

Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/March 1982



His Resurrection and Ours

Letters

Readers continue to react to our treatment of homosexuality in the September issue. Comments appear here and in an editorial on page 22, which examines how the article affected a specific group.

More on homosexual healing

The first copy of *MINISTRY* I read was the September issue. I enjoyed it greatly, and it helped in my counseling with a homosexual in our church.—Blake Slater, Community Church, Washington.

I deeply appreciate receiving your very readable and instructive magazine. Your article on homosexuality in the September issue is worthy of commendation alone. So please keep on coming to my address.—Walter P. Clausen, Lutheran Church, Texas.

For some time now I have been receiving courtesy copies of your magazine, and while I have seldom agreed with a majority of the articles, I have found them interesting, informative, and, in some cases, helpful, if for no other reason than because you project a point of view radically different from mine. Your September

An outstretched hand

If you are receiving *MINISTRY* bimonthly without having paid for a subscription, it is not a mistake.

We believe the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. Since 1928 *MINISTRY* has been designed to meet the needs of Seventh-day Adventist ministers. However, we believe that we have much in common with the entire religious community and want to share with you our aspirations and faith in a way that we trust will provide inspiration and help for you too.

We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulders, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you cannot use.

Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy. Each request should be on your church letterhead (if possible) and include name, address, denominational affiliation and position. Clergy outside the U.S. and Canada please remit \$2.00 postage.

issue, however, falls into a different category. Quite simply, it is unscholarly, un-Biblical, totally divorced from good psychiatric theory, and is politically mischievous. Your recommended reading list is biased beyond belief, and the majority of the titles were written by persons who have long since been discredited as experts in the field, e.g., Gangel, Barnhouse, Kubo.

As for the interview with Colin Cook, the very narrow theology present there and in your closing notes on page 27 speaks for itself. I respectfully submit that in this instance you have done yourself, your magazine, your denomination, and the Christian church generally a great disservice.—Frederick B. Williams, Episcopalian Church, New York.

In addition to the letters received in our offices, the Quest Counseling Center also received many responses to the Spangler-Cook interview on homosexuality (see editorial on page 22). Here are some excerpts from these responses.—Editors.

The Lord has used this article very powerfully in my life. It has become a catalyst for my faith.—Presbyterian Minister.

Most encouraging article I have ever read. Totally crystal clear. Put more hope in me than I have had in years.—Layman.

A wonderful statement of faith and its power to save.—Christ's Church Minister.

Nothing—absolutely nothing—has so delighted me and thrilled me since my own healing two years ago.—Anglican Minister.

Your insights are the most helpful I have ever seen on a complex problem. You Seventh-day Adventists, who used to be scored as the world's worst legalists, seem to be leading us back to Christ and the supremacy of His gospel! God does work in mysterious ways His wonders to perform!—United Methodist Minister.

Without doubt, one of the best, most informative, and enlightening interviews I have read in quite some time.—Church of Christ Minister.

One of the most detailed interviews with an ex-gay ever produced in a Christian periodical.—Review in *Love in Action* Newsletter.

I have read, reread, and read again the interview. It once again awakened the promise of hope.—Seventh-day Adventist Minister.

Recommended three times

I would like to receive your *MINISTRY* magazine. It has been recommended to me three times. First, by a retired pastor who joined our new congregation. Second at a New Church Development conference. Third, through a Seventh-day Adventist congregation that has begun to worship in our just-finished building. We appreciate all the help we can get to do the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Gerhard Bihl, Pilgrim United Church, British Columbia.

Creationism fallacy

In regard to the issues of creationism, you fall into the fallacy of so many conservatives. You assume that if you can disprove evolution you have won the victory. The issue is not whether evolution is true, but whether the *literal* account in Genesis 1 and 2 is true. Since I am not shackled to a literal Bible, I do not have to accept Genesis 1 and 2 as an accurate statement of how the earth and man came into being. I find nothing there that tells me when or how Creation took place. I do find a deeply spiritual interpretation of who created the world and why He created it, and this is all that matters to me.—Frank T. James, Christian Church, Pennsylvania.

Take time for your family

Thank you for printing Warren Heckman's article, "The Pastor and His Pastime" (November, 1981). I learned this valuable lesson about taking time for our families and other pursuits approximately one year ago. I just thank God that I learned it early enough in life to enjoy my marriage and see my children grow. Please, fellow pastors, take time for your families; let's not have another generation of preachers' kids who hate Jesus because "He always took their daddy away."—Greg Chantler, First Covenant Church, Washington.

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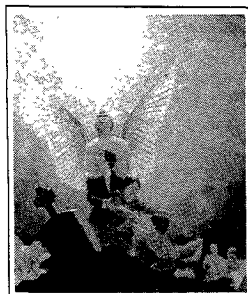
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Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/March 1982/Volume 55/Number 3



COVER: LOU SKIDMORE

Computers Come to Church/4. Robert D. Moon. With more and more small computers coming on the market, you may have been wondering whether you could use one to care for many record-keeping functions in your church. Properly used, a small computer can make you more effective. But there are pitfalls.

Alcohol: A Witness Against Itself/7. John M. Drescher.

What Jesus Said About Faith and Relationship/8. Morris L. Venden.

Jesus Is Coming Soon!/10. Gordon M. Hyde. A firm belief in predictive prophecy leads us to the conclusion that only the return of Jesus, as outlined in Scripture, can provide an all-sufficient solution to the problems sin has brought into every area of life.

The Church and the Great Tribulation: Protection or Escape?/13. Hans K. LaRondelle. God's pattern of dealing with His people through all ages would indicate that in the final time of trouble He will not remove the church from tribulation, but divinely protect her during the storm.

Opportunity for Miracles/16. Roy E. Graham.

Good Marriages Don't Just Happen/18. Ron Flowers. In fact, it almost seems that good marriages aren't happening at all! There are many reasons, of course, for the rapidly rising rate of divorce. The question is: What can we do about it?

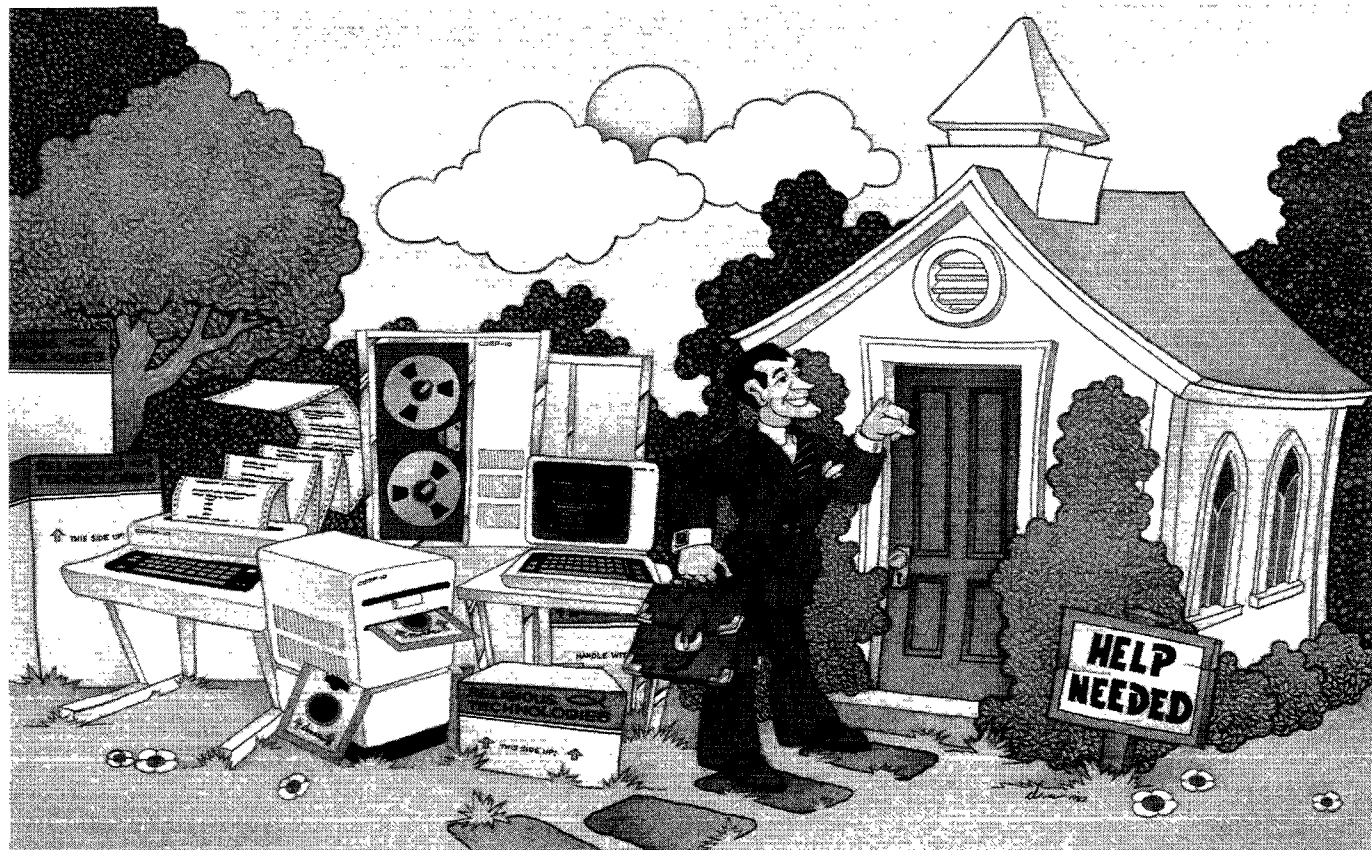
His Resurrection and Ours/22. B. Russell Holt. We have always believed that Jesus literally rose from the dead the Sunday following His crucifixion and that His resurrection is the guarantee that we too will rise to new and eternal life at His second coming. Why, then, should we tend to sit on the sidelines while the rest of the religious world celebrates the momentous event of the Saviour's resurrection?

The Color of Spring Is Love/24. Bunnie Herndon.

Tischendorf and the New Testament/26. Siegfried H. Horn.

From the Editor/22.
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Biblical Archeology/26.

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Computers come to church

The current trend toward low-cost "personal computers" is creating a growing interest in bringing computers into the local church. Would a small computer be helpful for your ministry? Perhaps. But it could create more problems than it solves. And cost a lot of money.

Robert D. Moon

Should you let a computer come to your church? Until recently, the large investment required both for staff and necessary equipment has made computer systems impractical for most local churches, pastors, or church schools. But current developments in low-cost "personal computers" are rapidly changing this picture and creating a growing interest in bringing computers into the local church. In increasing numbers, pastors and church administrators are asking, "Would a small computer be helpful to my ministry? What tasks could it do, and how effectively? Is a computer cost effective in my situation? What kind of equipment should my church purchase? How much expertise does one need to operate a computer system? What are the pitfalls of letting a computer into my church?"

Church computing—boon or bust?

Obtaining a computer is not a cure-all for your data-processing needs. When computing is used for appropriate applications it can be a great boon. When used

inappropriately it can truly be a bust! Most ministers have little knowledge about computing, which makes them very vulnerable to overenthusiasm and sometimes to unscrupulous salesmen. This article can provide you with general information and simple guidelines to help you make decisions related to computing, and give you an overview of some of the computing applications that might help your ministry.

All computer systems are not created equal

Be careful! Extreme differences exist among so-called personal computers. When selecting a computer, you should understand what is meant by a "computer system" and the terminology used to describe it. A computer system has two major parts that you must consider—hardware and software. *Hardware* refers to the machines and electronic equipment, while *software* refers to the programs (tapes, discs, manuals, et cetera) that makes the hardware perform the desired operations.

No computer will run without software. Thus, when shopping for computer services or a computer system, software should probably be your major concern. Ask such questions as: Do programs that meet my needs run on equipment my church can afford? Can software be easily developed

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for the equipment I am considering? What is the cost of buying software? How will I pay for it—lease or purchase? Will I ever stop paying? How will the software I purchase today be maintained if later I need corrections or enhancements?

Not until the 1960s did studies report that for the first time computer programming was generally costing more than the equipment itself. Today it is not unusual for the software portion of a computing system to cost two, three, four, or more times as much as the hardware.

You need to be cautious when you hear of a low-cost computer system that has software that will meet your needs "with a little modification." Unless the seller *guarantees* the cost of the software, including the modifications you want, you may end up with equipment and software that *almost* does what you need. It is not unusual for companies or individuals to charge \$20 to \$50 an hour for system analysis and programming. Thus, a system that *almost* does what you need could end up costing thousands of dollars of additional expense to make it do *exactly* what you need. All the hardware in the world won't provide the computing services you need without the right programs. Software considerations must be foremost!

Equipment considerations

When you are purchasing computer equipment it is important to distinguish between the central processor (sometimes referred to as the "computer") and such peripheral devices as line printers, random access storage via hard or floppy discs, tape drives, cassette drives, cathode-ray tube terminals (a piece of equipment that looks like a TV screen with a typewriter keyboard), and hard-copy terminals. The cost of central processors has decreased so dramatically over the past two decades that it is not unusual to spend much more for peripheral devices than for the central processor. For example, the central processing unit for a typical personal computer often costs less than \$2,000, while a printer attachment to generate high-quality letters or reports can easily cost \$3,000 to \$4,000.

The most expensive piece of equipment for applications using large amounts of data is often the disc equipment required to store information. Therefore it is very important to have adequate estimates of the *amount* of information that you will need to have stored in the system. Terms used to describe the amount of information stored on a computer device include *byte* and *page*. A *byte* refers to one character of information, while a *page* generally refers to approximately 2,500 bytes, or characters—about as many characters as are on an average typewritten page. Computer people use the term *file* to refer to a number of records of a given type of information. Examples are (1) an address file and (2) a file of all your church members, with the

amounts of their donations. Thus in this connection there is a critical factor to remember: Do not be satisfied with a demonstration from very small files if you anticipate processing much larger ones. Programs that will operate successfully on given equipment with small files may not be adequate for larger files. Ask the dealer, "If I need more disc storage, can I get it, and if so, what will it cost?" Not all systems have cost-effective ways of adding as much storage as you may need later.

Develop a potential budget

In operating a computer system, you must consider three major costs: (1) the cost of equipment; (2) operating costs, including supplies and the personnel to operate the equipment; and (3) the cost of computer software, which may involve the purchase of existing programs, contracting with an individual or an organization to write or modify existing programs, or personnel costs for a programmer. A common mistake is to underestimate what is involved in operating the equipment and entering the data. Many small businessmen have been led to believe that entering data or operating the computer is so simple that any of their employees can do it. While this *may* be true, such processes still take time and cost money. Pastors especially need to be careful about building computer budgets around volunteers. What happens to your investment in equipment and programs if these volunteers are suddenly no longer available? If you have an accountant in your church he might help you develop a realistic budget.

Don't lose sight of your mission

Computers are very interesting, and it is easy for an individual to become so personally involved with their operation and programming that other activities that should have higher priority are left undone. You are a minister, and your mission is first and foremost to shepherd God's people and spread the gospel. Computers, without question, are now supporting many aspects of ministry by caring for certain necessary tasks more effectively than has been possible in the past. There is also great potential in many new areas. But computers are valuable to you only as they make it possible for you to minister and evangelize more efficiently. You have been called to be a minister, not a computer hobbyist or a "computer nut."

Computer applications for churches

At least seven general categories of computer applications can be supportive of ministry: (1) word processing, (2) personalizing mass mailings, (3) financial applications, (4) processing lists, (5) coordinating the follow-up of interested individuals and prospective members, (6) coordinating Bible studies, and (7) generating special reports.

All seven can be handled with a personal computer having the right peripheral equipment, provided you have the right type of software and the amount of information you plan to handle is small enough. For larger applications a personalized computer can be used as a data-entry device to transmit information via phone lines to a larger computer. A large computer can process and store more information than personal computers possibly can at the present and print large amounts of information on high-speed line printers. For such jobs, peripheral printers that are affordable and can be readily attached to a personal computer simply take too long.

Word processing. Almost any personal computer on the market today has software to make it a word-processing system—at a cost of about \$150 to \$400. Some of the common systems are Easy Writer, Word Star, and Magic Wand. Before purchasing such a system, be sure there is good documentation on how to use it. Have it demonstrated and try to use it yourself before you buy it. A system that will adequately handle word-processing needs for most churches will include at least two floppy discs, a CRT screen, and a type-writer-quality printer. And it will cost about \$5,000 to \$7,000. Be careful of bargain systems with dot-matrix printers that will not provide the quality you need for letters.

Personalizing mass mailings. For relatively small files, a personalized computer can be very useful for mass mailings. With it you can generate labels and print the name, address, and salutation on a standard letter for any list of persons you choose. However, personal computers do have limitations for mailings to very large numbers of people, since too many names may exceed the storage on its floppy discs!

Financial applications. A number of financial applications are appropriate for a personalized computer, provided you have adequate floppy disc storage to cope with

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the size of your church membership. These applications include stewardship systems, budgeting and accounting systems, and generating financial reports. A stewardship system can help keep track of giving by category and provide members with itemized statements of their year-to-date gifts.

Processing lists. There are many types of lists that a church handles, and by careful organization of data, it is possible to minimize storage of these lists in a computer system. This can be accomplished by associating multiple types of information about each person. Thus it is possible to select lists that meet certain criteria—for example, all deacons, all elders, all individuals who have contributed to the building fund in the past six months. Once the selection has been made, the computer can generate labels, special types of statistical reports, personalized mailings, et cetera.

