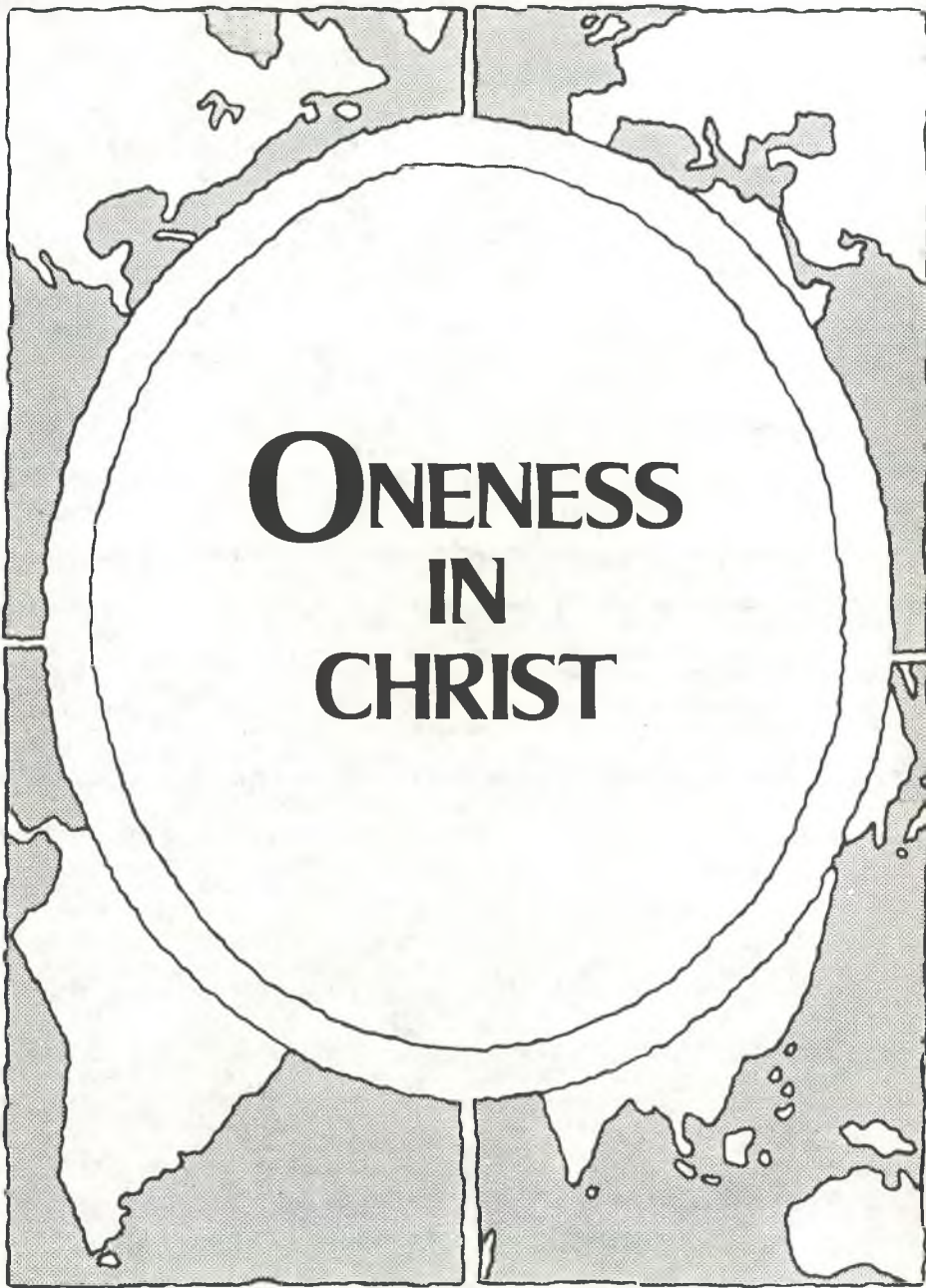
1. One of the demands of the Jerusalem council to the Gentiles was "to abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols" (Acts 5:29, RSV). Yet at a later time, Paul clearly seems to deviate from this requirement by suggesting that under some circumstances eating meat offered to idols is permissible (1 Cor. 10:18-33). Why do you think Paul felt free to set aside the earlier command?

By what criteria do we know which part of our religion is cultural—and therefore relative—and which part is absolute and therefore essential to people of all cultures at all times?

2. The wearing of wedding bands is a source of controversy for the church in North America. How do you think Ellen White's major statement on the subject (see Testimony) applies to the contemporary situation?

What other cultural forms or practices tend to cause dissension in the church today? Based on the Bible and the Ellen White writings, suggest a set of principles for handling such problems.

3. What is your reaction to the Jesuit accommodation to Chinese culture described in the Evidence and How To articles? Do you think their approach went too far, and compromised basics of the gospel? What are the positive aspects of the approach they took?
4. Suggest some specific ways in which individual Christians and the church can more effectively influence modern western culture.



"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"—2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV

Lesson 6, August 1-7

A Christ With No Mind

selected by editors

INTRO- DUCTION

Editor's note: Of all the atrocities during the civil rights upheavals of the 1960's, perhaps none was more appalling than the bombing of a Birmingham church in 1963. Four little black girls were murdered in that blast. Activist/comedian Dick Gregory attended their funeral, and the following is his reflection on its significance.

"Another funeral. It wasn't like Medgar Evers' funeral. This one was by invitation only. But they came anyway, the poor, the raggedy, the verb-buster. Outside the church I saw an old Negro woman in torn tennis shoes holding onto an old Negro man who had a wine bottle in his pocket. I was glad when the television cameras took pictures of that old couple. Those kids died for *all* Negroes, not just those who were invited.

But I guess the greatest lesson of the Birmingham bombing was for the Negro who thought that civil rights didn't pertain to him—the principal, the teacher, the doctor, the preacher, the lawyer. Those were his kids in that church, and whether he wanted to demonstrate or not, whether he thought we were going too fast or not, he found out that as long as your skin is black. . . .

Three of the children lay outside the church. I talked to one of the mothers. Both of her

daughters were in the bombing. One daughter got glass in her eyes, and the mother spent five hours in a hospital operating room waiting to find out if she would ever see again. A few minutes after she learned that one daughter would not be blind for life, she learned that her other daughter was dead.

After a while, Lil and I walked over to the church that had been bombed. We saw a strange and terrible thing. All the windows but one had been completely blown out. The stained glass window of Christ was almost intact. Only Christ's eyes and the top of His head were blown out. And it frightened me because I wondered what it meant.

Christ with no eyes. The blind leading the blind? Christ with no mind.

We left and I told Lil that she had seen a great work of art because it had taken a hundred years of hate and violence to produce an artist capable of creating that picture. But it wasn't the only frightening symbol I saw in Birmingham that day.

I saw a state policeman with a tommy gun cradled in his arm, a smile on his face, leaning against a mailbox across the street from the church. The mailbox was painted red, white, and blue."

Taken from Dick Gregory with Robert Lipsyte, *Nigger* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1964), pp. 213, 214.

□ August 1
Sunday

Equality in Christ

by editors

LOGOS

Black is beautiful! The slogan is dated now, but it certainly is in harmony with the biblical perspective on the racial diversity of humanity, and so is the celebration of other skin pigmentations and distinctive racial characteristics. People of all races and nations share the common dignity and worth of humanity. But racial distinctiveness seems to be a part of God's plan: "From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live" (Acts 17:26, NIV).

The Apocalypse pictures each race bringing its own honor and glory into the perfect society of the new Jerusalem: "By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it . . . they shall bring into it the glory and honor of the nations" (Rev. 21:24-26, RSV).

Racial diversity, then, is maintained in the world-wide Christian community. But the prejudice, alienation and oppression that characterize race relations in the world is to be overcome in the new order of reality that Christ established: "With us, therefore, worldly standards have ceased to count in our estimate of any man: even if once they counted in our understanding of Christ, they do so no longer. When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world; the old order has gone; and a new order has already begun" (2 Cor. 5:16, 17, NEB).

Christ's new order of humanity also means an end to oppression of women. The creation story informs us that men and women were both endowed with the image of God, the attribute that sums up what it means to be human. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27, NIV). According to this passage, male and female are complementary. Only male and female together comprised full humanity. Neither half of the complement can legitimately be subjugated or oppressed.

Apart from God, however, society reduced women to virtual non-personhood. The gospel brought about a transformation of the status of women. Though Paul was cautious about violently upsetting the current social order, he proclaimed a radical concept of equality and unity in Christ that was "an incipient revolution," the consequences of which are still being worked out.¹ "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28, NIV).

The gospel thus involves complete rejection of racism, classism, and sexism. Unity in Christ means equality and justice—lived out in the church and proclaimed in its witness to the world.

D.F.M.

1. *The Interpreters Bible*, vol. 5, p. 519.

Assaulting the Walls of Prejudice

by Ron Graybill

Walls of separation have been built up between the whites and blacks. These walls of prejudice will tumble down of themselves as did the walls of Jericho, when Christians obey the Word of God, which enjoins on them supreme love to their Maker and impartial love to their neighbors.¹

When the Holy Spirit is poured out, there will be a triumph of humanity over the prejudice in seeking the salvation of the souls of human beings. God will control minds. Human hearts will love as Christ loved. And the color line will be regarded by many very differently from the way in which it is now regarded. To love as Christ loves, lifts the mind into a pure, heavenly, unselfish atmosphere.²

When the Holy Spirit moves upon human minds, all petty complaints and accusations between man and his fellow man will be put away. The bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness will shine into the chambers of the mind and heart. In our worship of God there will be no distinction between rich and poor, white and black. All prejudice will be melted away. When we approach God, it will be as one brotherhood. We are pilgrims and strangers, bound for a better country, even a heavenly. There all pride, all accusations, all self-deception, will forever have an end. Every mask will be laid aside, and we shall "see him as he is." There our songs will catch the inspiring theme, and praise and thanksgiving will go up to God.³

The Lord Jesus came to our world to save men and women of all nationalities. He died just as much for the colored people as for the white race. Jesus came to shed light over the whole world. . . .

"Who," says Paul, "maketh thee to differ?" The God of the white man is the God of the black man, and the Lord declares that His love for the least of His children exceeds that of a mother for her beloved child. . . .

The Lord's eye is upon all His creatures; He loves them all, and makes no difference between white and black, except that He has a special, tender pity for those who are called to bear a greater burden than others. . . .

The black man's name is written in the book of life beside the white man's. All are one in Christ. Birth, station, nationality, or color cannot elevate or degrade men. The character makes the man. If a red man, a Chinese, or an African gives his heart to God, in obedience and faith, Jesus loves him none the less for his color. He calls him His well-beloved brother. . . .

Man may have both hereditary and cultivated prejudices, but when the love of Jesus fills the heart, and they become one with Christ, they will have the same spirit that He had. If a colored brother sits by their side, they will not be offended or despise him. They are journeying to the same heaven, and will be seated at the same table to eat bread in the kingdom of God. If Jesus is abiding in our hearts we cannot despise the colored man who has the same Saviour abiding in his heart.⁴

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Revelation 7:9

The Lord makes no difference between white and black, except that He has a special pity for those who are called to bear a greater burden

1. *Review and Herald*, Dec. 17, 1895; Republished in *The Southern Work*, 1966 ed., p. 43.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 209.

3. *Review and Herald*, Oct. 24, 1899, p. 677.

4. Manuscript 6, 1891. Published in *The Southern Work*, 1966 ed., pp. 9-14.

Ron Graybill is an associate secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate. He is the author of *Ellen G. White and Church Race Relations*.

□ August 3
Tuesday

Hierarchy: A Manmade Concept?

by Ruthita Fike

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Genesis 2:23

The founders of our nation based the constitution on the belief that "all men are created equal." They made that statement knowing that blacks were slaves and that women did not have the right to vote. There was no equality then and after years of struggle there still is no equality now.

The women's liberation movement has been a hot issue for such a long time that people are bored with it. Yet, the movement is blamed for tearing down the family and a bevy of other evils.

How should the Christian relate to the issue? What are a woman's real rights and what should her role be? A study of the creation of Adam and Eve reveals some interesting possibilities. Some theologians hold that since Adam was created first he was made superior. That view seems supported by Ellen White when she states that the man should be "the head of the household."¹

Another view is possible. It is well to remember that during the Creation week inferior things were not created *following* superior things. Theologians frequently boast that after all things were created for man, man was created as the crown of all living things. If that view be correct, then woman, being created last, is actually superior.

And yet that view is hardly satisfactory either. A closer study of the Creation week reveals another answer. It is curious that Eve was created *from* Adam. God could just as easily have formed her out of the dust. Why did He depart from His usual procedure in creating this last of His creatures?

Could it be that God was emphasizing Adam and Eve's unique closeness? They alone were made from *one* body. Perhaps a comparison to the Trinity is appropriate. Humans have a difficult time understanding three beings. God the Father is usually portrayed as God number one, with God the Son coming in second, and the Holy Spirit an inexplicable third.

Understanding two bodies as one has been no easier. Consequently, instead of concentrating on man and woman's unique blending we have analyzed their differences. But by defining roles and examining rights man and woman have grown further apart.

It is a pity that so much energy is expended on discussing who is superior to whom. What should be the issue is how man and woman complement each other.

What then are women's rights? Equality? Undoubtedly. There should be no question that Eve, as the daughter of God, is entitled to the same inheritance as Adam. Jesus would have died to save Eve as well as Adam. Ellen White says that "women should fill the position which God originally designed for her, as her husband's equal."²

What then should be a woman's role in today's world? I believe that can be answered only by each individual couple as they assess their strengths and weaknesses. As one body they can parcel out duties as may best be accomplished by both of them. The Lord will help each of them develop to their best potential and that potential may not necessarily be within traditional roles. The important issue is, however, that they are united in mind and body, both striving for perfection through the grace of God. The issue is thus not one of equality but one of unity.

**Instead of
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on man
and woman's
unique
blending
we have
analyzed their
differences.**

1. Ellen White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 211.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

The Quest for Social Equality

by Sharon Sawyers

HOW TO

Key text:

Matthew 7:12

The quest for social equality animates modern times. The means to achieve this ideal, whether it be on a societal or personal level, is to be found in a fundamental principle which we recognize as the "Golden Rule." It is the most sound basis for directing proper human behavior and is a worthy standard by which the laws of a society are and should be measured.

Beginning with the Greeks, the ideal of an equality as a moral principle for all mankind has been debated over the centuries. One of the great philosophers of the Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant, reinforced and strengthened the idea of equality as a necessary principle for organization. Furthermore, he believed that the foremost prerequisite to establishing the conditions under which men can act according to the principle of moral equality was achievement of political equality. Present-day American society is still imbued with these ideals of political equality as set forth in the 18th and 19th centuries and is pursuing a utopian social structure within which all individuals can participate equally.

Adventists believe that only the return of Christ will bring about a perfect social order. Yet we are to join in efforts to create a society that more closely approximates the divine ideal.

Thus, it is indeed a proper endeavor for society and for each of us to pursue social equality. How do we go about it?

1. **Analyze your attitudes about others.** Periodically take a good, hard look at your innermost feelings about people. Although you may conclude that men are not actually equal in the most literal sense, it is absolutely essential to believe that they should be treated as equals. Voltaire said that all men have the right in the bottom of their hearts to think themselves entirely equal to other men. You will not treat others as equal, however, as long as you disregard their right to self-esteem. Ask yourself if you really respect each human.

2. **Develop an attitude of love.** Sir Francis Bacon believed that there is in man's nature a secret inclination and motion toward love of others. This is true, but we must take the initiative to develop the full potential of this human quality. One way to do this is through prayer. Praying for others can help us love them. Prayer is the best arbitrator of differences; it helps us empathize with the situation of other human beings; it kindles love and affection in the heart. If your heart does not want equality for all, your head will not make you act for equality. Love energizes the will and moves it to action.

3. **Practice the "Golden Rule."** Christ tells us that we are judged by the way we relate to individuals (Matt. 25:31-46). Through our daily behavior and dealings we are afforded a chance to demonstrate our respect for the worth of individuals. We can find ways to help each person within our sphere of influence to realize his full potential; help him acquire a sense of importance in his life.

As Immanuel Kant has said, the Golden Rule means that men must treat one another always as ends and never as means. In the words of John Stuart Mills, there will be no great improvement in the lot of mankind until a great change takes place in the attitude of man toward man.

"Always treat others as you would like them to treat you: That is the Law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12, NEB).

The Golden Rule means that men must treat one another as ends and never as means.

At the time of this writing, Sharon Sawyers was an instructor in the Humanities Division at Union College.

☐ August 5
Thursday

The Paint Job and the Church

by Desrie Josiah
and Greg Brothers

OPINION

Key text:
Galatians 3:28

Not everyone is alike. People come in various sizes, shapes, colors, temperaments, aptitudes and sexes.

The problem is that God alone has had the good grace to accept that fact. (Indeed, He seems to be responsible for it!) People seem to like things more orderly, more uniform, more comprehensible than God does. It's as though we haven't the skill to sketch the form of individuals but must paint with a wide brush, one sweeping monochromatic stroke at a time. We step back from our work satisfied that we have brought "sense" to our world, unaware that individual details have disappeared beneath the coat of black or white paint.

No one can say that he or she hasn't done this. Every group and every sub-culture has painted itself good ("for we have *this*—color, language, homeland—in common . . .") and others evil (" . . . and *they* don't"). "All Irish are lazy." "All English are brutes." "All North Dakotans are dumb." "All blacks like noisy church services." "All women are emotional." "All whites are racist." The paint job goes on and on.

Now a certain amount of this is inevitable. Dividing people into groups does save wear and tear on the nervous system. The problem comes when we cease to see individuals as individuals and see them only as representatives of a group. When this happens Desrie Josiah and Greg Brothers become invisible. In Desrie's place is seen a "Black Female"—presumably someone that claps her hands in church and is in college only to snag a husband. Taking Greg's place is a "Male WASP pastor"—presumably someone that likes cashew-nut loaf and voted for Ronald Reagan. Too often we don't respond to people, only to the group that supposedly they represent.

The problem comes when we cease to see individuals and see only representatives of a group.

Adventists, whether we realize it or not, have a special message regarding racial, sexual and cultural differences. It is not that these differences do not or should not exist. It is that these differences are unimportant in light of one much more important—the difference between saved and lost, between being a friend or being an enemy of God.

An example might help. During the Russian Revolution Mensheviks, Cadets, Social Democrats and Bolsheviks worked and fought together. It's not that they agreed with each other—after the war the Bolsheviks had all of their former allies shot! It's just that what they had in common—opposition to the Czar—was more important than their differences.

So it should be with us. There will and there should be differences of race, taste and politics among us. All Adventists will not worship in the same way. All pastors need not be men. All church members need not be Republicans and not all church members must like (or dislike) The King's Heralds or The 2nd Chapter of Acts for special music. Yet all Adventists have the Sabbath to remind them that there is no privileged class, that all were saved and created by the same God.

Two sexes. Three races. Over 200 countries. Unknown myriads of likes and dislikes. But one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

□ August 6
Friday
62

Desrie Josiah is a senior pre-law major at Walla Walla College who does not clap in church.
Greg Brothers is a pastor in Plentywood, Montana, who hates cashew-nut loaf.

