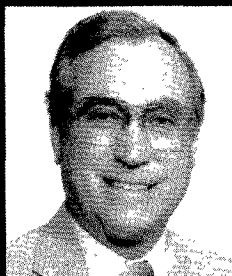


# Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

December 1987



## THE CHURCH: VOICE OF GOD?

GEORGE E. RICE/4

### Baptism: pastoral perplexities

REX D. EDWARDS/7

### When it's time to move on

FREDDIE RUSSELL/10

### 1987 Annual Council

FLOYD BRESEE/12

### The devil and the waiting Father

DAVID C. JARNES/14

### Discrimination at the Lord's Supper

PEDRITO U. MAYNARD-REID/18

### Come on, ring those bells!

CATHY McBRIDE/20

### Our new baptismal manual

KENNETH R. WADE/24

#### Editorials:

Open or shut door?

*Kenneth R. Wade/22*

Only children make it to heaven

*J. David Newman/23*

#### Departments:

Letters/2

MINISTRY Reports/12, 24

Editorials/22

Biblio File/26

Index/29

Shop Talk/32

## More on moonlighting

How many souls are being lost because the minister is engaged in non-ministerial money-making activities? Are we ordained to the ministry till retirement or for life? If we are fit enough after retirement to make money in a secular business, then why not use our fitness to volunteer for the Lord's work in the saving of souls?

If we accept the ministry as our divine calling, then we also accept the Lord's remuneration for that calling. The Lord is a good paymaster if we serve Him well. —J. T. Knopper, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.

■ Adventist ministers face another large problem related to those of moonlighting and economic hardship, and that is the problem of the absence of a true pastoral career that offers the possibility of upward mobility in the *pastorate*. It is true that pastors who are successful are given progressively greater responsibilities and larger congregations. But the increased responsibility should also be accompanied by a progressive increase of salary.

Church administrators have the opportunity for this kind of a progressive career. One can go from the local conference to the union conference and on to the General Conference and receive progressive remuneration. But pastoral remuneration is fixed, regardless of responsibility, and therefore the *pastorate* becomes stagnant. There is less motivation and more frequent burnout.

I have three suggestions: 1. There could be three or four pastoral salary levels, based perhaps on the membership and the annual tithe of the church. This would provide for pastoral progression and stimulate church growth and evangelism. A pastor could then qualify for the next salary level without changing churches. As the membership and tithe of his church reached the next level, so would his salary.

2. Since there are more expenses and demands in pastoring larger churches, the conference could provide additional

subsidies (for travel, telephone, equipment, entertainment) to those responsible for large churches.

3. Churches could be encouraged to give their pastors a monthly subsidy (for travel, telephone, equipment, entertainment) to supplement their salaries. The amount of the subsidy would vary depending on the membership and income of the church. —H. L. Thompson, Compton, California.

## Survey of teachers valid?

The teacher who wrote "I think your survey is strongly biased to favor women's ordination" ("Religion Teachers' Opinions on the Role of Women," August 1987), was correct on several counts.

First, many of the items were so worded as to elicit a response favorable to increased involvement of women in traditionally male roles. For example, if number 3, "There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted," had been worded, "Men are more suited for some jobs than women and vice versa," there would have been more affirmative answers.

Similarly, the item on which the survey centers, number 15, "It is appropriate for women who have demonstrated their calling to the ministry to be ordained as gospel ministers," assumes as true that which has yet to be settled—that God is calling women to the ministry. "Proficiency for" would have been better than "calling to."

The leading nature of the survey as a whole also discredits the finding for the crucial number 15. Every colporteur, evangelist, pastor, and teacher knows that the best way to elicit a positive response to a critical question is to prepare the way with questions or statements that make a negative response incongruent or untenable. And where was the follow-up item that should have been number 16: "If the ordination of women, even if theologically acceptable, would likely result in division within the church and diversion of her attention and energy from more vital concerns, the matter ought not to be

pressed at this time"?

Finally, it was assumed that ordination of women to the ministry has been such a burning issue among Adventist religion teachers that they have all studied the matter thoroughly and objectively. Why not include questions asking each respondent about the depth of study given and the degree of importance assigned the matter? —Ken Blake, Durham, New Hampshire.

■ A number of questions arise about the statistical methodology of Dr. Dudley's study and the conclusions inferred therefrom.

1. A 72 percent response rate from North American colleges is certainly not bad for a "one-time mailing," but why just a one-time mailing? In "hot" issues, there is the distinct prospect that those most likely to respond are the persons pressing hardest for change, whereas it may be difficult to extract a response from those satisfied with the status quo. The failure to follow up introduces the very real possibility of non-response bias.

2. The casual acceptance of the poor response from outside North America is disturbing. And I find absolutely mind-boggling that those outside North America "had to supply their own air-mail postage." Please say that's a misprint.

If "languages and cultures" play a role in reducing response, how can it be rationalized that this entitles the researcher to offhandedly gloss it over with a sentence? Such difficulties simply demand the investment of more time, more effort, more money—whatever it takes to get the data (within reason, certainly; but the researcher offers no reasons). And a 50 percent response rate with the strong possibility that nonresponse bias may be a factor among these teachers as well as among those in North America makes publication difficult to justify.

3. Who are the "outside North America" interviewees? All we know is that they are religion teachers in Adventist senior colleges outside North

(Continued on page 28)

The photographs of those who have written for this issue will reveal more variety than we usually have. White, Black, Hispanic, and female faces peer out at us. And you will notice that we have several authors from outside of North America.

This variety reflects the goal we have for MINISTRY. While the term *international* in our logo does not always represent our practice, it does represent our intent. Unfortunately, we receive few manuscripts from ethnic groups and even fewer from overseas. Those of you who are members of these groups, please consider this a challenge to write for MINISTRY.

You will not want to miss our lead article in which George Rice explains the context and meaning of the Ellen White statement "I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God."

Short articles often have more punch than longer ones. Do not miss "Our new baptismal manual," which describes a complete re-writing of the baptismal manual. It is our prayer that this manual will be the means of introducing millions to the unique message of our church.

Keep your eyes open for the February 1988 issue. This double-sized special will focus on 1888 and righteousness by faith. What really happened in 1888? Can we really understand righteousness by faith? What happened to Jones, Waggoner, Smith, and Butler? What is the real meaning of our sanctuary doctrine? Has the Lord's coming been delayed? What are the nonnegotiables? What must we agree on and where can we differ? These are just a few of the articles that issue will contain.

One hundred years have passed since the Lord sent the precious message on Christ's righteousness, and we are still in this old world. The great event that this remnant church was raised up to proclaim has not occurred. The year 1988 should be one of deep penitence and reflection. Let us not just proclaim but practice the remedy given to the church of Laodicea.

This remedy—love and faith, Christ's righteousness, and the transforming influence of the Holy Spirit—must be at the center of our preaching, our practice, and even our policies. Our church and conference budgets should reflect that priority. It will not be easy—but the prize is eternal life with our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

It is our prayer that our February issue will play a part in preparing a people for the coming of the Lord.

*J. David Newman*

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VOLUME 60 NUMBER 12

# The church: voice of God?

George E. Rice

**What did Ellen White mean when she declared that the General Conference was no longer the voice of God on earth?**



*George E. Rice, Ph. D., is an associate secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate.*

**P**eriodically throughout our history individuals have risen claiming that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has apostatized. Moving Spirit of Prophecy statements from their context, they produce "evidence" that the church has become Babylon, and that the voice of God can no longer be heard in the decisions of the General Conference.

Because these charges are resurfacing today, it seems appropriate to review historical events that led to the first cries of "Babylon—come out of her my people."

Following 1844, what little organization existed in Adventist churches was congregational in nature. Each church and emerging company was a law unto itself. Belief in the Second Advent, the Sabbath, the high priestly work of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary, and the Spirit of Prophecy held these scattered entities together in reasonable unity. However, in order to accomplish their world mission, the Advent believers needed better organization.

In the early 1850s God made known His will concerning the organization of the growing movement. But as James and Ellen White spoke of the merits of organizing and urged the brethren toward it, fears were expressed that if the Advent believers entered into formal church organization, they would become part of Babylon. Ellen White pointed out in 1861 that even without a formal organization, these fears had already been realized: "August 3, 1861, I was shown that some have feared that our churches

would become Babylon if they should organize; but those in central New York have been perfect Babylon, confusion."<sup>1</sup> She warned, "Unless the churches are so organized that they can carry out and enforce order, they have nothing to hope for in the future; they must scatter into fragments."<sup>2</sup>

In 1901, as Ellen White looked back at these early years, she wrote: "As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable."<sup>3</sup>

## **Voice of God**

After the organization of the General Conference in 1863, Ellen White spoke of the authority of the church as being the voice of God. In 1875 she published a letter written to a brother who prided himself in his independence: "God has invested His church with special authority and power which no one can be justified in disregarding and despising, for in so doing he despises the voice of God."<sup>4</sup>

In another letter she said: "I have been shown that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but

be surrendered. Your error was in persistently maintaining your private judgment of your duty against the voice of the highest authority the Lord has upon the earth."<sup>5</sup>

Following the 1888 General Conference session there was a decided change in Ellen White's attitude toward the voice of the General Conference. Understanding the dynamics of what happened during the 1890s and the circumstances under which Ellen White wrote can help eliminate the confusion that exists today.

### **Abuse of power**

At the 1888 General Conference, where A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner presented their messages on righteousness by faith, O. A. Olsen was elected president. The opposition to these messages on the part of certain key individuals is well known. Olsen chose two men from among those who were not in sympathy with these messages and made them his key advisers—A. R. Henry and Harmon Lindsay. Because of their various responsibilities in the General Conference and Review office, and because of their strong personalities, they were able to sway the various boards and committees to follow their line of thinking.