Coordinating the follow-up of interested individuals and prospective members. This is a special form of list processing. It involves having a person's name, address, when and why he or she contacted your organization, and by what method—phone, mail, or in person. Multiple contacts, of course, indicate a sustained interest. By selecting individuals from these lists, based upon the time of their last contact and the type of their interest, you can assign them to church members, for visitation or send them special materials or a personalized letter.

Coordinating Bible studies. Keeping track of where individuals are in a Bible study program can be useful to large evangelistic endeavors. The computer can process and coordinate the name of each individual who is involved in Bible studies with the person who is giving the studies, and the date that each study is completed. The system can also provide lists of individuals who have not completed a lesson for a long time, as well as lists of persons who are nearing their last lesson and should be visited by the pastor. For small groups of names you may find it as practical to use a hand system as a computer. One such very fine system that already exists has been developed by Pastor Steve J. Joannou, 1100 Rancho Conejo Boulevard, Newbury Park, California 91320.

Generating special reports. With a computer, you can develop programs that will use information you already have stored to generate a variety of special reports—trend analyses on various types of giving, how the building fund is doing, what's happening to church expense, church growth figures, et cetera.

Guidelines for a decision

1. Review your present manual system and consider whether you *really* need a computer system.

2. Define carefully the specific uses you plan to make of the computer, including

(a) types of output desired—reports, lists, receipts, labels, letters, et cetera; (b) the amount of information on various files you anticipate storing and processing; (c) and how data will be entered into the computer system.

3. If a dealer has computer hardware and software (a turnkey system) that he claims will do what you need, have him demonstrate *exactly* what it will do and then describe to him the additional things you need. Do not consider purchasing the equipment or services unless the dealer will give you a price and a *written agreement* that includes the cost not only of the equipment but also of software packages with any agreed-upon modifications.

4. When leasing or purchasing a computer system (both hardware and software) that meets acceptable specifications, provide for payment to be contingent upon acceptance testing to demonstrate that the specifications have been met.

5. Develop a reasonable budget for the computer operation you plan. Attempt to determine savings that might be realized and new revenues a computer might help generate through better fund raising, as well as costs of the system, including equipment, operating personnel and supplies, programming, and maintenance. Now determine whether what you are considering is cost justified.

6. Consider purchasing *services* as a first step to getting some of your operations computerized. If you wish to buy computer services rather than a computing system, get vendors to agree to give unit costs where it is appropriate—for example, 10 cents for each name entered on an address system and \$3.00 per thousand Cheshire labels on ungummed paper. When computing services can be purchased in this way, you can make simple comparisons of costs between vendors.

7. Make certain when purchasing a computer system or computer services that there is a pathway for growth that allows you to process more information or develop new applications without negating previous investments.

8. Make certain there is good documentation on how to use the hardware and software you are considering.

9. Make certain you will be able to get software and software maintenance at a reasonable cost for at least five years, and longer if possible.

10. Take care not to become overly

enthralled with computers. Your real priorities as a pastor or an evangelist could become obscured if computing becomes a hobby.

These guidelines are certainly not intended to discourage appropriate uses of the computer in the local church. Correctly used, it can provide cost-effective support for many types of ministry. However, it is critical that pastors and evangelists view the computer in a total perspective that recognizes it as only one of many means that may assist them in better fulfilling the gospel ministry.

Should a computer come to your church? Only you and your congregation can decide.

Still have questions?

One brief article can't begin to consider all the possibilities and difficulties of using small computers in a local church. Also, many churches will decide after careful study that a personal computer system will not handle their specific needs or that it would not be cost effective. That is why Andrews University Computing Center has developed two programs that you will want to know about.

The University Computing Center is currently involved in all the types of computing described in this article and can provide these services to churches on a contract basis. You can have a computer program designed to handle many of your church's needs without even owning a computer system at all! The center can also provide consulting and equipment. For more information on how you can have computing without a computer, write or call: Mr. Lowell Witz, Director, Andrews University Computing Center, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104. Telephone: (616)471-3456.

For those who want to know more than this article can provide about church applications for small computers, the center has developed a workshop—Ministry and Computing—to answer your questions. It can be presented upon request at any location where sufficient attendance will justify expenses. Direct inquiries regarding the workshop to: Dr. Arthur Coetzee, Director, Lifelong Learning Center, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104.

Computers are valuable to you only as they make it possible for you to minister and evangelize more efficiently. You have been called to be a minister, not a computer hobbyist or a "computer nut."

Alcohol: a witness against itself

You don't need to build a case from the Bible or experience a moral or spiritual conversion to condemn the use of alcohol.

John M. Drescher

In no longer need to go to the Bible for evidence that alcohol use runs counter to religious and spiritual principles. Not since my wife and I attended seventeen two-hour sessions dealing with the hard facts of alcohol without moral or religious connotations. Not since my wife took additional classes in how to work with abused women and volunteered to serve in an abused women's program. Not since we read books and stacks of other material dealing with alcohol and its problems.

Sidney Katz, staff writer for the *Toronto Star* who studied alcoholism at Yale University, agrees with me in the article "Booze: Why You Shouldn't Drink a Drop." Katz writes that he abandoned drinking alcohol and became a teetotaler, not because of a moral or religious conversion, but on grounds that to him are simple, pragmatic, and irrefutable. His article cites statistics and facts to prove his case against any use of alcoholic beverages.

No, one doesn't need the Bible to develop a case against alcohol; it is a witness against itself. Notice a few facts.

In Western society alcohol is killing people faster than the deadliest wars of all history. Alcohol causes 60 percent of teen-age deaths on the highway and 50 percent of all highway deaths. It shortens the life span of one out of every 13 persons (alcoholics live 10 to 12 years less than other people). The executive secretary of the International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism said recently that of the 6 million known alcoholics in America, 350,000 would be buried before a year is out. In contrast, Vietnam killed 5,000 yearly. Half of drownings are alcohol related, and according to a study by Johns Hopkins University, 50 percent of pedestrians killed in accidents had been drinking. Everyone concerned to preserve life and peace must be concerned about alcohol.

Alcohol is the number one drug problem of American youth. One third of high school students boast of getting drunk at least once a month, and 1.3 million young

people between 12 and 17 years of age have severe drinking problems. Alcohol use among teens is up 90 percent in 3 years, according to *U.S. News and World Report*. The Department of Health and Human Service's survey of fourth- and fifth-graders on the West Coast reveals that 45 percent consider themselves continuing users of alcohol. The parent who drinks forfeits his arguments against the child's use of drugs. Everyone concerned for youth must be concerned about alcohol.

Studies show a clear relation between alcohol consumption and the rate of crime. Alcohol is involved in 80 percent of all crime, and 80 percent of those in prison are there because of alcohol-related crimes. Dr. Jaren Tinklenberg, of Stanford University, speaking of the close link between alcohol and violence of all kinds, said, "Alcohol is a disinhibitor of social control." Every person concerned for law and order must be concerned about alcohol.

One of every 10 persons who drinks will become an alcoholic. In every community alcohol necessitates various social and religious agencies, in addition to law enforcement, to attempt to deal with the problems it creates. The known cost to the taxpayer for Government services alone exceeds \$15 billion per year in the United States. In Canada the cost is \$2.5 billion annually. Everyone concerned about human welfare must be concerned about alcohol.

Alcohol depresses brain function from the first drink and destroys thousands of irreplaceable brain cells with every drink. Dr. Daniel Sutter writes: "As a neuro-anatomist and neurophysiologist, I believe the use of alcohol has very serious implications for the Christian. To me it is

extremely serious to voluntarily subject one's highest levels of intellect and emotions to the anesthetizing effects of a drug which has no food value to the body but rather irritates and destroys its tissues."

It is estimated that 85 percent of all hospital admissions are alcohol related; this includes not only those who drink but also persons affected by them. Everyone who is concerned about health must be concerned about alcohol.

Disregarding the actual physical harm alcohol causes, it has no food value and takes from family needs. Not only does it destroy families and bring incalculable sorrow and suffering but the annual bar bill for a husband and wife can easily come to \$2,000-\$3,000 per year. It is a major cause of family breakups in the United States. Everyone concerned about the family must be concerned about alcohol.

No, one doesn't need to build a case from the Bible or experience a moral or spiritual conversion to condemn the use of alcohol. It's a witness against itself.

Disney takes on alcohol

Disney animation has fought many evils in its time. Fantasy, Disney-style, has given the hope that all lived happily ever after.

But now Disney has produced an animated film, "Understanding Alcohol Use and Abuse," designed to counteract the fantasy of alcohol use and alcoholism. Two characters, Reason and Emotion, battle for control as the story line illustrates the disruptive effect of alcohol on the body's responses. It's intended for grades 7 and 8, but as with all Disney stories, there will probably be as many adults watching as kids!

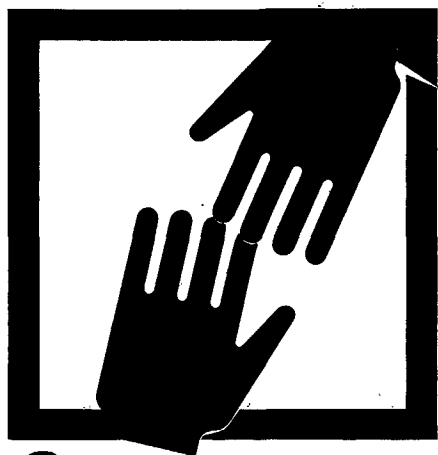
In Western society alcohol is killing people faster than the deadliest wars of all history. Alcohol causes 60 percent of teen-age deaths on the highway and 50 percent of all highway deaths.

John M. Drescher is a professor at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Virginia, and a widely published author on a variety of subjects.

The Bible does not teach that salvation is by grace alone—it is always by grace through faith. Faith on the part of the sinner is essential. However, faith involves more than simple mental assent, or belief. Saving faith insists on trust. And trust involves two parties, one trusting the other. When the sinner trusts Jesus for salvation, then there comes into existence a saving relationship. When the sinner accepts salvation by faith there is more than a legal declaration in heaven. There is the beginning of a relationship with God, followed by ethical results and expectations.

Morris L. Venden

What Jesus said about faith and relationship



One Christmas I made a custom bicycle for my boy. The bike that he had described as the one he wanted hadn't been invented yet! So I worked for hours in secret, out in the garage, doing the best that I could to make this special gift for him. But all the work and planning I put into the project would have been of no value to him if he had refused to accept it on Christmas morning. In fact, if he had not accepted it, not only would the bicycle have done him no good, but his refusal would have been a slap in my face, as well. Regardless of how good or how inferior a

gift may be (and I've made some things that definitely were inferior, and I didn't blame my family for rejecting them!) the gift is of no benefit unless it is accepted. Even if the gift is perfect—the greatest gift that could ever be given—and includes life itself, if it's rejected, not only is it valueless to the one for whom it was intended, but its rejection means a slap in the face of the Giver, as well. As beautiful as is the truth of justification by faith and Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, it's of no benefit to anybody unless it is accepted.

Justification is mankind being put right with God through what Jesus has done. It is a provision in heaven for the redemption of the whole human race, and has as its foundation the spotless righteousness of Jesus. Justification, however, is useless to any sinner until it is accepted by him. The Bible does not teach that salvation is by grace alone—it is always by grace through faith. Faith on the part of the sinner is essential.

However, faith involves more than simple mental assent, or belief. The devils believe and tremble, according to James 2:19, but they do not have saving faith. Saving faith insists on trust. And trust immediately involves two parties, one trusting the other. When the sinner *trusts* Jesus for salvation, then there comes into existence a saving relationship. When the sinner accepts salvation by faith there is more than a legal declaration in heaven. There is the beginning of a relationship

with God, followed by ethical results and expectations.

As we pursue what Jesus had to say about this relationship, notice first of all John 17:3. Here Jesus goes immediately to the basis of eternal life as far as our reception of it is concerned. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." While it is true that the basis of our eternal life is Jesus and His sacrifice in our behalf, we still have a part to play. We must *accept* His gift. When we first accept His mighty grace, this relationship of knowing Him is begun; as we continue to accept His grace on a daily basis, the relationship continues. I've often enjoyed asking various congregations and audiences to vote on the question Which is more important—getting married or staying married? In the end the greatest vote comes when I ask how many think it is a stupid question! Obviously, both getting married and staying married are important. Coming to Jesus is important, and staying with Jesus is important. It is important for the broken connection between God and man to be restored, but it is equally important that the restored communion be continued. It means one thing if my boy rides his special custom bike on Christmas morning and never touches it again. It means another thing entirely to be able to see him riding it every day, all year long.

Jesus said that eternal life, as far as we are concerned, is a matter of knowing

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Him. He repeated this teaching several times. In Matthew 25 He tells the story of the ten young ladies in the wedding party. Ultimately, the basis of the host's refusal to admit the five foolish girls was because he did not know them (verse 12). Their problem was that they did not have a personal relationship with God. In Matthew 7:23, Jesus describes those who will find themselves at last on the outside. In spite of their many good works, the Lord says to them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

There are really only two classes of people in the world today—those who know God and those who don't. Those who know God have accepted His justifying grace and continue to accept it in a restored relationship with Him. Those who don't know God are not accepting His grace or perhaps have never accepted it. Each of us is in one group or the other.

When we consider the questions of faith and relationship, we are talking about the same thing, in a sense. There is no saving faith without this relationship, and there is no relationship without faith. I'd like to suggest that the greatest definition of *saving faith* is "trust." It is impossible to trust someone, no matter how trustworthy he may be, unless we know him and are acquainted with him personally.

We become acquainted with anyone by the basic methods of communication. We talk to him; we listen to him; we go places and do things with him. Likewise, when we consider the matter of a relationship with, and trust in, God, we discover that the essence of the whole matter is our fellowship, our communion, with Him. The Bible premise is that faith is a gift (Rom. 12:3), and a gift is not something that one works for. Faith is given to us as we come into relationship with the Giver; it comes as a spontaneous result of knowing God. And we have saving faith no longer than we know God as our personal friend, on a one-to-one basis.

The problem of sin in the first place was broken trust, a lost relationship. The originator of sin decided that he no longer needed to trust God, that he could go his own way. The issue in sin is not simply doing bad things; it is a broken relationship. When a person has lost his relationship with God he has lost his righteousness, as well, as far as God is concerned.

When I am living apart from God, I have no righteousness. The only genuine righteousness there is comes through a restored relationship with God. Jesus said in John 16:8,9 that when the Holy Ghost comes "he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe [or trust] not on me." At its lowest common denominator, sin is living life separated from the Lord Jesus Christ. Only through a life of union and communion with Him, made possible

by His gift of justification through faith, is the sin problem effectively dealt with and the separation ended.

Jesus repeatedly invites us to come. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden" (Matt. 11:28). "Come, take up the cross, and follow me" (Mark 10:21). "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). But simply coming to Jesus isn't enough. That is the beginning, but it is only the beginning. Jesus also had another favorite invitation—*abide*. "Abide in me, and I in you. . . . He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (chap. 15:4, 5). "To day I must abide at thy house" (Luke 19:5). Abiding in Him is what the faith relationship is all about.

In John 6:53-56 we find some difficult words of Jesus: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

The people to whom Jesus spoke these words pretended to be confused, but they understood more clearly than they were willing to admit what He was referring to. They had the scrolls and had read Jeremiah 15:16, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them." They understood that He was offering them a relationship with Himself, but they turned Him down because they were seeking a temporal kingdom. What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it and it becomes a part of our being. Christ is of no value to us if we do not know Him as a personal Saviour. Eating is a very personal matter; no one else can eat or drink for you. You must do it for yourself. And no one else can eat spiritually for you, either. You must seek Christ for yourself.

Jesus went to a Samaritan village. He met a woman by the well. She went to the people of the village and told them, "Come, see" (John 4:29). They came. But after meeting Jesus they said, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (verse 42).

If you depend upon someone else to do your eating, and breathing, and exercising

for you, you will die. In the spiritual life, if you depend upon another to do your Bible study, your prayer, and your sharing and outreach, you will die spiritually. Jesus said it in Matthew 4:4: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He said it in John 6:63: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." He said it in Matthew 26:41: "Watch and pray"; and in Mark 8:35: "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." It is through the tangible ingredients of relationship—Bible study, prayer, and Christian witness—that we enter into relationship with Him and that we continue to abide in Him, as well. What will be the result? We will experience so close a relationship with Him that Jesus describes it as dwelling in Him, and He in us (see John 17:20-23).

It is essential, then, for us to remember that our relationship with God is not based on behavior, but on communication. Anyone who thinks that his behavior is the basis of his relationship will soon give up the relationship. And anyone who gets discouraged in his relationship with Christ because of his behavior is a legalist.

There's a difference between being *discouraged* over our behavior and being *disappointed* about our behavior. I am disappointed in my behavior many times, but I am not discouraged with my relationship with Christ! Why? Because Jesus had a kind way about Him of going straight ahead with His disciples even when they failed and sinned again and again. Read about one instance in Luke 9:52-56. The disciples had wanted to call down fire on the Samaritans and destroy them. Jesus rebuked them, and He may rebuke you and me, too. But He kept walking with them. They went on to another village, together.

So we can take courage when we realize that Jesus continues to walk with us as long as we continue to seek fellowship with Him. And sooner or later His power, which is greater than our failures, will complete the work that has been started in our lives. He will once again invite us to come, when He says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). There we will abide with Him forever.