REACT
Lesson 6

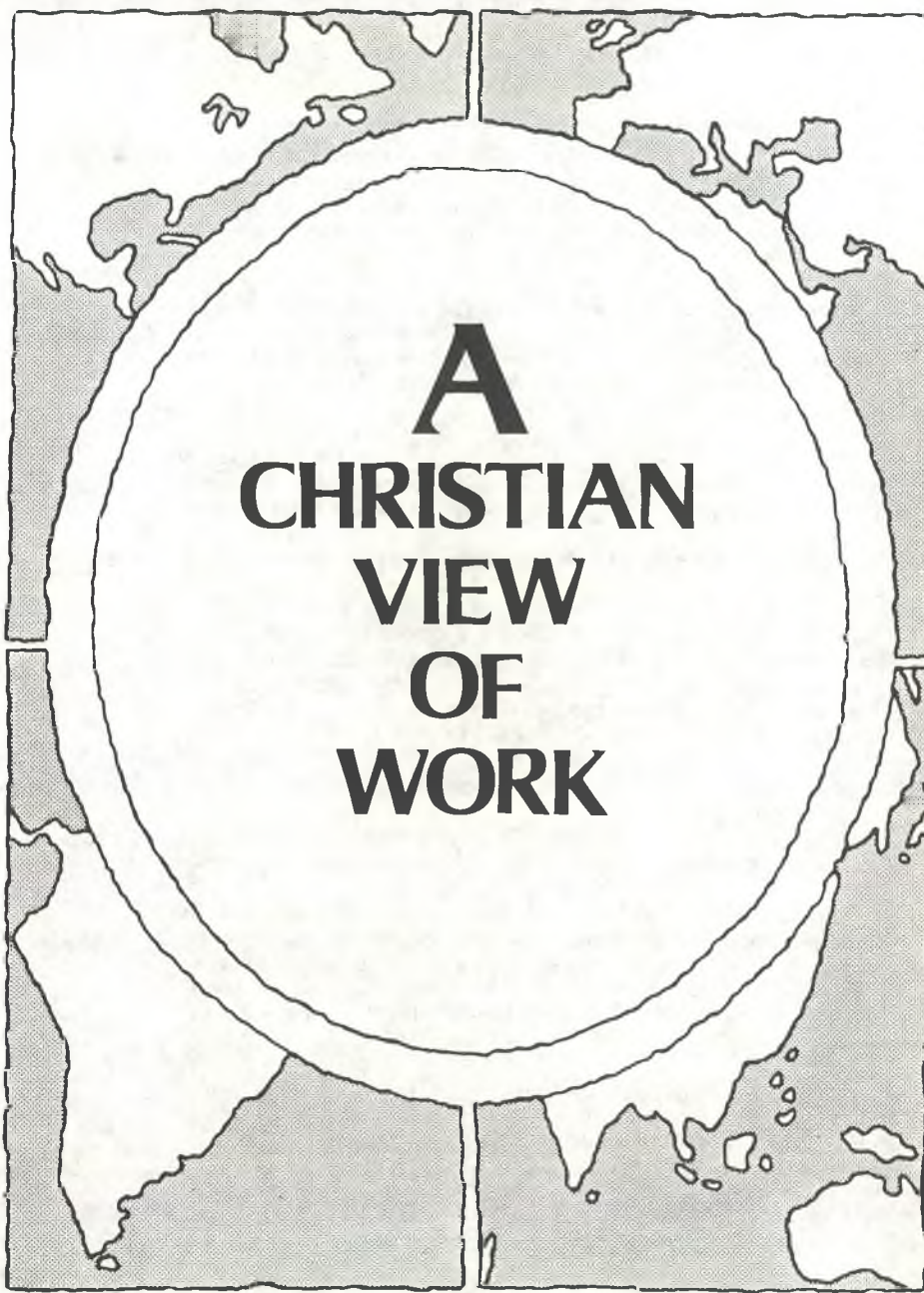
-
1. The issue of racial equality is less visible now than in the 1960's. Do Dick Gregory's reflections on the 1963 Birmingham bombing have any relevance for the 1980's? Do elements of racial bigotry remain in American society? Does the church need to speak out more forcefully on this issue?

Does the picture of a stained-glass Christ with no mind or eyes suggest anything to you about the condition of human relations in the church today? Why do you think the state policeman leaning against a red, white and blue mailbox was such a frightening symbol to Gregory?

2. What is your assessment of race relations in the church today? Does the existence of separate black conferences in North America compromise the principle of equality in Christ? What are the advantages of black conferences? What can be done to enhance leadership opportunities for blacks, other racial minorities and women in the church?
3. Beside the following church-related responsibilities, place an M beside those you think should be handled by males, and F beside those you think should be handled by females, and a B beside those which you think should be done by either or both. Be prepared to give reasons for your responses.

_____ church elder	_____ ordained minister
_____ Dorcas leader	_____ General Conference president
_____ college president	_____ conference youth leader

4. Paul's radical statement of racial, social and sexual equality in Christ in Galatians 3:28 seems to be at odds with his conservative counsel on the silence of women in church (1 Cor. 14:34) and the submission of slaves to their masters (Eph. 6:5). Can his statements be harmonized? How do you deal with the apparent conflict?
5. Do you agree with Ruthita Fike's argument that defining sex roles and examining rights have driven men and women further apart, and that the real issue should be how man and woman complement each other? Why or why not?

A stylized world map with a large white circle in the center. The map is rendered in a simple, graphic style with black outlines and a light gray stippled background. The circle is centered over the Atlantic Ocean, with the Americas to the west and Europe and Africa to the east. The text "A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF WORK" is written in a bold, sans-serif font within the circle.

A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF WORK

"There are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one."—1 Corinthians 12:6, RSV

Lesson 7, August 8-14

Facing the Ethical Dilemmas of Work

by Betty Howard

INTRODUCTION

You are a salesman, paid by commission. The more sales, the more money you earn. Yet you are supposed to offer customers disinterested advice and counsel based on your professional knowledge. How would you handle the temptation to "churn" (Wall Street's term for buying and selling with no real reason)?

As a young executive you announce to your wife that you must again be out of town for three weeks. She says she needs help with the children and dreads the forthcoming days with no support from you as their father. Moreover, she reminds you, you'll be missing your wedding anniversary.

You've worked for a father-figure boss for years. Then he invites you to become his assistant. During his vacation you discover he's been inflating production figures. In his absence, will you sign the falsified report or blow the whistle on him? What are your alternatives?

As a youth counselor you are to prepare a lecture for inner city youth on the worth of work and evils of idleness. As you prepare, you realize that for most of the youth you address, there are no jobs.

You are a student colporteur totally dependent on your own resources to finance your college education. You discover that sometimes it's not the compassionate, generous students who sell the most books. It's the greedy ones who run between houses who seem most successful. They advise you to assess quickly whether a sale is to be made, and take off as soon as possible if you have a poor prospect. "Selling and caring aren't

compatible," they explain. Will you take their advice?

You are a teetotaler facing an assignment in an advertising company to prepare a display ad for liquor. Jobs are hard to find in graphic arts and you have a wife and sick baby at home to support. How will you relate to the work assignment?

There isn't enough work to keep you busy in your government job. But if you don't "appear" busy, your supervisor may decide that yours is an expendable job at a time when cutbacks in employment are being made. This would leave you in a precarious position. You see others writing personal letters and juggling the files to "look busy." Your medical student husband is depending on you for support. What will you do?

After four years of college, you are degreed—and penniless. You are prepared to fill a denominational position and, in fact, three conferences have attempted to negotiate for your services based on glowing recommendations. You have been committed to "do the Lord's work" for several years. Then a most attractive business offer, suitable to your talents, promises a beginning income twice the modest denominational salary you've been offered—and the future income makes you dizzy. Someone reminds you that your tithe will be much larger if you go for the business venture. What considerations would be pertinent to your decision?

This week we'll seek to define a Christian perspective that will guide us in effectively meeting the challenges and opportunities raised by work.

Betty Howard is dean of women at Columbia Union College.

☐ August 8
Sunday

Work in the Plan of God

by editors

LOGOS

Two views of work are common in society today. In one view, work is a means to an end; a means for acquiring material resources to enjoy the good life during your time away from work. A second view, more practiced than it is theoretically espoused, sees work as an end in itself. The workaholic seems to find meaning and fulfillment, or perhaps escape, in work alone.

The biblical concept of work combines elements of both these views. But it also transcends both views in placing work into the larger context of God's redemptive purposes.

1) God participates in work. Jesus said, **"My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I, too, am working"** (John 5:17). The work of God involves creation of the universe (Ps. 19:1), sustaining life in the universe (Heb. 1:3), control over the affairs of nations (Acts 17:26, Rom. 13), and the accomplishment of his "good purpose" (salvation) in individual lives (Phil. 2:13).

The work of Jesus includes His redemptive sacrifice (Rom. 3:24-26), intercession/priesthood (Heb. 7:23-29), judgment (John 5:22) and, ultimately, rulership over the earth (Rev. 19:16).

2) Work is an integral part of God's design for ideal humanity. Work is not a penalty imposed on man because of his rebellion. Before that rebellion, **"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it"** (Gen. 2:15, NIV). And, work is part of the magnificent future God has planned for His people (Isa. 65:21-23).

3) Christ transforms work relationships. Humanity's sinful condition has not only added drudgery and hardship to work, it has resulted in exploitative, oppressive treatment of employees and dishonest, unfaithful treatment of employers. Because they are equal and unified in Christ, Christian employers and employees treat each other with mutual respect and integrity. **"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. . . . And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him"** (Eph. 5:5, 9, NIV).

4) God's calling invests work with ultimate significance. For the Christian, every vocation is a sacred calling. Every job, in the final sense, is done for the sake of the body of Christ. **"For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and, individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them; . . ."** (Rom. 12:4-6, RSV).

5) God calls us to rest as well as to work. **"Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work. . ."** (Ex. 20:9, 10, NIV). Yes, there is life after work in God's plan. We are called to live rhythmically, alternating work, rest, recreation, and worship. Our weekly cessation from labor symbolizes our recognition that our eternal hope and security is not based on our own work, but on the work of Christ in our behalf (Heb. 4:9, 10).

For the Christian, then, work has intrinsic value as a God-ordained function and it has a purpose beyond itself in the upbuilding of the body of Christ.

D.F.M.

Duties Chasing One Another Wildly

by Rhonda Robinson

Most people enjoy working, especially if their jobs are interesting and the pay is good. In fact, it seems that some people enjoy their work so much that instead of doing their jobs, their jobs are doing them. By that I mean, they don't just like to work; they live to work. Work begins to dominate their lives. Ellen White describes people thus burdened:

"Overwork sometimes causes a loss of self-control. . . . The Lord never compels hurried, complicated movements. Many gather themselves burdens that the merciful Heavenly Father did not place on them. Duties He never designed them to perform chase one another wildly."¹

As work becomes the most important thing in life, people devoted to it can't enjoy leisure, for they are too anxious about their jobs when they leave the office. And sometimes, people work themselves so hard they get sick.

"I hear of workers whose health is breaking down under the strain of the burdens they are bearing. This ought not to be. God desires us to remember that we are mortal. We are not to embrace too much in our work. We are not to keep ourselves under such a strain that our physical and mental powers shall be exhausted."²

"It is not wise to always be under the strain of work and excitement, even in ministering to men's spiritual needs; for in this way personal piety is neglected, and the power of mind and soul and body are overtaxed. Self-denial is required of the servants of Christ, and sacrifices must be made; but God would have all study the laws of health and use reason when working for Him, that the life which He has given may be preserved."³

Our church history provides an interesting case study of a pioneer leader who overworked:

"I saw that my husband's constant and excessive labor was exhausting his fund of strength, which God would have him preserve; that if he continued to overtax his physical and mental energies as he had been doing, he would be using up his future resources of strength, . . . and would break down prematurely, (depriving) the cause of God of his labor. . . .

"(He) thought it wrong for him to spend time in social enjoyment. He thought that the work in the office would suffer if he should. But after the blow fell upon him, causing physical and mental prostration, the work had to be carried on without him."⁴

For the college student, studying can become overwork. "When the largest portion of time is devoted to brain work, the organs of imagination lose their freshness and power, while the physical organs lose their healthy tone. The brain is morbidly excited by being constantly exercised, while the muscular system is weak from lack of exercise. There is manifest loss of strength and increase of debility, which in time makes its influence felt on the brain. As far as possible, harmony should be preserved between the mental and physical powers. This is necessary for the health of the entire system."⁵

TESTIMONY

Key texts:

Mark 6:31

Matthew 11:28-30

1. *Messages to Young People*, p. 135.

2. "Our Duty to the Unsaved," *Review and Herald*, April 28, 1904.

3. *Gospel Workers*, p. 243.

4. *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 517-519.

5. *Mind, Character and Personality*, p. 509.

Rhonda Robinson was a senior communication major at Columbia Union College at the time of this writing.

□ August 10
Tuesday

Values Informing the Christian Worker

by James Londis

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Luke 12:13-21

Whether we like it or not, we're in the midst of a business culture that dictates a logic not always consonant with the gospel. The gospel suggests that we examine our work in the light of our values. Williams and Houck offer this checklist:

1. How do we use power over individuals, particularly when we're the boss?
2. How do we understand our use of nature and natural resources?
3. How do we understand wealth and property ownership?
4. How do we hope to achieve happiness?
5. How do we understand justice?
6. How do we respond and deal with our drive to gratify material wants?
7. How do we understand time and its significance and value?

These are issues that affect how much importance we attach to our work and how we treat other people in a work contest. What we decide about these values generally becomes the guidepost or boundary marking our decisions. The business world logic, on the other hand permeates our lives.

"We live in an economic system," Hans Kung observes, "that urges us to increase production so that we can increase consumption, so that production does not break down but expands. In this way the level of demand is always kept above the level of supply through advertising, etc. Our wants continue to increase. New needs are created as soon as the old are satisfied. Luxury goods are classified as necessary consumer goods in order to make way for the new luxury goods."²

The Christian must ask: Does the Bible attack that logic? If it does, we have to rethink the meaning of work and the meaning of business in our personal lives. Now the Bible doesn't address the question, "Shall I fire the incompetent (but pitiful) widow?" But we can distill some guidelines from Scripture to help us orient our values.

C. S. Lewis makes the point that you have to use your imagination in determining how to apply the gospel:

"Christianity does not replace the technical. When it tells you to feed the hungry, it doesn't give you lessons in cookery. If you want to learn that, you must go to a cook rather than a Christian. If you are not a professional economist and have no experience of industry, simply being a Christian won't give you the answer to industrial problems."³

Informed by the values of the gospel, the Christian worker will apply his technical skill in the most humane, unselfish way possible.

Shall I
fire the
incompetent
(but pitiful)
widow?

1. F. Williams and John W. Louck, *Full Value*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 24.

2. Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian*, (New York: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 596 ff.

3. C. S. Lewis (Walter Hooper, ed.), *God on the Dock*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), p. 165.

☐ August 11
Wednesday

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James Londis is the senior pastor of Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Takoma Park, Maryland.

by James Londis

Mind Your Business

Our culture has come to define people by the work they do, by the business in which they are employed. It attaches self-worth, importance and even identity to what people do to make a living.

A 1981 *Washington Post* article on clergy burnout explored the cases of ministers leaving the pulpit because the needs of their congregations leave them exhausted and overwhelmed. Among those who do not leave, a high percentage feel that their work has become all-consuming. They don't have time for their families. They don't have time for leisure. They don't have time for any activity other than work. Most ministers are saying what society has wanted them to say: Your work should be the most important thing in your life. Your work should be the all-consuming passion. Your work should be what identifies, defines and gives you a sense of value.

It's true that the Genesis story says we are going to earn our living by the sweat of our brow. It's true that in many respects work is essential, important and a blessing. We all have to work and we are all, to some extent, shaped and defined by our work. But the gospel informs us about (a) the importance of work, and (b) how to work ethically. It's a lack of ethics in work that makes the job react on the worker so that it becomes too important.

The gospel has good news for the working person. But it is often difficult to find guiding biblical principles for today's world of work. Many argue that like oil and water, the Bible and business do not mix too well. How can you apply the doctrine of forgiving your brother seventy times seven when your employee can't do his job and ought to be fired? How does one observe Jesus' instructions to care for the poor when the "poor" is a widowed supervisor with two small children who simply cannot handle her responsibilities? If you fire her, she will become a charity case. How do you fulfill your responsibility to your stockholders if you keep her on the job? You're operating a business, not a welfare organization.

In spite of the difficulties, there are values that affect our policies and actions in the business world. These values can be found in the Bible, but they are not listed in a particular text or chapter. The values emerge primarily out of biblical stories. A sense of what is right or wrong, a sense of proportion, comes out of parables like the Prodigal Son and the laborers in the vineyard. Jesus doesn't define neighbor; he tells stories about the neighbor. Thus we learn what it means to be a neighbor from the story of the Good Samaritan, from the story of how He treated the woman at the well.

What are some of the general values taught in the Scriptures? There are ethics of fairness and justice which are also upheld in the business world. But the Biblical ethics of forgiveness, grace and compassion are not intrinsic to the business ethic as we know it. If we are going to listen to the Gospel, we have to be willing to go beyond popular contemporary business ethics. The importance of this cannot be overestimated.

HOW TO

Key texts:
Luke 10:25-37;
Luke 15:11-32;
John 4:5-32;
Mark 12:1-9

Many argue that like oil and water, the Bible and business do not mix well.

James Londis is the senior pastor of the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Takoma Park, Maryland.

☐ August 12
Thursday

Perspectives on Labor, Leisure and A Finished Work

by William Loveless

OPINION

Key texts:

Genesis 2:1-4;
3:19;

Exodus 20:9;
Deuteronomy

5:13-15;

Psalms 104:23;
Ecclesiastes

3:9-14;

Isaiah 65:21-25;
2 Thessalonians

3:7-11

The Genesis record paints a picture of God's purpose for His people: replenishing the earth, subduing it, achieving dominion over all other living things. It is a joyous, active picture. After the fall, work became a hard necessity as well as a joy, but it remained an essential aspect of man's nature as a being created in the image of an active Creator. Observe the disintegrating effects of continuous unemployment for a potent lesson in the benefits of work to human life.

The advanced technology of modern society has posed an important work-related problem: What to do with leisure time. Within this century, two percent of our population soon will be able to produce the goods and foods needed for the other 98 percent. Already the four-day work is a reality for an estimated 400,000 workers in the United States, and the trend is snowballing. The idea is popular. Yet some problems are emerging.

Not all employees like longer weekends. They don't know what to do with their leisure. To work less means to experience a reduction in the meaning of life, a longer time to lie flat on their back watching TV, a longer weekend of drinking, or a compulsion to "moonlight," taking a second job on the weekends. While a lot of people can stand three to four days of work, ten to twelve hours a day, fewer can face a three- or four-day weekend.

The Biblical record suggests that leisure (1) should be balanced with labor, and (2) is most beneficial if it is entered into with gratitude. Thus Israel rested and memorialized deliverance from slavery, expressing gratitude for the gift of freedom (Deut. 5:13-15). Some workers make themselves into slaves with no memories of deliverance. Some non-workers, confronted with an abundance of everything, become bored with anything. The work addict retreats into work rather than confront the insecurity to be met in the world of play, repose, and unprogrammed contact with life itself. The typical workaholic is as averse to admitting his dependent needs as the alcoholic. Yet Scripture tells us that creation and rest are part of the same act (Gen. 2:1-4). Rest is not just a diversion from labor but a necessary ingredient of genuinely creative work. The Sabbath is linked to creation and rest. The law links the Sabbath with the deliverance of Israel from slavery. It also suggests social justice which the people of God should practice toward laborers in their own household and business (Deut. 5:13, 14). Thus motivation for this law is clearly set forth: gratitude for the gift of freedom (Deut. 5:15).

The doctrine of the soon coming of Jesus relates to a time when our work will be finished. In a world where time itself is a problem, how important it is that we give the world a clear picture of Jesus' advent—not only as the end of time and human history as we know it now, but also as a goal of all work. When Isaiah looked at the new heaven and new earth minus the effects of sin, he saw a dynamic, active goal reflecting the best intentions of the Sierra Club and Audubon Society, and their statements on conservation. When the "work is ended," God's children will at last be part of God's creation, at peace with Him and His work (Isa. 65:21-25).