Repeatedly Ellen White wrote to Olsen, warning him against the counsel of these men. They were not only sweeping Olsen along with them, but they were influencing others to make wrong decisions. The following problems were isolated by Ellen White during Olsen's tenure: (1) decisions voted by boards were deliberately not carried out by those who had the responsibility for their implementation;<sup>6</sup> (2) Olsen treated Henry and Lindsay as representative men and sent them throughout the field to give counsel, men "to whom the people shall listen and show respect as the voice of God in the conference";<sup>7</sup> (3) these men exercised their authority as "kingly power";<sup>8</sup> (4) while connected with the Review, these men dealt in an un-Christlike way with those who were to receive royalties for their writings;<sup>9</sup> (5) Henry and Lindsay refused to be worked by the Holy Spirit and turned away from obeying God's word;<sup>10</sup> (6) decisions for the whole work were made by a handful of people under the influence of these men.<sup>11</sup>

Although in 1875 Ellen White considered the General Conference and the decisions made by this body as "the voice of

the highest authority the Lord has upon the earth," less than 20 years later her attitude was quite different.

Taking into consideration all of the abuses that existed at the center of the work, Ellen White was forced to say: "This is the reason I was obliged to take the position that there was not the voice of God in the General Conference management and decisions. Method and plans would be devised that God did not sanction, and yet Elder Olsen made it appear that the decisions of the General Conference were as the voice of God. Many of the positions taken, going forth as the voice of the General Conference, have been the voice of one, two, or three men who were misleading the conference."<sup>12</sup>

It is not clear in the 1875 statement (*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 492) whether Ellen White is speaking of the General Conference in session, or whether she is referring to the daily and weekly decisions that were necessary for the advancement of the work. Her statements after 1888 about the decisions of the General Conference not being the voice of God seem to reflect the daily and weekly decisions that were made. It is in this context that Elders Henry and Lindsay would have had the greatest influence. As noted above, Ellen White said in 1891, "Many of the positions taken, going forth as the voice of the General Conference, have been the voice of one, two, or three men who were misleading the conference."<sup>13</sup>

But does this mean that God has rejected His people, and that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is no longer His representative on earth? Not at all.

### **Babylon**

During the early 1890s, at the very time Ellen White was saying that the voice of the General Conference was no longer to be considered the voice of God, A. W. Stanton published the tract "The Loud Cry! Babylon Fallen!" Stanton proclaimed the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Babylon, and said the loud cry of Revelation was to God's true people to come out of her.

Upon reading Stanton's tract, Ellen White picked up her pen and wrote: "I feel deep sorrow of heart that [Stanton] did not plead with God, 'Bless me, O God, bless now I see my error. Thou art communicating to Thy people the richest truths ever committed to mortals. These people are not Babylon; for Thou

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hast given to them righteousness and peace; and Thy joy, that their joy may be full.' . . .

"How could [Stanton] come from that meeting where the power of God was revealed in so marked a manner [the 1893 General Conference session], and proclaim that the loud cry was that the commandment-keeping people were Babylon? . . .

"I have no such message to give; but one of an entirely different character. . . .

"Beware of those who arise with a great burden to denounce the church. The chosen ones who are standing and breasting the storm of opposition from the world, and are uplifting the downtrodden commandments of God to exalt them as honorable and holy, are indeed the light of the world.

"How dare mortal man pass his judgment upon them, and call the church a harlot, Babylon, a den of thieves? . . .

"When anyone is drawing apart from the organized body of God's commandment-keeping people, when he begins to weigh the church in his human scales, and begins to pronounce judgment against them, then you may know that God is not leading him. He is on the wrong track."<sup>14</sup>

### **After 1901**

As the church gathered for the General Conference session of 1901, Ellen White stressed the urgency of reorganization: "That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be—that is past. What we want now is a reorganization. We want to begin at the foundation, and

to build upon a different principle.”<sup>15</sup>

In this reorganization she saw the prospects of breaking the power of those she considered to be unfaithful stewards. Her hopes were realized. The General Conference Committee was enlarged to include representation from the world field. Elder A. G. Daniells was elected president. Independent entities were brought under the leadership of the General Conference, and departments were established to guide the work of these entities, including the medical work. Union conferences were established, and the day-to-day decisions of running a world work were given to the local and union conferences.

Looking back at this historic session, Ellen White wrote, “Every time I think of that meeting, a sweet solemnity comes over me, and sends a glow of gratitude to my soul.”<sup>16</sup>

However, some months later God revealed to her that He had intended to do much more at the 1901 General Conference session. The realization that the people of God had not fully attained what God desired brought grief to her heart. She describes what God had revealed to her and the agony of disappointment she felt in “What Might Have Been.”<sup>17</sup>

Be that as it may, the organizational flaws that had allowed certain men to operate in such a way that led Ellen White to say that she could no longer consider the decisions of the General Conference as the voice of God had been corrected.

Ellen White’s son Edson, smarting under some unjust dealings he had endured at the hands of the Review prior to 1901, sought compensation. To him his mother wrote: “I am again much burdened as I see you selecting words from writings that I have sent you, and using them to force decisions that the brethren do not regard with clearness. . . .

“Your course would have been the course to be pursued if no change had been made in the General Conference. But a change has been made, and many more changes will be made and great developments will be seen. . . .

“It hurts me to think that you are using words which I wrote prior to the conference. Since the conference great changes have been made. . . .

“A terribly unjust course has been pursued in the past. A want of principle has been revealed. But in pity to His people God has brought about changes. . . .

“The course of action which before the conference might have been a necessity is no longer necessary; for the Lord Himself interposed to set things in order. He has given His Holy Spirit. I am confident that He will set in order the matters that seem to be moving wrong.”<sup>18</sup>

From 1901 on, Ellen White spoke positively regarding the future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In 1905 she wrote: “We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established. We cannot now enter into any new organization; for this would mean apostasy from the truth.”<sup>19</sup>

In 1908: “I am instructed to say to Seventh-day Adventists the world over, God has called us a people to be a peculiar treasure unto Himself. He has appointed that His church on earth shall stand perfectly united in the Spirit and counsel of the Lord of hosts to the end of time.”<sup>20</sup>

In 1909 she spoke again about the authority of the General Conference when in session: “At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general management of the work have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans and to restrict God’s work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God. But this is not saying that the decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative men from all parts of the field should not be respected. God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority. The error that some are in danger of committing is in giving to the mind and judgment of one man, or of a small group of men, the full measure of authority and influence that God has vested in His church in the judgment and voice of the General Conference assembled to plan for the prosperity and advancement of His work.”<sup>21</sup>

In 1913 she wrote: “I am encouraged and blessed as I realize that the God of Israel is still guiding His people, and that He will continue to be with them, even to the end.”<sup>22</sup>

Just prior to Ellen White’s death W. C. White said: “During our conversation, I told her [Lida Scott] how Mother regarded the experience of the remnant church, and of her positive teaching that God would not permit this denomina-

**“The course of action which before the conference might have been a necessity is no longer necessary; for the Lord Himself interposed.”**

tion to so fully apostatize that there would be the coming out of another church.”<sup>23</sup>

Three points emerge from our study: 1. When two or three men dominated the decision-making process of the General Conference in the 1890s, Ellen White could not consider the voice of the General Conference as the voice of God. 2. Precisely at this time (in the 1890s) she defended the church against those who would destroy it by calling it Babylon and urging God’s people to forsake it. 3. God will not allow the Seventh-day Adventist Church to so fully apostatize “that there would be the coming out of another church.” Rather, this church will go through to the end. ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 1, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> ———, *Testimonies to Ministers* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1962), p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> ———, *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 417.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 492.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White manuscript 33, 1891.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White letter 2, 1894.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White manuscript 43, 1901.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen G. White letter 7, 1896.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White letter 4, 1896.

<sup>11</sup> Ellen G. White manuscript 33, 1891.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Ellen G. White manuscript 21, 1893.

<sup>15</sup> Ellen G. White, in *General Conference Bulletin*, Apr. 3, 1901.

<sup>16</sup> ———, in *Review and Herald*, Nov. 26, 1901.

<sup>17</sup> ———, *Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 104-106.

<sup>18</sup> Ellen G. White letter 54, 1901; also in A. V. Olson, *Thirteen Crisis Years: 1888-1901* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1981), pp. 199, 200.

<sup>19</sup> Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), book 2, p. 390.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 397.

<sup>21</sup> ———, *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 260, 261.

<sup>22</sup> ———, *Life Sketches* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1943), pp. 437, 438.

<sup>23</sup> Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Later Elmhaven Years* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1982), vol. 6, p. 428.

# Baptism: pastoral perplexities

Rex D. Edwards

How should we handle rebaptism, children who want to be baptized, and those who want to join our church but who have been baptized by modes other than immersion?



Rex D. Edwards is an assistant secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association, and directs the association's PREACH seminars and Continuing Education program.

**A**s a pastor in the last half of the twentieth century, I have grown accustomed to the companionship of perplexity. In every significant area of my ministry integrity of ideals and actuality of practice collide mercilessly. This is certainly true as regards baptism. The very mention of the word brings to mind at least five perplexities that vary in intensity but are nonetheless real.

## 1. Baptism as the criterion of pastoral effectiveness

The baptizing of converts is indeed an important function of the pastor, yet it has assumed an inordinate role in the lives of Seventh-day Adventist ministers. It has tended to become the criterion of evaluating their overall effectiveness.

Pastors' "baptismal records"—which refers not to the quality of their handling of this sensitive area, but simply to the number of people they have managed to immerse—are often the foremost points of reference in determining their competence. From this one fact inferences are drawn that encompass their whole beings—their orthodoxy, their gifts, their spirit, their attitude toward people, and so forth.

This scale of religious values poses to Adventist pastors the temptation to use baptism to meet their own professional needs rather than the spiritual needs of the people they serve. Knowing that they will be lauded by their fellow pastors and denominational superiors and become more attractive to other conferences simply by baptizing as many people as they

can makes it doubly hard to maintain sensitivity and integrity in relation to potential converts.

In the depths of their spirits, ministers know that Paul was right when he wrote to the Corinthians: "For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel" (1 Cor. 1:17, RSV). Immersing as many people as one can—any way, anyhow—is a tragic distortion of the high calling of God. Keeping the practice of baptism in its true focus poses a painful dilemma before many pastors because it means going against the stream of denominational expectation and staking one's own respect for persons over against the accusation of not having a passion for souls.