The issue in sin is not simply doing bad things; it is a broken relationship. When a person has lost his relationship with God he has lost his righteousness, as well, as far as God is concerned.

We believe, according to the Word of God, when the time appointed by the Lord (which is unknown to all creatures) is come, and the number of the elect complete, that our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven, corporally and visibly, as he ascended with great glory and majesty, to declare himself the Judge of the quick and the dead, burning this old world with fire and flame to cleanse it. . . . The faithful and elect shall be crowned with glory and honor; and the Son of God will confess their names before God his Father, and his elect angels; all tears shall be wiped from their eyes. . . . And, for a gracious reward, the Lord will cause them to possess such a glory as never entered into the heart of man to conceive. Therefore we expect that great day with a most ardent desire, to the end that we may fully enjoy the promise of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.—The Belgic Confession (1561).

This We Believe/7

Gordon M. Hyde

Jesus is coming soon!



H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS

know anything of the how, when, where, and why of it?

Perhaps it would be helpful to get some sense of perspective at the outset so that readers can know the background for our beliefs regarding Jesus' coming. The way one answers the questions just raised about the Second Advent has more to do with his view of the Bible than with his knowledge of the constantly changing kaleidoscope of events in today's world. For example, those who have problems continuing to believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ are not too likely to be excited by the idea of a Second Advent, imminent or otherwise. Similarly, if the predictive element in Bible prophecy is denied there is little room left for a Second Coming.

It is interesting that even secular observers are noting the crescendo of voices proclaiming that the end of all things is near. "Boom in Doom" was *Time's* designation of the phenomenon. The same secular observers are sometimes recognizing that time is running out on the human race ecologically, politically, and socially. At least all recognize—when they dare to voice it—that a Damocles' sword in the form of "the bomb" dangles on a thread over the entire planet. This was more keenly sensed, perhaps, in 1946 than it is in 1982 (for the ominous fades with time's passing). But such secular awareness of

That's what my favorite ensemble was singing at college in 1941. To some, 1941 may seem only yesterday, but for the one who knows about the high peaks of expectancy regarding Jesus' second coming and their repeated failures over the cen-

turies—including some recent ones—forty years may seem a very long time. In fact, theologians of some denominations that have consistently preached the imminence of Christ's return are now urging that the stress on imminence be quietly phased out.

But how is it really? Does not the Bible teach the return of Christ? Does it not give clues as to the timing of the event? What about signs of its imminence? What is meant by the "return of Christ?" Can we

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potential trouble may not overlap at all with a religious belief in the end of the age resulting from the second coming of Jesus Christ to our world. The fact that the Bible describes in broad strokes some of our present world predicaments and depicts them as signs of the Advent near will undoubtedly be seen as mere happenstance by the secular observer and perhaps by others who devote themselves to theology and related fields.

For example, Dewey M. Beegle in *Prophecy and Prediction* (Ann Arbor: Pryor Pettengill, 1978), challenges the evangelical Christian's view that Christ is to return soon. In the process, he tends to lump together the Armstrong people, Jehovah's Witnesses, Billy Graham, Seventh-day Adventists, and Zionists. He faults them all for believing in predictive Bible prophecy. At the same time, he reminds them that he himself came out of a conservative evangelical background. (Whether he should be seen as a bellwether, the Pied Piper, or a modern Moses may not yet be clear.)

Nevertheless, the Beegle type of criticism is the natural outgrowth of a diminished view of the Bible. It represents the thinking of the contemporary theologian who has been "liberated" from any high view of the Bible's inspiration and consequent authority. This freedom can be traced back to the rationalistic Protestant theologians of post-Reformation Europe and even further. On the road to the exaltation of human reason and science above the authority of the Bible, these theologians came to deny miracles and the transmission of propositional truth from God to man. Obviously, therefore, there was no place for predictive prophecy, which needs room for God to break into history.

It is interesting to note that rationalistic Protestant theologians picked up one denial of the predictive element in Bible prophecy from a Jesuit named Alcazar in the early seventeenth century. Alcazar's preterist principles of prophetic interpretation denied the key elements of the historicist school that had undergirded the Reformation. Preterism had no place for the predicted historical progression of world powers from Daniel's day to the Second Advent, nor for the year-day principle upon which such a progression is based. What had been seen as predictive was now pushed back into the beginnings of the Christian era or even to events of Daniel's own time, as determined by critical scholarship. But such views do not make the headlines today.

In contrast, many evangelicals hold to the predictive element in Bible prophecy and to the Biblical signs of an imminent Second Advent, and these views do make the news. Evangelicals have continued to hold a high view of the Bible's inspiration

and authority, leading them to believe in the ability of Bible prophecy to predict coming events and conditions. Many seem to have abandoned, however, the historicist principles of prophetic interpretation followed by Christ, the apostles, the early church, the Reformation, and the great Advent Awakening of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They seem to see God's prophetic clock stopped from the days of Christ to the end of the age.

In his 1980 book, *The Gathering Storm: World Events and the Return of Christ*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) Harold Lindsell, former editor of *Christianity Today*, refers to the history of the scheme of prophetic interpretation prevalent in evangelical circles today. He traces its futuristic principles back to John N. Darby, a founder of the Plymouth Brethren (a small but active conservative, back-to-the-Bible movement in England and Ireland in the 1800s and early in this century). But Lindsell makes no reference to those futurist principles that antedated Darby's views. These were the work of another Jesuit, Ribera, at the time of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Ribera's views had no evident impact upon Protestants for 300 years. But Samuel R. Maitland (1792-1866), of the Church of England, and several other interpreters eventually became the link between Ribera and Darby. (For a detailed study, see L. E. Froom's *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols., Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C., 1946-1954). Ribera's key prophetic interpretation was to see the antichrist as a single individual who would rule for a brief span of years at the end of the Christian age, just before the Second Coming.

One must respect Dr. Lindsell's frankness in discussing the multiple variations on this basic evangelical view as he canvasses their seemingly irreconcilable differences, as well as alternatives. He recognizes some of the "impossibilities" of the various interpretations given involving the rapture, the tribulation, the antichrist, the Jews (their future holocaust, their "conversion" and consequent mission), the resurrections, the judgments, the distinction between Israel and the church, et cetera.

Most impressive to a Seventh-day Adventist believer in Bible prophecy and its historic fulfillment is the complete absence of any reference by Lindsell to the role of the papacy—whether past, present, or future—in that fulfillment. (The state of Israel is given great prominence today, as though the Old Testament Hebrews were still God's chosen people and the actual land of Palestine still under God's covenant promise.) Likewise, the Seventh-day Adventist is struck by the fact that Lindsell nowhere explains, and scarcely alludes to, the gap of some 2,000 years that futurists place between the close of the first sixty-nine of Daniel's seventy weeks of years (assigned by Daniel to the Jewish people) and the seventieth week. Of course, the line of modern interpreters—including such well-known personalities as Harry A. Ironside, C. I. Scofield (of Scofield Bible fame), Martin R. DeHaan, and John Walvoord—has had its modifying impact on Darby's basic view and helps to account for some of the internal variations and tensions.

Where do we, as Seventh-day Adventists, stand in the spectrum of prophetic interpretation, and what bearing has this position had upon our view of the Second Coming and its imminence?

At the outset, let it be said that we have always held a high view of the authority of Scripture, based not upon a theory of verbal inspiration but upon the belief that chosen men of God were His channels for making propositional truth known to man. For us this revelation carries the same authority as would God's audible voice. We likewise are among the few remaining champions of the historicist system of prophetic interpretation.

So when Jesus Christ is recorded as promising His disciples, "I will come again" (John 14:3, cf. Acts 1:9-11; Titus 2:13), we take His statement at its face value. We look for the same Jesus who ascended to His Father in the company of angel hosts and encompassed with clouds to come back as He went away—literally, personally, visibly, and for specific purposes (see Rev. 1:7; Matt. 26:63, 64; 2 Thess. 2:8).

When the Lord spoke to His disciples of Jerusalem's coming destruction, they asked Him to explain to them when those things would happen and what signs there would

Many evangelicals seem to have abandoned the historicist principles of prophetic interpretation followed by Christ, the apostles, the early church, the Reformation, and the great Advent Awakening.

be of the nearing of His return. He then gave them the Olivet discourse recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Mercifully blending items that touched both Jerusalem's end and the end of the world, the Lord nevertheless placed His return *beyond* a period of great tribulation, which, being shortened in mercy to the church, would be linked to signs in the sun, moon, stars and to worsening conditions on the earth. And all this He presented just before He was to die in the midst of the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy, causing sacrifices to cease as acceptable to God and commissioning His disciples to continue offering God's covenant to the Jewish people for another three and one-half years before turning to the Gentiles (see Dan. 9:27; Matt. 27:51; Heb. 2:3, 4). The Lord recognized this application of Daniel's seventieth week when at the beginning of His ministry He proclaimed, "The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15, cf. Dan. 9:25, 26).

Thus, in Matthew 24, Christ was pointing down centuries of time during which the persecuting "little horn" of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 7:7, 8, 19-27) would bring its wrath against "the saints of the most High" for three and one-half times, or 42 months or 1260 day-years. The testimony of nearly all Reformation interpreters was that this "little horn" (the beast of Revelation 13, the antichrist of John's epistles) was none other than the papacy. [For a perceptive analysis of this viewpoint and its continuing validity, see "The Pope as Antichrist: An Anachronism?" by David P. Scaer, *Christianity Today*, October 23, 1981.—Editors.] The record of her persecutions of dissenters is history. She dominated the world, both religious and secular, for 1260 day-years—approximately from 533-538 to 1793-1798 A.D.—with the power to persecute reduced before her wound unto death inflicted by the French in the aftermath of the Revolution (see Matt. 24:21, 22; Rev. 13:3). This wound was to be, and has been, remarkably healed, as witnessed by her world influence today.

This, then, is the historical setting for the great Advent Awakening following the turn of the nineteenth century. The application of the day-year principle to the 1260 days and their widely recognized termination gave new confidence to the historicist school, which then turned its focus upon the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14—the longest of the Biblical time prophecies. Their expositors reached the dramatic conclusion that these "days" would end and their Lord would come around 1843 or 1844!

England and Europe were actually the first great centers of Advent testimony. Societies, missions, publications, and conferences involved scores of trained and prominent men, clerical and secular. The light of Old World Advent expectation seemed to fade when a "tongues move-

ment" broke out in Edward Irving's church in London and when witnesses began to urge efforts to convert the Jews and to effect their return to Palestine. As the movement declined in Europe, it gained in North America.

Lindsell refers to "these so-called prophets [who] when proved to be in error, have introduced fanciful explanations to account for their disappointments" (Lindsell, *op. cit.*, p. 13). Actually, the witnesses in various countries, writing in different languages, were well aware of the warning against fixing the day and hour of the Advent. Initially they were well content with the year! But despite their disappointment, the fact remains that their calculations were based on the historicist system of prophetic interpretation. They were only taking the next developing step in the pursuit of present prophetic truth. [The followers of William Miller, in New England, gave consideration to the preterist principles advocated in their day by the historical-critical expositors of the Bible, but consciously turned from that system. See P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), pp. 63-77].

The fact is that a sense of the imminence of Christ's return became particularly acute following the epochal events of the French Revolution, the dissolution of the papal states, and the taking of the pope prisoner in 1798. The great time-line prophecies of Daniel and Revelation were widely understood and confirmed by events with worldwide impact. A great wave of interest in the predictive prophecies of the Bible, especially the 1260 and 2300 days, resulted in a worldwide proclamation of the imminent return of Christ, the hour of His judgment being come (see Rev. 14:6, 7).

It is true that the cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:14) at the close of the 2300 days was understood at that time to refer to the cleansing of the earth by fire at the return of Christ. But that does not diminish the fact that Daniel's "time of the end" (cf. verses 17, 19; 11:35; 12:7-9) had already come and that those portions of his prophecy (paralleled also in Revelation) that had been sealed or closed were now open. As a result, the greatest proclama-

tion yet seen of an imminent Advent was underway to all corners of the world.

That message, represented by the three angels' announcements of Revelation 14, began to be and has continued to be proclaimed from that time forward. Those messages culminate in a twofold result—the development of a people revealing the character of God through faith in Jesus Christ and the return of that same Lord and Saviour to reap the harvest of both the redeemed and the lost (verses 12-20). With all time prophecies thus completed, prophetic time is no more. With the revelator, we await, but not in idleness, the Lord's soon return.

The return of Jesus Christ, opening the climactic events of the millenium (see Revelation 20), provides the all-sufficient solution to every problem that sin has created on this earth. The resurrection of the saints of all ages solves the problem of death (see 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54). The eventual destruction of all rebellious souls, including Satan, will solve the problem of sin (see Rev. 20:7-15). The creation of a renewed heaven and earth solves all ecological consequences of sin (see chap. 21:1-6). The tree and river of life (chap. 22:1, 2) bring the gift of immortality to the redeemed—a gift postponed by Adam's sin (cf. Gen. 3:17-19 with Rev. 22:3). What else? Who can even suggest what else? The prophets give us glimpses. But that is only the beginning. To dwell in God's presence and experience an eternity of opportunity and means to develop all that is noble and right will be the joy and fellowship of the redeemed forever.

We are waiting. Our Lord suggested that we would (see Matt. 25:1-13). But the signs of Christ's return are not diminishing; they are growing stronger and more universal daily (see 2 Tim. 3:1-5). We need to live as though He could come tomorrow (see 1 Thess. 5:1-6). We need to plan His work as for a lifetime ahead. As the nobleman said to the servants entrusted with his goods, "'Trade with these till I come'" (Luke 19:13, R.S.V.).*

Yes, my college singing group was right. Jesus is coming soon!

*From the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

We look for the same Jesus who ascended to His Father in the company of angel hosts and encompassed with clouds to come back as He went away—literally, personally, visibly, and for specific purposes.

Christians generally agree that Scripture points to a period of great trouble at the end of time. But does God intend to remove His church prior to that tribulation, or does He promise divine protection so that the church may endure it and emerge triumphant? Does it matter? The author feels there is a consistent pattern in the New Testament and that a misunderstanding here can cause the church to be unprepared for her final crisis.

Hans K. LaRondelle



The church and the great tribulation: protection or escape?

Christ never promised His church a pretribulation rapture out of the world. On the contrary, in His supplication to His Father He says, "My prayer is not that you take them [His disciples and those who would afterward believe on Him through their witness] out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one" (John 17:15).*

Protection in tribulation

The contrast between a rapture 'out of the world' and protection within the world 'from the evil one' is clear. Christ explicitly rejects in this text any thought of a rapture, either secret or public, that would remove His church from the earth while leaving the world to continue its existence inhabited only by the unrighteous. He requests from His Father something else: that God will "protect them from [tērein . . . ek, "to guard," "to keep from"] the evil one." Jesus explained the necessity of God's keeping power: "I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name" (verse 11). God's keeping or protecting power is necessary because the church exists in the sphere of the evil one.

In Revelation 3:10, Christ promises the church in Philadelphia: "Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial

that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth."

Robert H. Gundry comments perceptively on these texts both in John and in Revelation: "The plain implication is that were they absent from the world with the Lord, the keeping would not be necessary. Similarly, were the Church absent from the hour of testing, keeping would not be necessary."¹

J. F. Walvoord disagrees. He argues: "The thought of the Greek [tērein ek] is to 'keep from,' not to 'keep in,' so that the Philadelphia church is promised deliverance before the hour [of trial] comes."² This appeal to the thought of the Greek is refuted, however, by Jesus' use of the same Greek verb in John 17:15, where Christ places this expression ("to keep from") in full contrast with the idea of removing the church out of the world. Instead, Christ promises protection that results in a victorious rescue by God's keeping power. The emphasis is not on the period of tribulation, but on the victorious emergence of the saints out of it. Of the great, countless multitude before the throne of God, one of the elders speaking to John declares, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation" (Rev. 7:14). The stress is not on escape from the tribulation, but on a victorious emergence out of it after having passed through it.

To say, as Walvoord does, that Christ's promise in Revelation 3:10 indicates a rapture of the church before the hour, or time, of tribulation is to shift Christ's emphasis from the experience of the

church within that time to the period of tribulation itself. But such a rationalistic distinction fails to catch the idiom in which an "hour" refers not to mere passage of time but to a prominent experience or trial (see John 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1).³

Christ promises to keep the Philadelphia church from the eschatological hour of trial. If this indicates a pretribulation rapture of the church out of the world, why does not God's similar promise to ancient Israel concerning the Babylonian exile indicate a pretribulation rapture from the Babylonian trial? "'It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it'" (Jer. 30:7). This text merely promises deliverance from the time of Jacob's distress after Israel has gone through the exile. Neither does Revelation 3:10 require a pretribulation rapture for the Philadelphia church, but rather it offers divine protection within the testing tribulation and persecution.