Rest is not just a diversion from labor but a necessary ingredient of genuinely creative work.

REACT
Lesson 7

1. Study the questions posed in the Introduction. Informed by lesson material and Biblical principles, propose solutions to the problems and give reasons for your answers.
2. Would you consider a minister who spends 40 hours per week at his job truly dedicated? Why or why not? What balance between work and leisure would you suggest for one passionately committed to the work of God?

Does the fourth commandment suggest that we should labor six days per week with the Sabbath being our primary leisure time? Or is everyone entitled to at least two days off per week?

3. The Bible often defines people according to their work: Abel, a keeper of sheep; Peter, the fisherman; Demetrius, the silversmith; Lydia, a seller of purple; Aquilla and Priscilla, tentmakers. In what sense would you like/dislike identification by vocational pursuit? Under what circumstances do you think such definitions might diminish a person? What other identities do you think are most important to note in a person?
 4. Recall a time when leisure following work was particularly rewarding to you. Recall some ill-spent leisure hours and suggest more worthwhile alternatives. Design some leisure time pursuits to be spent with friends which incorporate exercises in gratitude.
 5. Respond to the checklist questions appearing in the Evidence article.
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A stylized world map with a large white circle in the center. The circle contains the title "THE CITIES" in a bold, serif font. The map is rendered in a simple, graphic style with black outlines and a light gray background for the landmasses.

THE CITIES

**"Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you . . ."—Jeremiah
29:7, RSV**

Lesson 8, August 15-21

Comments on the City Church

INTRODUCTION

City Dweller Comments: It is impossible for us all to flock to the ghetto mission field, so here is my suggestion: Intelligent, educated white people (change the word to *black*, if you are black) can do a great deal to effect a change of attitude among friends, relatives and associates. We all have opportunity to deal with people who harbor racial prejudice, which is a sticky problem in the city. We sometimes sell our friends down the river because they have exhibited prejudiced views. Thus we mirror intolerant attitudes that whites hold for black people: They'll never change, so why bother with them?

Graduate Student Comments: My fellow graduate students make such wistful comments about inner-city churches and their demise. Yet such students help perpetuate the death by driving past the crumbling inner city churches to the more affluent, highly sociable suburban churches.

Been There Comments: The high mortality rate for church members in the 18 to 30 age group may be related to the fact that during this time many of these young people attend a big city church. These churches need some component parts that hold special meaning to the distinct types that belong to it, to avoid losing people in the shuffle from week to week. Many city churches lack the component necessary for young adults.

Just about the only means for reaching the young adult after he graduates from high school is college. That is fine, if the person happens to be college material, and if he happens to find

the right place at the right time with the right friends and teachers. He just may jell into an Adventist who knows why he is a church member. But the young person with no immediate plans to attend an SDA college, cast into non-Adventist work or study environment for perhaps the first time, faces crucial decisions concerning career, life partners, and a hundred other things, yet finds no arena to deal with them on Sabbath morning.

Willing Worker Comments: I went to a city church full of ideas, and found it controlled by iron-fisted church board members who beat their opposition down with their pocket-books. In the work I initiated, I failed to take their control into consideration. I should have worked with this group for months before attempting any innovations. At any rate, I was able to run a Sabbath School discussion for graduate students and professional people with an average attendance of 20 (previously only a handful of such people appeared on the scene on an occasional basis). In addition, we had a small interfaith Bible discussion group and some social events designed to attract believers of any faith. The latter had the poorest attendance except for the one or two times we held soirees at a private home nearby. Then there was standing room only and all kinds of backsliders long absent came out of the walls.

The above comments raise the issue of this week's lesson—How can God's people best minister to the cities?

The writer is an anonymous alumnus of Columbia Union College.

☐ August 15
Sunday

A Tale of Two Cities

by editors

LOGOS

Cities are not inherently evil according to Scripture, neither are they necessarily good. Rather, in the conflict between good and evil, both sides are represented by cities. Babylon, the adulterous, oppressive, materialistic, violent city, is any human social structure that sets itself up against God. Jerusalem, the peaceful, just, righteous city, is God's true people living together in holy community.

Urban evils are certainly not glossed over in the Bible. From the beginning of biblical history cities were centers of organized rebellion against God, prideful attempts to find authentic life apart from Him. The builders of Babel said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves. . . . (Gen. 11:4, NIV) Sodom, probably the most notoriously evil city ever, was guilty not only of gross sexual immorality (Gen. 19:3-9) but also of neglecting its needy and suffering (Eze. 16:4). Other evils attributed to cities include false worship (Jer. 32:26-29, 34, 35), violence (Eze. 7:23), and injustice (Eze. 9:9).

But the judgment pronounced on these cities was not because they were cities, but because they were wicked. Cities were an important part of the good and just society designed by God for the Israelite nation (Num. 35:1-8). And urban life will continue in the perfect society of the new earth (Revelation 21).

Though God found it necessary to destroy Sodom, His general approach to cities is not abandonment or annihilation, but redemption. Few cities have been as thoroughly corrupt and violent as was the Assyrian city of Nineveh. But God did not abandon this vile city, rather He sent a preacher (Jonah) and when the city repented, it was spared God's judgment.

God calls His people to make the cities centers of mission activity, to seek the well-being of city-dwellers and to touch their lives with the good news about Christ. "But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare" (Jer. 29:7, RSV).

In this week's adult Sabbath School lesson, Gottfried Oosterwal points out that New Testament Christianity was an urban movement. The work of the gospel in Antioch provides a good example for involvement in Christian outreach to cities (Acts 11:19-30; 13:1-3).

Oosterwal comments: "The work not only centered in preaching the Lord Jesus; the believers also *lived* Jesus Christ. . . . No wonder that it was at Antioch where the followers of Christ were first called Christians. People hearing and seeing them saw Christ. Second, the church continued as a lay movement. . . . Third, ministry was carried out as teamwork, and holistically, with prophets, pastors, teachers, administrators, relief workers, and evangelists working together. Fourth, the believers lived in the city where people could hear and observe them in their daily life and vocation. . . . Fifth, the church was liberal—giving, with a deep concern for people other than their own. Sixth, it was a missionary church, a home base and a training school for missionaries. Finally, all ministry was rooted in the work of the Holy Spirit."

A biblical church, then, cannot avoid the cities, but must give them devoted service.

D.F.M.

Christianity Flees the Cities

by William Loveless

More people live above the sixteenth floor in New York City than live in Denver, Colorado. New York City alone includes one-fifth of all the office space in the United States. In lower Manhattan, two million people live in an area roughly the size of J. F. Kennedy airport.

No wonder Ellen White wrote, "At the present time there is not a thousandth part being done in working in the cities, that should be done, and that would be done if men and women would do their whole duty."¹ The need for work in the cities has not diminished. The words of Ellen White might be considered even more timely for the current church: "As a people we need to hasten the work of God in the cities, which has been hindered for lack of workers, and means and a spirit of consecration."²

Many who call themselves Christians refuse to have anything to do with the city, because work in the city means sacrifice and dedication. Some Adventists have chosen to inhabit a convenient out of the way place, where they can relax and need not be harassed by the demands of the cities, where traffic and noise abound. They want to live in the peaceful, tranquil, quiet countryside. However, the church militant has more than the comfort and peace of its members in mind. This other-world existence is not promised until the "work" is done and we're gathered home.

Those who like to talk about leaving the cities, where the aged, handicapped, and underprivileged need their help, may be forgetting God's firm injunction that His saving message must be brought to people in need.

Here is an earnest reminder: "The burden of the needs of our cities has rested so heavily upon me that it has sometimes seemed that I should die."³

Long before Adventists had begun their suburban drift, they were aptly described as reluctant to minister in the large cities:

"It seems difficult to make our people feel a special burden for the work in the large cities."⁴

Work in the cities is the Christian's special duty:

"The duty of God's servants at this time is to preach the Word to the cities. Christ came from the heavenly courts to this earth to save souls and we, as almoners of His grace, need to impart to the inhabitants of the great cities a knowledge of saving truth."⁵

For fortification and inspiration, city workers have scriptural instruction: "Workers in cities should read carefully the tenth and eleventh chapters of Hebrews, and appropriate to themselves the instruction that this scripture contains."⁶ What will the city worker learn from Hebrews 10 and 11? Here is an example:

The city worker can identify with Moses' reluctance to return to Egypt. He left a simple shepherd's existence to dwell with a vast throng of people in a tent city on the move for the next forty years. A big city's sanitation headaches and neighborhood tensions in tight quarters became his province. For the rest of his life Moses was a stranger and pilgrim on earth in undesirable circumstances.

Read Hebrews 11. You will be confronted with people who were not absorbed in comfort, ease, and freedom from care. "We are not among those who shrink back," Paul observes.

TESTIMONY

Key text:

Hebrews 11:15, 16

"The burden of our cities has rested so heavily upon me that it has sometimes seemed that I should die"

1. *Evangelism*, p. 29.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 329.
3. Manuscript 13, 1910.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Letter 62, 1910.
6. *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 40.

William Loveless is the President of Columbia Union College.

☐ August 17
Tuesday

Seeking the Welfare of the Cities

by Barry Casey

EVIDENCE Key text: Jeremiah 29:7

The city has, more often than not, been a symbol of all that is wrong with the human race. After Cain killed Abel, the first thing he did was found a city in a far country: the implication is that founding a city is just the kind of thing a man of Cain's character would do. Babylon has long been a symbol of wickedness and oppressive power for Western Christendom.

And yet the city has also been a symbol of all that is grand and creative about humanity. Gibson Winter, a sociologist of religion, speaks hopefully of the city as "Metropolis" when he envisions "the possibility of a unified, human society arising from the chaos of our massive, urbanized areas. Metropolis is the mother city, the nurturing totality of interdependent regions and municipalities where children may find a climate conducive to growth, where education may enrich life as well as capacities, where men and women may have opportunity to participate as members and receive their rewards, and where advantages may be distributed with equity."¹

That is the vision of the ideal, the hope of the way things ought to be. Another view of major American cities was summarized in a recent film entitled *Escape From New York*, a scenario in which that city becomes the largest maximum security prison in the world. The truth, of course, is somewhere in the middle.

Most North Americans are urban dwellers; this fact alone means that the church's primary mission is in the cities. How are we to address this enormous challenge? Winter points out that the role of the pastor in the local community has largely been superseded, in terms of human services, by social agencies and government programs. Whereas the pastor used to be an influential liaison between the city government and the people in the parish, secular agencies have taken up such responsibilities. Moreover, the problem and solutions of urban areas are so technical that a pastor does not have time to devote to these problems at the expense of other duties. It is not that ministers should not be concerned with social problems in the cities—it is rather that they should not have to carry the burden alone. Winter proposes to urban Christians that the laity is the key to the church's mission in the cities. He believes a laity "theologically self-conscious and socially alert, is the form through which the church's witness in metropolitan society will be realized."²

If we are to take Winter's advice seriously, urban Adventist Christians must become experts in city living. It means that they must be alert to the best that the city has to offer socially, culturally, and politically. It means that they must be willing to serve on city planning boards as well as in their traditional medical roles. It means that they must have the courage to confront corporations which flagrantly violate environmental laws.

Humankind will never build the ideal city, but we can work in hope to change the cities we've got. Will it make a difference? I think of a tiny smiling woman, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who continues to change the lives of hundreds, perhaps thousands, in that city. If we are willing to "seek the welfare of the city" and to "pray to the Lord on its behalf," we too can make a difference.

Adventists must become experts in city living.

1. Gibson Winter, *The New Creation as Metropolis* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), pp. 2, 3.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 11

Healing the Cities

The city is a human experiment in relationships; it often fails. But sometimes, through sensitive planning, compassion, and the ability to listen and act on people's needs, some facet of it actually works. If our lives are an experiment in the attempt to become truly human then perhaps we can forgive those, whose goal it is to run a city right, if they frequently fall far short of realizing human needs. A human being is a complex creature, and when we multiply that one person by millions, it's easy to see how the cities fail so often. Nevertheless, there are things we can do to help heal the cities. Here are a few suggestions for people willing to experiment with life:

1. **Get to know your city.** Discover its history, its resources, its cultural, social, and religious centers, its services. Then use them to their fullest.

2. **Get to know the religious groups in the city.** Meet with the pastors, priests, and rabbis; pray with them, fellowship with their people, take part in their services. Open yourself up to other people and their perspectives. Realize that religious diversity is a creative force, that it does not automatically pose a threat to one's own tradition of faith.

3. **Be willing to work with secular groups whose means and goals you can conscientiously support.** It is important for Christians to see that the work of healing in the world is a privilege given to humans as a whole, not just to Christians. Wherever people hear the call to participate in the work of becoming human and helping to build a more human world, there the Spirit of God is at work.

4. **Learn to love people.** I don't mean to sound facetious, but the whole human venture is a bust without love. A lot of us may feel like the "Peanuts" character Linus, who yells "I love humanity—it's people I can't stand!"

Perhaps it will become more real for us if we think in terms of *individuals* who need our love, rather than whole nations at a time. The best way is still for people to work with people.

5. **Pray for your city.** The cities most often seem like Babylon, but then we also have the Biblical example of Nineveh, where a city renowned for its wickedness and cruelty turned around and worshipped the God of Israel. In our zeal to attack problems, confront the evil within the social structures, and within ourselves and others, let us not be like Jonah who sulked because he didn't get to see the whole place go up in smoke. Our egos should not be at stake here: this is a situation where pride has no place and where all our actions, though unworthy, are dependent on, and preparation for, the ultimate actions of God.

HOW TO

Key texts:

Proverbs 9:1-15;

Jonah 1-4

For Love of the City

by Roy Branson

OPINION

If Christians are going to serve a city, they have to love it; and not just that part of the city that still resembles a small town or the countryside. They have to love a city for itself; for being diverse, quick, vivid, committed to the superlative. If Christians are consumed by hatred for cities as such, no passion will remain to combat the injustice, cruelty and alienation perpetrated by evil persons and institutions within cities.

Many Christians, when they vent their moral outrage against cities are actually expressing their aesthetic taste

Many Christians, when they vent their moral outrage against cities are actually expressing their aesthetic taste. They don't like cities; cities don't please them. Similarly, some people prefer the ocean to the mountains, and still others choose the desert over either. Fine, but would anyone seriously suggest that the preferred location was more wicked or righteous than the other?

Ah, but what if some admit to a taste for formal gardens, or even the contemplation of the varied architecture most easily found in urban areas? Is a museum as lovely as a tree? For some, even asking the question hints at sacrilege, never mind moral confusion. But the question is really about perceptions of beauty, not conformity to moral standards.

There are Christians who realize that the reason they hate cities is because cities are human—too human. For one thing, there are just too many people in them. "All that hustle and bustle, that jostling around."

So far, only preferences are being expressed, not moral judgments. But these remarks are often followed by, "you can't put so many people jammed up together and still expect them to behave the way they should." It is only another small step to making a moral judgment. "People ought to live out in the open, some distance away from the nearest house if they're going to live like real human beings."

What is the justification for such a judgment? There may be references to the healthfulness of fresh air, but more powerfully, there is the appeal to the religious conviction of Christians that humans are sinners, followed by the assertion that trees and pastures and mountain streams are not. Sinful humanity, the argument goes, corrupts everything it touches. Cities are more the result of human action than is the country, so the country is a better, less sinful place than is the city. So, stay away from humans—except to save them—and cling to meadows.

Certainly, humans are the only creatures who sin, if one means by sin knowing, willful violation of moral standards. But they also have the greatest capacity to reveal the Creator. Cities concentrate not only criminal and evil behavior, but expressions of humanity's creativity. It is primarily in cities and metropolitan areas that institutions are established to foster the finest in man's abilities: libraries, universities, philanthropic organizations, museums, historical archives. To love cities is to love humanity and its creations.

To love the country is also to appreciate God's creation. We associate tranquility and visual delight with the contours of God's physical creation. But that is an aesthetic response, not a moral evaluation. After all, lovers of nature must realize that sin is to be found in rural

To love cities is to love humanity and its creations

□ August 20
Friday

78

Roy Branson is an ethicist with the Kennedy Institute in Washington, D.C. He is also the editor of *Spectrum*.

areas. A sparse population scatters incidences of inhumanity, perhaps, but rural areas reflect no purer strain of humanity than is to be found in cities.

Living in the city and living in the country are certainly different, appealing to distinct tastes. But the point is, one form of living is not intrinsically more evil or good than the other. As children of God we are to praise Him and enjoy His creation, whether rural or urban. In either the country or city we are to worship God and combat the evils that oppress the weak and vulnerable.

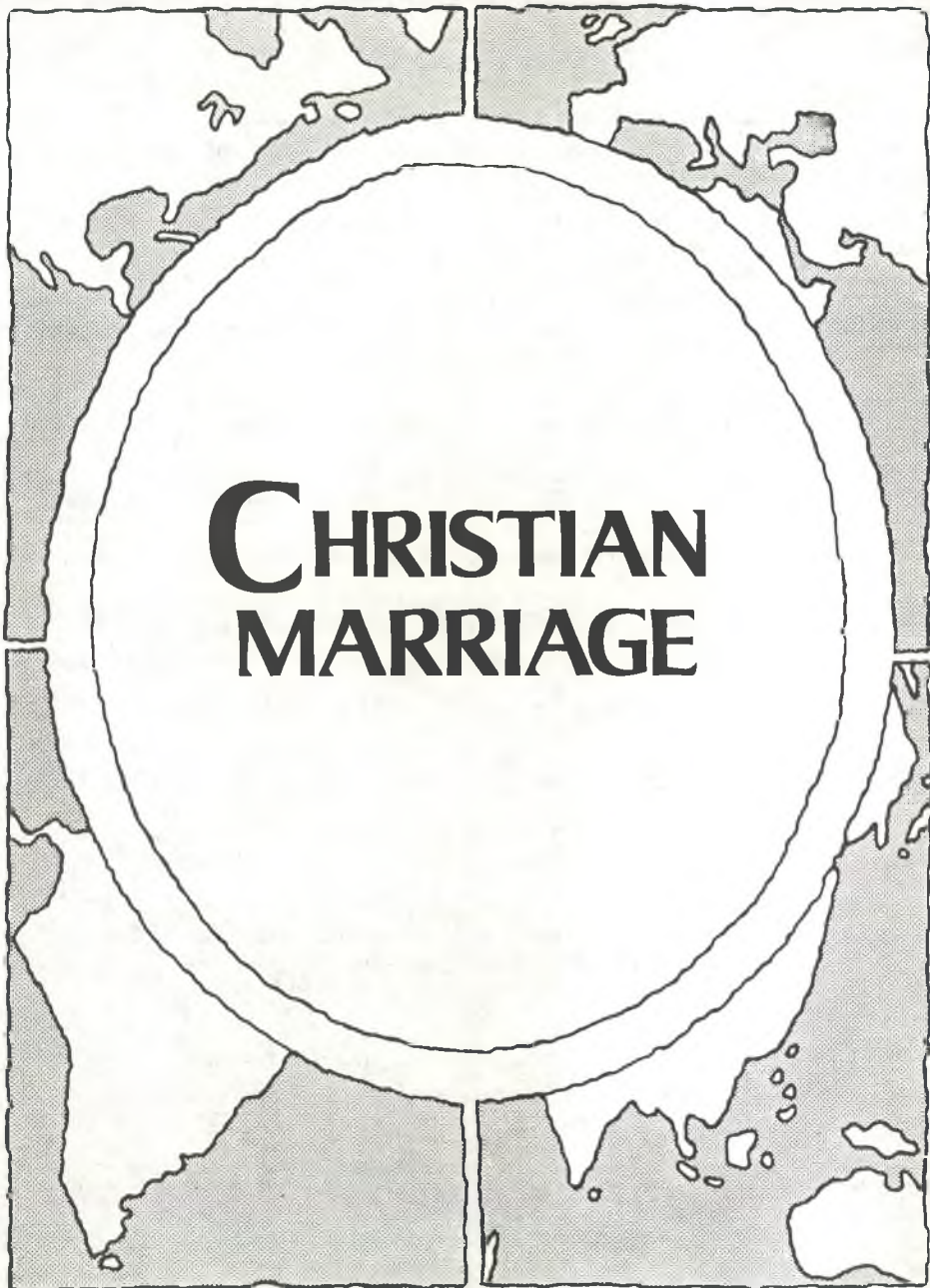
But if Christians are going to serve God in a city, they cannot be consumed by loathing for it. If Christians are going to help cities they will have to appreciate them and love them as reflections, ultimately, of the sustaining, creative power of God Himself.