## 2. The age of the baptized

The age at which a person may be baptized is particularly problematic. With children many important factors need to be heeded.

On the one hand, I take very seriously the desires and impulses of the individual and the fact that the Christian life is a perennial process in which one never fully "arrives." Therefore, when a small child approaches me with a strong wish to become a Christian, and I sense that this is not motivated externally by parent or peer pressure, the desire to eat the Lord's Supper, or some other secondary reason, I am cautious about quenching this flame of interest and saying, in effect: "You cannot trust what you are feeling now. You are not old enough to understand yet; go and wait."

I am uneasy about such a response, for if the spiritual life is process, does it not have to start somewhere and will not the

## Should a person be rebaptized in light of what is felt to be a more authentic experience or commitment?

beginning point—no matter at what age—leave much yet to be learned? And if an earnest little child is told that his deep feelings are not to be trusted, will he begin to distrust all spiritual impulses and thus fail to recognize those that will come later? For these reasons, I cannot easily give a categorical answer that no children under the age of such and such (10 or 12 or 18) should ever be baptized.

On the other hand, I find myself asking: "Is baptism the way to acknowledge incipient religious interest?" Perhaps we should have another rite for this stage in a child's pilgrimage, and reserve baptism for that moment when a mature person knows the alternatives and the full power of sin, and then commits his existence to Christ in a way no child is capable of doing.

### 3. *Rebaptism*

My third question is akin to the second: Should a person be rebaptized in light of what is felt to be a more authentic experience or commitment? I am often confronted with this question and feel pressures from both sides. No person can ever fully know the depths of another's subjectivity. Thus, what happened years before and what is happening now are forever secrets of individuality that the experiencer alone can evaluate. If rebaptism would express and reinforce a significant milestone in the soul's journey, who am I as a helper of souls to deny such a benefit?

However, the question that intrudes again on such a line of reasoning is the question of meaning. Is this the nature and purpose of baptism? After all, a life in the process of becoming will experience many new plateaus of meaning and growth. And should the rite of baptism accompany each one of these? Is baptism a sign of birth, and thus unrepeatable, or

is it a vehicle of expressing commitment to Christ and thus meaningful at various stages along the way?

### 4. *Baptized but not immersed*

The fourth perplexity I face arises when members of other churches who have not been immersed as believers seek to become members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Here one confronts the dilemma of how to speak the truth of his convictions in love; how not to make too much or too little of this distinctive rite.

I find achieving the right balance here to be very difficult. I do not want to be so dogmatic that I make the mode and meaning of baptism appear to be the central aspect of Christianity. Nor do I want to state our position in such a way that all other forms and practices are emptied of meaning and made to appear totally invalid. Yet the truth in believer's baptism by immersion is worth standing for and emphasizing.

The problem lies in conveying this uniqueness in a positive and not an arrogant way. We Seventh-day Adventists have often left the impression that "we are right and all the rest of you are wrong." For many non-Adventists, to be immersed after having been sprinkled and confirmed represents a humiliating capitulation—the tacit admission that the churches from which they came and all their past spiritual experiences were unauthentic. I have known many people to use this interpretation to avoid serious religious commitment.

I hate to see baptism become the key factor in keeping a person out of a fellowship, and yet I am not willing to jettison all conviction to gain one member. The solution to the dilemma lies in finding a way of relating believer's baptism by immersion to other religious practices so that it becomes a positive addition to one's experience and not a humiliating deprecation.

### 5. *Dull ceremony versus joyful celebration*

This fifth perplexity is the very practical matter of how to make the act of baptism more meaningful. A Jewish bar mitzvah is accompanied by a great deal more fanfare than a baptism in a Seventh-day Adventist church. Because of our repeated emphasis on baptism's nonsacramental and "merely symbolic" nature, we tend to regard the rite itself rather lightly.

I feel a great need to deepen its significance and meaning for both the candidates and the church, and to make more of baptism in the sense of a joyful celebration. So I find myself asking, "How can I interpret this rite, prepare people for it, execute it, and follow through in such a way that it catches up the feelings of wonder and ecstasy that one associates with a birthday or a first Communion or a bar mitzvah?"

## Baptism's meaning diminishes perplexities

These are the most central of the perplexities I face in relation to baptism. How do we minister with integrity in light of these pressures? Let me begin a constructive rationale by attempting to define the core understanding of baptism out of which I work, and in reference to which I try to cope with all the perplexities that arise.

I look on baptism as a person's public declaration that he has been confronted by God in Christ and is responding to the gracious invitation to follow Him in obedience and commitment. I think this rite should stand at the beginning of such a conscious relationship, and is in essence a symbol of entrance or birth into a unique dimension of experience.

The mode of baptism is a derivative concern of mine. Given the meaning I have just described, the immersion of a believer is in my judgment the best medium of expression. It depicts in dramatic form both the Christ-event and the saving event in the life of the believer (Rom. 6:1-3). As no other mode, immersion conveys the essence of how the process of salvation begins. However, the meaning is the primary reality, and the mode should always be the second item of concern and grow out of this primal category.

With this definition as a working center, consistency leads me toward solutions to the various problems I have mentioned.

### 1. *Baptism with integrity*

For example, I try studiously to keep my own professional needs from affecting my handling of baptism. I try to allow it to be the authentic work of God-the-Initiator and man-the-answerer, and not a mechanical process of enlarging the church rolls and my reputation. Because baptism stands for "a happening" in which I am at best a spiritual midwife and not the causer, I do not coercively pressure the potential believer for an imme-



diate decision. Rather, I wait for God to bring forth the growth of a seed of witness.

## 2. Baptizing the young

My definition of baptism has resulted in several guidelines as to when it should take place. The twelfth year has become a pivotal age in my understanding. This was the age when a Jewish child began to participate as an adult in the cultic life of Israel and when Jesus made His first pilgrimage to Jerusalem. From a psychological standpoint as well, this is a significant transitional age.

I make it a practice never to take the initiative and approach a child directly about a decision for baptism before the twelfth year, although I try to give general encouragement and instruction up to this period. If a child, on his own, expresses an authentic desire to be baptized, I take him very seriously and in consultation with his parents often encourage his decision. I do this out of respect for the mystery of individuality and the desire not to routinize the ways of the Spirit. The crucial factor under the age of 12, however, is that of initiative. I respond to the child's wishes rather than asking the child to respond to my appeal.

During the child's twelfth year, and usually in a small group situation, I for the first time try to convey to him my feeling that the time has come to consider this momentous decision. I try to increase the level of instruction and concern expressed through the youth classes, and by the time of that person's sixteenth year, to have done everything humanly possible to lay the claims of Christ before him.

In these latter years the full impact of sin has become apparent. If the child was baptized before the turbulence of adolescence, I try to direct his attention to the reality of life as process. Some rededication experience is often necessary if he is to continue to bring all that he knows

of himself to all that he knows of God in Christ.

Some argue with urgency that baptism should be reserved for this more adult moment, and I sense great validity in this. However, there is a need for some public, active Christian commitment earlier than this. It seems to me that a 12-year-old's earnest acceptance of Christ as Lord and of his Christian tradition is an authentic beginning for his pilgrimage. Baptism should mark the *conscious beginning* of existence under the lordship of Christ, and I believe this can be actualized at 12 providing that life as process and growth and change is steadfastly taught.

## 3. Rebaptism

In regard to the problem of some people's desire for rebaptism because of a more mature spiritual experience, I try to use as a criterion the concept of baptism as the sign of spiritual birth. If the person really had not entered into spiritual life at the time of a previous baptism and has now, I might consider rebaptism. But as divorce precedes remarriage, so disfellowshipment would logically precede a rebaptism. To avoid this process would be to make rebaptism merely a reconsecration.

In the great majority of cases, however, I find there is a defective understanding of the process nature of spiritual life and therefore a confusion of the brand-new and new-as-growth. In his *Small Catechism*, Martin Luther asks, "What does baptism mean for daily living?" His answer: "It means that our sinful self with all its evil deeds and desires should be drowned through daily repentance; and that day after day a new self should arise to live with God in righteousness and purity forever."

Most often I suggest other forms of declaration than baptism for the new plateaus that people reach. In this respect, I reinforce the importance of the ordinance of foot washing that precedes the celebration of the Lord's Supper. William H. Branson wrote, "Following conversion and baptism, sins may accumulate in the life of a follower of Jesus. . . . He does not require a complete reconversion and cleansing. But he does require the lesser cleansing. Day by day he must come to God through Christ, confessing his failures, his pride, his selfishness, and his fallings into sin through the temptings of Satan. He must exercise faith that just as all his past sinful life was forgiven

# I am careful to affirm what I consider to be the positive values in the practices of infant baptism and sprinkling.

and cleansed when he first came to Jesus, so now the blood of Christ cleanses him anew from these additional sins. This lesser cleansing is symbolized by the ordinance of feet washing."<sup>1</sup>

The foot-washing experience, then, can be an occasion when baptismal vows are renewed. Only if rebaptism really is an entrance or birth experience do I think it is appropriate.

## 4. Baptizing Christians

As to the problem of interpreting baptism to those coming from a different background, I find that the crucial factor is attitude. When the mode of immersion is explained in positive and nonexclusive terms, I find that the emotional barriers often can be overcome.

I always attempt to interpret the immersion of a believer as a positive contribution to the faith that one brings to a Seventh-day Adventist church. I am careful to affirm what I consider to be the positive values in the practice of infant baptism (acknowledgment of one's birth into a Christian family) and sprinkling (a symbol of the outpouring of the Spirit), and show how believer's baptism can complement and enlarge the Christian understanding rather than contradict it. In doing this, I do not attempt to soften the Adventist distinctiveness, but simply put it in the form of a positive sharing rather than an argumentative debate.

I believe that this approach is more valid than that of a completely "open membership" that merely prefers believer's baptism by immersion, but accepts any form of baptism. I believe there is tremendous truth in a person's responding for himself to the claims of Christ and tremendous power in immersion as a witness to this response.