Matthew 24

One of dispensationalism's main tenets is the doctrine of the imminence of the secret rapture and coming of Christ, "that is, it could happen any day, any moment."⁴ Gundry explains more fully: "By common consent imminence means that so far as we know no predicted event will necessarily precede the coming of Christ. The concept incorporates three essential elements: suddenness, unexpectedness or incalculability, and a possibility of occurrence at any moment."⁵

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Obviously such a doctrine of imminency creates unalterable tension with Biblical admonitions to watch for the apocalyptic signs heralding the approach of the day of the Lord. Walvoord even places us before the false dilemma of looking either for the pretribulation coming of Christ *or* to "look for signs." He states: "The exhortation to look for 'the glorious appearing of Christ to His own' (Titus 2:13) loses its significance if the tribulation must intervene first. Believers in that case should look for signs."⁶

The idea of imminency is certainly incompatible with the belief in a posttribulation coming of Christ, while an expectant attitude toward the Lord's return is in full harmony with the Biblical admonitions to watch for the appointed signs. Luke, writing for the Gentile church, transmits Christ's outline of future events from the destruction of Jerusalem until His return, including signs in the sun, moon, and stars, as well as chaotic conditions and tribulation in the whole world (see Luke 21). Then the Lord advises: "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (verse 28).

According to Christ's warning, the church must look for His coming *while* they watch the predicted signs and experience the tribulation. Such signs do not harmonize with the imminency doctrine, but stimulate an attitude of looking forward to Christ's parousia after the events of the tribulation.

It may be a surprise to many to learn that except for verses 40 and 41, dispensationalism applies the whole prophetic discourse of Jesus in Matthew 24 to national Israel only and not to the church of Christ! Walvoord states, "The godly remnant of the tribulation are pictured as Israelites, not members of the church."⁷ However, Christ-believing Israelites become part of the church through baptism into the death of Christ. In order to eliminate the force of this conclusion, dispensationalism simply declares the whole chapter applicable to the Jews only. Thus, according to this view, "this gospel of the kingdom" (verse 14) refers to the restoration of David's national kingdom, and the tribulation of the saints in connection with the fall of Jerusalem (verse 15-22) applies to Jewish Christians alone. Consequently, the rapture of the elect at the parousia of Christ (verse 31) involves only believing Israelites.

Yet the context of Matthew 24 clearly indicates that Christ addressed His prophetic discourse to His *apostles*, who stand unquestionably as representatives of His church, not of national Israel, now rejected by God as a theocracy (see chaps. 18:15-18; 21:43; 23:37, 38; Eph. 2:20). Consequently, the whole Matthew 24 discourse relates to the church, and the saints in the tribulation predicted there belong to the church of which the apostles

were the first witnesses. This is confirmed by the fact that both Mark and Luke repeat Christ's discourse for the Gentile church (Mark 13; Luke 21). The "gospel of the kingdom" is exactly the gospel Paul preached to both Gentiles and Jews (see Acts 20:25; 28:23, 31; Col. 1:13).

Christ's prophetic outline of future events in Matthew 24 does not contain a pretribulation rapture of the church. On the contrary, the gathering of the elect by God's angels at Christ's parousia, at the sound of the trumpet (verse 31), is unmistakably the rapture of the church after the tribulation. "Immediately after the distress of those days" "the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory" (verses 29, 30). Luke's parallel description of this apocalyptic redemption confirms this idea: "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21: 28).

Matthew 24:31, "He will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect," refers to both Jewish and Gentile Christians in the gospel church who will be gathered at Christ's coming *after* the preceding tribulation. The general term *the elect* is not restricted to Jews (see 1 Peter 1:1; 2:9). It is remarkable that dispensationalism wants to apply the first 31 verses of Matthew 24 exclusively to national Israel and yet singles out verses 40 and 41 as applying to the rapture of the church. Even if one wants to connect the expression, in these verses, "one will be taken" to the rapture of the church (which has some linguistic support in John 14:1-3, where the root verb *paralambanein* is the same as that used in Matthew 24:40, 41), this rapture is still described in connection with the rapture of the elect (verse 31)—in other words, the posttribulation parousia of Christ. We concur, therefore, with the conclusion of G. E. Ladd, "The Rapture of the church before the Tribulation is an *assumption*; it is not taught in the Olivet Discourse."⁸

Thessalonians and the rapture

A twofold confirmation of the posttribulation rapture can be found in Paul's words describing Christ's parousia as accompanied by "the voice of the archangel and . . . the trumpet call of God" (1

Thess. 4:16). The only archangel mentioned by name in the Bible is Michael (Jude 9), who is connected in Daniel 12:1, 2 with the resurrection of the saints *after* the time of distress, or final tribulation. J. F. Walvoord is sufficiently impressed with this testimony of the posttribulation deliverance and resurrection of the saints in the Old Testament (cf. Isa. 25:8; 26:14-21) that he concedes "the point that the resurrection of Old Testament saints is after the tribulation."⁹ He feels compelled, however, to divorce this resurrection completely from the translation and resurrection of the church, because "the Old Testament saints are never described by the phrase 'in Christ.'"¹⁰

This literalistic argument is untenable, because Paul addresses most of his epistles to the saints, the typical Old Testament description for God's covenant people (cf. 1 Peter 2:9), and considers, as well, the Old Testament saints to be believers in the Messiah, or Christ (see 1 Cor. 10:1-4; cf. Heb. 11:24-26). Paul's deliberate statement to the Thessalonians that at the time of the rapture of the church the voice of the Archangel (Israel's Defender) will sound is a sufficiently clear confirmation that the resurrection of both the Old Testament and the New Testament saints will occur simultaneously as *one* resurrection (see John 5:28, 29). Walvoord calls this argument "not conclusive proof." But what else does Paul mean by saying that the voice of Israel's Defender, the Archangel, will be heard at the rapture and resurrection of Christ's church? Paul's further statement in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 that "the trumpet call of God" will sound at that time is additional support for the same idea. Isaiah predicted that "a great trumpet will sound" (Isa. 27:13) at the end of Israel's exile, or tribulation, and "in that day . . . you, O Israelites, will be gathered up one by one" (verse 12). This prophecy will be gloriously fulfilled, suggests Paul, at the dramatic parousia of Christ and the rapture of His church.

J. F. Walvoord also claims that 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 is "no support for posttribulationism" because Paul was only "demonstrating that the predicted Day of the Lord was still future," and that the Thessalonian Christians should not worry "that their present persecutions were those anticipated for this period (of the Day of the Lord)."¹¹ A closer look at the Biblical passage and its context reveals, however,

Matthew 24 does not contain a pretribulation rapture of the church. On the contrary, the gathering of the elect by God's angels at Christ's parousia is unmistakably the rapture of the church after the tribulation.

that much more is involved. Paul writes explicitly to correct a false teaching (apparently set forth under Paul's own name) that the day of the Lord had already begun or at least was so imminent that it could occur at any moment. This idea had alarmed some and led them to quit their daily work to become a burden on others (see chap. 3:6-15). Paul corrects this deception of an any-moment coming of the day of the Lord, or parousia, by reminding the church of His oral teaching about two preceding signs of apocalyptic evil that had to develop in history *before* the day of the Lord would take place (chap. 2:3-5). He makes it clear that at "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" not only will the church be "gathered to him" (verse 1) but also the lawless one (antichrist) will be destroyed "by the splendor of his coming" (verse 8). This clearly implies a posttribulation coming of Christ for His church!

The church and the antichrist

This conclusion is in perfect harmony with the conclusive testimony against a two-phase coming of Christ found in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10. Yet dispensationalism teaches that the church will be secretly gathered to Christ seven years before the antichrist is destroyed by Christ's parousia. Paul's clarifying remarks in 2 Thessalonians 2 effectively refute any such secret rapture. The occasion of our being gathered together to Christ, he says, will also involve simultaneously the destruction of the persecuting antichrist.

The efforts of dispensational writers to escape Paul's rather obvious teaching are curious. Some create an artificial distinction between "the day of Christ" (which they apply to the rapture) and "the day of the Lord" (in their view, the subsequent tribulation for Israel and the judgment of God). But how can the day of the Lord include tribulation by the antichrist when Paul declares that the lawless one will bring his apostasy *before* the day of the Lord?¹² "Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion [*apostasia*] comes first [*prōtos*], and the man of lawlessness is revealed" (2 Thess. 2:3, R.S.V.).†

All accept the conclusion that this lawless one is the apocalyptic antichrist who will cause the great tribulation for the saints of God by his self-deification within the temple of God (verse 4). This apostasy is not an exclusive message for Jews, but is vitally relevant for Christians! Christians should know the antichrist so they need not be confused by a mistaken imminency of the parousia. Then they will watch and see the approach of the day beforehand and be ready for "the day of the Lord."

Evidently the Thessalonians had understood from Paul's First Epistle that they were to be raptured *before* the tribulation (chap. 4:13-18). Gundry states, "The Thessalonians erroneously concluded that

Christ's coming lay in the immediate future, with resultant cessation of work, fanatical excitement, and disorder."¹³ Paul's answer in 2 Thessalonians 2 is a refutation of such an imminency doctrine. The apocalyptic tribulation must come first, *before* the parousia and rapture.

Another effort to avoid the posttribulation advent of Christ is a forced exegesis of *hē apostasia* in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 to denote *not* the apostasy, or rebellion, of the antichrist, but the departure, or rapture, of the church from earth before the antichrist and his tribulation arise. The simple fact is, however, that the term *apostasia* in the New Testament and in the Septuagint is used exclusively for religious defection, a departure from the faith.¹⁴ It never refers to the departure of the church from earth. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3 it is correctly translated as "the rebellion" both in the Revised Standard Version and the New International Version. The definite article *the* before *rebellion* points to a well-known apostasy about which Paul had informed the Thessalonians earlier (verse 5) and which he now explains more fully in the following verses, especially verses 4, 9, and 10. The apocalyptic apostasy, says Paul, will be a deliberate departure from the apostolic faith, a rebellion against God, led by the antichrist. This is the time of the great tribulation for God's faithful people. Paul urges the church to watch for this developing apostasy so that the parousia, or day of the Lord, will not surprise her like a thief (1 Thess. 5:1-6).

Finally, some dispensationalists insist that the mysterious Restrainer of the antichrist (see 2 Thess. 2:6) must be the Holy Spirit working through the church. Thus the Restrainer being "taken out of the way" (verse 7), so that the antichrist will be revealed, would point to the rapture of the church out of the world before the antichrist brings his tribulation on the earth. But R. H. Gundry has convincingly shown that this dispensational exegesis has no foundation either in the immediate context or in the New Testament as a whole. Even if the Holy Spirit will be ultimately withdrawn from an impenitent, wicked world, this does not prove that the church of Christ Jesus will be evacuated from earth to heaven "in a retrogressive step to the Old Testament economy."¹⁵

It is certainly a "fantastic assumption," as J. Wilmot says, for dispensational eschatology to assert that in the *absence* of

the Holy Spirit and the church, and within the "seven" years of the antichrist's reign, "a great multitude which no man can number" shall be converted to Christ from among all nations! Paul's eschatology in 1 and 2 Thessalonians places both the glorious rapture of the church and the simultaneous destruction of the antichrist at the dramatic parousia (see especially 2 Thess. 2:1, 8). This is Paul's teaching of a posttribulation parousia and rapture, based on Christ's outline of events for the Christian dispensation in Matthew 24.¹⁶

When Christians trust in the teaching that they will be raptured to heaven *before* the persecution of the antichrist, how will they be prepared for the coming final test of faith? The danger of pretribulationism is that it instills in the hearts of God's people a false hope and thus fails to prepare the church for her final crisis.

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† From the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

¹ *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), p. 58.

² *The Rapture Question* (Zondervan, 1972), p. 70.

³ *The Church and the Tribulation*, p. 60.

⁴ J. F. Walvoord, *The Return of the Lord* (Zondervan, 1971), p. 80.

⁵ *The Church and the Tribulation*, p. 29. See chapter 3, "Expectation and Imminence," for an excellent response to the dispensational doctrine of imminency.

⁶ *The Rapture Question*, pp. 195, 196.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁸ *The Blessed Hope* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), p. 73.

⁹ *The Rapture Question*, p. 154.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 164, 165.

¹² R. H. Gundry, in *The Church and the Tribulation*, pages 96-99, shows conclusively that the variations "day of Christ" and "day of the Lord" have no different technical meanings. See, for example, see 1 Corinthians 5:5.

¹³ Gundry, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

¹⁴ E. I. Carver, *When Jesus Comes Again* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1979), p. 271. For a more detailed study, see Gundry, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-118.

¹⁵ Gundry, *op. cit.*, 128; see detailed discussion on pp. 122-128.

¹⁶ See G. H. Waterman, "The Sources of Paul's Teaching on the Second Coming of Christ in 1 and 2 Thessalonians," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 18/2 (Spring, 1975), pp. 105-113. He concludes, "The words of Jesus as recorded by Matthew were the source of Paul's teaching."

Paul makes it clear that at "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" not only will the church be "gathered to him" but also the lawless one (antichrist) will be destroyed "by the splendor of his coming."

Twentieth-century man lives in an age of jet travel, spare-part surgery, satellite surveillance, and the promise of a space shuttle. Yet, deep down, man needs a faith, and he knows it. In the midst of his bewildering technological jungle, he is seeking for clear guidance and safe paths. He presents a challenge to us as ministers to demonstrate true Christianity.

Roy E. Graham



Opportunity for miracles

There is, today, a crisis of belief. It has become fashionable to question Christianity's relevance to the decade of the eighties, or at least to ask how it can accommodate to the times. Did Jesus Christ really mean what He said about faith and prayer and the reception of the Holy Spirit's power?

Technology not enough

Such questions of relevancy and effectiveness stab insistently into our consciousness today because in the technological and scientific spheres where men are in control things do work and promises are fulfilled. Men have walked on the moon

and returned. Men live and work after complex spare-part surgery. Jet travel and satellite surveillance have caused the world to shrink, and the development of a space shuttle program may yet further diminish distance. By pressing a few buttons in our own homes we can talk almost instantly to most parts of the world. The result of all this technological skill is that most people will risk their lives on the abilities and productions of their scientific fellow men. But few will risk their lives on the truths behind the Incarnation and Resurrection as did the first Christians.

Yet man is still not really contented or satisfied. His questions are often more wistful than cynical. His quest may be veneered with casualness, but when we are able to peel off the veneer, we find his search is real enough and often desperate, too. Deep down, man needs a faith, and he knows it. In the midst of his bewildering

technological jungle, he is seeking for clear guidance and safe paths. Surrounded by his accumulated comforts and serenaded by the stereophonic music of his favorite performers, he needs something that will do more than just stifle the stabbing questions about life and death.

Sometimes in despair he turns his back on all that technology can provide and seeks a god, even the God, through narcotics, hallucinatory drug trips, or other escape routes. But if he survives he finds himself back under the blazing heat of his self-made scientific suns, longing for protection, power, direction, and a faith commensurate with computerized living.

Genuine Christianity

In another age, what we know as New Testament Christianity proved to be just such a faith. Indeed, it is the evident contrast, between Christianity as we know

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it today and that which stands out in the New Testament record as the original and genuine article, that frustrates our attempts to answer those who question Christianity's relevance to the eighties. Was it simply that the first century was a credulous age? Did the power of superstition control society and so make Christianity's relevance easy? Were people different? Has time altered human nature and needs? Were the first-century proponents of Christianity just ahead of their time in promotional and public-relations techniques? Were the apostles simply slick salesmen or even con men? Was the whole thing a fantasy?

However one approaches those questions, he should remember that at its inception New Testament Christianity was immediately relevant. No one asked that question. What they did ask was for the secret behind its relevance. Notice carefully Acts 4:7-13. An amazing miracle had taken place the day before. The results were clearly evident to all—a crippled man who had endured his infirmity for more than forty years was now walking and leaping in the air, on healed limbs. No one asked whether the preaching of the healers and what they had done was true or relevant. The facts spoke for themselves. The concern was “By what power or by what name did you do this?” (verse 7).^{*} As people observed what had taken place the compelling challenge was simply expressed: What is the secret of your obvious dynamism? Who is the source of your undoubted authority?

The record of this remarkable event is in Acts 3:1-10. Note both the content and the contrasts. Peter and John are pursuing the religious life—they are coming to the Temple for prayer and worship. The beggar has been a cripple as long as he can remember. Always he must depend on others. He had heard about the Miracle Worker, Jesus of Nazareth, who often seemed to be in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Finally a few friends brought him to the city, but when they arrived they were greeted with the news that the Nazarene had been crucified! The cripple's disappointment was keen. Now he was irreparably doomed to be deposited daily at the Temple gate to continue begging. The gate was the Beautiful Gate, but he was certainly a less than beautiful sight.

As Peter and John approached, he sensed something different about them. They responded to his plea. He waited expectantly for the coveted coin. And then came the disappointment. No money was available; nothing material was to be offered. But what was this? “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!” (verse 6)! Faith broke through. Physical strengthening was followed by spiritual awakening, and the miracle of transformation took place. This previously lame, destitute individual became healthy and independent, with a new perspective on

life. Now he could cope through the power of God. No wonder that his healing caused consternation to those religious ones who saw no such power in their own lives, and excitement among those who were searching for the genuine.

Lessons for today

There is in this New Testament incident a challenge to us as ministers of that same gospel some 2,000 years later. It is the challenge to demonstrate *true Christianity*. Today is the opportunity for miracles. What does the Holy Spirit teach us from this event?

1. Amid the round of religious duties and concerns there is the daily, stabbing need of lame humanity.

This is not a new need; men are born this way. All are sinners, and no merely human solution will meet their need. Fellow beings, less affected at least physically, are willing to toss them a coin, to urge welfare authorities to provide better facilities, to seek to improve their lives in various small ways, but none of these provisions reaches the root of the problem. Lame, needy humanity must experience a spiritual miracle. Thus when Peter is challenged for an explanation, he affirms, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (chap. 4:12).