REACT
Lesson 8

1. How can the church better minister to those in the 18-30 age group who are not in an SDA college but who are located in large metropolitan areas?
2. Study the suggestions in the How To article. Discuss specific ways in which these suggestions might be applied in your city or town.
3. What word best describes your view of working with secular groups for the betterment of the city? Explain.
 - a. enthusiastic
 - b. uncertain
 - c. anxious
 - d. negative
 - e. other—explain
4. Identify the pros and cons of city living. Which are of most concern to the Christian?

Consider the situation of a young professional couple with two small children trying to decide where to live. Which consideration should weigh more heavily: the need for a favorable environment in which to raise the children, or the desperate need of the cities for Christian outreach?

5. What responsibility, if any, do white, middle to upper-class suburban Adventists have to the needs of the central city near which they live?



"A man will . . . be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."—Ephesians 5:31, NIV

Lesson 9, August 22-28

What's So Special About Christian Marriage?

by Edna
Maye Loveless

What is special or unique about Christian marriage? Confronted with this question, people on or near the Columbia Union College campus commented on the many dimensions of Christian marriage.

Miriam Wood, senior editor for Home Study Institute, says, "In a secular marriage the point of commitment to one another above all else is stressed; in a Christian marriage commitment to God is first, then commitment to one another. This primary commitment enables the husband-wife commitment and bond to be much stronger than it could otherwise be. It does not take anything away from the marriage; on the contrary, it strengthens the union and provides solid ground during times when the natural stresses of life take their toll."

Robert Schwandt, CUC professor of psychology, sees the Christian marriage relationship as an *informed* one, "one in which God's relationship to man is exemplified." The lessons learned in marriage, he observes, "become our revelation of God's love." Thus the learning is reciprocal. One brings to marriage a knowledge of God, and finds in marriage insights about God.

Melvin Wolford, CUC's professor of education, also emphasizes learning. He sees in a Christian marriage "a chance to grow, and grow, and grow."

Schwandt defines the growth that takes place in marriage: "First, it is a creative relationship that is generative for both persons. Second, it constitutes cooperation. It teaches working together for a common goal. And it should exemplify an in-

depth loyalty to one person."

Another resource unique to the Christian marriage, points out **William Loveless**, CUC's president, is the Christian community. "In the fellowship of the church a Christian couple in trouble (and Christian couples *can* experience trouble) find a commitment to aiding them in creating a stable union, rather than the world's blasé, 'Get out of it if it isn't working.' Christians rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. There is therapy in both responses—and the added optimism that Christian charity can overcome difficulties."

Providing a profile of a Christian marriage would be difficult, but **Wolford** suggests some examples: "In a Christian marriage," he observes, "there is an overriding concern for developing a caring relationship about man and God. This can be shown in a number of ways. One might be to ask what Christ would do, not what I want. This would lead to Christ's being the center of the home, not food or pleasure or the TV set. Another evidence of uniqueness might be a willingness to sacrifice to help each member of the family, including the children, grow in a way that meets each person's potential and needs, not the needs of any one dominant individual. For the Christian, this growth includes the dimension of the soul, not just the body and mind. The ultimate uniqueness of a Christian family is that while it is concerned with the present life, it is more concerned with the life of eternity where the growth begun on earth can continue infinitely."

INTRODUCTION

Edna Maye Loveless teaches communications, education and English at Columbia Union College.

August 22
Sunday

Mutuality, Oneness and Permanence

by editors

LOGOS

Despite the tragically high divorce rate in our society and church, and the contemporary vogue of "living together" rather than getting married, marriage remains an overwhelmingly popular idea. It is part of God's created order, a fundamental component of human existence.

"But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one" (Mark 10:6-8, NIV). This passage indicates that the primary purpose of marriage is not procreation but the "oneness" for which humans were created (Gen. 2:18). Sakae Kubo comments that this oneness "implies the acceptance of each other, a willingness to reveal one's most innermost being to the other. . . . 'It exists not as a giving nor as a receiving, but as a *perfect sharing*. It takes co-initiative and co-responsiveness.' As they come to know each other in the most intimate way, the couple experiences themselves as one."¹

Yet, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer eloquently reminds us in a wedding sermon, the oneness of marriage is grounded in God, not in human feeling. "God joins you together in marriage; it is his act, not yours. Do not confound your love for one another with God. . . . As high as God is above man, so high are the sanctity, rights, and the promise of marriage above the sanctity, the rights, and the promise of love. It is not your love that sustains the marriage, but from now on, the marriage that sustains your love."²

God's plan for the marital relationship is well summarized by Paul: "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. . . . Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church" (Eph. 5:22, 35, NIV). Helmut Thielicke observes that the statement that the man is the head of the woman . . . is inserted in a more general framework, namely in the commandment to 'be subject to one another' (Eph. 5:21). Hence this cannot mean any one-sided domination on the part of the man; on the contrary, their common dependence upon the Lord, who is above them and is to be feared, place the man and wife in a relationship of mutual service to each other, which is characteristic of our whole relationship to our fellow men (Gal. 5:13; 1 Peter 4:10) for Christ is himself the prototype of the servant."³

The comparison of marriage to the relationship between Christ and the church is a reciprocal illumination: The intimacy of marital love symbolizes Christ's powerful, enduring love for His people; Christ's self-giving love demonstrates the love that should exist in the marital relationship.

The oneness of marriage is to be permanent. "Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate" (Mark 10:9, NIV).

Finally, there is nothing in scripture to suggest that marriage is universally mandatory. Singleness can be honorable and highly useful in furthering God's cause. (See Matt. 19:10, 12; 1 Cor 7:25, 26, 29-35.)

D.F.M.

1. Sakae Kubo, *Theology and Ethics of Sex*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1980), p. 27.
2. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Eberhard Bethge, ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1953), p. 43.
3. Helmut Thielicke, *The Ethics of Sex*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1964), p. 11.

A Prophetess Looks at Marriage

by Robin Cowdrick

Marriage for a prophetess must have had its own special challenges. Initially Ellen Harmon did not expect ever to marry. But rumors began to spread about her and the young single preacher, James White, traveling in the same group when visiting companies of scattered believers. Protection of Ellen's reputation was a factor influencing James and Ellen to unite their lives.

Thus Ellen entered marriage, a union she later reflected on this way: "Marriage is something that will influence and affect your life both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will not advance his plans in this direction without the knowledge that God approves his course. He will not want to choose for himself, but will feel that God must choose for him. We are not to please ourselves, for Christ pleased not Himself. I would not be understood to mean that anyone is to marry one whom he does not love. This would be sin. But fancy and the emotional nature must not be allowed to lead on to ruin. God requires the whole heart, the supreme affections."¹

Her marriage did not prove to be a conflict-free venture, and some of her most difficult decisions concerned caring for the children. How did she juggle the duties of wife, mother and prophetess? She recalls:

"Although the cares that came upon us in connection with the publishing work and other branches of the cause involved much perplexity, the greatest sacrifice which I was called to make in connection with the work was to leave my children frequently to the care of others.

"Henry had been from us five years, and Edson had received but little of our care. For years at Rochester our family had been very large, and our home like a hotel, and we were from that home much of the time. I had felt the deepest anxiety that my children should be brought up free from evil habits, and I was often grieved as I thought of the contrast between my situation and that of others who would not take burdens and cares, who could ever be with their children, to counsel and instruct them, and who spent their time almost exclusively in their own families."²

The work of God also led to separations between James and Ellen, which she reluctantly accepted as necessary. She wrote James: "Although I miss you very, very much and love you, yet I feel at present I belong to God to wait for and do His will. I tell you freely it is a great sacrifice to my feelings to have you separated from me as you are, and yet it seems to be that it is as God would have it, and I must be reconciled. It has been hard, so hard.

"I wept and prayed and pondered and wept again, and the steady conviction forces itself upon me that it is right as it is. God's work is great. It demands our first attention."³

Ellen White acknowledged and affirmed her husband's role, and leaned heavily upon him for support. She wrote about their relationship, "Without him I could accomplish but little, but with his help, in the strength of God I could do the work assigned me."⁴

Long after death ended their 35-year marriage Ellen declared, "Although he is dead, I feel that he is the best man that ever trod shoe leather."⁵

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Ephesians 5

Without James I could accomplish but little

1. *Adventist Home*, p. 43.

2. *Life Sketches*, p. 165.

3. Ellen G. White letter 32 to James White, June 24, 1878.

4. *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 575.

5. Document file, 733 C, interview.

Robin Cowdrick is a senior communications-journalism major at Columbia Union College.

□ August 24
Tuesday

A Credo for the Family

by Lewis Bird

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Galatians 5:22

Out of the ferment of graduate studies, counseling situations, and continued reflections on "how to have a happy home," I have come to . . . four things I do not believe.

I do not believe that the Christian view of marriage is contractual. Contracts bind; covenants bond. . . . To bring the language of the courtroom or board room into the bedroom and living room is a sure route to negotiated truces and quantified love.

Covenantal living presupposes cords of faith, hope, and love which find expression in sensitive caring, appreciative support, and responsible feeling. God's covenantal love defines fidelity and intensity for us forever. Part of Christian marriage is the joyful discovery that our marriage bonds have been touched with the flaming ability to keep such truth.

I do not believe that you have to work at marriage in order to maintain it. Using the word *work* in maintaining a vital marriage may prove too misleading to be useful. For most of us, work is not a positive term. It represents strain, stress, striving, and bothersome discomfort. How does this glue marriage together?

Whether by themselves or with the help of a counselor, there are times a couple must work on conflict areas in their marriage. There work is needed. But in the flow of life where understanding and agape prevail, a better concept would be to maintain an active, creative awareness. Active awareness pays attention to another's feelings, struggles, differences, and dreams.

Building lives beats building careers

I do not believe that men should find their primary satisfaction in their careers, nor that women should find their only gratification in raising children. . . . Building lives beats building careers. The only place where any of us may ever come close to being indispensable is as a spouse and as a parent. Men should not miss out on this opportunity. Luther once spoke of the embarrassment a father might feel in hanging out the diapers in a chauvinistic neighborhood. "Let them laugh. God and the angels smile in heaven."

When we sacrifice quantity of time for quality alone in family relationships, we usually lose both

Both fathers and mothers are needed at home. Both males and females must give an account for the stewardship of their talents in the world outside. The critical question is not how more men can find happiness in the home nor how more women can find usefulness in the office. Rather, Christians might ponder how redeemed spouses and parents can enhance the other's roles and gifts in every arena of life. . . .

I do not believe that the critical difference in family living lies in the quality of time rather than the quantity of time you spend with your mate or children. While this slogan has become gospel to many professionals too busy to spend necessary time at home, often it is merely a rationalization. It keeps us from eliminating committee meetings, church activities, nights at the office, and other hard choices demanded if we are to invest more time with the family.

Sharing of dreams, stresses, schedules, questions, memories, and future plans takes time. When we sacrifice quantity of time for quality alone in family relationships, we usually lose both, and disappoint those we love who needed us to be there and to care.

Excerpted from Lewis Bird, "A Credo for the Family," *Christian Medical Society Journal*, Fall, 1977, pp. 15, 16.

August 25
Wednesday

Lewis Bird, Ph.D., is eastern regional director of the Christian Medical Society.

The 2X Formula (or Getting to Know You)

by Robin Cowdrick

"If men and women are in the habit of praying twice a day before they contemplate marriage, they should pray four times a day when such a step is anticipated."¹

This statement suggests that marriage is a solemn step and should not be taken without preparation. Here are some suggestions to consider when thinking about marriage.

1. **Find a pastor or counselor that you can trust.** Set up and keep regular appointments with that person. A marriage expert can administer a series of tests that will measure compatibility. An assessment of family background, attitudes and personality traits can reflect the potential for success or failure of a marriage.

2. **Read books and articles about marriage, families, homemaking, children, communication, birth control, lifestyles.** Many couples have enjoyed reading *The Adventist Home* together. Check out other publications available at the Adventist Book Center. Don't forget about the public library.

3. **Work on your communication skills.** It is easier to kiss than to talk, but you had better learn to talk. Exchanging feelings, attitudes, facts, beliefs, and ideas with another person can be sticky. You should dialogue honestly about the following:

a. Careers (Will the wife work? How will decisions about changes in careers or in job site be approached and made?)

b. Children and birth control (How many children? When? Is Christian education a priority?)

c. Church attendance

d. Family worship (How often will you have it? Who is going to conduct it? How much input should come from each partner?)

e. House work (Who is going to do what?)

f. Leisure time (Travel, vacations, TV, separate and joint recreational pursuits.)

g. Money (Handling the checkbook, paying the bills, budgeting, dealing with credit, debt, and savings.)

h. Educational aspirations (How will the other's goals affect your life?)

i. Sexuality (How do you want to express it?)

j. Problem solving (Will you talk? How will you handle disagreements? Are you agreed about whether or not to seek a counselor's help to resolve conflicts?)

k. Personal appearance and habits (what procedures will you pursue to maintain relationships here?)

While you're engaged, don't get so caught up in the wedding that you forget about the marriage. A wedding ceremony is only the beginning of a marriage. It is a one-day event; the marriage lasts a lifetime.

HOW TO
Key text:
Amos 3:3

1. *Adventist Home*, p. 71.

Saturday Night in Toledo, Ohio

by Greg Brothers

OPINION

Key text:
1 Corinthians
7:32-35

"I could marry any woman that I please. Unfortunately, I don't please any of them."—Leonard Solonuiik

Take this simple test:

On Saturday nights I usually

A. Spend an exciting and glamor-filled evening out on the town with a friend.

B. Get together with friends at home and make popcorn.

C. Wonder why there's nothing to watch on TV.

If you answered "A" to the above question, you probably like the color orange and know how to pronounce words like "ciao" and "Porsche." You also don't need to read this article.

If you answered "B" to the above question, you probably voted for Jimmy Carter in the 1980 presidential election. You are a secret wearer of bib overalls and do not need this article either.

If you answered "C," your social life is a lot like mine. Keep reading.

At the time in life when many of our friends are trying their wings as social butterflies, some of us seem to be stuck as caterpillars. There are as many reasons for this as there are soloists. Some of us lack the time, money, need or nerve to ask someone out; some of us never get asked out. Some of us are waiting for that "special someone" and some of us are still recovering from the last "not so special someone." Then there are those of us that have the rare good luck to live in a place like Plentywood, Montana—a place where the living is easy and the social life is non-existent.

Whatever the reason and whatever the duration, lack of a social life can be either a disaster or an opportunity.

Let's look at the disaster side of the coin. While it hasn't yet been proven to cause cancer, going it alone can bring a host of other problems in its train, such as a crippled self-image, lowered standards and selfishness.

Among Americans (including American Adventists) it's important to be popular. Being single is for bookworms named Mortimer Snerd and crazy old ladies that raise cats and geraniums. If you're in college and not dating, or out of college and not married, you're automatically labeled with the Scarlet Letter "L" (for "Loser"). Every wedding announcement carries the unwritten message that "we got our act together—what happened to you?"

I'm exaggerating of course. But the fact is that with parents, church and Madison Avenue all echoing God's remark that "it is not well for man to live alone," you can expect your self-image to take a few blows. The reason is that we too often value ourselves only as much as others value us. "Look!" we say, "I must be worth something! After all, he (she) thinks so!"

Learn to have a true appreciation of your own worth. Learn what value God places upon you. People who seek self worth, status and security in their relationships (rather than from God) will find only a hollow shell. Learn to think of yourself as important—not because you're dating the prettiest girl in three counties—but because God thinks you're important.

**Every wedding
announcement
carries the
unwritten
message that
"we got our
act together—
what happened
to you?"**

Sometimes, out of loneliness, a desire for security or sheer boredom, the easiest step seems to be to lower the standards. "Sure they're dumb/non-Adventist/boring/32 years older than me/not a Bruce Cockburn fan—but they're all I've got!" To put it crudely, if you've been fasting for a month, even a garbage can looks good.

I'm not saying that some people don't set unrealistic standards and I'm not endorsing the "checklist" method of dating. ("Let's see now—we'll give her a "7" on table manners, a "9" on conversational ability. . . .") Nor do I have any simple answers—after all, one man's flexibility is another man's lowered standards. Let me suggest a few questions to ask yourself though: Am I dating this person because I *need* to or because I *want* to? Does my relationship with this person lead me closer to God? Am I proud of this person?

Another hazard of being single can be selfishness. I can arrange the furniture the way I want, keep the hours I want, eat what and when I want, listen to what I want, spend my spare time the way I want, make only those commitments I want. I need not consider the wants or desires of anyone else. My "rough edges" are my own—to be kept or smoothed away as I choose.

Anyone who's made any sort of commitment to another person (be it going steady or getting married) doesn't have this freedom to be selfish. So long as that commitment holds they have a constant incentive to be altruistic. Survival of their relationship depends upon each considering the demands of the other. Those demands are just an echo for me. I have only my conscience to keep me from becoming self-centered.

Fortunately, the same things that can lead to selfishness can also be the greatest guard against it.

If you're living alone, you probably have more spare cash and undoubtedly have more spare time than you would if you were married or going steady. You can take these resources and spend them on yourself, thus building a nice safe, velvet-lined rut. Or you can spend them on others.

Most churches desperately need help with their children's Sabbath Schools, Pathfinder clubs, Emergency Service Centers, and cooking schools. Then there are Big Brothers, Big Sisters, emergency hotlines, Scouts, nursing homes, crisis centers and Red Cross blood drives in abundance. Instead of sitting around feeling sorry for yourself, help someone else whose sitting around, feeling sorry for himself. You will never have more time or money to help others than you do now.

While you're helping others, it wouldn't hurt if you helped yourself as well. Try out for a position on the school paper or take a class at the YWCA. Learn to read the New Testament in the original Greek (check with Home Study) or how to cook with a wok. It's too easy to sit around and mope when you're single—a camera or a calligrapher's pen can prevent the Sunday afternoon blahs from settling in.

While you're brushing the cobwebs out of your life, you might try dusting off your Bible as well. God says that He can be closer to us than any friend and that with His friendship we will *need* no other.

It's too easy to sit around and mope when you're single—a camera or a calligrapher's pen can prevent the Sunday afternoon blahs from settling in.