I deplore the fact that some people allow the issue of reimmersion to cut

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**The crucial factor under the age of 12, however, is that of initiative.**

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them off from the ministry of a church, but my experience has indicated that this rarely happens if the act is interpreted tactfully. Often an objection at this point is a way of avoiding significant religious commitment. Although this is certainly not the primary purpose of the rite, it does in such cases serve to separate religious seriousness from superficiality.

#### 5. *Meaningful baptismal services*

My attempts at making the act itself more meaningful start with interpretation and careful preparation, and then the linking of the act of baptism with the person's ordination to a life of ministry (see my article "Baptism as Ordination," *MINISTRY*, August 1983). I deplore the practice of reducing baptism to a liturgical interruption. Ellen White says, "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, powers infinite and omnipotent, receive those who truly enter into covenant relation with God. They are present at every baptism."<sup>2</sup> Since the Godhead is present, with what dignity and care should this service be planned?

I encourage the families of the converts to have some kind of celebration either right before or right after the baptism to underline their interest and joy. The whole worship service should be given to and revolve around the baptism. It should be planned as a high day in the life of the church, and climax with the ordination of these candidates to a life of ministry in the Master's service at the frontier of their vocational worlds.

In my opinion, we Seventh-day Adventists have much to learn from other groups in terms of how to point up the mountain peaks of the soul's journey. Our Puritan background has left us impoverished in the art of "celebrating through the created order." Baptism offers a golden opportunity to develop rituals that will convey both intellectual and emotional meaning to others.

By no means do I sense having arrived in this area of ministry. I think that the meaning baptism embodies lies at the very heart of Christianity, and that room remains for the further development of nonverbal and dramatic forms of communicating that meaning. So I look for the practice of baptism to continue to be a creative aspect of organized Christian life. ■

<sup>1</sup> William H. Branson, *Drama of the Ages* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1950), pp. 183, 184.

<sup>2</sup> *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1075.

# When it's time to move on

**Freddie Russell**

**Most parish ministers in our church move frequently. Should administrative personnel follow their example?**



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ichard Dobbins, a family therapist, said, "People do not change until the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of change." Change

is never an easy thing to accept. Yet every organization eventually needs to make changes. Hopefully, whatever changes occur are in response to needs.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has experienced many changes in the past few years, some positive and others less so. It has become evident to many that the church has reached the point where change in one particular area is much needed. I speak of the present practice of not limiting the number of terms that an elected church official can serve in a position. Because the number of terms is not limited, problems have arisen that might have been avoided if this practice had been discarded. I have noted three key problems.

1. *Stagnation.* When one brand of thinking predominates over a prolonged period of time, the development of new ideas and fresh approaches to meeting the challenges of the work is stifled. In such cases, statistics (e.g., baptisms, tithe gains) that suggest that a conference is moving forward may be misleading. (In our more reflective moments, most of us would agree that statistics do not always accurately reveal the overall health of a field.)

2. *Misuse of power.* When one person remains in power for a prolonged period, an environment for misuses and abuses of power is more likely to be created.

Deposed presidents Duvalier of Haiti

and Marcos of the Philippines are classic examples of this problem. They came to believe that they owned their positions, and all too often punished those who aspired or were perceived as aspiring to their offices.

Their cases are, I hope, more extreme than what the church experiences, but the principles are the same. The old adage "Absolute power corrupts absolutely" is still true.

3. *Deterioration of respect.* A deterioration of respect for leadership can develop when a leader stays past a reasonable time. Unfortunately, when this happens an environment of hostility can develop that can lead to forced changes in leadership, a process that is sometimes chaotic. Regrettably, some conferences have experienced these painful situations.

Ellen White received direct counsel from the Lord regarding the need to make *periodic* changes in leadership. She wrote: "The question is asked me if it is not a mistake to remove the president of a state conference to a new field when many of the people under his present charge are unwilling to give him up.

"The Lord has been pleased to give me light on this question. I have been shown that ministers should not be retained in the same district year after year, nor should the same man long preside over a conference. A change of gifts is for the good of our conferences and churches" (*Gospel Workers*, pp. 419, 420).

This counsel regarding periodic changes is often followed in the case of the parish ministers, while it is frequently ignored when it comes to administrators. But Ellen White made no distinction between the two.

The messenger pinpointed the dangers of retaining leaders in a position "year after year": "The churches become accustomed to the management of that one man, and think they must look to him instead of to God. His ideas and plans have a controlling power in the conference. . . .

"Many are strong in some points of character, while they are weak and deficient in others. As the result, a want of efficiency is manifest in some parts of the work. Should the same man continue as president of a conference year after year, his defects would be reproduced in the churches under his labors. But one laborer may be strong where his brother is weak, and so by exchanging fields of labor, one may, to some extent, supply the

deficiencies of another" (*ibid.*, pp. 420, 421).

### **An issue in Black conferences**

At this time the problem of men staying too long in a single position, at least on the local conference level, seems not to be as great an issue in the White conferences as it is in Black conferences. The reasons behind this are worth our consideration.

Of the 59 conferences in the North American Division, only 9 are predominantly Black. Because of the limited number of positions in Black conferences, Black ministers with administrative or other specialized ministry gifts have very few conference-level slots in which to exercise their abilities, while their White counterparts with the same gifts have almost unlimited (comparatively speaking) opportunities for ministry. This bottleneck gives Black leadership nowhere to go. Those in leadership positions stay as long as they can, realizing that the church offers Blacks few such positions. (Of course, this highlights another problem that needs to be addressed.) Their staying overlong produces the problems we have mentioned.

For Whites the problem of retaining people too long in positions is more apt to occur on the levels of the church above the local conference. The higher a person goes in the organization, the easier it is to "hide out" for years where there is little accountability, because, like doctors, we ministers don't expose each other.

How can we begin to limit the amount of time that an individual stays in office? The easiest way would be to stipulate in the constitutions of our organizations a limit to the number of terms a person may serve. But that would be only a superficial solution. We need to adjust our thinking on the whole subject of leadership. The time has come when we must seriously consider placing more emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit, especially as they relate to the selection process in filling positions in denominational leadership.

Each of us brings gifts/abilities to each job that we take within ministry, whether it be in the parish ministry or denominational leadership. Before an individual is placed in a position, his or her gifts/abilities should be considered as they relate to that position. The church must ask What are the challenges of the position? Does this individual have the

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**"I have been shown that ministers should not be retained in the same district year after year, nor should the same man long preside over a conference."**

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gifts/abilities necessary to meet these challenges?

These considerations are even more important regarding heads of organizations such as local conferences, unions, divisions, and the General Conference. Since organizational needs change every few years, the church must continually have new leadership, with new skills.

When challenges arise that are outside the realm of an individual's particular abilities, this view that leadership is based on gifts makes it easier for that individual to move on to another area where his or her talents fit the needs. Then moves from administrative positions within the church back to parish ministry could be made without the individual's feeling like a failure or being perceived as one.

In addition, we would begin to recognize the benefits to the organization of using the full spectrum of gifts that are available in different individuals. And last but not least, the aforementioned problems engendered by a leader's occupying a position too long would be greatly, if not completely, diminished.

I fully realize that this approach to leadership is visionary; however, it is biblical. Through careful and prayerful consideration, we must develop a spiritual process to make this a reality. What I am suggesting is simply that we make practical application of the priesthood of all believers, which, in short, means that every member of the body has something to offer for the body's upbuilding. ■



# Annual Council—1987

Floyd Bresee

**W**hat would you consider to be the most noteworthy events in the Adventist Church during 1987? In his president's report at the opening meeting of the 1987 Annual Council, Neal Wilson included these five:

1. *Unprecedented Growth.* In June the Inter-American Division became the first to number more than 1 million members. In the same month membership for the world church passed the 5.2 million mark. The Inter-American Division alone now has more Adventists than there were in the whole world in 1954—just 33 years ago.

2. *Guam Radio on the Air.* In January, ribbons were cut at the new radio station on Guam, and KSDA is now broadcasting. We have already received responses from listeners in 55 countries.

3. *Success in China.* Daily KSDA beams 12 hours of broadcast into the People's Republic of China. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has signed a contract with officials of the Chinese government and is opening an office in Beijing. ADRA will lead out in such projects as helping make water available in remote villages. It is hoped that this program will demonstrate our practical interest in the people of China.

When our work officially closed in China, we had some 20,000 members. We estimate our current membership there to be between 40,000 and 50,000. One member sent word that she had 350 people ready for baptism but didn't know

how she could find an Adventist minister to baptize them. Later the church heard from her again. She had found a way—250 had been baptized and she was certain there would be 140 more soon.

4. *Adventist Magazine in Russia.* The Russian government allowed the Review and Herald Publishing Association to print and distribute in Russia a magazine depicting Adventists—who they are, what they believe, and how they live, both in Russia and the United States. These magazines have become most precious to our Russian members.

Construction of our new seminary in Russia is well under way. It should be ready in the summer of 1988.

5. *Legal Victories in U.S. Supreme Court.* Recent decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court have been significant to the church. Some of these decisions have involved Adventists and have been argued before the Court by General Conference attorneys. One ruling established that people could not be denied unemployment benefits if fired because of the Sabbath. Another allows religious institutions the privilege of preferential hiring—the church can insist on certain standards of belief and lifestyle among its employees without being accused of discrimination.

## Items of interest

The routine but necessary business of Annual Council sometimes seems to drone on endlessly. However, as I sat trying to tune my ears to things of concern to the typical Adventist minister, many significant items emerged.

*More Members Per Evangelistic Worker.* (By evangelistic worker we mean ministers and other noninstitutional church employees.) In 1920 the church employed 38 evangelistic workers

for every 1,000 members. Today there are only 7 per 1,000. This is not necessarily bad if our laity are carrying more of the burden. But in some parts of the world pastors are so few that they cannot shepherd their flocks.

At least three factors underlie this dramatic change: the church is growing very rapidly, a smaller percentage of members may be tithing, and the number of inactive members is increasing.

*Harris Pine Looks Better.* Late in 1986 the church faced an unusual financial crisis. Harris Pine Mills, which was owned by the church and provided work for students at many Adventist schools, was hemorrhaging so badly it declared bankruptcy. The church always intended to see that all of Harris Pine's debts were paid. Bankruptcy was simply the method of stanching the financial bleeding.