We may move people into new environments, we may seek to rehabilitate them by varying methods, but the only cure for lame mankind is to accept the offer God has made through Jesus Christ.

2. Humanity seeks the solution to its problems in material things.

This is what the lame man asked for. This is the direction in which people look for security. Some recognize that their need goes beyond the material. But then they become discouraged and turn again to the “silver and gold.” The teaching of Christianity's Founder epitomized the inadequacy of this approach. Jesus affirmed that “a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15). There is more to life than cents and dollars, houses and automobiles, furniture and color television, boats and vacation homes, educational success and sound insurance policies. The only solution for mankind's lameness is in the miracle that is performed by receiving Christ's power into the life.

3. Lame humanity is at the Beautiful Gate—outside the church.

This is the church's opportunity, the opportunity for miracles. Really there should not be “cripples” inside the church, for Christ makes whole. There may be those who have stumbled and broken a limb or who have in some way temporarily injured themselves, and to these we should minister. But our constant challenge is to the needy world. Outreach is not optional. The work of restoration is divinely decreed.

4. The agents to meet the needs of humanity are fellow humans who have been transformed.

God's plan is that those who have themselves experienced the transforming and revivifying power of grace in their own lives will share this experience with others in need. “I give you what I have” (Acts 3:6), Peter said. The companionship of Christ in Peter's life proved to be sufficient. As a minister of the gospel, what do you have to give others? You and I must have something to offer, and we must know it works. As our understanding of values is transformed, so will we present this to those in need. “The gospel we present for the saving of souls must be the gospel by which our own souls are saved.”—Ellen White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 469. Note that Peter took the one in need by the hand and helped him up. While God accomplishes the task by His Spirit, the human instrumentality has a part to play also. We cannot accomplish our mission by office appointments or phoneathons. You and I must be personally involved in direct contact with needy souls.

The only cure for lame humanity is to receive Jesus Christ as Lord. Spiritual cripples will never be set on their feet by any other person or by any other means. There is no gospel of life except the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Genuine Christianity is as relevant to the eighties as it was to the first-century world of the apostles. Our task, then, as Seventh-day Adventist ministers, is to demonstrate in our lives and in our ministries that the opportunity for miracles still exists.

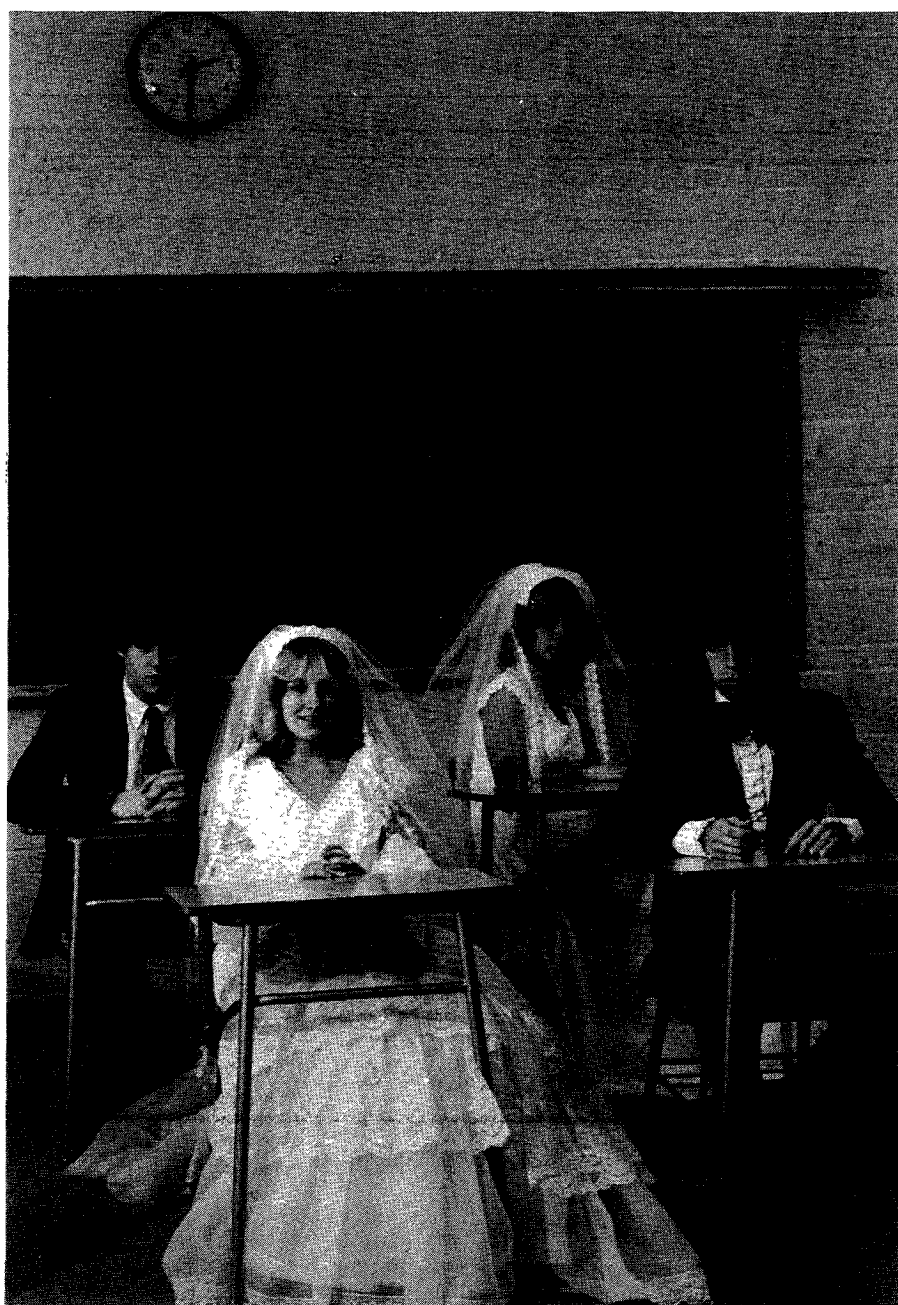
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We may move people into new environments, we may seek to rehabilitate them by varying methods, but the only cure for lame man is to accept the offer God has made through Jesus Christ.

Good marriages don't just happen

Marriages may be "made in heaven," but they are coming apart in ever increasing numbers right here on earth! The church itself is not immune, as any pastor knows who has been in parish ministry for more than a few years. Is there anything we can do to slow the escalating divorce rate? Part of the answer may lie in what happens before the marriage takes place.

Ron Flowers



If you are a typical pastor who has been in a particular parish for a few years, you're seeing some young couples you married a few years ago now beginning to show signs of marital difficulties. The long fingers of divorce have probably reached into your pews more than once or twice to snatch apart couples that you never dreamed were susceptible. You feel bad about such situations, and powerless at the same time. "What can I really do?" you ask yourself.

To begin with, you can determine that every couple planning for marriage will have the benefit of some kind of marriage preparation program. In the premarriage period, as well as in the early months of their life together, the foundation of the couple's marital relationship is being laid. A well-designed premarriage program can be a positive help in getting the married years started right.

Pastors and counselors attempting to institute premarriage programs face several difficult challenges, however. Premarital couples tend to be in a state of "bliss"—emotionally detached from reality and not very teachable. Many come through the teen-age years with a feeling that they have arrived and therefore can handle quite competently any situation that might arise. A romantic view of love and marriage frequently blocks the couple from any discussion of deep relationship issues. They believe that problems they may encounter later (or may even be having premaritally) will surely be driven away by their love. In fact, many do not want to be confronted with anything that might in any way jeopardize or threaten their relationship and eventual wedding.

Further, couples are not prone to turn to the church or the ministry for this kind of preparation. Pastors frequently complain, "Couples don't come to us until they're ready for us to conduct their wedding."

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Many couples simply do not expect or allow for any input from their pastor on the matter of their marital relationship. They think of the church only as a place for the ceremony, and of the pastor only as the one who somehow in that moment affixes God's seal of approval. In some cases it may be that the couple *are* willing to receive such help, but not from the pastor, because they feel they cannot trust him with such intimate matters. The most probable reason is that pastors have not generally seen the importance of the church's becoming closely involved with the private family lives of their people. Therefore we have not prepared for, neither cultivated an attitude of acceptance and appreciation of, this kind of ministry in our congregations.

Some overburdened pastors have tried to do marriage preparation and, encountering these obstacles, have despaired. The results, even when they have been able to get the couple to sit still for some premarital work, have often not seemed all that rewarding. The future is hopeful, though, for current studies and mounting evidence are providing valuable information on approaches that *are* effective. In addition, a clearer picture of the marriage scene is emerging; consequently the kind of ministry premarrieds need is becoming more evident.

Why is preparation necessary?

Marriage is a transition point. Much study is being given to the phases of life and the change points that individuals encounter throughout their lifetimes. Students of these life-cycle stages have identified some built in, predictable crises that can and often do occur. Becoming married constitutes one of these transition points. We minister most effectively to couples when we alert them to the new experiences in their lives they are about to encounter. A marriage preparation program affords an excellent opportunity to do this.

Marriage is changing. Couples entering marriage today have considerably different expectations of it than has been the case in the past. Marriage is undergoing a change from the traditional style, characterized by a definite, authoritarian, hierarchical role structure, with specific duties and obligations, to what is known as companionship marriage, which is more equalitarian, democratic, and flexible in its role structure. Whereas external social pressures were a strong factor in holding the traditional marriage together, the companionship model depends much more on love and affection, intimate communication, and mutual interest for unity. Commitment is perceived differently—it is more to another individual than to the institution of marriage itself. In short, one does not marry and settle down, but one enters upon a lifelong work to achieve a mutually harmonious relationship. Marriage preparation gives couples an opportunity, in a nonproblem time, to consider

carefully the model their marriage will follow.

Marriage requires skills. Learning how to be a husband or a wife and how to manage a relationship as intimate as marriage requires skills in what has been called interpersonal competency. These are special skills for achieving relational growth, in-depth communication, and conflict resolution. They are far more necessary in contemporary marriage than ever before. And they do not come naturally to us—they must be learned. If couples have not acquired these prior to engagement, they ought at least be afforded the opportunity of being exposed to them and developing as much proficiency as possible before marriage.

Christian marriage is waning. In many minds Christianity is allied with the traditional, hierarchical model of marriage. Hence, with the changes in marriage patterns, contemporary couples do not readily look to the church for guidance and authenticity for their marriage. The challenge to the church is to demonstrate that the Biblical concepts of marriage as covenant, one-flesh, mutual submission, servant-headship, unconditional love, spiritual gifts in the family, forgiveness, and reconciliation are not old-fashioned and outdated, but are in fact the real keys to fulfilled and lasting marriage. If marriage is to maintain its distinctive Christian characteristics, we in the church must make the effort to give these gospel principles contemporary expression, help couples understand their meaning, and give practical instruction as to how they can be integrated into their personal lives.

Three basic approaches

Ventures into the premarriage preparation field and studies conducted within the past decade are helping us to realize that the format followed in premarital work has a lot to do with how successful we will be. David Mace outlines three basic approaches to the task.¹ With the first of these, the "facts of life" approach, we are all familiar. This assumes that the primary need of the couple is for information and facts about the various aspects of married life and that the best way to communicate these is thorough advice-giving, information-sharing sessions of one type or another. Usually these are in a one-on-two setting, with the pastor and the couple alone.

This was the standard procedure I followed in my early ministry. Having had no training in this area and no model to follow, and with my priorities elsewhere, I would devote about two hours to each couple a week or so before the wedding, working out the details of the ceremony and then, in whatever time was left, sharing my philosophy and views on such things as family worship, the couples' relationship to the church, finances, and in-law relationships. I didn't have much to

say about the whole matter of communication; I studiously avoided talking about conflict (and anything about which they might get into conflict in my presence right then) and hoped they wouldn't bring up the topic of sex!

On those occasions when a pastor could bring together more than one couple, a more sophisticated version of the one-on-two—the premarital lecture series—has frequently been the style used. Concerning these, David H. Olson states that, though well-conceived and presented, they have been found to produce little in terms of attitudinal change. A further negative of this style is that couples are frequently turned off rather than excited about the need and value of future marriage enrichment and counseling.²

Others, writes Mace, do premarital counseling, working with the couple through specific difficulties in their relationship about which they have asked for help. Although the term has been loosely used for all approaches, strictly speaking it connotes the need for some kind of therapy or quasi-therapy to straighten out the couples' attitudes and thinking. As such it carries a certain stigma that repels many couples rather than encouraging them to engage in premarital preparation.

The third approach suggested by Mace (and the one he feels is most effective) is to help the couple to make a careful evaluation of themselves, of each other, and of their relationship. Some educational aspects may augment this and some counseling may grow out of it, but the central work is a discovery of themselves by the couple. This way of dealing with the couple builds on their usual willingness to invest in an understanding and enhancement of the relationship they are now enjoying, the dividends of which they will, of course, take with them into marriage. It can be carried out in such a way that the couple, who so often resist any kind of input from anyone during prewedding days, discover by themselves areas in which they are ignorant and unskilled or need advice and counsel. They may be stimulated to consider the deeper aspects of their relationship and develop a thirst for knowledge and skills that will meet their needs.

Happily a number of fine books, cassettes, workbooks, and other materials now exist from which the local pastor may draw to lead a couple into this kind of premarital exploration. The bibliography on page 20 suggests some of those that are available. Among these resources are several good inventories that lead a couple into a evaluation of themselves, each other, and their relationship. Although inventories differ in their style and comprehensiveness, the basic format is a questionnaire that may use a variety of methods of response (short written answers, multiple choice, agree or disagree, rating) to a series of questions and/or

statements. Topics generally include self-concept, love, communication, religious expectations, sex, finance, in-laws, anger and conflict, family planning, values, and goals. The inventory may be used unaided or in sessions with a pastor/counselor. Such an instrument frequently opens the way for important self-disclosure on the part of the prospective bride and groom and leads to a deepening (or in some cases a terminating) of their relationship.

Engaged couples also exhibit a willingness to learn from their peers. Consequently, opportunities to get together in group-sharing with other couples are helpful. Mace, Olson, and others also report that premarital couples can be trained in skills of communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution, and the results of such training carry over into marriage.³ Such an innovative program is carried on by Edward Bader (assistant professor of family and community medicine at the University of Toronto) and his colleagues. Their Learning to Live Together course capitalizes on the fact that newlyweds are more receptive and teachable than pre-marrieds. Bader divides the program into two parts—the first part (covering communication, family backgrounds, finances, and sexuality) offered before marriage; the last part (changing roles in marriage, resolving conflicts, building a better relationship) six months to a year after the wedding. The format is small-group discussion based on videotapes.⁴

What pastors can do

What can be done to interest couples and to elevate premarriage preparation as a priority item? Pastors can set a more receptive climate in the church through preaching, visiting, and informal conversation. They can encourage premarital work to be done in youth classes. Something positive could be done even in the children's classes to help set the stage for further preparation in the teen-age years. More needs to be done in the homes of the young people themselves; parents may need classes on how to prepare their children and youth for marriage. Overworked and busy pastors can utilize the spiritual gifts and professional training of members in the church who can take the leadership in marriage preparation for engaged couples. Pastors I talked with also felt that they needed to have closer relationships with the teens and young adults in their congregations, so that when these young men and women consider marriage there will be a natural tendency to look to the pastor for guidance.

All of this suggests that a pastor may shape the attitudes of his congregation not only toward premarriage preparation but also toward the whole matter of relationships in the family, as well as in the church. Is he warm and friendly? Is he an intimate person with whom one could trust the delicate matters of the soul—its happiness and joys, as well as its doubts, conflicts, and perchance negative emo-

tions? How much people feel they can trust him will directly affect whether or not they come to him for such things as premarital guidance and preparation and whether they follow his leading in the development and maintenance of relationships in their homes and marriages.

The pastor who can be "vulnerable" himself stands a good chance of leading premarital couples into the kind of experiences necessary for them to launch into marriage from a solid platform. By his willingness to be open, to love and accept unconditionally, the pastor gives a certain permission for the couple to do the same with each other. Having created for the couple such a climate before their marriage, the pastor paves the way for a relationship of confidence and trust between the couple and the church that will prove of inestimable value in sustaining their marriage in the days ahead.

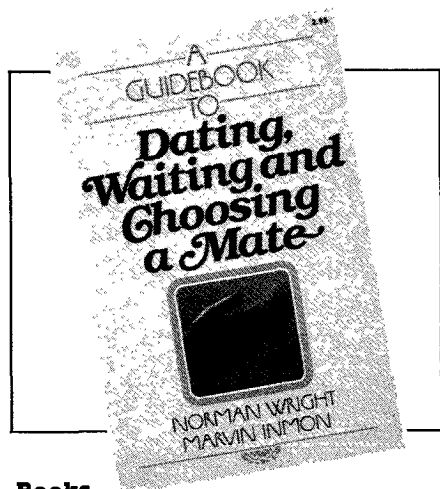
¹ David Mace, *Getting Ready for Marriage* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), pp. 9, 10.

² "How Effective Is Marriage Preparation?" Paper presented at the Toward Family Wellness Conference, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Oct. 18, 1981, pp. 5, 6.

³ Mace, "The Critical First Year," *Marriage Enrichment—The Newsletter of the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment* (Winston-Salem, November-December, 1978); Olson, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁴ Edward Bader, Robert Riddle, and Carole Sinclair, "Do Marriage Preparation Programs Really Help? A Five-Year Study" (unpublished report presented at the annual meeting of the National Council on Family Relations, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Oct. 16, 1981).