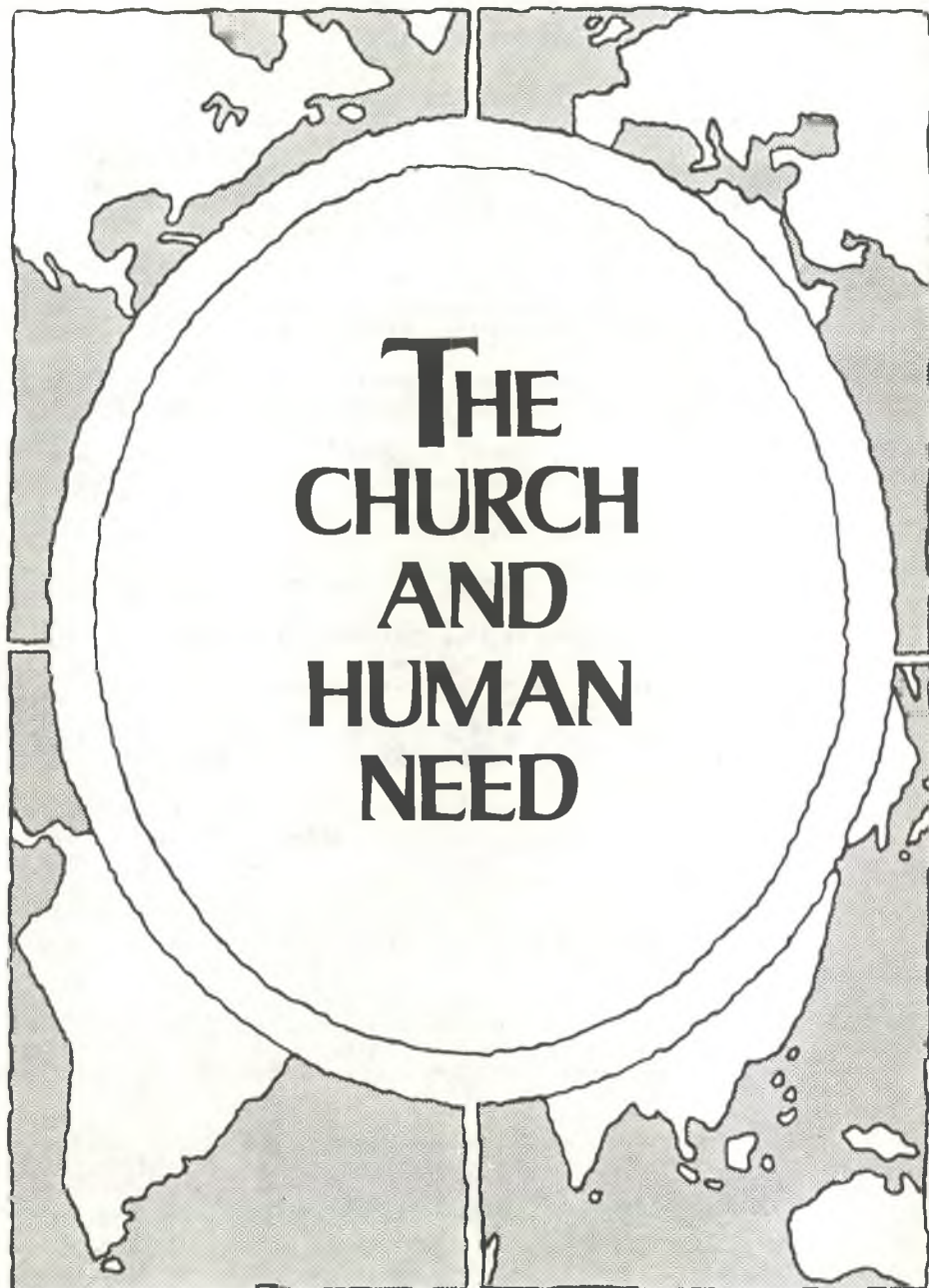
Take Him at His word—take some of that spare time of yours and try Him out. He's helped me.

No article about living the lonely life is complete without at least mentioning Adventist Contact. I've had friends try it who are now happily married; I've had friends try it who are still unhappily single. It only introduces people and it seems to work as well as any other means of introducing people. You get out of it what you put into it.

Living without a partner doesn't need to be a disaster. Learn to like yourself; learn to help others, learn to live with God. Married, engaged, dating or solo, the same God would both bless you and make you a blessing.

REACT
Lesson 9

1. What is unique about a Christian marriage? How does a Christian marriage differ from a "good" non-Christian marriage? Compare your ideas with those in the Introduction. Arrange your responses in priority positions to indicate which ingredients you think are most/least important.
 2. Discuss the four "disbeliefs" stated by Lewis Bird in the Evidence article. Do you agree or disagree with him? Why or why not?
 3. Examine the fruits/functions of the Spirit as described below. Cite specific marriage situations where such fruits would enhance the relationships.
 - a. Love heals
 - b. Joy awakens
 - c. Peace tranquilizes
 - d. Patience persists
 - e. Kindness serves
 - f. Goodness stabilizes
 - g. Faithfulness heartens
 - h. Gentleness supports.
 - i. Self-control balances competing allegiances
 4. Discuss the advantages of being single, particularly as they relate to the Christian experience. What is your reaction to Greg Brothers' comments (Opinion) on making the most of singleness? Apply his suggestions to your own setting.
 5. Are there ways in which the church can minister more effectively to single young adults? Give specific suggestions.
-



"Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."—Matthew 10:8, NIV

Lesson 10, August 29-September 4

Blessed Are the Poor?

by Mary DeLapp

INTRO- DUCTION

About fifteen years ago I was asked to serve our church as a part-time Christian education interim director. For part of our church school program at Thanksgiving and Christmas, we collected food, took baskets to poor families, then rested on our laurels until the next holiday season. For some reason, one woman remembered me several years after my Christian education duties had come to an end, and so Jean Haley came to me for help.

Joe was ailing and drinking. At times he doubled with pain, but the source of the trouble was obscure. He couldn't work much; the family was getting food and fuel from welfare. There was little money and Joe was ugly, "not gonna be pushed around by welfare." He frequently beat Jean until she had black and blue bruises. Eight persons were crowded into the small, broken-down house.

The dirty living-room rug, the cracked window, the faded-yellow slipcover on the davenport, the shred of toweling used for the baby's diaper, the array of cheap plaster objects on the table, every piece of furniture salvaged from the dump—this was home.

Jean said, "I been thinking about going to church and getting the kids started in Sunday School. Maybe that would straighten Joe out. Me and Rebecca went once before when Joe was drinking and he stopped. Everything was better while he was going. I don't know why, but it was."

Driving home, I tried to see Joe in my church wearing a hand-me-down suit, holding a hymnbook with his long fingers

blue-black clear back to his hand because he hadn't been able to scrub the grease off. When he smiled at his neighbor in the pew he would hold his head down trying to hide his missing teeth. And Jean, with out-of-date clothes, nervous, tense, afraid of doing the wrong thing. Both of them feeling the eyes, curious eyes, searching eyes, critical eyes—and worst of all, pitying eyes. Eyes. Eyes. Church eyes.

We could get the Haleys Sunday clothes. We could get their teeth fixed. But what could they say to each other, the poor trash hauler and the other people in the pews? "I see you've changed brands, Doctor. Do you think White Horse is just a shade smoother than Seagram's V.O.? That sure was a pretty green vase your wife throwed out last week. I patched it so's you can hardly tell."

As I discussed the situation with my minister, he said, "We have a class structure of talent, ability and education in this church and it unintentionally freezes other people out." It was a bitter truth to face that though my God was love, my church was selective.

It is nine years now since my first intensive association with the Haley family. I visit them several times a year. The only visible difference in the one-acre plot is that, instead of two or three derelict cars around, the place is choked with them. The only contact the Haleys have with churches is at rummage-sale time when Jean collects the clothes that didn't sell. The churches just don't seem to have a place for people like the Haleys.

Excerpted from
"Blessed are the Poor?"
Christian Herald (October, 1969), pp. 46, 47.

☐ August 29
Sunday

A Call to Compassion

by editors

LOGOS

One of the most prominent themes in Scripture is that God has a special concern for the poor and oppressed of the world. And those who are truly His people will tangibly express that concern.

One of the most striking words that the gospel writers use to describe Jesus' attitude toward human beings is compassion. "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harrassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:30, NIV). Because Jesus had compassion, He acted, He taught, He befriended, He healed, and finally, He went to the cross. If our faith is genuine, it will be the same with us, James informs us (James 2: 14-17).

God's concern for the poor is very strongly reflected in the laws He gave to Israel. The jubilee laws contained explicit provisions for social justice—freeing of slaves, redistribution of capital and the reversion of property to the family of the original owner (Leviticus 25). God summed up Israel's responsibility to the poor this way: "There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land" (Deut. 15:11, NIV).

Jesus' announcement of His messianic mission in the synagogue at Nazareth was couched in terms of ministry to the poor and oppressed. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18, 19, NIV).

Though Christians have almost universally recognized (though not always acted on) the need to help *individuals* in need, there is sometimes hesitancy to work change for the corporate structures of society which oppress the poor. But the biblical prophets were not in the least reticent about calling for judicial and political reform. Amos was particularly forceful. "You trample on the poor and force him to give you grain. . . . You oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts. . . . Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts" (Amos 5:11-15, NIV).

Biblical people, participating in God's compassion for those in need, will be emphatically on the side of justice and mercy for the oppressed and downtrodden.

D.F.M.

by William Loveless

At the Lord's Table

"He delights to take apparently hopeless material, those through whom Satan has worked, and make them the subjects of His grace. . . . Tell them there is healing, cleansing for every soul. There is a place for them at the Lord's table. He is waiting to bid them welcome."¹

Wonderful pictures of a hospitable Lord! But are we also waiting to bid them welcome?

Where is the Lord's table? Off in the sky? In New York City? In our home church? Nestled in our comfortable college setting?

What is the Lord's table? Is it walnut, maple, pine, metal, or logs?

What is on the table? Rice? Veja-links? Artichoke hearts?

Luke 14 tells us the story of the invitation to a great gospel feast. Now *gospel* suggests different things to different people. For some, it is the sound of "Power in the Blood" or "Shall We Gather at the River?" For others, it would sound more like "O, Sacred Head Now Wounded" or "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

Which is more appropriately "gospel" in your mind? You already have made a choice—or someone else did it for you. Your mother and your father nurtured you in an environment that is likely to be known as *the middle class*. It offers certain settings, foods, and pursuits where you feel comfortable.

The very specific provisions for feasts in the Israelite economy reached across the familiar setting, foods and pursuits to the aliens, servants, fatherless, widowed, and to all "other class/other culture" people (Deut. 14:29). At their celebrative gatherings, the people learned the joy of true hospitality. Throughout the year they were to care for the bereaved and poor.²

When Christ introduced the story of the great supper, He represented "the blessings offered through the gospel. The provision is nothing less than Christ Himself."³ But in order to accept the invitation to the gospel feast, the guests had to subordinate worldly interests to the one purpose of receiving Christ and His righteousness. Guests concerned about real estate, commerce, and social relations didn't respond.

In the parable, "the host turned from those who despised his bounty and invited a class who were not full, who were not in possession of houses and lands."⁴ He invited the lower classes. Problems of class were very real to Christ's listeners. The Jews commonly believed that persons suffering either financially or physically were in ill favor with God, and thus they often neglected these classes.

How shall the middle class reach the upper and lower classes of society? "In the command to go into the highways and hedges, Christ sets forth the work of all whom He calls to minister in His name. . . . To a great degree this must be accomplished by personal labor. This was Christ's method. His work was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience."⁵

"Those who stand high in the world for their education, wealth or calling, are seldom addressed personally in regard to the interests of the soul. . . . Many would receive help if the Lord's workers would approach them personally, with a kind manner, a heart made tender by the love of Christ."⁶

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Luke 14:15-24

Christ had faithful regard for the one-soul audience.

1. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 234.
2. See *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 220, and *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 530-542.
3. *Christ's Object Lesson*, p. 222.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 226.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 230, 231.

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☐ August 31
Tuesday

The Church and Its Remnant

by Barry Casey

EVIDENCE

Key texts:
Matthew 5:14;
John 17:23;
Luke 4:18, 19

A remnant within the remnant must arise

private greed becomes economic exploitation . . . individual anger is projected into the national defense budget.

Martin Luther King, Jr., once remarked that the church has become a thermometer rather than a thermostat, because it registers the climate around it instead of changing it. The image of the Christian church as an agent of social change has been a recurrent theme throughout its history, despite centuries in which the church was content to uphold the status quo and go quietly about its business of speaking to itself. Recently, however, new voices from the Third World are calling the church back to its prophetic role as "the reflectively Christified portion of the world."¹

Robert McAfee Brown, a contemporary Protestant theologian, uses the image of a "remnant" for the church acting in the world. While asserting that the church itself is a remnant within society, Brown wryly observes that a "remnant within the remnant" must arise which is concerned with liberation and the gospel. "Those who embrace the remnant image today will lead apparently split lives. They will have one foot in the institution with all its complacency in the face of evil and all its complicity in the ongoingness of evil, but they will have the other foot somewhere else—in various *ad hoc* groups that transcend denominational, ecclesiastical, racial, class, and even faith lines, groups dedicated to this or that aspect of the liberation struggle."²

Part of the prophetic role which "the remnant within the remnant" plays in society is to point out the sinful structures that support oppression. Sin is never found in the abstract. It is not merely an idea or a concept. It takes form in concrete situations within our lives, it has the force of decisions and motives behind it. It alienates, it separates, it destroys. As Gustavo Gutierrez notes, "An unjust situation does not happen by chance; it is not something branded by a fatal destiny: there is human responsibility behind it."³ The private, individual sins which we cherish in secret tend to get solidified and concentrated when brought into the public sphere of institutions. Thus, our private greed becomes economic exploitation of countries and peoples, individual anger is projected and legislated into the national defense budget, secret fears become foreign policy.

To be such a "remnant within the remnant" will demand much of Christians, particularly of Seventh-day Adventist Christians. Our instinct for many years has been to avoid confrontation with political issues, unless they directly impinged upon our own interests. But that is the point—we *already* are involved in political issues by the very fact that functioning humans are political creatures. It is not a question of deciding whether or not to be involved, but rather deciding which side we will come down on as individuals and as a church. The Gospel is directed to the victims of racial, sexual, political, economic, and spiritual oppression. In such a world neutrality (if that is even possible) on such sensitive issues is a virtual vote in favor of maintaining the status quo of these vicious circles of oppression.

The Gospel continually calls us to conversion, to a "turning around" of our commitments, priorities, and vision. In other words, we are called to be converted *from* the alienation of sin to the redemption of the world in Christ, redemption which begins within the world, for where Christ is the Christian is called to follow.

1. Gustavo Gutierrez, S. J., *A Theology of Liberation*, tr. and ed. by Sister Caridad India and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1973), p. 261.
2. Robert McAfee Brown, *Theology in a New Key*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), p. 159.
3. *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 175.

by Barry Casey

Working for Change

HOW TO

Key text:
Isaiah 55:1-11

Living out the gospel in our time means not only learning the way of the cross, but also learning how to become politically wise. Since change begins in the heart and is worked out in society, the Christian must cultivate the ability to articulate his or her concerns, and to be willing to work them out within society in the most effective way. Here are a few suggestions:

1. **Conscientization.** This is a term introduced to North American and European theology by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. It refers to rejecting the oppressive consciousness we've lived under, becoming aware of our situation, and finding a new language to express the new life. In Christian practice it might take shape as follows:

a) Read the Bible as a book of liberation announcing freedom from the alienation of sin and the oppressiveness of sinful structures in society.

b) Pray for repentance and conversion. Pray for freedom from prejudice and bigotry. Pray for compassion and hope. Pray for both the oppressed and the oppressor. Have the humility to honestly face your own fears about letting God work changes in your life.

c) Reorder the way you identify yourself. Most of us tend to identify ourselves as Adventists first, then Christians, then citizens, and finally, members of the human community. If we reverse this order we identify ourselves first with the largest possible group, the human community. Thus, our priorities of *concern* will move from the most inclusive category to the least inclusive, although our sphere of immediate *influence* begins with our own church community and reverses the order to the human community.

d) Listen to how language is used to either constrict or liberate. Are we unconsciously, as males, excluding 51 percent of the human race by our use of male-dominated language patterns? Do we realize that our thinking and world-view is shaped by our language, and that our perspective as middle-class North Americans is limited?

2. **Act within your own community.** The place to begin is in your own situation with those you live and work with. There is no liberation unless it begins in one's own concrete situation. We must ask ourselves what we can do to overcome our prejudices about people in our own immediate situation, before we can begin to critique others.

3. **Become politically responsible.** Know who your elected officials are and let them know what your position is on the issues by letter, telegram, or phone call. Learn the various groups around the nation which act as clearing-houses for information on social issues, such as Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC), the Alliance for Survival, and the Center for Environmental Education. If you feel you can support the purposes and goals of such groups learn how you can become effective politically in action with them.

4. **Vote!** It still can make a difference.

Welcome to the Middle Class

by William Loveless

OPINION

Key text:
Galatians 3:28

Welcome to the middle class! Is it so bad to belong to the middle class? Yes and no. No one would opt for complete social disorganization. So we move into groups made up of people having social characteristics, values, problems and ideologies roughly similar to our own. This tends to restrict many kinds of interaction with others outside the group.

What do students of human nature know about social class? How are people assigned to various classes? These factors impinge: occupation, source of income, home type, area lived in. These indices don't indicate a person's honesty, warmth, friendliness, industry, or commitment to others. Such factors don't really count in determining "class." A study of social class indicated that the key indicator is economics. As sociologist Lloyd Warner says, "It is believed that the fundamental structure of our society, that which ultimately controls and dominates the thinking and actions of our people, is economic, and that the most vital and far-reaching value systems which motivate Americans are to be ultimately traced to an economic order."¹

The scene becomes interesting when we examine the church in terms of social class. Class raises problems bearing on the nature of the church, and the manner and timing of its proclamation.

The mark of the primitive church was social inclusiveness—rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, slave and free. The purpose of the gospel was to break down the prestige structures of group consciousness and place all men in a loving relationship, especially within the fellowship (Gal. 3:28).

But the characteristic of the church today is social exclusiveness. The exclusive congregations of the major denominations advertise themselves as "friendly churches," and put a premium on the friendly handclasp and "something for everyone to do." Despite this warmth of sentiment, the typical congregation is a very homogeneous social and economic grouping.

Evangelism and congregational outreach studies suggest that converts are most often recruited by "contacts with friendly members." This appears to be a sound approach to Christian mission. But the majority of "friendly contacts" in metropolitan neighborhoods encounter people of similar social and economic position: association by achievement is the dominant principle of informal relations. Thus the lay ministry of the church tends to recruit like-minded people who will strengthen the social class nucleus of the congregation. Then we put these people to work and they "stay strong members." But activity itself has class meanings. The good church member is one who does things. To be successful, a middle-class person must perform adequately. To be a middle-class Christian is to perform well on the committee: (new-style salvation by works!) Under such social class inbreeding, the church is bound to turn in on itself and allow introversion to take over. The truly Christian church faces an immense challenge to span cultural/social lines and appeal.