When Harris Pine closed, it owned some \$33 million worth of furniture parts scattered throughout its plants all over the United States. Through assembly and sales, this inventory has already been reduced to \$9 million. The original indebtedness of \$46.5 million, as determined by the trustee, has been reduced to less than \$20 million.

The redwood division has been sold to a non-Adventist company. All redwood branches have been reopened except one, which hopes to open soon. These branches are operating under Adventist executives and are hiring students from the schools where they were established. Harris Pine's furniture division—including the plant at Pendleton and eight branches—is in the process of being sold. It is hoped that these will soon be operating under similar arrangements as is the redwood division.

The temptation to sell off every asset as quickly as possible has been resisted.

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By selling more judiciously, not only will all the other debts be paid, but it seems likely that the General Conference will also receive payment for the funds it lent Harris Pine.

*Tithe and Mission Funds Increase.* General Conference tithe receipts for 1986 were \$74.8 million—an increase of 5.9 percent over 1985's \$70.6 million. Tithe the General Conference received in 1987 from outside North America shows an increase of approximately 14.6 percent over 1986. Part of this increase is a result of the weakening of the U.S. dollar in the world market.

As compared to tithe receipts, mission giving has been declining for several years. However, it is encouraging to note that 1986 and 1987 saw a slight increase in worldwide mission giving, and a definite increase in North American giving.

*Ministers May Again Choose Social Security.* Since 1968 all clergy subject to U.S. tax laws have been obligated to pay Social Security tax unless they opted out on grounds of conscience. The minister choosing not to be covered must sign a statement that says in part, "I certify that, because of my religious principles, I am conscientiously opposed to the acceptance of the benefits of any public insurance . . ." Some 1,000 Adventist ministers have chosen this route. The church respects the rights of individual conscience, but the statement above clearly indicates that it would be dishonest to opt out simply to save money. Not only is such action unethical—it is also illegal.

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 has opened a window whereby clergy who previously opted out of Social Security may now, probably for the last time, enter the program.

*Printing Plant in the U.S.S.R. Considered.* The Soviet government has offered to authorize the Adventist Church to operate the only church printing establishment in the Soviet Union. This offer has grown out of friendly overtures made by Neal Wilson and other Adventist leaders, as well as the visit of Soviet government officials to the Review and Herald Publishing Association and other Adventist institutions.

Should we accept this offer? Doing so would require a degree of cooperation with the Soviet government. While we would not be required to print any political literature, we would have to print materials for other churches—although not under our name. Could we refuse to

print materials promoting things we oppose?

We have prayed for years that God would open the way so we could get our literature into the Soviet Union. Please pray for our leaders as they seek God's will in this problematic situation.

*Adventist Media Center Studied.* Frank Magid Associates, a consulting firm, was commissioned to study the Adventist Media Center and its five programs: *Breath of Life*, *Christian Lifestyle Magazine*, *It Is Written*, *La Voiz De La Esperanza*, and the *Voice of Prophecy*. They took two surveys. The first, done by mail, surveyed 300 Adventists—half of them laity and half denominational leaders. This survey found that not many were tuning in Adventist programs—less than 10 percent reported regularly watching Adventist programs available in their area. *Breath of Life*, *It Is Written*, and *Voice of Prophecy* were most interesting to members over 50 years of age.

The second survey was a carefully constructed, random telephone sampling of 1,000 persons in the general U.S. population. It indicated that 9 percent of Americans have heard of the *Voice of Prophecy*, 8 percent have heard of *It Is Written*, and 7 percent know about *Christian Lifestyle Magazine*. Some 47 percent have a favorable attitude toward Adventists, and 29 percent an unfavorable attitude.

The most alarming statistic is that 51 percent of those surveyed said they know nothing at all about Adventists.

Some 61 percent of the respondents said they looked to help outside themselves in the area of health. They expressed far more interest in health than in any other area mentioned in the survey. Learning this, our consultants took us to task. Despite our strong health message and all the health-related institutions the church operates, we are doing next to nothing in the media to take advantage of the public's interest in health.

*Chemical Dependency in the Church.* The General Conference Study Commission on Chemical Dependency in the Church, created at the 1985 Annual Council, presented a report of their findings to this year's meeting.

A national survey of the use of alcohol and other drugs by North American Adventist youth was conducted in 1985. Results indicate that 12 percent were currently using alcohol and 8 percent were using tobacco. Some 58 percent had used alcohol sometime in the past,

and 38 percent had used tobacco. Significantly less use occurred in students attending Adventist schools than in those attending public schools.

The problem is not limited to North America. Studies show that very similar problems exist in other parts of the world field. Adventists who enter the church while addicted are seldom able to recover without help. Yet because of our church standards, the member cannot easily admit the problem, and the church is not well equipped to help solve it anyway.

The church must have high standards. But it also needs a redemptive attitude.

Dr. Winton Beaven, an assistant to the General Conference president, has taken on the task of mobilizing the resources of our world divisions to combat chemical dependency in the church.

*Shepherdess Regularized.* Shepherdess International, a pilot program begun at the General Conference to give support and training to ministers' wives, was authorized by this Annual Council to become a permanent subentity of the Ministerial Association. The action will be implemented January 1 if leadership is able to fund the program by replacing an existing salary somewhere in the General Conference complex.

*Harvest 90 an Overwhelming Success.* Our Harvest 90 world baptismal goal through June 1987 was 620,000. The Lord led us to baptize more than 841,000 by that date—an average of more than 1,276 souls per day.

The Middle East Union, one of the most difficult places to work, is the first to surpass its goal for the quinquennium (1985-1990). They had baptized 1,225 as of Annual Council. Our Soviet brethren reported 1,700 baptisms for the year.

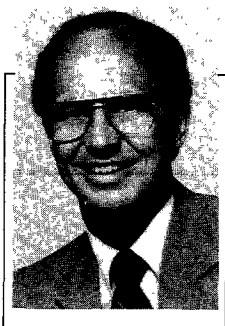
Dr. Calvin Rock, one of the General Conference vice-presidents, has held two evangelistic series in the past year—one in London and the other in Nairobi. The latter resulted in 1,200 baptisms and the starting of two new churches.

If a General Conference vice president, in spite of all the committee meetings and administrative work heaped upon him, can hold two series in one year, couldn't every administrator hold at least one series every two years? When every pastor is holding meetings or seminars every year and every administrator is doing it at least occasionally, God can use us to accomplish even more than we have in the past. Let us unite hands and hearts with one another and with our Lord for a finished work. ■

# The devil and the waiting Father

David C. Jarnes

Looking for something to liven up your devotions? One of our editors offers samples from some of his favorite devotional readings.



David C. Jarnes is one of MINISTRY's assistant editors.

**T**he spiritual life of the flock—either congregation or family—tends not to rise higher than that of its leader. One of the most important things you can do to strengthen your ministry is to maintain a strong devotional life. The Bible must be the foundation of your devotions, but for variety, and for personal application, the perspectives of others are helpful.

The four books I describe below are among those that I have found particularly inspirational. They vary in style and approach, but are all characterized by a scriptural base; solid, careful thinking; and personal application. I believe you would find them enriching.

## *The Waiting Father*

During the 1950s Helmut Thieliicke, dean of the school of religion at the local university, regularly filled the largest church (capacity 4,000) in nonchurch-going Hamburg twice weekly with an audience of men and women, sophisticated students and ordinary shopkeepers.

Thieliicke was a well-known German theologian, widely respected for his scholarship. But his great concern was to convey the biblical messages to modern man in everyday life.

His book *The Waiting Father* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1959) is made up of 16 sermons based on parables Jesus told. Let me whet your appetite by giving you a taste or two of the spiritual feast he has spread.

In his sermon on the parable of the prodigal son, Thieliicke gives a beautiful

portrayal of repentance: "The repentance of the lost son is therefore not something merely negative. In the last analysis it is not merely disgust; it is above all homesickness; not just turning away from something, but turning back home. Whenever the New Testament speaks of repentance, always the great joy is in the background. It does not say, 'Repent or hell will swallow you up,' but 'Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"

"[The prodigal's] disgust with himself could never help him. . . . It was the father's influence from afar, a byproduct of sudden realization of where he really belonged [that brought him home]" (pp. 26, 27).

Notice how he speaks directly to our spiritual needs in his sermon on the parable of the sower. Of the seed that fell on the path, he says: "A person who is only a path through which the daily traffic passes, who is no more than a busy street where people go rushing by hour after hour and where there is never a moment of rest, will hardly provide the soil in which the eternal seed can grow. People who are always on the go are the most in danger.

"A person who can no longer be receptive 'soil' for at least 15 minutes each day, who never allows himself to be 'plowed' and opened up, and never waits for what God drops into his furrow, that person has already lost the game at the crucial point" (p. 54).

In this same sermon he suggests that the birds in the parable represent "thought forces" within us that seek to dominate us: ambition, sexual fantasies, desire for recognition and prestige, wor-

ries and cares, and so forth. The Word of God demands a time in each day when it is our *only* companion.

This book also contains Thielicke's sermon on the parable of the laborers. While every Christian is called to work for the Lord, and this parable is directed to all, it seems especially to speak to those of us who earn our living working for the Lord.

As you will recall, in this parable those who worked only the last hour of the day received the same wages as did those who had labored through the whole day. Thielicke makes two thought-provoking points: First, when we are jealous of God's grace to others, we cannot enjoy His grace toward ourselves. And second, the difference in reward is not in the wages received at the end of the day (eternal life) but in the privilege of laboring with the Master. Those who labored with Him for only the "evening hours" will receive eternal life, but in the meantime they have lived lives of meaninglessness and frustration. Those who have labored with the Lord through the whole day may have experienced difficult times and exhausting toil. But if they have learned to recognize and enjoy His presence, they have had a richer experience—and a better life—in spite of it all.

This book will enrich your own preaching on the parables. But more than that, it will feed your soul.

### ***The Screwtape Letters***

For a change of pace in your devotional reading, try C. S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961). A careful thinker, as an adult Lewis turned from a de facto atheism to Christianity. His book *Mere Christianity* is a classic of modern Christian apologetics—I've found it very helpful personally.