Bibliography



Books

Dobbins, Richard D. *You Can Find A Good Mate*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1981. 32 pages.

The author covers factors involved in mate selection and how spiritual principles apply. Good bibliography at the end.

Drescher, John M. *You Can Plan a Good*

Marriage. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1979. 30 pages.

Sixty-one pithy statements about marriage, with a discussion statement or question for the couple to consider following each one. An excellent premarital checklist.

Eyrich, Howard A. *Three to Get Ready*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1979. 147 pages.

Subtitled *A Christian Premarital Counseling Manual*, this book approaches premarriage preparation from the more traditional, directive counseling approach. Seven sessions are outlined in detail, with expanded notes on the pastor's presentation. It includes a short section on the theology of premarriage counseling, an extended section on the use and interpretation of the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis, along with scriptural responses to it, a 48-item questionnaire, and an annotated bibliography.

Hine, James R. "Will You Make a Wise Marriage Choice?" Danville, Illinois: Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1978. 12 pages.

An inventory with some sixty thought-provoking questions on seven major areas—family background, ideas about marriage and home life, personality interaction, compatibility, economic factors, sex attitudes and practices, and love.

Mace, David R. *Getting Ready for Marriage*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1972. 128 pages.

This book has the flavor of a self-help guide to marriage preparation—penetrating questions to be considered and valuable insights on potential trouble spots in marriage.

Marriage Education. Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1979. 148 pages, loose-leaf with binder.

Articles, exercises, cassettes, and testing materials that may be used by pastors/counselors as a structured program in six premarital and one post-wedding session or as resource material. The twelve-part "Preparing for Marriage Inventory" forms the nucleus of the discussions between pastor/counselor and couple.

McDonald, P. J. "Marriage Expectation Inventory," Form I (for engaged couples). Saluda, North Carolina: Family Life Publications, 1976. 8 pages.

Fifty-eight questions on nine vital areas—love in marriage, communication in marriage, freedom in marriage, sex in marriage, money, selfishness, religious expectations, relatives, expectations related to children. Respondents provide written answers on separate forms.

Oates, Wayne E., and Wade Rowatt. *Before You Marry Them*. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1976. 137 pages.

Includes premarital pastoral care and counseling, the congregation and premarital care, the pastor's function in premarital care, the changing context and goals of premarital counseling, and the family context in preparation for marriage.

Olson, David H., et al. *PREPARE*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Prepare, Inc., 1979.

PREPARE (Premarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation) is a scientifically developed inventory (125 items) designed to assess relationship strengths and possible problem areas, including communication, sexual relationships, conflict resolution, financial management, realistic expectations, religious orientation, equalitarian roles, family and friends, children and marriage, personality issues, leisure activities, and idealistic distortion. Results are scored by computer, and a printout is provided. Although a self-training manual in the use of the program is planned, PREPARE currently requires a one-day training program.

Tate-O'Brien, Judith. *Love in Deed—Manual for Engaged Couples*. St. Paul, Minnesota: International Marriage Encounter, 1981. 72 pages.

A practical step-by-step workbook to guide a couple through the last three to six months of their engagement. Includes an inventory on the areas of communication, family background, financial priorities, sexual intimacy, values, conflict, and the sacramentality of marriage, interspersed with short essays on these topics.

———. "Love in Deed—Minister's Guide-book." St. Paul, Minnesota: International Marriage Encounter, 1981. 16 pages.

A companion volume to the *Manual for Engaged Couples*, to help pastors and lay sponsors in their ministry to premarried and newly marrieds.

Thompson, David A. *A Premarital Guide*

for Couples and Their Counselors. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1979. 80 pages.

A detailed questionnaire that serves as an inventory of thoughts, feelings, opinions, goals, and ideals on a comprehensive list of subjects. May be used by a couple alone to discover areas of compatibility/incompatibility or in conjunction with a pastor/counselor during the suggested six lessons. Excellent questions to facilitate self-disclosure, but requires extensive writing on the part of participants.

Togetherness, Oneness, Joy. Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1979. 121 pages, loose-leaf with binder.

A companion volume to *Marriage Education*, containing only those materials that are applicable to the couple.

Woolsey, Raymond H. *Planning the Ideal Home*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1975. 155 pages.

Covers a broad spectrum, including the finding of a partner, building a happy home, family planning, and finances.

Wright, H. Norman. *Premarital Counseling*. Evanston, Illinois: Moody Press, 1977. 215 pages.

Includes a program for five sessions with an engaged couple and an outline for a group premarital series. The appendix is packed with resources, strategies, projects, and short, definitive essays. Must reading for every serious premarriage counselor.

Wright, H. Norman and Marvin Inmon. *A Guidebook to Dating, Waiting, and Choosing a Mate*. Irvine, California: Harvest House Publishers, Inc., 1978. 160 pages.

Information and questions needed for preparing youth for dating, courtship, and marriage. More than one half the book consists of exercises, strategies, and work sheets.

———. *Preparing Youth for Dating, Courtship, and Marriage*. Irvine, California: Harvest House Publishers, Inc., 1978. 58 pages.

A manual for pastors, teachers, and lay leaders to use in conducting a seventeen-session series on this topic, using *A Guidebook to Dating, Waiting, and Choosing a Mate* as a text. Includes complete instructions, text for presentation, twelve overhead transparencies, and four reproduction masters.

Cassettes

Frazee, W. D. "Husbands and Wives." Wildwood, Georgia: Wildwood Recordings. 16 cassettes.

Bible perspectives on preparing for marriage, husband-wife relationships, and parenting.

Roberts, Wes, and Norman Wright. "Before You Say 'I Do.'" Irvine, California: Harvest Tapes, 1978. 6 cassettes.

A marriage preparation program for couples. Excerpts of counseling sessions and lectures by the authors, along with questions and projects for the listener in the accompanying guidebook. Covers Biblical background of marriage, expectations, roles, communication, conflict resolution, in-laws, finances, and sexuality.

Wheat, Ed, M.D. "Sex Technique and Sex Problems in Marriage." Springdale, Arkansas: Bible Believers Cassettes, 1975. 4 cassettes.

Three hours of intimate, personal sex counsel by a Christian family physician. Covers Biblical perspectives, human anatomy, sexual response, phases, sexual problems, and birth control along with a question-and-answer section. A folder of helpful charts and diagrams is included.

Wright, H. Norman. "Upon This Foundation." Vol. 1, "Marriage Preparation and Premarital Counseling." Denver, Colorado: Christian Marriage Enrichment, 8000 East Girard, Suite 602, 1974. 6 cassettes.

Includes discussion of the state of marriage and family life today and outlines of six premarital sessions with a couple. Also covers group preparation counseling and the use of the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis Test. A booklet of materials for both the counselor and counselee is enclosed.

———. "Using the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis." Denver, Colorado: Christian Marriage Enrichment, 8000 Girard, Suite 602, 1978. 4 cassettes.

Instruction on how to use the T-JTA in premarital or marital counseling. Scriptural resources for helping the counselee's weak areas, as well as a bibliography for counseling, are also included.

Filmstrips

Preparing for Marriage. Family Films, 14622 Lanark Street, Panorama City, California 91402, 1980. Set of four 10-minute filmstrips accompanied by either two 12-inch records or two cassettes.

Titles are: "Getting Yourself Ready for Marriage," "What to look for in a Life Partner," "What to Expect From Marriage," and "Christian Marriage Is Different." Suitable for teen groups and the preengaged, as well as engaged couples. Helpful discussion questions are included.

His resurrection and ours

The great fact of Christ's resurrection may be blurred by Easter eggs and chocolate bunnies, new dresses and matching shoes, but should we sit on the sidelines while the religious world celebrates an essential truth?

As Seventh-day Adventists who worship on Saturday, we are sometimes seen by our Sundaykeeping Christian brothers and sisters as somewhat less than enthusiastic about Easter. Indeed, our seeming lack of interest in this important religious holiday has often given them reason to suspect that we don't place very much emphasis on Jesus' resurrection, or worse still, that we don't even believe in it!

Yet, while we often allow Easter to pass with barely a nod, we believe implicitly that our Lord literally rose to life from the tomb that Sunday morning so long ago. In fact, paradoxically enough, we probably place a greater importance on the implications of His resurrection than do many Christians. The reason is not hard to find.

For those who believe that at death the soul of the faithful Christian goes to be with its Lord, the resurrection of the body seems, necessarily, to be a rather anticlimactic event. For us who believe that the faithful Christian remains unconscious in death until called forth to eternal life by the Lord at His second coming, the resurrection takes on a much more central significance. As the apostle Paul put it: "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. . . . But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. . . . As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ" (1 Cor. 15:13-23).*

Thus the Second Coming has always occupied a principal place in Adventist thought. We have always looked to that blessed hope as the grand culmination of all our longings and expectations. The apostle says in a different place: "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

Two articles in this issue of MINISTRY deal



with the return of Jesus—this central theme of Adventism: "Jesus Is Coming Soon!" by Gordon M. Hyde (p. 10); and "The Church and the Great Tribulation: Protection or Escape?" by Hans K. LaRondelle (p. 13). In these is reaffirmed

our confidence in the fact that the Saviour will soon appear to fulfill all the promises He has made to us through Paul and the other Bible writers. But it is His resurrection that guarantees these promises and seals them to us. Our hope of life when Jesus comes is based on our certainty in His own victorious resurrection. As the Father called forth His Son from the grave, to take His place with Him eternally in glory, even so do we expect the Saviour to call us forth from the grave to unfailing life if we should die before He returns. Without the surety of this great fact, Paul solemnly vows, our preaching and our faith are in vain.

Let us, then, give no one reason to doubt our belief in the Lord's resurrection or to question the significance we attach to it. Let us preach it—joyfully, earnestly, with power. And when better to do so than at Easter?—B.R.H.

*The Scripture quotations in this editorial are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

Homosexuals and other sinners helped

When we decided to print the interview with Colin Cook ("Homosexual Healing") and the article by Raoul Dederen ("Homosexuality: A Biblical Perspective") in the September, 1981, issue, we suspected response would be forthcoming. We haven't been disappointed.

A number of the letters that we received here in the editorial office regarding this subject were printed in the January, 1982, magazine. Others appear in this issue (see page 2). But in addition to the letters that we have received, the Quest Counseling Center, which was mentioned in the article and which is directed by Cook, received *one hundred* responses by letter or by phone in a single seven-week period from September 12 to October 31, 1981! These represented thirty-two of the States in the United States.

As might be expected, most of those who wrote to us were pastors who either had dealt with the issue of homosexuality in the course of their ministerial work or who expected to do so. Only two individuals who wrote to our office identified themselves as homosexuals; both roundly condemned our treatment of the subject. Not so with those responding directly to the Quest organization. These were mostly individuals needing help or information. Some examples (Cook withheld names, places, and other identifying details even from us in order to maintain confidentiality with those who contacted his organization):

• The mailman who obtained his copy of MINISTRY illegally. Delivering the mail, he noticed the title on the cover of the magazine—"Homosexual Healing." "I fig-

ured I needed this more than the minister to whom it was addressed, so I took it home," he confessed. "It made more sense to me than anything I have ever read on the subject. It was like gold." (He did agree to deliver the magazine after being assured he would receive a copy for himself.)

- The priest who scoured his city for some kind of "Homosexuals Anonymous" program where he could find help. Everywhere he met incredulity that he should even want help now that homosexuality is "accepted." He thought of trying to set up his own program, but didn't know where to begin. Then the September *MINISTRY* arrived.

- The minister who called from a pay phone and gave only his first name. He says he is free from homosexual activity but terrified of the feelings within and the fear without.

- The businessman who told of summoning the last ounce of his resolve to run from the house of the man he "loved," never to return—crying himself to sleep for months, but now free for six years and recently married.

- Such poignant, personal experiences remind us, as editors, that the words we place on paper and send out into a seeming void have a life of their own and that they touch people for time and eternity. These are the flesh and blood; statistics and analysis are the skeleton. But even lifeless figures have a story to tell. The tabulation of these one hundred responses is not in any sense a scientifically controlled sampling, but it does reveal what we believe are some significant facts.

First, homosexuality is a widespread problem that cuts across denominational lines. The large number of responses indicates the extent of the problem and a significant degree of interest and concern among the churches. The broad spectrum of denominations and churches represented shows that none is immune. Here is the breakdown of those contacting Quest according to the denominational affiliation (or more general religious category) claimed: Seventh-day Adventist (15); Baptist (9); Methodist (7); Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, and "charismatic" (4 each); Church of Christ, Episcopalian, "evangelical," and Presbyterian (3 each); "interdenominational" and Brethren (2 each); Evangelical Free Church, American Lutheran, Bible Missionary Church, and Friends (1 each). Twenty-one simply identified themselves as "Christians"; one called himself a "humanist"; 3 claimed to be non-Christians; 12 gave no indication of religious affiliation.

Although not all of those responding to the Quest center were homosexuals, more than one fourth (27 percent) did identify themselves as such. Of these, a third were ministers of various churches, suggesting that homosexuality is without boundaries

and is a phenomenon that can be combined on a pragmatic level with a life style that in other respects gives evidence of earnest Christian living. An illustration of this is an experience that Editor J. R. Spangler had recently on a trip when he fell into casual conversation with a young man, a student in a Christian college. The talk came around to the subject of losing weight and the difficulty thereof. As they discussed this struggle and the need to accept Christ's promises and believe in prayer, Spangler mentioned some of the gospel concepts brought out in the Cook interview on homosexuality and their parallels to victory in every area of life. When the young man learned of the treatment of homosexuality in *MINISTRY*, he said quietly, "I used to have that problem. A friend of mine still does, even though he is doing volunteer missionary work for the church. Could I have a copy of the magazine to send to him?"

It seems obvious that there is a need for a serious ministry to homosexual persons among the Christian churches. The wide range of religious background represented indicates that Christians everywhere and in every church need to recognize the seriousness of the situation and work together to provide compassionate, responsible, Biblical answers to those seeking help.

Second, in spite of militant denials by many gays that they need or want to change their sexual orientation (or, indeed, that it is even possible to do so), many homosexual persons desperately long for change.

Forty percent of those contacting Quest did not reveal their sexual orientation. Of those who did, 27 percent were homosexual; 16 percent were heterosexual; 14 percent designated themselves former homosexuals; and 3 percent had homosexual parents. Thus self-identified homosexuals represented approximately half of those who indicated their sexual preference. If parallel figures hold true for those who did not indicate their orientation, approximately 50 percent could be homosexually inclined.

Obviously, most of those contacting Quest directly could be expected to be appreciative of its stance regarding homosexuality or at least predisposed to be favorable. (In fact, only four had negative reactions.) Even so, the conclusion is inescapable that many homosexual persons long for deliverance. Twenty-four of the twenty-seven self-admitted homosexuals were Christians who were deeply grieved and anxious at the feelings within them and longing for a solution to their dilemma. Even among the four who reacted negatively to the article and the work of the center there was evidence of conflicting emotions. One, the director of a church for committed gays, expressed a

wish to be heterosexual and said he would like to visit the center. Another, after disagreeing bitterly, said somewhat wistfully, "Oh, well, send me your information pamphlet anyway!"

Sweeping statements that "homosexuals do not want to change" are patently false. Eighteen of those contacting Quest desperately sought personal help in dealing with homosexuality (fourteen for themselves, four for a spouse or child). Six of these are actually prepared to move to the center for counseling, and one has already sold his business to do so. An additional fifty-five expressed a need for information or materials beyond a casual interest.

Third, there is evidence that deliverance from homosexuality is more prevalent than most of those who deal with the subject are willing to admit. One highly significant fact to come out of the responses was that a surprising number reported already having found healing. Fourteen declared that they were former homosexuals who had reached varying degrees of heterosexual development. Six of these were ministers. Such numbers, says Cook, are consistent with his informal findings in the past that homosexual healing, rather than being the impossibility claimed by many, is in fact far more common than is normally supposed—not because such healing is simple, but because God is rich in mercy to sinful human beings. One former homosexual minister also wrote our editorial office to declare his joy at the deliverance he had found in Christ.

We praise God for such experiences and for the response to the September articles. It does more than merely gratify our desire for knowing how readers react to what they read in *MINISTRY*. It confirms our belief in the miraculous power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to save to the uttermost all who come to Him for grace to help in time of need.—B.R.H.