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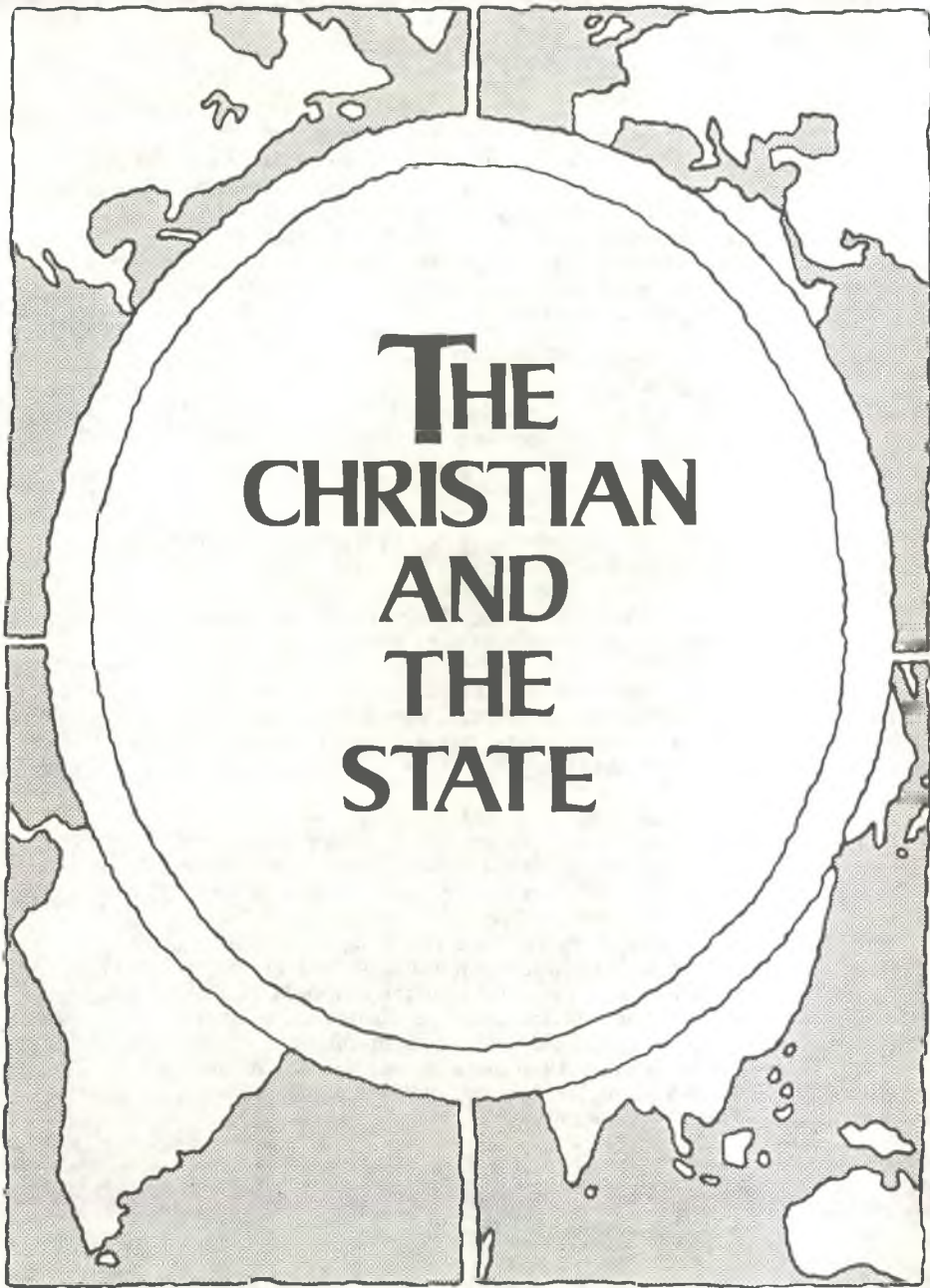
REACT
Lesson 10

1. The Haley's story (Introduction) raises the problem of social exclusiveness in the church. Do you agree with William Loveless' negative assessment of the current situation (Opinion)? Can anything be done to overcome social class barriers in the church? Be personal in your recommendations. For example, your solution might begin: "Here's what my church/I can do to integrate and interact with various social classes."

How would you rate the effectiveness of the following functions in breaking down social barriers?

Vacation Bible School	church music concert series
stop smoking clinics	seminars on stress management,
health screenings	budgeting, human relationships, child-rearing, etc.

2. List the social injustices in the world today which genuinely concern you. Prioritize your list, putting first those injustices which cause greatest concern. Prioritize your list again, naming those injustices which you can do something about (1) acting on your own, and (2) acting in cooperation with other groups.
3. Discuss Barry Casey's recommendations for social action (How To). Do you agree that we should identify ourselves first as members of the entire human community, rather than placing our Adventist identity first? Explain.
4. Every seventh year was to be a sabbatical year in ancient Israel. During that year the soil was to lie untilled—a conservationist's dream! The poor could harvest what grew spontaneously while property owners lived off the bounty of a specially-blessed sixth-year harvest. During the sabbatical year the people were released from the pressing labors of the field and enjoyed greater leisure, time for restoring physical powers, for meditation, prayer and instruction of their households (see *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 532). What relevance might the sabbatical year provisions for rest have for today? Are there ways of making times for meditation, prayer, instruction and leisure more attractive and worthwhile? What, if any, are the socio-economic implications of the sabbatical year for the modern Christian community?



"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."—Matthew 22:21, NIV

Lesson 11, September 5-11

Three Men— Two Kings

by Florence M. Winslow

This article deals with three men, the kings they served, and the rewards they received.

The first is Suger, Abbot of St. Denis. For him, church and state were inseparable, embodied in the person of the king. He was adviser and friend to Louis VI just when the French crown was beginning to gain that strength which would later culminate in the reign of Louis XIV.

Honored to the end, he died in office, having, according to his understanding, served both church and state as one entity.¹

The second is Thomas, Cardinal Wolsey, Chancellor to King Henry VIII of England. For many years, Wolsey labored assiduously in the King's interests, both at home and abroad; and English law is much more equitable because of some changes which he instituted. Henry's gratitude to his minister showed itself in the growth of the latter's power, which developed to an extent unequaled by that of any other English subject. But earthly rulers sometimes grow

impatient with even the most faithful servants. Wolsey fell when he failed to secure papal consent for Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Stripped of his powers, ill and dying, he uttered these words:²

"Had I but served my God as diligently as I have served my king, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs."³

The third is Sir Thomas More. He, too, loved and served the same King Henry VIII, accepting the office of chancellor after Wolsey. But to More, the Roman Church represented the embodiment of God on earth, and not even Henry could make him forswear his allegiance to it. In the face of the opposition of those closest to him, More refused to swear to the Oath of Supremacy, an act which would have indicated his acceptance of the king as Supreme Head of the Church. Accused of treason and found guilty, More paid the highest penalty, protesting as he mounted the scaffold, "that he died the King's good servant, but God's first."⁴

INTRO- DUCTION

1. Erwin Panofsky, tr. *Abbot Suger*, second ed. (Princeton, New Jersey, 1979).

2. "Wolsey." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th Edition.

3. Burton Stevenson, *Home Book of Quotations*. (New York, 1952).

4. R. W. Chambers, *Thomas More*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1958).

Florence M. Winslow is a lecturer in English and art appreciation at Oakwood College, having retired from full-time teaching after twenty-five years.

☐ September 5
Sunday

To Caesar and God

by editors

LOGOS

Today when we sing "crown Him Lord of all," it is rarely with the intention of expressing radical, inflammatory political sentiments. But for the early Christians to assert that "Jesus is Lord" was to directly challenge the claims of the Roman emperor. The Caesars were at least the highest human representative of the gods, and some claimed to be gods themselves. To be a Christian then was to be fundamentally at odds with the earthly powers of the day. If Jesus is Lord, Caesar is not. The N.T. counsels relating to government, given in that setting, contain principles applicable to the various political situations in which Christians find themselves.

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God" (Rom. 13:1, RSV). There have been at least three major ways of interpreting this controversial passage. One might be called the "positivistic" view. This view takes the statement that governmental authorities are from God very literally. Whatever powers exist are specifically ordained by God. The Hitlers, Amins, and Kaddafis of the world pose a problem for this view: Is God responsible for such dictators?

Secondly, there is the "normative" view. It says that it is not particular governments that are ordained by God but "the concept of proper government. As long as a given government lives up to a certain minimum set of requirements, then that government may properly claim the sanction of divine institution. If, however, a government fails adequately to fulfill the function divinely assigned to it, it loses its authority."¹ A weakness of this view is that Romans 13 was written in the context of the oppressive ancient Roman empire.

The third view could be termed "revolutionary subordination." In this view God is not responsible for the shape or identity of the "powers that be," rather he "orders them, brings them into line;" they are "used by God in his ordering of the cosmos."² What Paul, then, is calling for is not necessarily obedience but subordination. Christians may be compelled by conscience to disobey the state, but they do not become violent revolutionaries, they remain subordinate by accepting the penalty imposed by the state. Christians subject themselves to government because Jesus Himself became subordinate to earthly powers (Phil. 2:5-9), and in so doing He "revealed and achieved God's victory."³ This view could be faulted for relying on a questionable translation of the word rendered "instituted" in the RSV of Romans 13:1. Can it really be accurately interpreted "ordered"?

Since no interpretation of Romans 13 is without difficulties, it is important to keep in mind other N.T. passages bearing on the Christian's relationship to the state. Jesus' statement, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Luke 20:25, RSV) suggests that the Christian does owe respect and cooperation to the government. However, since his primary allegiance is to his heavenly citizenship (Phil. 3:20), the Christian "must obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29, RSV) if the dictates of the state are contrary to God's will.

But, though, like the early Christians, we may be called up to disobey for the sake of conscience, our attitude toward government should be characterized by peacemaking and intercessory prayer (1 Tim. 2:1).

D.F.M.

1. John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972), p. 201.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 203, 204.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

A Higher Law

TESTIMONY

Key text:

Matthew 10:17-20

"We have men placed over us for rulers, and laws to govern the people. Were it not for these laws, the condition of the world would be worse than it is now. Some of these laws are good, others are bad. The bad have been increasing, and we are yet to be brought into strait places. But God will sustain His people in being firm and living up to the principles of His word. When the laws of men conflict with the word and law of God, we are to obey the latter, whatever the consequences may be. The law of our land requiring us to deliver a slave to his master, we are not to obey; and we must abide the consequences of violating this law. The slave is not the property of any man. God is his rightful master, and man has no right to take God's workmanship into his hands, and claim him as his own."¹

"Now, as in former ages, the presentation of a truth that reproves the sins and error of the times, will excite opposition. . . . It is the same policy which has been pursued in all ages. Elijah was declared to be a troubler in Israel, Jeremiah a traitor, Paul a polluter of the temple. From that day to this, those who would be loyal to truth have been denounced as seditious, heretical, or schismatic. Multitudes who are too unbelieving to accept the sure word of prophecy, will receive with unquestioning credulity an accusation against those who dare to reprove fashionable sins. This spirit will increase more and more. And the Bible plainly teaches that a time is approaching when the laws of the state will so conflict with the law of God that whosoever would obey all the divine precepts must brave reproach and punishment as an evil-doer.

"In view of this, what is the duty of the messenger of truth? Shall he conclude that the truth ought not to be presented, since often its only effect is to arouse men to evade or resist its claims? No; he has no more reason for withholding the testimony of God's word, because it excites opposition, than had earlier reformers. The confession of faith made by saints and martyrs was recorded for the benefit of succeeding generations. Those living examples of holiness and steadfast integrity have come down to inspire courage in those who are now called to stand as witnesses for God. They received grace and truth, not for themselves alone, but that, through them, the knowledge of God might enlighten the earth. Has God given light to His servants in this generation? Then they should let it shine forth to the world."²

a time is approaching when the laws of the state will so conflict with the law of God that whosoever would obey all the divine precepts must brave punishment

1. *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 201, 202.
2. *The Great Controversy*, pp. 458, 459.

The Church and the Powers

by Hendrik Berkhof

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Ephesians 3:10;
6:10-18

Editor's note: Dutch theologian Hendrik Berkhof understands the "Powers" in Paul's writing (see key texts for today) as the fallen structures of society such as the state, the economic system, prevailing societal norms, etc. He comments below on what the church's stance should be in relationship to the "Powers" in view of the fact that they have been unmasked and stripped of their coercive force by Christ.

This is what the church announces to the Powers. The very existence of the church, in which Gentiles and Jews, who heretofore walked according to the *stoicheia* [basic principles] of the world, live together in Christ's fellowship, is itself a proclamation, a sign, a token to the Powers that their unbroken dominion has come to an end. . . . It is a sign of the end time, of their incipient encirclement and their imminent defeat.

. . . All resistance and every attack against the gods of this age will be unfruitful, unless the church herself *is* resistance and attack, unless she demonstrates in her life and fellowship how men can live freed from the Powers. We can only preach the manifold wisdom of God to Mammon if our life displays that we are joyfully freed from his clutches. To reject nationalism we must begin by no longer recognizing in our own bosoms any difference between peoples. We shall only resist social injustice and the disintegration of community if justice and mercy prevail in our own common life and social differences have lost their power to divide. Clairvoyant and warning words and deeds aimed at state or nation are meaningful only in so far as they spring from a church whose inner life is itself her proclamation of God's manifold wisdom to the "Powers in the air."

This is not to say that Paul is ignorant of a more direct encounter between the faithful and the Powers. Ephesians 6:10-18 proves the contrary. The believer strives ultimately not against tangible men and objects ("flesh and blood," verse 12), but against the Powers they obey. This war with the Powers must be waged seriously. A man must arm himself for it. The arms named (truth, righteousness, the readiness of the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God) show that Paul is not contemplating an offensive against the Powers. Though surely the believer must assure his defense against them, he can do this only by standing, simply, by his faith. He is not called to do more than he can do by simply believing. His duty is not to bring the Powers to their knees. This is Jesus Christ's own task. He has taken care of this thus far and will continue to do so.

We are responsible for the defense, just because He takes care of the offense. Ours it is to hold the Powers, their seduction and their enslavement, at a distance, "to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (verse 11, cf. 13). The figurative allusion to weapons points to this defensive role. Girdle, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet, and sword are all defensive arms. Lance, spear, bow, and arrow are not named. They are not needed; these are the weapons Christ Himself bears. Our weapon is to stay close by Him and thus to remain out of the reach of the drawing power of the Powers.

**We are
responsible
for the
defense,
because
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the offense**

Hendrik Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers*, John H. Yoder, trans. (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1962), pp. 51, 52.

☐ September 8
Wednesday

The Christian and the State

by Emmanuel Saunders

HOW TO

Key text:
Matthew 22:21

Having reflected on the Christian responsibilities to the state, we should have little doubt in our minds that the Christian is to "render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). In a letter to Timothy, Paul exhorts the Christian to pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority. . ." (1 Tim. 2:2). Again and again the Bible admonishes us to support our governments. But the potential for conflict is always there, so the following should be kept in mind.

1. Don't sacrifice principle for expediency. After Jesus answered the Pharisees' question about paying taxes, He had little reason to expound further on the Christian's duty to the state. His Judaic detractors were so overwhelmed with the comprehensiveness of His answer that they immediately "left Him and went their way" (Matt. 22:22). However, Peter was unequivocal in pointing out the Christian's duty towards God and Caesar. "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29, NIV). Ellen White wrote that "the law of God . . . demands obedience and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts."¹ Thus, the Christian should never sacrifice the principles of God on the altar of political expediency.

Political philosophers like John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau helped to crystalize the concept of a higher law. Such a law, they contended, was fundamental to freedom of conscience. This concept of higher law underscored the righteousness of rebellion against despotic rule in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Only recently, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. exemplified these principles of "higher law" in his fight for justice and equality against what he considered the oppressive laws of the state.

2. Be prepared to suffer the consequences. No one should delude himself with the feeling that because he stands up for principles, he will automatically be granted special miracles. The experience of the numberless martyrs in Christian history shatters this delusion. When Daniel's three companions made their courageous decision to disobey the king, their lives were spared in a remarkable way. But it does not necessarily follow that our "fiery furnace" experience would end in a miraculous deliverance like that of the three Hebrew boys, for "all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:15). Paul knew this experientially; for him the path of suffering culminated in a martyr's death.

3. Don't unnecessarily invite persecution. Although Christians are to expect persecution, we are not to be bigots. Instead, we are to "be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16). Some tests may come in disguised forms like ecumenical movements or identifying with "apostate Protestantism" to legislate morality. By rejecting these groups and ideas, we could easily be ostracized for compromising on political issues. Whatever the test, we must obey God rather than "Caesar."

Beware of Beast!

by editors

OPINION

Key text:
Revelation 13

Those who would be loyal to truth have been denounced as seditious, heretical, or schismatic (*Great Controversy*, pp. 458, 459).

"They brought in crow-bars, spades, tongs, axes, pincers, saws, mine-detectors, metal hoists, probes, powerful lights, cameras, fire-arms, walkie-talkie radios, motors . . . in a word, it was as if a bomb had gone off. . . ."

"This whole act of banditry, carried out by insolently shameless KGB men, went on for four days.

"The search warrant stated that 'the residence of V. F. Shelkova may contain stores of manuscripts, libellous literatures, . . .'

"As for libellous literature, for confiscation of which the warrant was made out, we have never had any. The confiscated literature was purely religious in content. . . ."

A time is approaching when the laws of the state will so conflict with the law of God that whosoever would obey all the divine precepts must brave reproach and punishment as an evil-doer (*Great Controversy*, p. 459). Sure. But that won't be until the time of trouble. Really? Ask Dina, the recipient of the KGB visit described above. Ask her father, Vladimir A. Shelkov (if he were still alive). He spent 24 of his 84 years in Soviet labor camps and finally died in one. Why? Because as leader of the True and Free Seventh-day Adventists, he dared to "stand in defense of unpopular truth."² Truth like Sabbath observance and religious liberty.³

Adventists have used the books of Daniel and Revelation to make sense out of history, both past and future. Whatever the validity of this use may be, something is clearly wrong when we become so certain about the future that we ignore the significance of the present. If we continue to sleep through current events because we can't place them on our prophetic charts we may be rudely awakened one day by a blaze of glory that melts the elements with fervent heat—and we weren't even aware that things were warming up!

What has this to do with our relationship to government? It means that we will be aware of the malevolent dragon that lies within even the most lamb-like of governments (Rev. 13:11). It means that wherever the dragon may lift one of his hideous heads (Soviet Union, Iran, Cuba, El Salvador, United States, wherever), we will be sensitive enough to perceive and courageous enough to speak out against the oppression.

To live up to our calling as a prophetic movement, we must, as Jonathan Butler has commented, "lament today's torment, today's tyranny and persecution, not yesterday's. . . . It is the raging beasts of this present world that the believer needs slain by the Lamb of God. It is this desperate moment that he desires transformed into the brilliant millenium of a new heaven and a new earth."⁴

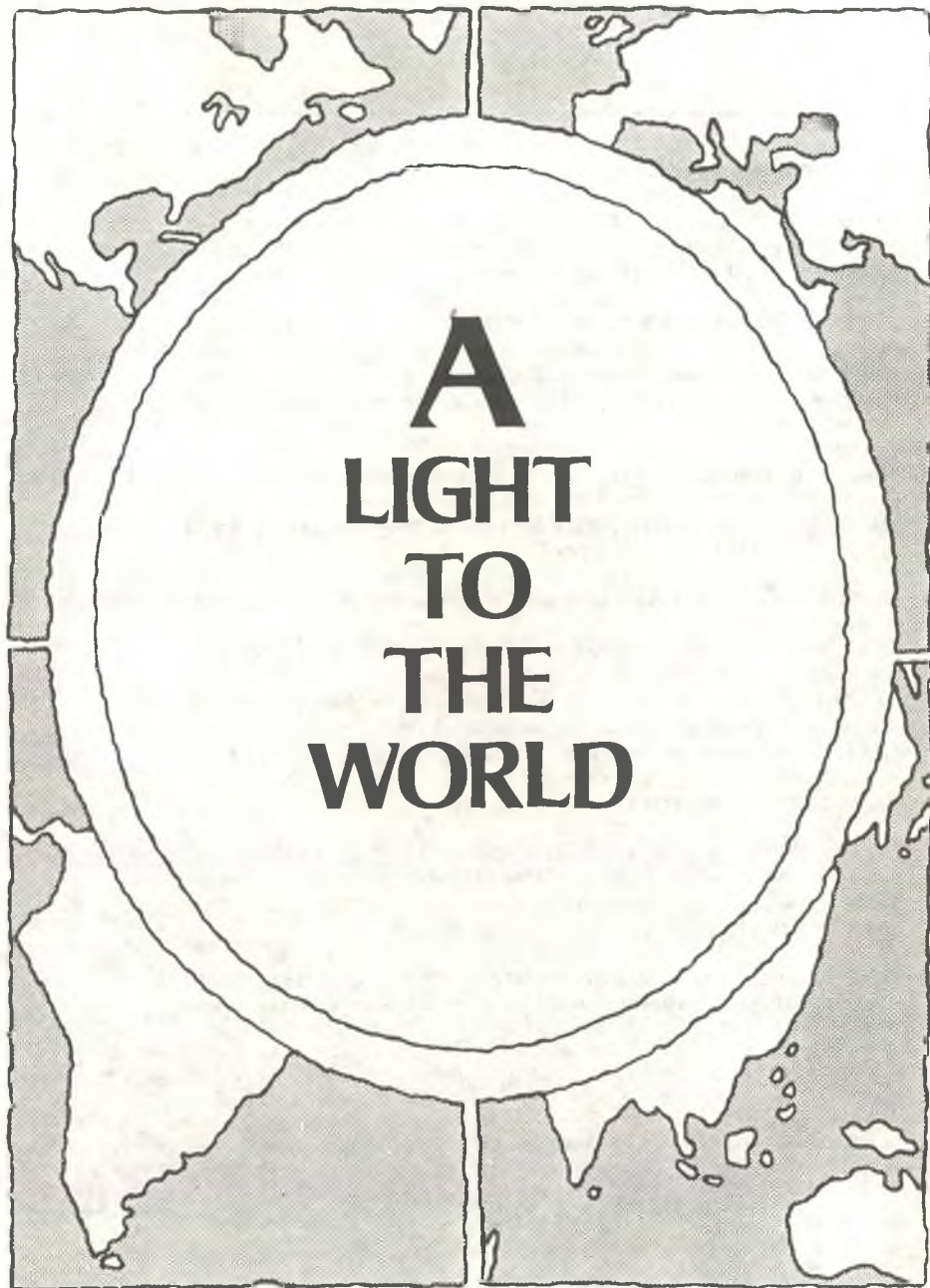
D.F.M.