*The Screwtape Letters* is made up of short pieces focusing on the spiritual life of the individual. Here, as in Thielicke's book, you will find good spiritual content applied in a practical way to life in the twentieth-century world.

But what adds special interest to this book is its perspective. The book purports to be a series of letters from a senior devil, Screwtape, to his nephew, Wormwood, a junior executive in the devil's enterprise.

Wormwood has been assigned a particular man to cultivate, and Screwtape writes letters of advice as to what temptations are effective and how to conduct

the case so as to get the results they are seeking. The skewed point of view gives fresh insights on the war in which we are the battleground, the troops, and the spoils.

Don't miss Lewis's preface. In it he explains his concept of Satan's realm: the devils he writes of are fallen angels consumed by selfishness. I love the explanation he gives as to why he doesn't portray them as batlike creatures. He says it's because "I like bats much better than bureaucrats. I live in the Managerial Age, in a world of 'Admin.' The greatest evil is not now done in those sordid 'dens of crime' that Dickens loved to paint. It is not done even in concentration camps and labor camps. In those we see its final result. But it is conceived and ordered (moved, seconded, carried, and minuted) in clean, carpeted, warmed, and well-lighted offices, by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voice. Hence, naturally enough, my symbol for hell is something like the bureaucracy of a police state or the offices of a thoroughly nasty business concern" (p. x).

In one of his letters, Screwtape tells Wormwood that because humans are beings of flesh as well as spirit, their nearest approach to constancy in the spiritual life is undulation, a series of troughs and peaks. "The dryness and dullness through which your patient is now going are not, as you fondly suppose, your workmanship; they are merely a natural phenomenon which will do us no good unless you make a good use of it. . . .

"It may surprise you to learn that in His efforts to get permanent possession of a soul, He [the Enemy—God] relies on the troughs even more than on the peaks; some of His special favorites have gone through longer and deeper troughs than anyone else" (p. 37).

This letter contains what, because of the encouragement it has afforded me at times, is one of my all-time favorite quotations: "Do not be deceived, Wormwood. Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys" (p. 39).

Wormwood's advice regarding small sins serves us as a warning to be taken seriously: "You will say that these are very small sins; and doubtless, like all

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**"I like bats much better than bureaucrats. I live in the Managerial Age, in a world of 'Admin.' . . . Hence, . . . my symbol for hell is something like . . . the offices of a thoroughly nasty business concern."**

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young tempters, you are anxious to be able to report spectacular wickedness. But do remember, the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy. . . . Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed, the safest road to hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts" (p. 56).

Usually we don't benefit much from a negative approach; Lewis himself confesses that he found looking at the spiritual life from this diabolical perspective stifling after a while. But as a supplement to our usual menu, a change of pace for our thinking, this book is worthwhile.

### ***Dynamic Discipleship***

Another book I'd recommend for your devotional reading is Kenneth C. Kinghorn's *Dynamic Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973). Written for novice Christians, this book leads one step by step through the Christian life. The author writes both of and from his personal experience and includes a lot of illustrations. If you're looking for sophisticated theology, this book will disappoint you. But I think a good, solid, carefully and clearly done review of the basics is helpful for us every once in a while—especially as part of our devotional life. Reading this kind of work



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## Kinghorn describes how personality maladjustments—scars and twists left in our unconscious minds by old hurts and resentments—may cripple our spiritual experience.

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helps us to check up on ourselves.

Kinghorn was converted after he had completed college. At the time he wrote this book, he was professor of church history at Asbury Theological Seminary. I particularly appreciate his thoroughly Arminian orientation, so in harmony with historic Adventist thinking on salvation and the spiritual life. (His book *Christ Can Make You Fully Human* lays out in simple, readable terms this orientation. I've found the perspective it gives both interesting and helpful for understanding our church's discussion of righteousness by faith during the last decade.)

In his first chapter, Kinghorn covers what Christian discipleship is, and in the second, the centrality of faith to maintaining a vibrant spiritual life.

The third chapter, "Excess Baggage," is particularly thought-provoking. Here Kinghorn describes how personality maladjustments—scars and twists left in our unconscious minds by old hurts and resentments—may cripple our spiritual experience. "Conversion to Jesus Christ does not automatically heal the personality wounds of the deep mind, any more than conversion cures a broken leg, or the mumps, or a common cold. The reason? Emotional scars are not in themselves sinful. They may be the result of sin, and they may become the occasion for

sinning, but in themselves they are in the category of infirmities" (p. 42).

Kinghorn continues, "The answer to damaged emotions and maladjusted complexes is not suppression. Rather, the solution is God's gracious work of healing" (p. 44). He believes that in those Christians who cooperate with Him, the Holy Spirit works to uncover and remove these personality problems and bring emotional and spiritual wholeness. And, characteristic of his approach throughout the book, he makes four specific suggestions as to how the Christian may have this kind of healing.

In discussing the problem of self-will in the Christian's life, Kinghorn notes that the Bible speaks of salvation as present and future processes as well as past. "A number of my Christian friends talked about having been saved. But I heard very little about the continuing process of *being saved*" (pp. 71, 72).

He points out that spiritual transformation is a lifetime process and that it involves a continual saying yes to God. And he develops the process in terms of confessing and forsaking sin and walking in renewed obedience to Christ.

Later chapters contrast, in practical terms, walking in the flesh with walking in the Spirit; point out that mature Christian experience involves growing beyond what Hebrews calls "the elementary teaching about Christ" (Heb. 6:1, Phillips); call us to Christian service, encouraging us that taking on the yoke of Christ frees us from "guilt, the burden of the past, boredom, the burden of the present, [and] fear, the burden of the future" (p. 138); and lay out our high destiny—a destiny we may begin fulfilling now—that of being cocreators with God.

### ***Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing***

Of all that Ellen G. White wrote, my favorite books are *Education*, *Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*. The latter is not mentioned as frequently as the others, so while I'm writing about devotional books, I want to recommend it to you.

*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* is ideally suited for devotional reading. Taking selected verses from Christ's sermon on the mount, Ellen G. White adds two- to four-page-long comments and applications. These meditations are collected into five chapters that cover the basic divisions of Christ's sermon. The chapter titles reveal the contents: "The

Beatitudes," "The Spirituality of the Law," "The True Motive in Service," "The Lord's Prayer," and "Not Judging, but Doing."

To those who recognize their spiritual poverty, Jesus offers the kingdom of heaven. "Whatever may have been your past experience, however discouraging your present circumstances, if you will come to Jesus just as you are, weak, helpless, and despairing, our compassionate Saviour will meet you a great way off, and will throw about you His arms of love and His robe of righteousness. He presents us to the Father clothed in the white raiment of His own character. He pleads before God in our behalf, saying: I have taken the sinner's place. Look not upon this wayward child, but look on Me" (p. 9).

"When tribulation comes upon us, how many of us are like Jacob! We think it the hand of an enemy; and in the darkness we wrestle blindly until our strength is spent, and we find no comfort or deliverance" (p. 11).

"If you have a sense of need in your soul, if you hunger and thirst after righteousness, this is an evidence that Christ has wrought upon your heart, in order that He may be sought unto to do for you, through the endowment of the Holy Spirit, those things which it is impossible for you to do for yourself" (p. 19).

"While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. . . . God offered [Christ's disciples], in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires" (pp. 54, 55).

Fathers and mothers, "lead [your] children to see in every pleasant and beautiful thing an expression of God's love for them. Recommend your religion to them by its pleasantness" (pp. 97, 98).

"Every promise in the word of God furnishes us with subject matter for prayer, presenting the pledged word of Jehovah as our assurance" (p. 133).

These fellow travelers on the Christian pathway encourage us to keep moving along and help us find the right road and avoid some of the detours and potholes that might cause us difficulty. I hope that you will find one of these books an encouragement. ■



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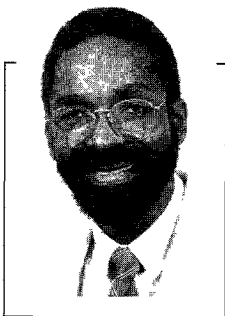
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# Discrimination at the Lord's Supper

**Pedrito U.  
Maynard-Reid**

**Paul was concerned about one-upmanship at the Lord's Supper. Many have made what he wrote the basis for theological one-upmanship and schism.**



*Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, Th.D., is director of the Department of Theology at Antillean Adventist College, Mayagüez, Puerto Rico.*

**O**f all the Pauline Epistles, 1 Corinthians speaks most directly to the problems and concerns of today's parish pastor. One such problem is that of practices surrounding participation in the Lord's Supper. It was one of the many problems that affected the unity of the first-century church in Corinth. And it is one that has affected the unity of the entire Christian church over the centuries.

Particularly during the Reformation there were intense discussions and differences between the various religious groups and Reformers like Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli regarding the meaning of the Supper. Even now such issues as transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and the symbolic meaning of the emblems continue to divide Christianity.

But in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul was not attempting to develop a complicated eucharistic theology, such as was debated during the Reformation. Throughout 1 Corinthians the theological issue is that of unity. All the doctrinal and ethical problems had their roots in the divisive spirit that had ingrained itself in the church. Yet, ironically, the church has made one of the very passages that Paul wrote to help unify the church the grounds of great disunity among the body of believers.

One simply needs to read 1 Corinthians 11:17-19, which begins the discussion, to realize Paul's interest: "But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the

worse. For, in the first place, when you assemble as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and I partly believe it, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized."\*

The Corinthians' problem, then, was not theological but sociological—if one can truly make such a distinction, for all biblical sociological problems are in essence theological. The factious spirit among them when they came together for the Lord's Supper made the meal not really the Lord's Supper (verse 20). Because of the inequitable and divisive social situation, the Spirit of the Lord was not present.

In verses 21 and 22 Paul clearly states the causes of disunity at the Communion service: "In eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not."

These verses tell us a number of things regarding the social situation of the church in Corinth, which seemed to be at the heart of the divisive spirit there.<sup>1</sup> First, there were at least two groups at the service. Second, the groups began eating at different times. And third, the quality and the quantity of the food differed among the groups. Let us look carefully at each of these points.