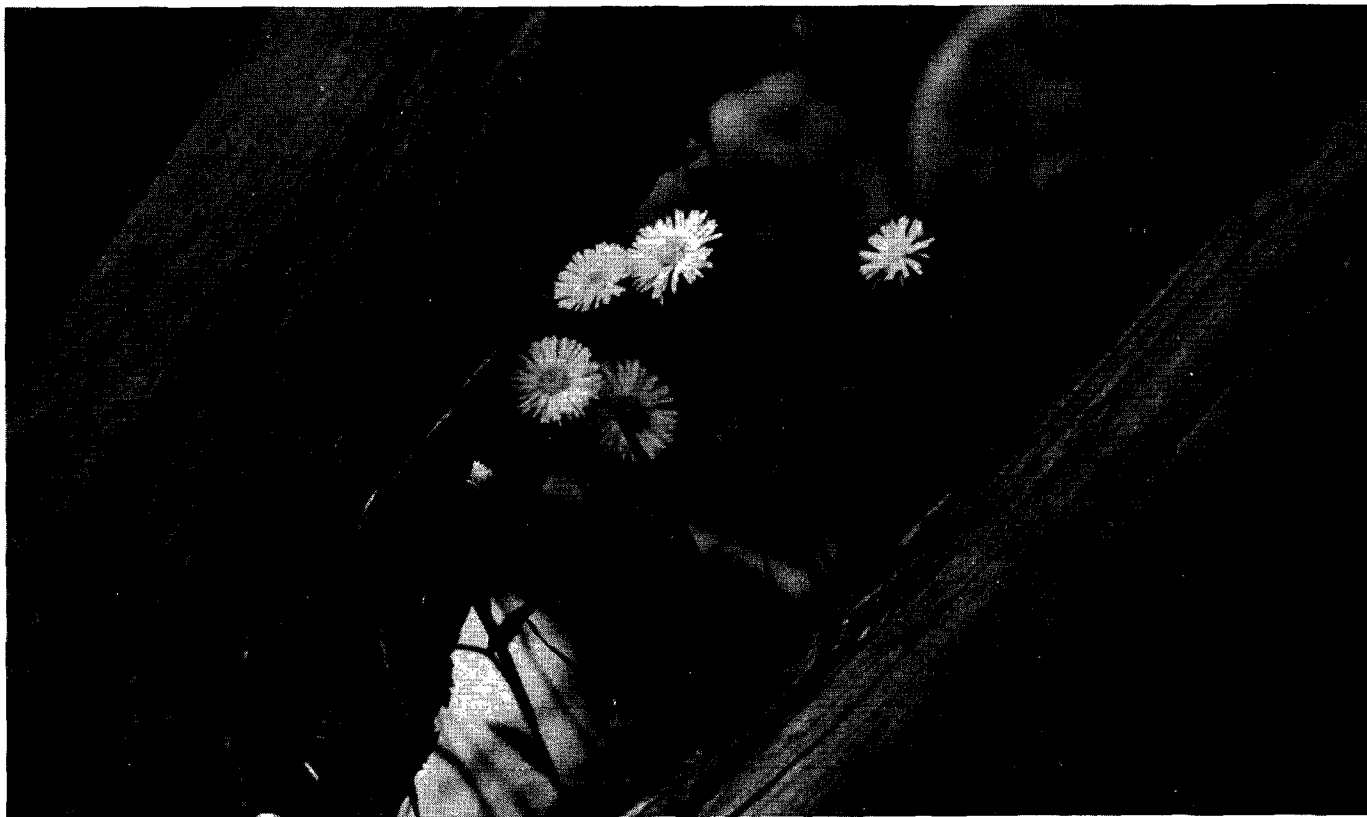


September issues still available

Several requests have been made for reprints of the September interview with Colin Cook, "Homosexual Healing," and Raoul Dederen's article, "Homosexuality: A Biblical Perspective." Although reprints of the individual articles are not available, back numbers of the entire September issue can still be purchased at the single-copy price of \$1.50. Please write for quantity prices.

The color of spring is love

Last week I looked at the way God has painted our world. A span of blue overhead, variegated greens spread across the land, and with the hands of a master artist He brushed color for contrast. The color of spring!



KIT WATTS

The earth curves through space on a yearly journey around the sun, spinning endlessly on its tilted axis. This axis holds the secret of our changing seasons. If, instead of leaning exactly $23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees to one side, the axis of the earth were straight up and down, the globe would present the same aspect to the sun throughout the year. There would be no spring and summer, autumn and winter. While the earth would have varied climates, there would be no varied seasons, and we would have missed so much beauty and diversity!

It is fascinating to discover that the tilt of the earth never changes as it makes its annual circuit of the sun. It is the continuous altering of the planet's position in relation to the sun that produces the parade of seasons. The upper end, or the

Northern Hemisphere, tilts toward the sun in summer, away from it in winter. During the earth's curving progress from the tilted-away position to the tilted-toward-position and back again, it passes through the intermediate changes and we have those seasons of most dramatic change, autumn and spring.

There is a precise moment each year when the tick of a watch separates winter and spring. It is the moment—usually on the twenty-first of March—when the sun reaches the celestial equator, the imaginary line through the heavens directly above the earth's equator. At the exact moment when the sun's center appears to cross this line, the seasons officially change. This is the vernal equinox of the ancient astronomers. At that moment the rays of the sun fall vertically on the equator, and day and night are of equal length all over the globe. From that moment nights in the Northern Hemi-

sphere grow shorter and days lengthen until the summer solstice, which falls late in June. At the time of the summer or winter solstice there is a brief time when "the sun stands still in the sky" and summer or winter are born as the sun begins its ponderously predictable swing toward the equator once more.

The vernal equinox passed last week, and I can tell that my little world is being hit more directly by the sun's rays. It is awash with color and the stirring of life on every side. Furry yellow-green catkins dangle gracefully from oak limbs. A halo of pinkish-white bells surrounds the manzanita tree. The migrating cedar waxwings have stripped the red winter berries from the toyon. The avocado trees are losing their leaves and at the same time covering themselves with chartreuse blossoms. Tissue-thin apricot, peach, and nectarine blossoms adorn the trees with delicate grace and gently float to the ground in the

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soft spring wind, like falling pink snow.

On the roof just outside my back door is a large electrical-connection box. Years ago a pair of Bewick's wrens set up housekeeping there, and each season they raise several families in it. The Bewick's wren is a wee bit of a bird with the heart of a giant and a seemingly unending song that is sweet, tumbling, and lilting beyond description. The volume and length of this outpouring of liquid melody is amazing. How can it possibly come from such a tiny speck of life? The male bird is fiercely attentive to his home, scrapping furiously with any other bird that dares to blunder onto his turf! I often sit for long intervals watching this aggressive little house builder as he courts, builds, feeds, and trains his family.

I marvel at the variety of nature in the spring! One bright day last week, bone weary from much bookwork, I sat in the sun, watching the wren. I looked toward the overgrown meadow. Thick yellow-and-black bumblebees were bustling about in search of nectar. I watched as they lit on the violets, riding them to earth with their weight. Hummingbirds darted about, fanning the flowers with the speed of their tiny wings. Red ants explored decaying duff under the avocado trees. A pale-green lacewing insect crawled over a red-and-black ladybird beetle in its hurry to reach the top of a slender blade of green grass. Once on the tip, it looked about with eyes that shone in the sunlight as though plated with burnished gold. The day was a symphony of color!

I remember hiking in Death Valley one spring. I had crossed miles of shale and gravel when I noticed a blotch of color against the monotonous gray of the gravel. It was a lone desert five-spot flower. There were no green leaves. There was nothing except a perfectly formed rose-purple flower contrasting brilliantly with the grayness. Glowing red spots at the base of

the five petals both lit up its throat and give it its name. Why was it blooming there all alone?

One time in a March long past I hiked across the sand dunes of the lower Mojave Desert. I topped an especially high dune and dropped down the far side into a solid bank of pleasantly perfumed desert lilies. The pristine-white flowers rose above slender, deeply ruffled blue-green leaves that spread out flat across the sand. On the center of the back of each lily petal the Designer had painted a bluish-green band. Was such beauty and fragrance wasted on that desert sand dune?

In a boggy mountain meadow beside the John Muir Trail up in the High Sierra country, I found a fascinating flower one spring. I had slipped off my pack and sunk wearily down on the moss beside a bog when I noticed a slender reddish stem pointing skyward. It was covered with blossoms of a delicate shade of pink, and each blossom looked for all the world like a tiny elephant head in profile—flat, broad ears, well-defined forehead, and long, arching trunk. Clinging to the stalk with minute stems, the blossoms nodded their little elephant heads in the breeze. I remember rolling over on my back in the thick moss, looking up into the vault of sky, and wondering to God why such intricate perfection was expended on a flower that so few would ever see?

As I considered those flowers, which often bloom unseen by human eyes, unappreciated by human hearts, breathing their perfume in air that few humans would breathe, I marveled. The God who created the vast reaches of space, who keeps the earth tilted at precisely 23½ degrees, who moves the earth and sun in their orbits, is the very same God who designed and perfumes the flowers. Both boundless space and diminutive blossom are maintained by His power—and I can only bow in reverence and awe.

Our God must love color, beauty, and diversity, for He has been profligate in filling our lives with all three. I think, too, that He must also have a sense of whimsy and humor. Consider kangaroos and snapdragons and elephant-head flowers! Did He chuckle and smile as He designed these for us? I am sure that each blade of grass, each budding flower, and each bird that sings has been given to us as an expression of His love. But what about beauty in nooks and crannies and desert wastes? Why there, my Lord?

Long ago Solomon said that there is a purpose for every living thing under the sun. The beauty that escapes human recognition is seen and appreciated by the living God, for in the economy of God there is no wasted flower, no unnecessarily spilled perfume. Although Scripture calls these plants the flowers of the field that are here for today and yet perish in the noonday sun, even so, they matter to a beauty-loving God.

Last week as the vernal equinox came, I sat alone, with the sun hot on my back, listening to the throbbing vibrations of honeybees at work. Perfume floated uphill from the citrus orchards below. I looked again at the way God has painted our world. A span of blue arched overhead. A wrap of variegated greens spread across the land, and with the hands of a master artist He brushed color for contrast to please our eyes and delight our senses. The color of spring!

Because the earth slowly changes its position in relation to the sun, *every year there will be a spring*. "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22). That is a promise from your Lord—and when spring begins, He will once more fill your world with color, for your pleasure, because He loves you. You see, *the color of spring is love!*

Prayers from the parsonage

"And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him" (Matt. 27:55).

How much of the crucifixion proceedings did these devoted women observe? Had their valiant protests been drowned out by the shouting mob before Pilate? Did they also weep with the daughters of Jerusalem as You struggled under the heavy crossbeam? Could they hear the mallet's thud as nails were pounded into Your wrists?

Golgotha ("a skull") was no place for a woman. Who wouldn't recoil from ranting thieves, hardened soldiers, and mocking priests?

Yet, they were there: Mary, Your mother, along with Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and others. Had they been able, they would have stormed that cross and rescued You. They longed to offer You water, to fan away the flies, to shield You from the sun.

Instead, they waited—wincing when You tried to raise Your body for a better breath, crying when they looked in Your face, covering their ears when scoffers taunted. They listened for a word, watched for a nod, hoped for a miracle. Three hours

of darkness did not frighten them. The violent earthquake did not scatter them. A bloody, bruised body did not repel them. They stayed.

And when Joseph of Arimathea had taken down Your dead body, washed and wrapped it, and placed it in his own tomb, "there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre" (verse 61).

Lord, I am in awe of these godly women whose love would not let them forsake You even at Calvary, even at the grave.

Make me, I pray, strong under pressure, compassionate under injustice, and courageous under opposition. May I always be loyal to You!

By Cherry B. Habenicht

Tischendorf and the New Testament

More than a hundred years ago a dedicated German scholar discovered 129 large parchment leaves of a Biblical manuscript in a wastepaper basket and rescued portions of Scripture older than any copies then known.

Before me lies a sacred life task, the struggle for the original form of the New Testament." These were the words written by Konstantin von Tischendorf to his fiancée in 1842. Tischendorf, then only 27 years of age, was an assistant professor in Leipzig, Germany. When he died some 33 years later, his obituary recorded that no single individual had done more for the New Testament since its books were originally written by the apostles than this man Tischendorf. Hearing of this claim, we may ask, In what way did Konstantin von Tischendorf make such an outstanding contribution on behalf of the New Testament?

During the years when young Tischendorf was a theology student, the authority and authenticity of the New Testament were under attack in Germany as never before. Illustrious theologians were convinced that they were serving the cause of truth by subjecting the sources of the Christian faith to the most rigorous critical investigation. The result was, for example, that the apostle Paul was considered the author of only four of the books that carry his name, while the others were thought to be products of anonymous authors centuries later. Also, many of the stories about the life and ministry of Jesus found in the Gospels were rejected as legendary, and especially the Gospel of John was declared to be a fabrication dating from a period when the true facts about Jesus had long been forgotten.

Young Tischendorf, a deeply religious man, was pained by this situation and felt that the defense of the New Testament needed, in the first place, a solid foundation, namely a Greek text that would be accepted even by critically inclined scholars as being nearly identical with the original text. This was not the case in the early nineteenth century. Although more than four thousand manuscripts of the Greek New Testament were known to exist in monasteries and libraries, they



Konstantin von Tischendorf

were mostly copies dating from the Middle Ages and containing many thousands of variants. For this reason many scholars had come to the conclusion that there was no way of finding out what the original Bible writers actually had written. On the other hand, conservative students of the Bible maintained that God had held His hand over His Word and protected it from corruption, but they lacked the evidence that the Bible had faithfully been transmitted down through the centuries without having experienced corruption.

The earliest Greek New Testament available at that time was the Codex Alexandrinus (symbolized by the letter A) in the British Museum, which several editors of the Greek text of the New Testament had consulted ever since it had come to England in 1627, and which had been fully published by the eighteenth century. However, that manuscript dates from the fifth century A.D., hence was still a relatively late witness of the original Bible text when one considers that the books of the New Testament had all been written during the first century.

Furthermore, the Codex Vaticanus (B), a fourth-century Bible manuscript, had been in the Vatican Library at least since 1481, when it appeared for the first time in

the library's catalog. But this manuscript had never been made available to outside scholars and was still inaccessible to them in the mid-nineteenth century.

Finally, the National Library in Paris owned a fragmentary fifth-century Bible manuscript, the Codex Ephraemi (C). However, that manuscript was apparently of no value, for it was a palimpsest, which means that its pages had been used twice, first for one composition that at a later time had been washed off so that the writing material, in this case expensive parchment, could be used for another literary work. It happened that the Codex Ephraemi's original composition had been a text of the Greek Bible, and this had later been erased and replaced by sermons of Saint Ephraem of Syria. So thorough had been the work of erasure that the director of the Paris National Library had said that mortal man would never be able to decipher this codex.

It becomes readily apparent that Tischendorf had a herculean task before him in his desire to reconstruct the original Greek text of the New Testament, in view of the fact that only late copies of the Bible were available to him and that thousands of known Bible manuscripts had to be consulted and collated. All of them, with the exception of the Codex Vaticanus, which remained inaccessible, were produced after the Christian faith had become a state religion and the Bible text had reached what was thought to be a fixed but somewhat corrupt form. But working day and night with all manuscript publications available at that time Tischendorf published in 1840 the first edition of his *Novum Testamentum Graece*, which was superior to any existing Greek New Testament in print, so that the Lutheran Bishop Draeseke could call it "the foundation of Tischendorf's literary immortality." During his lifetime seven more editions were published of this Greek New Testament, which for many decades remained the foundation of all scholarly work on the New Testament.

However, Tischendorf still needed to locate earlier Bible manuscripts than those already known and to publish any that had not yet become available to the scholarly world. Since it was impossible for him to

Siegfried H. Horn, Ph.D., is dean and professor of archeology and history of antiquity, emeritus, Andrews University Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan. He is now living in Pleasant Hill, California.

have access to the Codex Vaticanus, a text a hundred years closer to the apostolic age than the earliest manuscript available to him, he went to Paris to examine the Codex Ephraemi and see for himself whether it would be possible to decipher the underlying Greek text that had been erased, in spite of the fact that every scholar who had tried his hand on it had declared it to be undecipherable. He traveled to Paris in the fall of 1840 and was granted permission to study the manuscript. Fortunately Tischendorf possessed the eyes of an eagle and an incredible amount of patience that served him well in his work of reading and deciphering ancient manuscripts. For more than two years Tischendorf sat at a small table in front of a window during every hour that the library was open and deciphered the faint traces of the old Greek characters. Letter after letter and word after word was carefully examined, and all possibilities were tested until he was convinced he knew what the original text was saying. When he left Paris in 1843, he carried with him a copy of that valuable Bible manuscript of the fifth century.

I wish to insert here a brief experience of my own. In the summer of 1958, I had the opportunity of spending half a day with this precious manuscript, the Codex Ephraemi, in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Being desirous to obtain a personal impression of the quality of Tischendorf's work, I had made several unsuccessful attempts to examine this codex. Finally I received permission from the director to handle it for a day. The secretary personally brought the manuscript to me and seated me at the same table in front of the window where Tischendorf is said to have worked for more than two years. I was greatly excited as I handled the parchment leaves of this ancient Bible and compared that great man's work from his published edition with the actual manuscript. I must admit that my admiration for Tischendorf's work increased immeasurably during those hours.

A few months after Tischendorf had left Paris he published the New Testament section of the Codex Ephraemi, and this unheard-of accomplishment established his fame as an authority in the area of Biblical textual studies. Libraries eagerly opened their doors to him, and he made ready use of these opportunities to visit in the next few months the libraries of Switzerland, Venice, Milan, Turin, Modena, Florence, and Naples.

Finally he came to Rome and, armed with letters of recommendation from Prince John of Saxony and the archbishop of Paris, presented himself at the Vatican. He was received by Pope Gregory XVI, who had already heard of the young scholar's fame, and received permission, given somewhat reluctantly, to do some collation work on the Codex Vaticanus.

However, after only six hours of work with the famous manuscript this permit was withdrawn. It is not known why the Vatican was so reluctant to let Tischendorf publish this Bible text for which Christian theologians in all parts of the world were waiting. Some have thought that Cardinal Mai, at that time the librarian of the Vatican Library, wanted to publish it himself, while others have speculated that the Vatican authorities were afraid that this earliest-known Bible text might contradict the official Catholic translation, the Vulgate, and thus possibly create doctrinal problems. Whatever the reasons were, Tischendorf was forced to wait patiently for another twenty years before he was finally allowed to study and eventually to publish the Codex Vaticanus.