Something is wrong when we become so certain about the future that we ignore the significance of the present

1. "Shelkov's Daughter Protests: An Open Letter to Brezhnev," *Spectrum*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 33-37.
2. *Great Controversy*, p. 458.
3. Marite Sapiets, "Shelkov and the True and Free Adventists," *Spectrum*, vol. 11, no. 4, p. 30.
4. Jonathan Butler, "When Prophecy Fails: The Validity of Apocalypticism," *Spectrum*, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 14.

1. What lessons do you derive from the three historical figures discussed in the Introduction?
2. Discuss the various interpretations of Romans 13:1-7 referred to in the Logos article. Which interpretation do you think is best? Or, can you suggest a different one? Explain your answer.
3. It seems clear from Scripture and Ellen White that we are to disobey the state if it commands us to do something contrary to the will of God? But does this exhaust our duty in regard to the state, or are we called to take an active role in opposing injustice and oppression?
4. Share your reaction to Berkhof's discussion of the "Powers" (Evidence). What do you think he means when he says that Christ takes care of the offense, we take care of the defense? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
5. Discuss the pros and cons of the following activities from a Christian perspective:
 - a) withholding taxes used for purposes perceived to be unjust or unchristian (such as nuclear armaments)
 - b) participation in demonstrations and petition drives opposing unjust or immoral governmental actions
 - c) involvement in groups promoting human rights among the governments of the world (such as Amnesty International)
 - d) involvement in party politics
6. Do you think the apocalyptic symbols of Daniel and Revelation, which we have traditionally applied to an end-time crisis centering around the Sabbath issue, have any bearing on the way we understand and relate to human governments today?

What can be done to aid Adventists (and others) outside North America who are experiencing time-of-trouble-style persecution right now?



"I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles."—Isaiah 42:6, NIV

Lesson 12, September 12-18

Caught Between Two Nights

by Ove Berntsen

In order to draw the world to Himself, God not only gave individuals the corrective of conscience and the incitement of good dreams. He also brought into being a special people, so that the earth itself might be filled with "the knowledge of the Lord"; a holy nation, through whom all the peoples of the world should be blessed.

Israel was to glorify God (Isa. 49:3), to be His witnesses (Isa. 43:10), to reveal to men the principles of His kingdom. All would then recognize that this people stood in a special relationship to the God of heaven. People after people would be joined to the house of Jacob. The temple would be called "a house of prayer for all nations" (Isa. 56:7). And eventually Jerusalem would be known as "the Throne of the Lord" (Jer. 3:17). Thus Israel would "bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit" (Isa. 27:6).

Reading these promises, it seems as though God's imagination is running wild. Israel never became what God intended—"a light for the Gentiles." Failure followed failure in their sad history. And in the Servant songs of Isaiah we can already discern an individual beginning to stand out from the mass of Israel, who in some mysterious way is the essence of the covenant.

"A light for the Gentiles" was one of the earliest designations of Jesus (Luke 2:32). He passed over the same ground as the old Israel and undid the results of their failure. He was the only true Israelite. At the cross God's election and the remnant met in Jesus. He was the final result of what God had started with

Abraham and expanded at Sinai. He was at last the only One who could fill this unique position. All the law and the prophets were gathered up in one man, "the man for others." He was truly "the light of the world" (John 8:12).

And, "a light for Gentiles" was also one of the formative titles of Christ's followers (Acts 13:47). To this point, the focus of God's election had been narrowed down to one Man, now it is dramatically expanded—to all who believe. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). Christ is ultimately God's Servant, but all believers are to share in the liberation of the blind.

One stormy night, a father was awakened by his little son, who was weeping. He asked what was wrong. "It is so dark, and I am afraid," the boy answered. But instead of switching on the light, the father stretched out and clasped his son's hand. Soon the boy became quiet. "Is it better?" the father asked. "Yes," he whispered, "it is not so dark any longer."

Those who have felt the warmth of a Father's hand, whose life has been illuminated by a different light, a light that comes from One who Himself went through the darkest hour of human experience, are called to share this light with others. We cannot expel, but we can penetrate the darkness of the world, a world "caught between two nights, blindness and death."¹

INTRO- DUCTION

1. Dylan Thomas, "Elegy," in *Collected Poems 1934-1952* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1956), p. 180.

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☐ September 12
Sunday

The World's True Light

by editors

LOGOS

The contrast of light and darkness is a vivid biblical metaphor that is pertinent to the Christian's life in the world. Light is associated with salvation (Ps. 27:1), goodness, righteousness, truth (Eph. 5:9), and life (John 8:12). Darkness represents the opposite of all these things. In the writings of John, particularly, the struggle between good and evil in the world is pictured in terms of light vs. darkness. Light in the fullest sense, is God Himself—"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you; God is light; in him there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5, NIV).

The light of God is "unapproachable" to mortals (1 Tim. 6:16). But in Jesus Christ, the light of God was beamed into the world. The illumination from the Word made flesh dispels darkness without blinding human eyes. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12, NIV).

The world apart from God is enshrouded in thick darkness (Isa. 60:13). But through Isaiah, God promised a "light for the Gentiles" (Isa. 49:6), making it possible for all those in darkness to "come out" and "be free" (Isa. 49:9). Luke records the New Testament affirmation that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the liberating light (Luke 2:32). The darkness of error, lostness, enslavement and death is dispelled for all those who respond to Jesus Christ. Those who do receive Jesus become reflectors of the true light. "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matt. 5:14, NIV). Through their uninhibited faithfulness to biblical values and lifestyle, Christians shed light on the world they inhabit. In proclaiming the good news about the light of the world, the Christian community itself becomes a "light to the Gentiles" bringing "salvation to the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47, NIV). Distinct from the world to preserve the brilliance of their light, Christians penetrate the world with the light that the captives of darkness may go free.

The ultimate purpose of the light shed by Christians is to reveal who God is so that men may glorify Him. Jesus said "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16, NIV). The first angel's message, proclaiming the everlasting gospel and the hour of God's judgment, brings light to the world just before the return of Christ. The purpose of this proclamation is that individuals "fear God and give him glory" (Rev. 14:7, NIV).

Paul challenges those who have received the light from God to put on that light as armor, particularly in view of the impending "day" of Christ's return. "The night is nearly over, the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Rom. 13:12-14, NIV).

D.F.M.

Children of Light

by Jonquil Hole

Come out into the sunshine!

"I was shown that God's people dwell too much under a cloud. It is not His will that they should live in unbelief. Jesus is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. His children are the children of light. They are renewed in His image, and are called out of darkness into His marvellous light. He is the light of the world, and so also are they that follow Him. They shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."¹

Generators or supply lines?

Writing from Cooranbong, Australia, in 1899, Ellen White counselled a Brother Morse that *no effort is needed to make the light shine*. One has only to come to God with a humble heart and receive His love, which will then shine forth with a simple, natural truth.²

People see light, they don't hear it.

On July 7, 1895, Mrs. White wrote to Edson and Emma White. After telling them about her daily activities, she added some counsel on light. She said that God would hold men accountable who had been given light and had refused to walk in it. The light we have received is not only to be preached, but to be lived, and this light is to shine to others through our good works, which are the fruit of our faith and life in Christ. This, she said, is the means God uses to communicate truth to unbelievers.³

New light for old?

In a general letter written in 1899, Ellen White wrote that we do not need increased light, but rather a surrender of the heart so that the light we already have may become the principle of action in our lives. New light will come only as God's children maintain a living relationship to the Source of light. "New light will ever be revealed on the word of God to him who is in living connection with the Son of Righteousness. Let no one come to the conclusion that there is no more truth to be revealed. The diligent, prayerful seeker for truth will find precious rays of light yet to shine forth from the word of God. Many gems are yet scattered that are to be gathered together to become the property of the remnant people of God. But light is not given simply to be a strength to the church, but to be shed upon those who are in darkness."⁴

Light house or house light?

From her home in Elmshaven, Mrs. White wrote in 1904 to W. W. Prescott, "In our work we are not to go onto a hilltop to shine. We are not told that we must make a special, wonderful display. The truth must be proclaimed in the highways and the byways, and this work is to be done by sensible, rational methods. The life of every worker, if he is under the training of the Lord Jesus Christ, will reveal the excellence of His life."⁵

TESTIMONY

Key text:
John 12:35, 36

**New light
will ever
be revealed
on the
word of
God to him
who is in
living
connection
with the
Son of
Righteousness**

1. *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 405, 406.
2. Letter 152: 1899. Emphasis ours.
3. Letter 88a: 1895.
4. Letter 201: 1899.
5. *Evangelism*, p. 396.

Glorifying Your Father

by Peter van Bemmelen

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Matthew 5:16

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in Heaven" (Matt. 5:16). It is very easy to misinterpret these words of Jesus as though He urges us to try very hard to do good works. The light of real Christian living is generated in an altogether different way. Through faith, the Christian believer maintains a vital connection with Christ day by day. Christ, then, works in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." As a result of this we will "shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:13, 15). William Barclay emphasizes two points concerning the lifestyle by which the Christian lets his light shine before men.

The tragedy of so much so-called goodness is that in it there is an element of hardness and coldness and austerity

"(i) Men are to see our *good* deeds. In Greek there are two words for *good*. There is the word *agathos* which simply defines a thing as good in quality; there is *kalos* which means that a thing is not only good, but that it is also winsome and beautiful and attractive. The word which is used here [Matt. 5:16] is *kalos*. The good deeds of the Christian must be not only *good*; they must be also *attractive*. The tragedy of so much so-called goodness is that in it there is an element of hardness and coldness and austerity. There is a goodness which attracts and a goodness which repels. There is a charm in the Christian goodness which makes it a lovely thing.

"(ii) It is further to be noted that our good deeds are meant to draw attention, not to ourselves, but to God. This saying of Jesus is a total prohibition of what someone has called 'theatrical goodness.' At a conference at which D. L. Moody was present, there were also present some young people who took their Christian faith seriously. One night they held an all night prayer meeting. As they were leaving it in the morning they met Moody, and he asked them what they had been doing. They told him; and then they went on: 'Mr. Moody, see how our faces shine.' Moody answered very gently: 'Moses wist not that his face shone.' The goodness which is conscious, which draws attention to itself, is not the Christian goodness.

"One of the old historians wrote of Henry the Fifth after the Battle of Agincourt: 'Neither would he suffer any ditties to be made and sung by the minstrels of his glorious victory, for that he would wholly have the praise and thanks altogether given to God.' The Christian never thinks of what he has done, but of what God had enabled him to do. He never seeks to draw the eyes of men to himself, but always to direct them to God. So long as men are thinking of praise, and thanks, the prestige which they will get for what they have done, they have not really even begun on the Christian way."¹

1. William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, vol. 1 (second edition), (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1958), pp. 121, 122.

by Albert Watson

Lights With Legs On

So what are we to say about all those "official" ways of being a light to the world? What are we to conclude about evangelistic campaigns, stop-smoking clinics, Voice of Prophecy broadcasts, Ingathering and magazine evangelism? Are we to conclude that all the methods for organized witnessing which the church uses are passé? Irrelevant? No longer effective or necessary? That would hardly be a valid conclusion.

Yet, it is also in the day-to-day life situation that everyone can be a light. A small light perhaps, but nonetheless a light in the places where we live and work.

1. Be a "light" to those who need physical help.

My wife, Maureen, one morning recently found herself on a crowded bus. As she rose from her seat to get off, several other passengers did the same. Just in front of her was a young woman carrying a baby. The bus lurched forward, throwing mother and baby into Maureen's arms. When the mother had gained her composure she was full of apologies. "Oh, please don't apologize. What a good thing I was here to save you from falling." The woman seemed assured by the sincere tone of Maureen's voice and ventured to ask a favor. "Would you mind holding my baby while I get the push-chair off the bus?" "Of course I will" my wife said, taking the baby from her mother.

As she stood there, baby in arms, Maureen heard a timid voice behind her. "Would you be kind enough to take us to Marks and Spencers?" Maureen found herself face to face with a blind couple. Blind people have sharp ears. They cannot look for the kindly face, so they listen for the kindly voice. No sooner had Maureen returned the baby to its mother's arms than she was off across the busy street to the chain store the blind couple wanted to find.

2. Be a "light" to those who need spiritual help.

Are we prepared simply to listen? More people than we think need a shoulder to cry on, a dumping ground for surplus sorrow, anxiety, and guilt. By listening, empathizing, reassuring, we can help those passing through a spiritual or emotional crisis.

3. Be a "light" without asking or expecting recognition.

A student was cycling home from college when a mechanical failure sent him tumbling over the handlebars of the bicycle. A passing motorist saw it happen and stopped. Seeing his badly cut face, she put him in her car, loaded his damaged cycle into her trunk and took him to the local hospital. She found his home telephone number and asked the casualty department to call his parents. And then she disappeared, refusing to give either her name or address. The point of this incident, of course, is that this lady was a total stranger, a modern Samaritan en route to Jericho, and not a Christian at all. Or was she?

All of us lead busy lives. We all have appointments to meet and schedules to fulfill. Yet, there still must be time to let the Christ-light of compassion shine. There are times when "persons helped" are more important than "Bible studies given" or "items of literature distributed."

HOW TO

Key text:

1 John 2:8-11

Shining In Splendid Isolation?

by Michael Pearson

OPINION
Key text:
Philippians
2:14-16

It was a drab evening in early spring. As I walked in through the back door my wife was sitting by the lounge window doing some tapestry work. "Switch the light on please, love," she asked. Now the light switches for our lounge, dining-room and kitchen are all together, and though we have lived in the house for six years, I still fail to flick the correct switch for the required light. I pressed the wrong one; the kitchen light came on. It did not throw much light on the tapestry; just a faint glow that did not help much. The light was not focused where the need was.

Similarly the church, the community of believers, is called to shed light where there is a need. Is it possible that we are letting our lights shine brightly in splendid isolation—away from where the need actually exists? Are we addressing ourselves to questions that people are actually asking? Are we meeting needs which people really experience? Does our concern for denominational identity sometimes blind us to people's felt and recognized needs?

It is significant that Christ's well-known words about light in the Sermon on the Mount, are preceded in Scripture by another figure of speech, "You are salt to the world" (Matt. 5:13, NEB). Salt has to be dissolved in the soup if it is to flavour it. A lump of salt in the soup is rather unpalatable. Is the Adventist presence in society well-distributed or do we as a group tend to be a little lump-like?

In the situation described above, my wife would have found an angle-poise lamp very useful. It could have been adjusted to cast light directly on the tapestry. Yet even a bright light located nearby can be more of a hindrance than a help. If it is at the wrong angle, it casts a shadow. The angle of our light to the world has also to be carefully adjusted.

Are we speaking, witnessing, shedding light, from the right perspective?

The witness of the community of believers has often been likened to a lighthouse. While clearly in some respects this is apt, in other ways it is misleading. First, a lighthouse must be distant from a ship if it is to be of help. However, the Christian community, if it is to be a light to people, cannot be a remote entity. And, secondly, a lighthouse alerts seamen to danger. While we anticipate a dramatic end to this earth's history, it is unfruitful for the Christian to be alarmist. It is instructive that Christ used the figure of light in a domestic context. The light was to help people about their normal chores in the house. The Christian testimony to the Gospel should be first and foremost that men can live the enlightened life in the normal routine, here and now.

We can be effective lights in the world only if our rays are directed on the everyday needs and concerns of modern individuals.

REACT
Lesson 12

1. To what extent is success in witnessing dependent on doctrinal correctness and a thorough knowledge of Biblical teachings? Which is more important—theological accuracy, or a loving spirit? Why? Think carefully about this one.
2. Does our concern for correctness, both moral and theological, sometimes make us insensitive to other people's needs? If so, how can we deal with this problem?
3. How important are correct motives in witnessing? Is it possible to be active in the church's outreach program for the wrong reason? Explain. Is it right to share kindness or witness about Christ to someone if we don't feel inclined to do so, if such action doesn't come spontaneously?
4. Is the "light" metaphor personally meaningful for your Christian experience? If so, share specific ways in which Christ is a light in your life.
5. Michael Pearson (Opinion) suggests that at times the light of the church's witness has either been too remote to be beneficial to those who need it, or it has been focused in the wrong direction. If this is so, how can we re-focus the light? How can we minister more effectively to contemporary society?



“By faith . . . he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”—Hebrews 11:9, 10, NIV

Lesson 13, September 19-25

Behold, I Make All Things New

by Harry Leonard

"Behold, I make all things new."

Nothing very startling about that. We're doing it all the time: new cars, new fashions, new detergents, new flavors, new college courses, even new-style Sabbath-school lessons. We thrive on the new and the advertisers know it.

Even *that* is new. Fifty years ago they stressed the oldness of their product: "makers of pure soap for seventy years," "the old and tried remedy" "just as grandma used to bake it."

But too often the new turns out to be the old in new clothes. The new car has different-shaped headlights, the new detergent has more (or fewer) blue specks in it, the new and improved cereal biscuit is simply a different shape (usually smaller).

New resolutions are not much better and even the new life of the Christian has some embarrassing moments as the old one keeps making a comeback.

"Behold, I make all things new."

And when *He* acts, things are never quite the same again. Things *really* are new.

So John portrays this newness as best he can, in pictures his generation would understand.

A holy city—the modern mind boggles at the apparent contradiction. But Jerusalem was the place where God met with his people and it was in the cities that the Christian faith had its early success.

A perfect city—hence the use of the number twelve, making the city a perfect cube, inhabited by a perfect number of people. The numbers are not to be taken literally, but they are to be taken seriously. We glimpse through them the perfection—the utter unspoiled newness—which is on its way and even now is in the making, a newness which will not disappoint or pall because it is always promising new pleasures and delights.

"Behold, I make *all* things new."

You, too?

INTRODUCTION

Key text:
Revelation 21:1-5

A World that is New

by editors

LOGOS

Though Christians are to love society and immerse themselves in service to it, they are never completely at home in this world. They feel the pull of something better. The great heroes of faith "did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance . . . they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one" (Heb. 11:13, 16, NIV).