## **Shutting out the poor**

### **1. Who constituted the different**

\*All quotations from Scripture in this article are from the Revised Standard Version.

groups? It seems that the Corinthian church included a large group from the lower class, and a small segment from the upper stratum of society. This is clear from chapter 1:26: "For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth."

It would seem that during these ancient Lord's Suppers—especially when the church was large, as the Corinthian church was—the members sat at several tables. It can be surmised that the wealthy would have the habit of physically separating themselves from the poor and partaking of the meal in their own exclusive society.

Chapter 11:21, 22 shows that the small upper stratum was prosperous and well fed to the point of drunkenness. On the other hand, it shows that the larger group, consisting of the poor, did not have enough to eat, went away hungry, and were humiliated.

2. These groups began eating at different times. Verses 21 and 33 indicate that some started eating before the rest. No doubt it was the upper class who were going ahead with their meal. But why would they begin first?

It was an accepted practice for each to bring his or her own meal to a common place and partake potluck-style in communal fellowship (cf. Acts 2:42-46). But the prosperous in the Corinthian church had lost the primitive sense of sharing and unity. They would start to eat before the poor arrived so that there would be no sharing of material goods with the less fortunate.

But not only was the minority group selfish; pride seems to have been involved also. First Corinthians 11:22 indicates that their actions humiliated the poor. The rich had no desire to associate with the humble and lowly (see Rom. 12:16). By eating alone in their exclusive groups, the well-to-do were putting down their brothers and sisters in the community and causing them embarrassment. They were, in effect, saying, We are superior to you.

3. First Corinthians 11: 21 indicates that at the supper some were hungry and others were drunk—clearly implying that there were unequal portions of food and drink. But it also seems that the quality of the meal of the rich was much superior to that of the poor.

At a common meal it was Greek practice for the higher social class to have a

different quality of food from the lower class. In his study of the social situation of the Corinthian church, Gerd Theissen cites a few examples to support this point. He notes, for instance, that Pliny, a famous personality of that era, argued that at a common meal a person of a higher social status should adjust his eating habits to match those of a lower status.

And Theissen quotes Martial's complaint to his host, who is of a higher social class, that he is treating him (Martial) as if he still belongs to the lower class. At dinner the host eats fattened oysters from Lucrine Lake, while Martial sucks mussels through a hole in the shell. The latter eats hog fungi, while the former enjoys turbot. The rich host consumes a turtledove "with its bloated rump" and golden with fat, while Martial is served a magpie that had died in its cage.<sup>2</sup>

It seems fair to conclude that some similar situation existed in the Corinthian church. The rich church members' meals, consumed before the whole body of believers came together, probably included some meat and fish delicacy (possibly the food sacrificed to idols, with which chapters 8-10 deal). After the common meal, the rich were stuffed and drunk, while the poor went away hungry.

### Profaning Christ's body

Paul unequivocally condemns this way of conducting the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:22). In the same verse he states that those who exhibit such selfish indifference to the needs and feelings of the poor actually despise the church of God.

In fact, he says that by their selfish actions and mistreatment of the poor, the wealthy Christians were profaning the body and blood of Christ (verse 27). Such actions intensified the schisms in an already fragmented church. To eat and drink worthily is to recognize that in the fellowship of believers all should be equal. Some cannot be sated while others are hungry. To permit such a situation is to invite judgment—a judgment that Paul links to the sickness of many and death of some of the believers (verses 29, 30).

One wonders whether Paul's message is not intensely appropriate to Christians today. As we sit at the table for the Lord's Supper, do we profane the body of Christ? Do we participate contented with our material comforts while fellow believers in the Third World go hungry

## By their mistreatment of the poor, the wealthy Christians were profaning the body and blood of Christ.

and even humiliated? As Ron Sider asks in his book *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, how dare we rest contented at the Communion service "until the scandal of starving Christians is removed"?<sup>3</sup>

Today, true unity in the body of Christ cannot be achieved when there is such a great distinction between the rich and the poor, between the sated and the empty. Each participation at the Lord's Supper should remind us of the Corinthian situation. We should hear Paul's voice anew. The poor, the hungry, are a part of the body of Christ. They deserve to be treated as such. To ignore their plight is not to discern the body of Christ. It is to bring judgment upon ourselves.

When we prepare ourselves for the Supper, we must put away all of the sins that divide the body of Jesus Christ. Yes, this means personal sins such as pride, jealousy, covetousness, envy, major or minor misunderstandings, malice, hatred, and falsehood. But at the same time, we must not fail to put away the social sins, sins such as neglect of the poor, hungry, and oppressed. It is only when the church of Christ has rid itself of these vices, at the individual and corporate levels, that these words of Jesus in His great prayer will be fulfilled: "That they may all be one" (John 17:21). ■

<sup>1</sup> I am greatly dependent on Gerd Theissen's *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982) for sociological insights on the situation in Corinth. See also William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther's comment on 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 in *The Anchor Bible: 1 Corinthians* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976).

<sup>2</sup> Theissen, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Ron J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1977). Cf. William Johnson's editorial "A Tale of Two Countries," *Adventist Review*, Nov. 6, 1986; and Barry L. Casey, "Needless Hunger in a Bountiful World," *Adventist Review*, Nov. 6, 1986.

# Come on, ring those bells!

**Cathy McBride**

**How to turn pizza, paper plates, a dark, dank basement, and a sad farewell into a festival to remember.**



*At the time this article was written, Cathy McBride was living in Moultrie, Georgia, where her husband pastored a church. She does free-lance writing and is active in the church community.*

**I**t was December 1982. Christmas trees sparkled in store windows and in residences—from narrow row houses to the brick shoe-box houses that are so familiar to Chicago. Children dreaming of brightly colored toys skipped excitedly through department stores, hanging onto the hands of hassled parents. The spirit of Christmas seemed to have enlivened everyone. Everyone but me.

"I can't believe this is happening," I said as I walked through the dark old church with my husband. "And why on Christmas Day? Great timing—some Christmas this will be!"

We were moving to another pastorate. On Christmas, of all days, we would have to say goodbye to the congregation we had worked with for two and a half years—the first church of our ministry. We had watched these families grow, seen them triumph over personal hardships and grow strong in Christ. Now we must leave them. Though the familiar words of "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" were running through my head, for me the bells were silent this Christmas.

The frail wooden staircase squeaked as though in sympathy with our pain as we made our way down to the basement. Like forgotten friends, memories called to us from every corner of the building.

"Remember the rainy Sabbath morning when we got to church and found three inches of muddy water in the basement?" I asked LeBron.

"How could I forget? There was nothing I could do but take off my coat, socks,

and shoes, roll up my pant legs, and start mopping. One thing's for sure, I never had to worry about becoming too proud here. Plenty of experiences helped me remember that the pastor is just one of the servants!"

"You did look hilarious that morning. From the waist down you could have passed for Huck Finn wading in the Mississippi! And all those dried leaves and sticks swimming around here. We never did figure out how they got in."

"I wouldn't have been surprised to find a few fish in here too!" LeBron added.

"Say, maybe we should stick a few fishing poles in the closet for the next pastor!"

Our laughter lifted our spirits for a moment. "Remember at last year's Christmas party when we gave Mrs. Greutz that can of nonstop shaving cream from the trick shop?" I asked. "She was a sight—yelling with excitement as it spewed all over her!"

"We've had such beautiful times in this church," LeBron mused. "I wish we could make our last day together beautiful too. What can we do to change this Christmas from sad to glad?"

"You're the optimist in the family," I reminded him. "But there's no way to make Christmas bells ring this year. I'm too depressed to even try."

"What about your pictures?" he asked. "Maybe we could find a way to use them."

I had taken many 35-mm. slides of church members—some pictures serious, others humorous. Many had captured the personalities of the individuals portrayed.

There were action shots depicting

church members participating in softball and horseshoe games. Tender moments between parent and child were captured, as well as portraits of children alone—making funny faces, carrying offering plates, or making messes of their meals and themselves.

A bud of hope began to break through the hard ground of my depression. "You may have something, hon. Maybe we could arrange a slide presentation for Christmas."

After I had spent countless hours of arranging and rearranging slides and background music, the presentation was ready. Beautiful memories lay scattered through the program, like rose petals along a garden path. Viewing it, I began to feel that maybe my holiday spirit could be resurrected after all. Maybe the bells of Christmas would ring for me again!

"I've got another idea, hon," I said. "Why don't we invite the church to have Christmas dinner at our apartment? It would be the cherry on the chocolate sundae. The day would be complete."

LeBron's first reaction was less than enthusiastic. "You've got to be crazy! You've forgotten one minor detail. The moving men came last week and confiscated every dish, pan, and chair from our apartment. The refrigerator is as bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard. You're taking a good thing too far. You'll have to put your Christmas dinner idea on the back burner—and leave it there until it burns up!"

Since I was experiencing temporary mania, I refused to be discouraged by his practical attitude. "Well, we can have the dinner at the church then. There are tables and chairs there. True, we don't have dishes there either, but on Christmas Day it's really the fellowship everyone is looking for.

"What about pizza served on paper plates?" I continued. "We want the day to be memorable, and there's no way anyone could forget pizza for Christmas dinner!"

After a bit of persuasion, LeBron reluctantly consented. "Well, I guess fast food is better than none at all."

When the big day arrived, the dark wooden pews of our church squeaked and crackled with the weight of friends coming to tell us goodbye. LeBron tried unsuccessfully to hold back the tears during his goodbye speech, and many others shared his tears. Friends sang songs, spoke words of appreciation and encouragement to us, and presented us with let-

ters and gifts to remember them by.

The nostalgic slide presentation was like dessert after a fine dinner. When it was over, applause rippled through the sanctuary.

"Those of you who do not have a place to enjoy Christmas dinner are invited downstairs for pizza. Yes, you heard right," my husband assured the chuckling congregation, "Christmas, Italian-style."