In the spring of 1844, Tischendorf made the first of his three trips to the Near East in search of ancient manuscripts, reaching the monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai after a twelve-day ride on camelback from Egypt. Why did that isolated monastery in the Sinai desert attract him so much? Because it was the only early Christian monastery that since its founding by the Emperor Justinian in A.D. 530 had not suffered destruction, neither accidentally by fire nor violently by acts of war. Hence Tischendorf reasoned that early copies of handwritten Bibles should have had a much greater chance of survival in this monastery than anywhere else. However, a careful search of several weeks in the library of the monastery led to disappointing results. After searching through many hundreds of valuable manuscripts in the library's possession Tischendorf could not find one copy of an early Bible among them. However, at the end of his stay he discovered 129 large parchment leaves of a Biblical manuscript in a large wastepaper basket that contained discarded writing material to be used as fuel. These leaves, dated by him to the fourth century, contained various parts of the Old Testament books. The monks gave him forty-three of these leaves as a gift and retained eighty-six leaves after having learned that they were extremely valuable.

After leaving Mount Sinai, Tischendorf deposited these forty-three leaves of the newly discovered fourth-century Bible manuscript in the library of the university

of Leipzig, and published them in 1846 without revealing their place of origin to prevent anyone from attempting to purchase the remaining eighty-six leaves.

In February, 1853, Tischendorf was back in St. Catherine's monastery with the purpose of acquiring these eighty-six leaves, but he was unable to find out anything of what had happened to them since his departure nine years earlier. His third and final trip to the Near East was on January 31, 1859. This time he was welcomed by the Sinai monks as the official envoy of Czar Alexander II of Russia, who was considered by the monks to be their powerful patron and special benefactor. But the experience of his second visit in 1853 was repeated. All of Tischendorf's inquiries led to nothing.

However, on the eve of his departure, on February 4, 1859, he made the greatest discovery of his life. As the result of a conversation with the monastery's iconomos, he learned that this young Greek had a handwritten Bible in his cell. Eager to see it, he was shown a stack of 346 parchment leaves wrapped in a red cloth. Dumbfounded with amazement and joy, he discovered that this stack of leaves contained not only the long-searched-for eighty-six leaves that he had rescued from a fiery destruction some 15 years earlier but also the complete New Testament, parts of several Old Testament books, and a copy of the noncanonical Epistle of Barnabas, as well as the Shepherd of Hermas, both of which were early Christian works. In fact, the discovery of the Epistle of Barnabas was of great importance to church historians, since it was known only from very imperfect copies up to that time.

Tischendorf gave to this famous Bible manuscript, known since then as the Codex Sinaiticus, the symbol **Ξ**, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Because all the early letters of the Roman alphabet were already used up as symbols to designate other Bible manuscripts, and because he considered the Codex Sinaiticus as far too important to receive a letter down the line in the Roman alphabet, he gave it this initial letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

On September 28, 1859, the presentation of the manuscript to Tischendorf took place in a solemn ceremony in the archbishopric residence in Cairo, and nearly two months later, on November 19, 1859, Tischendorf placed this precious Bible in the hands of Czar Alexander II in

Young Tischendorf felt that the defense of the New Testament needed a solid foundation, namely a Greek text that would be accepted even by critically inclined scholars as being nearly identical with the original text.

St. Petersburg (now Leningrad).^{*} In 1862, Tischendorf published it in four huge quarto volumes printed in facsimile type. In 1933 the Soviet Government sold it for £100,000 to Great Britain. Since that time it has been on display side by side with the Codex Alexandrinus in the British Museum in London.

The study of the Codex Sinaiticus, a Bible manuscript a hundred years older than the earliest Bible manuscript available at that time, showed that its text in all essentials was practically identical with the standard Greek text of the Bible, and proved that no discoveries of earlier Bible manuscripts would challenge any established doctrines based on the Bible. This fact has been borne out numerous times since Tischendorf's epoch-making find by further discoveries of even earlier Bible manuscripts, such as the Chester Beatty papyri, which contain parts of fifteen New Testament books dating from the third century, and the Bodmer papyri, which are

even earlier, reaching in part back to the second century.

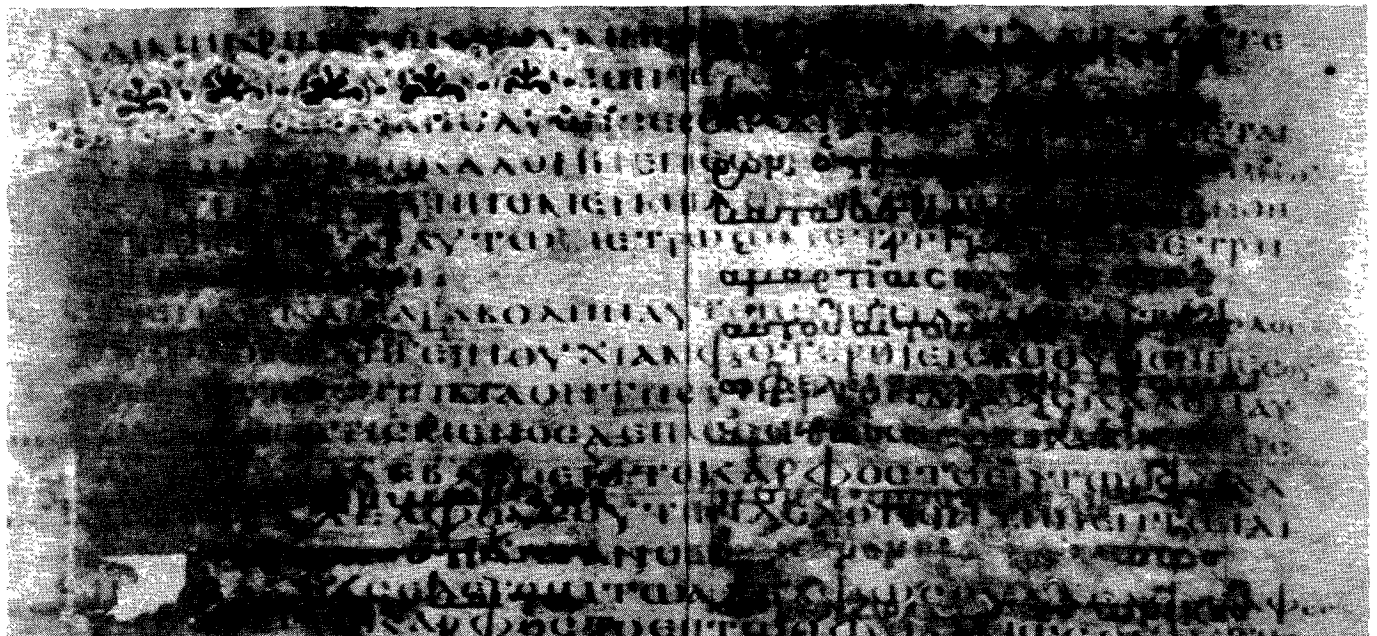
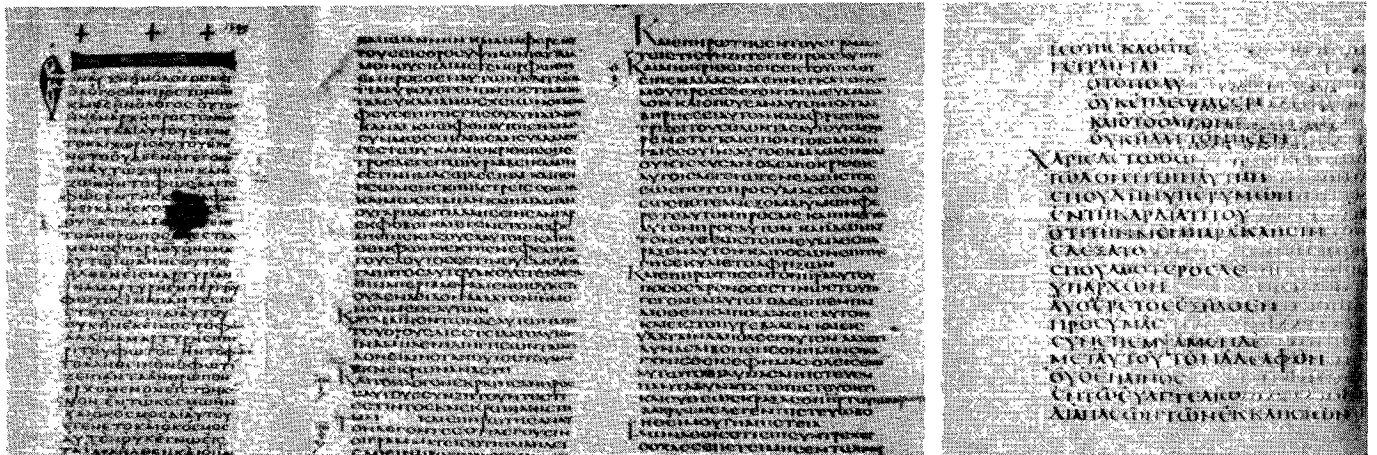
The publication of this early fourth-century manuscript, Codex Sinaiticus, did not fail to make also an impact on the Vatican authorities. Not only did it establish Tischendorf as the unrivaled authority on the Greek New Testament but it also assuaged any fear that the publication of early Bible manuscripts would be detrimental to the church or to its teachings. The result was that Tischendorf finally received the coveted permission to publish the Vatican's most famous Bible manuscript, Codex Vaticanus. His New Testament edition of this codex saw the light of day in 1867 under the title of *Novum Testamentum Vaticanum*. A year later it was followed by an official edition issued by the papal authorities.

Tischendorf's versatile pen continued to produce important textual editions and studies until the number of books pub-

lished during his lifetime reached seventy-two. As he approached the age of 60 and made plans for another journey to the Near East to search for more ancient Bible manuscripts, in addition to a proposed trip to the New World, a stroke brought an end to his work. When he died on December 7, 1874, a true Christian warrior and a great Biblical scholar passed away. His last will revealed his unshakable faith in God's leadership throughout his life, just as his work had been a witness to this faith. In part the will stated: "God has given me a life, happy and rich, and adorned by his blessings. Toil and hard labor was my lot, but it was truly precious. May God also put His blessings on the things which I leave behind: They are His work."

^{*}Charges had been made in more recent times that Tischendorf abducted the valuable Codex Sinaiticus against the wishes of the monks at Saint Catherine's, but these false claims have been laid to rest in the book *The Mount Sinai Manuscript of the Bible* (London: British Museum, 1933).

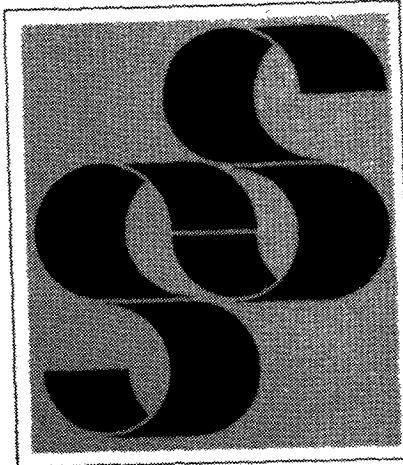
Top left: Codex Vaticanus (left, c. A.D. 370) and Codex Alexandrinus (right, c. A.D. 450), the oldest complete Bible manuscripts known when Tischendorf began his work. Top right: Codex Claromontanus, a manuscript of Paul's Epistles that Tischendorf also worked on during the two years he spent deciphering the Codex Ephraemi. Bottom: Codex Ephraemi, the palimpsest that proved virtually illegible until Tischendorf's efforts.



Courtesy, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Trustees of the British Museum, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

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MINISTRY and the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University will cosponsor the second annual Seminar on Church Growth and Pastoral Leadership, August 29 to September 2, 1982, for pastors and other church leaders.

Those who have developed successful methods or formulated new concepts in these fields and who would like to make a presentation or lead a workshop should submit a 350- to 700-word proposal. The proposal should outline the basic concepts and/or methods to be presented and the method of presentation planned. These should be submitted before April 1, 1982, to Institute of Church Ministry, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104. Notice of acceptance will be made by May 15, 1982.

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—Paul B. Peterson, Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

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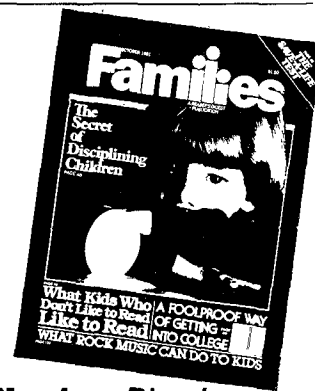
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New from Digest

Pastors seeking reliable and interesting information on the family may be pleased to learn of *Families*, a new magazine from *Reader's Digest*. Recognizing the public's need for and interest in accurate information on family life today, the new publication reaches into the university, the counseling room, the classroom, and elsewhere for its articles. The result is packaged in the entertaining, informative, and well-written style that has come to be associated with *Reader's Digest* for sixty years. *Families* sells for \$1.50 on the newstand or you can save significantly by subscribing.—Roger H. Ferris, Seattle, Washington.

Recommended reading

For centuries Christians have struggled with the tension of being in the world but not of the world. The author of "The Secular Saint" makes a case for evangelical Christian involvement in society.

The Secular Saint: A Case for Evangelical Social Responsibility

Robert E. Webber, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1979, 219 pages, \$7.95. Reviewed by Dennis W. Radford, assistant professor of English, Atlantic Union College.

Two thousand years ago Jesus set up the paradoxical tension between the community of faith and the community at large. Since then Christians have struggled with being in the world, but not of the world. Many have responded by withdrawing from society. Others have attacked and denigrated culture. But a few Christians have chosen to remain within the structure of society in order to influence and change culture.

In *The Secular Saint*, Robert E. Webber makes a case for Christian—especially evangelical—involvement in society. It is Webber's stated hope to "provide a theology for social concern." Because he sees the issue as one of confusion over the Christian's proper response to society, he attempts to give a clear historical-Biblical perspective on the question of Christianity and culture. And this he does with remarkably clear vision. In an orderly and easily understood manner, Webber establishes a solid Biblical foundation for Christian social concern.

In examining the traditional models used to discuss Christianity and culture, Webber looks at the separational, identificational, and transformational models. Though each of these has a Biblical basis, Webber believes they are inadequate to outline the Christian's relationship to society. Therefore, he develops the incarnational model, which combines Biblical and historical evidence from all the other models, to place the Christian within culture.

Each chapter includes a carefully organized summary, as well as suggested questions for discussion and books for further reading. *The Secular Saint*, because of its format, would make an excellent study guide or manual for a series of meetings—such as prayer meetings—where Christian responsibility to society and culture might be examined and discussed. *The Secular Saint* is recommended reading for any Christian seeking a Biblical basis for social concern.

The Best of John Calvin

Samuel Dunn, compiler, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981, 412 pages, \$4.95. Reviewed by Wayne Willey, pastor, New London, Connecticut.

Periodically an out-of-print volume is discovered that merits reprinting. This is one. Dunn has provided a well-written introduction to the life of Calvin in a sixty-five-page biographical section. He examines the influence upon Calvin's spiritual life and theology of such Bible scholars/translators as Robert Estienne (to whom we are indebted for the present verse divisions of the Bible) and Lefèvre, and Olivétan (translators of the Bible into French). We become privy to correspondence between Calvin, Luther, and Melancthon, and begin to understand Calvin's unfortunate involvement in the trial and execution of Michael Servetus.

Two interesting features are the extracts from the registers of the council of Geneva and the chronological list of Calvin's works. But the real usefulness of this book is its synthesis of Calvin's theological views. It is here that Dunn's skill as a compiler becomes apparent. Selections from Calvin's writings on thirty-eight topics are presented in readable form, yet the vigor and clarity of his theology are maintained.

Creating Children's Sermons

Bucky Dann, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1981, 132 pages, \$7.95, paper. Reviewed by Bobbie Jane Van Dolson, associate book editor, Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Realizing that spirituality begins in childhood, the author has prepared fifty-one mini-sermons for children, each illustrated with an easy-to-get visual aid (e.g., a yardstick, flashlight, chair). Rather than dealing with peripheral topics, he zeros in on the basics of theology—the nature of God, evil, atonement, discipleship, et cetera. Carefully organized as to theme, scripture, device, goals, and techniques, the plans are easy to follow and allow for the individuality of the person presenting the material.

Pastoral Care and Counseling

William E. Hulme, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1981, 176

pages, \$6.50, paper. Reviewed by Dick Tibbitts, youth director, Southern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The main part of this book deals in introductory ways with the role of the pastor as a counselor. The book's value lies in the last chapter, which deals with the congregation as a healing community. Here the author explores ways the congregation can be supportive to the needs of individuals, an area that has not been touched in pastoral counseling.

Dwell in Peace

Ronald C. Arnett, The Brethren Press, Elgin, Illinois, 1980, 156 pages, \$5.95, paper. Reviewed by John W. McGraw, pastor, Wheaton, Maryland.

The central theme of this well-written book is that human beings can be violated without their lives being taken by another. Not only will it help the reader understand the peace churches' position on nonviolence but it applies nonviolence to everyday relationships and contains thoughtful suggestions on how individuals can deal with their conflicts.

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