The biblical hopes for a new world are all centered in the person of one dramatic figure—the Messiah. The prophet Daniel was informed that just before the completion of "seventy weeks of years" the Messiah would appear and "everlasting righteousness" would be established (Dan. 9:24-27). When "The time had fully come, God sent forth His Son" (Gal. 4:4, RSV) with the stunning announcement that "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15, RSV). With the appearance of Jesus the Messiah, the new world order, long hoped for, broke into the world in a very real sense.

"It lives at the very heart of the gospel message to affirm that the Kingdom of God has in a real sense become present fact, here and now. . . . The future tense of the Old Testament ('behold the days are coming,' and the like) has now become an emphatic present: 'The kingdom of God is at hand' (Mark 1:15). . . . No need any more to look wildly about for signs of the Kingdom's imminent coming: it is right here 'among you' (Luke 17:21). In the person and work of Jesus the Kingdom of God has intruded into the world."¹

Yet the final consummation of the Kingdom is yet future. It awaits the day when we "will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27, RSV). What must take place before that great day? "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14, NIV). But also, "that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God. . . ." But thankfully, the Lord Jesus will overthrow this diabolical power "by the splendor of his coming" (2 Thess. 2:3, 4, 8, NIV).

Judgment will be executed against those who participate in the rebellion against God when Christ returns. But those who know and love God can look forward to that day with joyful anticipation, for they will be taken to heaven to be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:16, 17, John 14:1-3). At the conclusion of 1,000 years (see Revelation 20), the New Jerusalem will descend from heaven and this world, finally will be transformed; truth, beauty, justice, peace and love will reign triumphant. God will dwell with His people and He "will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away" (Rev. 21:3, 4, NIV).

Is all this just wishful thinking? No. It is a "blessed hope" grounded firmly in the victory over sin and death already accomplished by Jesus Christ. As Oscar Cullman put it, our "hope of the final victory is so much the more vivid because of the unshakably firm conviction that the battle that decides the victory has already taken place."²

D.F.M.

1. John Bright, *The Kingdom of God*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1953), p. 216.
2. Oscar Cullman, *Christ and Time*, Floyd V. Filson, trans. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950) pp. 84-87.

Heaven Begins Now

By Steen Rasmussen

Like John the Revelator, Ellen White was permitted to see the new heaven and the new earth in vision. John described the beauties he saw in the grandest terms he knew—gold, crystal, and brilliant jewels (Rev. 21:9-20). Ellen White uses language even more attractive to most of us today, especially in her later descriptions:

"There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into the hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home."¹

However, we must not limit our understanding of heaven to such human descriptions. Imperfect language can but give a vague indication of the glories of absolute perfection. "The most exalted language fails to describe the glory of heaven or the matchless depths of a Saviour's love."²

Heaven will, according to Ellen White, be no idle place. Just as Adam and Eve had active responsibilities in the garden of Eden, so shall the saints work in heaven.³ And just as this life is a constant learning process, so shall the life on the new earth be a life of gaining knowledge which will never be lost. "Heaven is a school; its field of study, the universe; its teacher, the Infinite One."⁴ More than anything else, it will be a life of service, an outgoing rather than an ego-centric life.

"In our life here, earthly, sin-restricted though it is, the greatest joy and the highest education are in service. And in the future state, untrammelled by the limitations of sinful humanity, it is in service that our greatest joy and our highest education will be found. . . ."⁵

We would understand Ellen White's view of heaven amiss, however, if we only focus on the future life. This life is a preparation for heaven. In writing out her first vision about the Advent people on their way to heaven, Ellen White gives us a clue as to what this preparation consists of. "If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe."⁶ Fifty years later she added, "The price of heaven is Jesus. The way to heaven is through faith in 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'" John 1:29.⁷

But this life is not only a preparation for heaven—for the saints it is also a foretaste of the very beginning of heaven. What will ultimately be fulfilled at Christ's return, we can already realize on a smaller scale in this life. Read the following statement carefully, contemplating whether heaven has begun in your life:

"As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here. We respond to His invitation, Come, learn of Me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal. Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ."⁸

TESTIMONY

Key text:

1 Peter 1:3-5

Heaven is a school; its field of study, the universe

Heaven is a ceaseless approaching to God through Christ

1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 675.

2. *Early Writings*, p. 289.

3. *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 230, 231.

4. *Education*, p. 301.

5. *Education*, p. 309.

6. *Early Writings*, p. 14.

7. *Desire of Ages*, p. 385.

8. *Desire of Ages*, p. 385.

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September 21
Tuesday

Heaven and Hope

by Kai Arasola

EVIDENCE

Key text:
1 Corinthians
15:19

**"The fate
of humanity
is dependent
on its
supply
of hope"**

**Without
eschatology
Christianity
is like a
ladder that
leads
nowhere**

As man seeks to understand the meaning of life, or the meaning of history, he is led to consider eternity. "Any doctrine of life must include a doctrine of the historical dimension of life."¹ In fact all theological answers to the problems of life can be placed between two questions: "where from" and "where to." It is the end that reveals the purpose of creation as well as the purpose of life. Only "the idea of fulfillment makes the creation meaningful. The end of the system leads back to its beginning."²

In view of the above, it is in eschatology that the doctrine of life is ultimately worked out. It shows what the goal of history as well as the purpose of each individual life is. "What oxygen is for the lungs, such is hope for the meaning of human life. Take oxygen away and death occurs through suffocation, take hope away and humanity is constricted through lack of breath; despair supervenes, spelling the paralysis of intellectual and spiritual powers . . . so the fate of humanity is dependent on its supply of hope."³

The eschatological hope of a new earth, of immortality and eternity is usually interpreted along two basic lines of thought. One line speaks of "inaugurated," "proleptic" (anticipated), "fulfilled," or "realized" eschatology in which Christ's declaration that the Kingdom of God has already come "closes the long vista of the future," and moves the *eschaton* (the last age) "from the future into the present, from the sphere of expectation into that of realized experience."⁴ With this idea heaven becomes another expression of the good in the Christian's life. Eternity is left out of the picture.

The other way of looking at Bible promises on the new earth and new life, is to take them at their face value, expecting a real thing in the future, a transcendent break-in by God. With this view the "new" is indeed new. No one can regard it as a modified version of the "old." No more can the new deteriorate back into the old, "for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

These two views can be brought together. The "realization" of God's "break in" now does not exclude the future ultimate fulfillment of the eschatological promises of the Bible. The Gospel is full of hope for the hopeless here and now—there is no need to artificially conclude that the promises of the future also have a meaning for this life only. In fact it is an expectation of a real new earth, a faith in resurrection and a real eternal life, that has been a power without which "the Gospel would have perished from the earth, crushed by the weight of historic catastrophies."⁵

It can be said with Emil Brunner, that without eschatology Christianity is like a ladder that leads nowhere.⁶ What was it again that Paul said? "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied. . ." (1 Cor. 15:19, NIV).

1. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology III*, (London: SCM, 1963), p. 297.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 299.

3. Emil Brunner, *Eternal Hope*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1954, p. 7.

4. C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), p. 34.

5. Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1910), p. 254.

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No More Sea— Fellowship Restored

by Helen Pearson

HOW TO
Key text:
2 Peter 3:10-14

John the Revelator had been John the fisherman. In his early life the sea had been the source of his income, the source of good, the source of life. In the book of Revelation it became the source of a flood of evil—it contained the wild beasts symbolizing alien and aggressive powers, it cast up mire and dirt. It was John's exile on Patmos that made the difference. For the isolated prophet, the sea was the barrier, taunting him with the possibilities of the life he could lead if only he could cross it.

The sea did not mean isolation from the Lord—but from fellowship with his fellow Christians. Fellowship for these early Christians did not mean cozy firesides where believers met together for mutual congratulation on spiritual virtues. Fellowship grew between these early believers while they wrestled together with the problems of translating their faith into everyday decisions on behavior in an alien society. It grew as that faith itself became a living, dynamic reality for each individual Christian. For John, the sea symbolized loneliness, alienation from that fellowship—while heaven promised fellowship restored and unbroken for eternity. As Christians today awaiting the Lord's coming, we have the privilege of developing a fellowship here on earth that will prepare us for the heavenly one. Here are two suggestions to help us experience fellowship like that of the early Christians.

1. Cultivate openness with others. We must cultivate an openness and an honesty with one another in the face of problems in our own society. Although few of us expect to be thrown to the lions, we are vulnerable to the ravages of secularism, in all its forms. We must make it our business to fight against alienation and separation. We must be on our guard against any attitude which is likely to put a wedge between us and our brothers and sisters within the church and outside it. Wherever we are in contact with one another, whether in the family, in the church, in schools and hospitals, offices and factories, or in any other groups, let us encourage closeness among our brothers and sisters in Christ, and fellowship with those who are not yet in Christ.

2. Carefully evaluate relational attitudes. Fellowship, both now and in heaven, is in reality the outcome of meaningful personal relationships. Let us examine ourselves for prejudices against others. Let us look for ways of evaluating people which are not based on externals like age, sex, nationality, appearance and social status. Let us learn to accept people as they are with all their faults and weaknesses. Let us recognize that they, like us, are products of their environment and heredity with as little say in either as we have. All this is not easy. We must be prepared to encounter hurt and misunderstanding. But those willing to risk a commitment to fellowship will have a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

Reward Enough

by Alveen Thoresen

OPINION

Key text:

Revelation 21:3, 4

It is impossible for me to begin to imagine what it will be like to live in a perfect world. Even to try is to be confronted by a host of tantalizing questions.

Does "perfect" mean that everything will simply be bigger and better? Is our world so scarred by imperfection that perfection will be totally unrecognizable? How is it possible to have a world without death? And what do we mean by world? Can we conceptualize the world to come on the basis of present experience? For instance, what happens when one picks a flower? How is it possible to have a world without pain? Surely even a perfect being is capable of stubbing a toe or even breaking a limb? If there is no more pain or sickness, why is it necessary to have a tree whose "leaves are for the healing of the nations"? And, for that matter, why "nations"? The questions are seemingly endless.

The Bible doesn't offer many explicit answers. The idea of planting vineyards for a lifetime (not to mention eternity) spent "eating the fruit thereof" does not really inspire me. And cities, as long as one doesn't have to live too close to them, no doubt have their good points. But the thought of a city some 1,400 miles square (or cubic?) is hardly likely to be an added attraction, especially to the inner-city dweller, even if it is made of precious stones and gold. It seems that John, having seen visions of the new earth, was not capable of describing it in anything but symbolic language. And the Old Testament writers, too, depict heaven in words heavily loaded with their own dreams. I suspect we all do likewise.

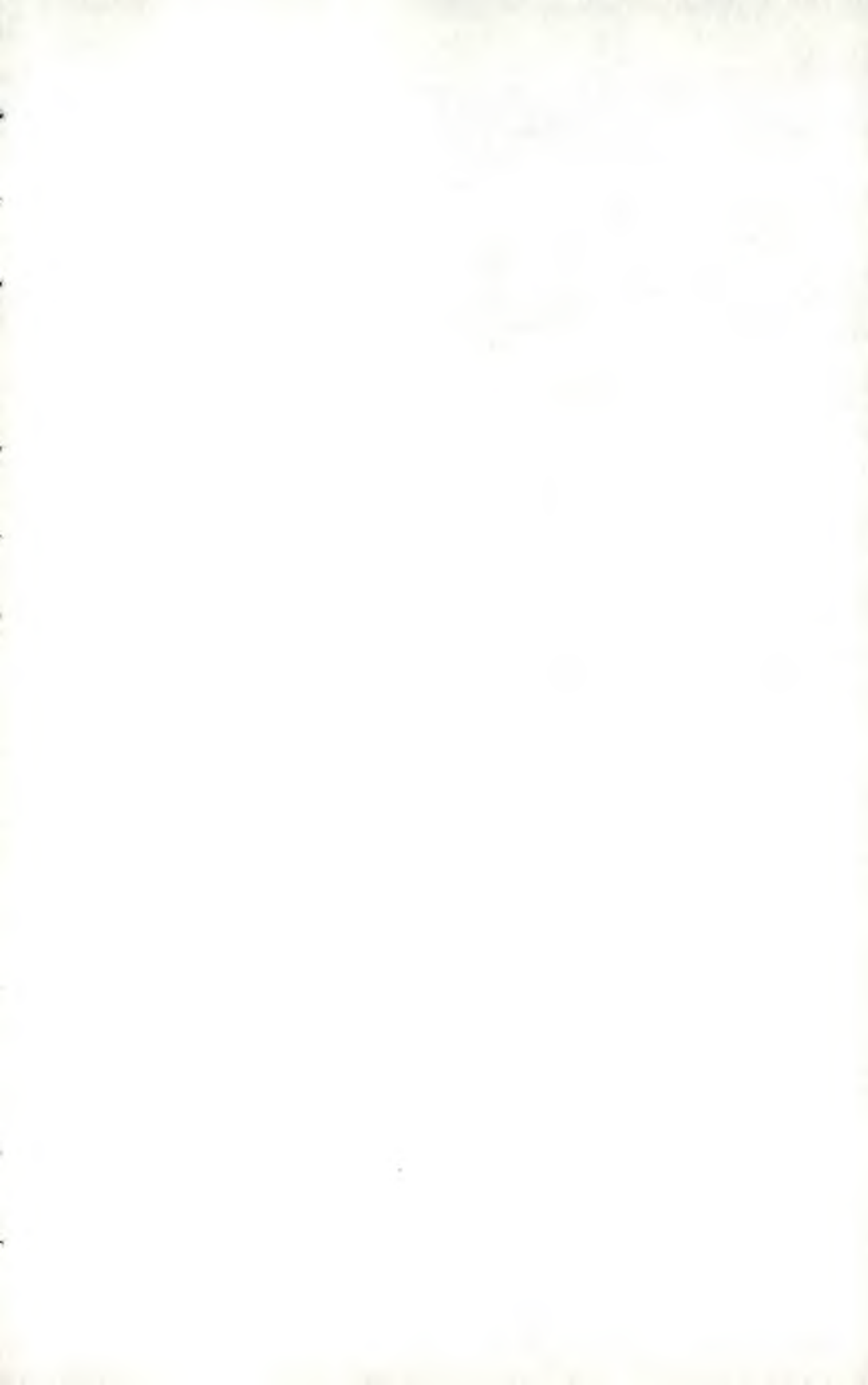
My own dream is simple—yet complex—because I don't really understand what I ask. Nevertheless, it is what He has promised: "I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am you may be also" (John 14:3); "You will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). The New Jerusalem is the city of peace where God meets with His people. All I need to know about that city, heaven, about the whole new earth, is that God is there and I will be with Him—the One who is the Answer to every question, the Resolution of every doubt. "And they shall see His face" (Rev. 22:4). Truly, that should be reward enough for every believing, trusting child of God. "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood" (1 Cor. 13:12, RSV).

All I need
to know
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REACT
Lesson 13

1. A contemporary Christian song lyric goes something like this: "If heaven never was promised to me, still it's been worth just having the Lord in my life." Do you agree with those sentiments? Would Christianity be worthwhile if no future life was promised? Explain.
2. How literal do you think the biblical descriptions about heaven are? What can we know for certain about the future life?
3. If there is no more pain and sickness in the new earth, why is there to be a tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations?

Will the future life contain difficulties and challenges?
4. Discuss the things you are most looking forward to in the new earth.
5. What experiential meaning does the Christian hope for the future have for the present? How would you respond to the criticism that Christianity is just "pie in the sky" and thus causes people to neglect or drop out of life in the here and now?



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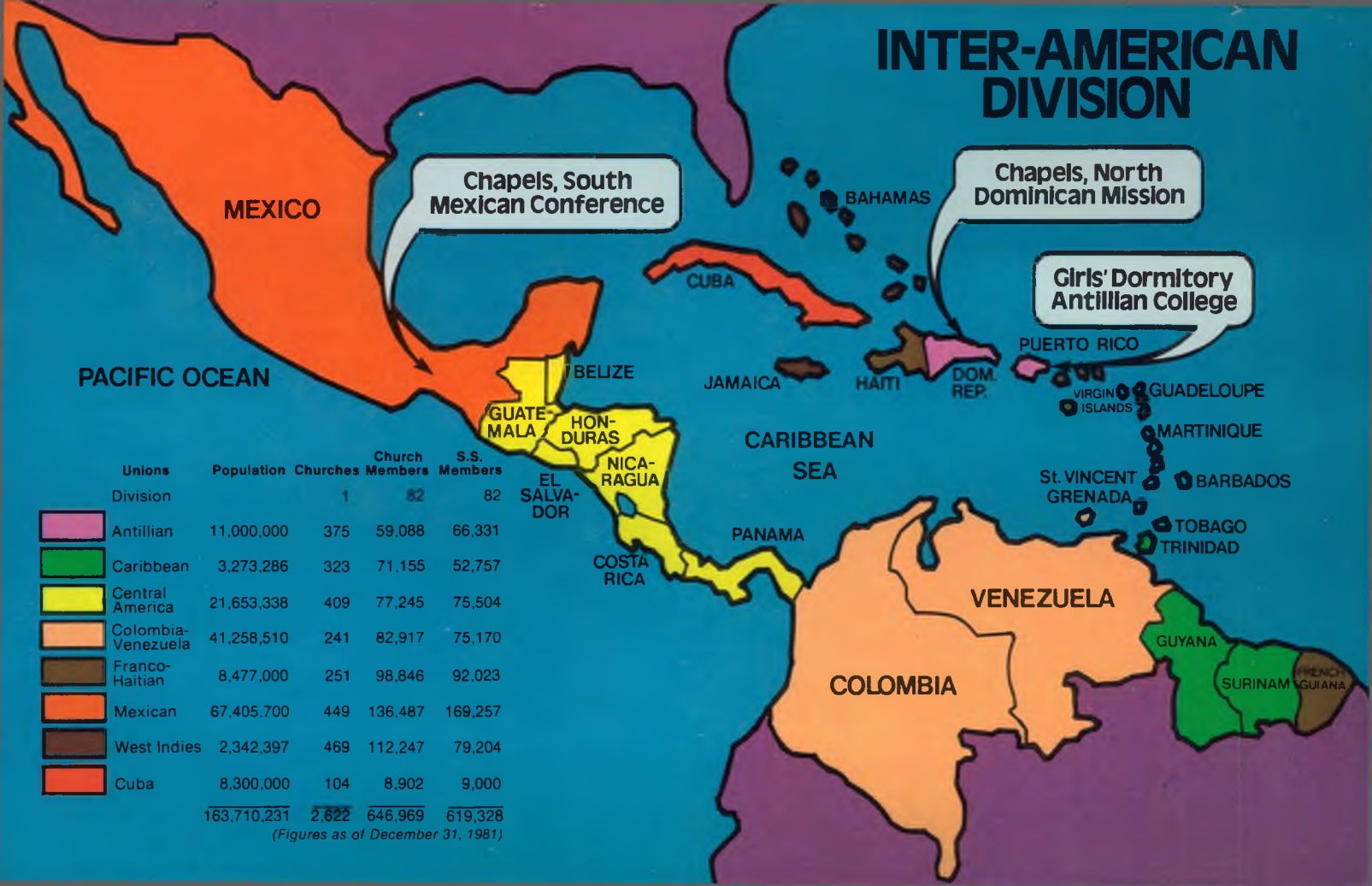
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CARIBBEAN SEA

Unions	Population	Churches	Church Members	S.S. Members
Division		1	82	82
Antillian	11,000,000	375	59,088	66,331
Caribbean	3,273,286	323	71,155	52,757
Central America	21,653,338	409	77,245	75,504
Colombia-Venezuela	41,258,510	241	82,917	75,170
Franco-Haitian	8,477,000	251	98,846	92,023
Mexican	67,405,700	449	136,487	169,257
West Indies	2,342,397	469	112,247	79,204
Cuba	8,300,000	104	8,902	9,000
	163,710,231	2,622	646,969	619,328

(Figures as of December 31, 1981)

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