Many of the church members, especially the younger ones, attended the meal. One stranger who had walked into our church service off the street ate with us. I was kept busy baking and cutting pizzas. Their spicy aroma flooded the basement. The traditional turkey and dressing couldn't have tasted better! A decrepit cassette player serenaded our dinner with Christmas carols. It was a happy time, filled with love, laughter, and friendship.

Gradually the people said their goodbyes. Afterward LeBron and I sat for a long time, enjoying the sweetness of the day. Finally LeBron broke the silence. "This is one of those times that engraves itself onto your heart like a sen-

**"What about pizza served on paper plates? There's no way anyone could forget pizza for Christmas dinner!"**

timent on an heirloom locket. This memory will grow dearer with each passing year."

His words nudged my imagination, and then, from somewhere in the distance, I heard a familiar sound. I smiled and let my imagination entertain me. Christmas bells! It was about time they started to ring!

In my heart I knew the bells had been there all along. Buried beneath my discouragement, waiting patiently for His touch. ■

## There is a safer way to learn while in locomotion.



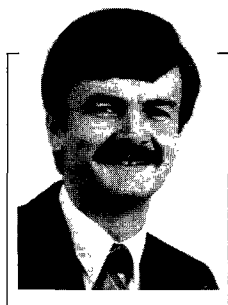
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# Open or shut door?

**I**t was 9:10 a.m. Sabbath morning when my wife and I drove up to the front of the little Adventist church. The sign in front clearly announced that Sabbath school would begin at 9:15, so we were glad to have arrived on time. In fact, we were so on time that we were the first ones there!

"Oh, well, someone will be along soon," I said as we pulled into the gravel parking lot at the side of the church. Since it was a bright, beautiful morning, we opened the car doors and let the breeze blow through. And sure enough, soon someone did arrive. A man and his wife parked in front of the church, and he hurried toward the side door about 20 feet in front of our car. As he walked he fumbled through a wad of keys in his hand. Halfway to the door he stopped and shouted to his wife back at the car to find out if she had the keys. Finally, keys in hand, he came on down to the door. I smiled at him as he approached. He managed a quick nod, then looked down at his keys. Soon he had unlocked the door and disappeared inside the church, closing the door behind him.

His wife was next. She managed a weak smile in our direction before disappearing.

One by one, cars pulled up and disgorged their passengers into the lot. Some people looked in our direction; others, like the lady who parked right next to us, made it a point not to. I smiled at everyone I could make eye contact with, and some even said "Morning" as they nodded. But all soon disappeared behind that side door and never appeared again!

"What do you suppose is behind that door?" I asked my wife, a touch of mystery in my voice. "A pool of alligators, maybe? . . . I notice that no one who goes through it ever comes out again!"

Of course I was only joking, but I was trying to see the church from the viewpoint of a first-time visitor who might have watched an Adventist television program and decided to drive over and visit his neighborhood church on a Sabbath morning. Would he be made to feel welcome? Would he be invited in from the parking lot? We resolved to sit in the car until someone invited us in, or until 9:30, whichever came first.

I've visited a lot of churches in recent years—both Adventist and non-Adventist. Unfortunately, more often than not I've found myself sitting or standing outside the church, wondering just how to get in properly.

There was the Adventist church, for instance, that I arrived at 9:35 one

morning—it had taken me longer to drive there than I had anticipated. The church was built in an L shape and had two exterior doors, one at the head of the L, and the other at the foot. Feeling quite confident in my powers of discernment, I noted which door appeared more used and made my way through it.

I found myself inside a dimly lit corridor with several closed doors on either side. I could hear singing, but wasn't sure which room it was coming from. At the end of the hall another corridor led to the right. At the end of that corridor stood a white door.

The side doors obviously led to Sabbath school rooms. But what about the white door? Did I dare open it? Or might it lead directly into the sanctuary? Feeling adventurous, I approached the great white door. As I grasped the knob and began to turn it, I became aware of a certain amount of resistance that indicated that the door was slightly sprung. In other words, there would be no opening it silently. It would open with a pop.

*Pop!* it went. And as I peered around its edge I discovered to my horror that I was at the very front of the sanctuary. Fortunately, I had had the good judgment to arrive in the middle of *Mission Spotlight*, and a large projection screen hid me from all but a few of the congregation.

Had I been a first-time visitor, I no doubt would have hightailed it out the door I'd come in through and never come back. But I had to preach there that day! So I quickly made my way around to the other door, showed myself in, and claimed a corner of a pew in the back.

Space won't allow me to regale you with more stories of untoward arrivals, but I do have quite a collection.

---

**"What do you suppose is behind that door? . . . I notice that no one who goes through it ever comes out again!"**

---



May I suggest that one of the simplest and least expensive evangelistic tools every church can employ is an *open* door (or at least a glass door) with a *friendly* person just waiting to go the extra mile to make sure every potential visitor is invited in and helped in finding a seat. You may need to hook up a special heater in the vestibule to keep your greeters from freezing during the winter, but it would be a worthwhile investment if it allowed you to have the door open at least a crack. You may need to relieve your friendliest member from other Sabbath school and church duties, but it will be worth it if you can get that person stationed where his or her warmth can envelop visitors and members as soon as—or preferably even before—they set foot in the church!

You're probably wondering whether we ever got invited into the first church. No. But I must say that after we were inside, the people were very friendly—especially when it came time to officially greet visitors—and this is typical. It seems to me that what we need is well-qualified people whose official job it is to make visitors feel welcome from the parking lot right on in to the pew.—Kenneth R. Wade

## Only children make it to heaven

**J**esus startled His disciples with the statement that “anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it” (Luke 18:17). \* “How can a man be born when he is old?” (John 3:4) questioned Nicodemus when Jesus told him the same truth.

Did Jesus really mean that no adults will make it to heaven? Why are children so special? What unique characteristic of children must adults possess if they are to receive eternal life? Some adults will be

in heaven. Enoch and Elijah were both translated as mature adults. What child-like qualities did they enjoy?

Some might say that trust, faith, and innocence are the virtues of little children. However, all these characteristics can also be possessed by adults. There must be something else that children have that adults lack.

The story following the blessing of the little children supplies the clue. The rich young ruler must have been just as surprised as the disciples were by Jesus' statement. This may have been what prompted his query: “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 18:18). We know Jesus' reply: “Keep the commandments.” The rich young ruler believed that he had kept all the commandments, but Jesus' words about receiving the kingdom “like a little child” bothered him.

He desperately wanted eternal life, but this idea about being a little child confounded him. In answer to his further question, Jesus told him to go and sell all that he had and then come and follow Him. If he did that, he would no longer be self-sufficient. Now instead of depending on his wealth, he would have to depend on Jesus.

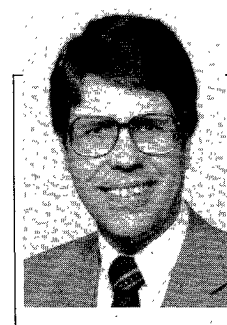
Dependence is the unique characteristic of a little child. Give an adult survival training and a pack of provisions. Put him alone in the middle of a wilderness at zero degrees, and he will probably survive. Take a 3-year-old child, give him the same training and the same pack of provisions. Put him alone in a wilderness at the same temperature, and he will not likely survive for even a day.

An adult is self-sufficient; a child is totally dependent upon another individual for survival. That is the unique characteristic of a little child, and that is what Jesus meant when He said that unless we become like little children we will never make it to heaven. The rich young ruler went away sorrowing because he was unwilling to become dependent.

Dependency is the essence of righteousness by faith. We use big words like justification, propitiation, expiation, soteriology, and election to describe salvation. Jesus used little words like nets, coins, sheep, faith, children. We pride ourselves on our self-sufficiency. “I can do it myself,” we say. That is why it is so hard for us to accept what Jesus says about becoming dependent like a little child—dependent on His blood, His life, His grace.

We prefer to depend on credit cards, mortgages, pills, psychologists, recognition, political savvy, devotional books, cassette tapes, or even the church. There is very little left to ask God for. If we are short of money, we borrow; if we have an emotional problem, we take Valium or participate in a series of sessions with our friendly counselor; if we have a spiritual need, we can resort to overwork to deaden our sense of emptiness. We don't really need God. Yet the essence of salvation is still dependency.

Jesus showed us the way by coming to earth as a dependent baby some 2,000



**J. David Newman**

years ago. He gave up His divine powers, His self-sufficiency, to become dependent on a woman named Mary. We seldom pause to think what it was like for Jesus to give up the adoration of the heavenly hosts for the mockery of the earthly rabble. He surrendered His omniscience for the tutelage of a peasant woman. In place of omnipotence He substituted “Of myself I can do nothing.” His omnipresence gave way to the presence of the Holy Spirit. Finally on Calvary He became dependent on death—man's greatest enemy. What Christ gave up is far beyond the feeble consciousness of man.

What do we give up to come to Christ? “A sin-polluted heart, for Jesus to purify, to cleanse by His own blood, and to save by His matchless love. And yet men think it hard to give up all!” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 46).

Just as Jesus could not save man without first becoming a dependent child, so man cannot be saved until he becomes like a child, dependent on the child we celebrate this Christmas time.—J. David Newman ■

\*All texts in this editorial are from the New International Version.

# Our new baptismal manual

**I**n His Steps, the new baptismal manual, written by MINISTRY assistant editor Kenneth R. Wade, is now available through the Ministerial Supply Center at the General Conference. MINISTRY interviews Wade about the manual.

**MINISTRY:** I know that a baptismal manual called *In His Steps* has been available from the Ministerial Association for many years. Can you give us a little background on this, and why a revision was needed?

**Wade:** The old *In His Steps*, the one with the green cover, was originally published in 1971 as a basic summary of Seventh-day Adventist teachings for use in preparing candidates for baptism. In 1982 stock of that edition ran out, and the association decided to revise it before re-issuing it. In the meantime, to keep customers supplied, Review and Herald published a slightly modified manual with a goldenrod cover. I became involved in the revision process in 1984. Then the 1984 Annual Council took an action that made all our previous revision work obsolete. The council requested us to produce a totally new manual based directly on the 27 fundamental beliefs that were voted at the 1980 General Conference session.

**MINISTRY:** So this manual is totally different from the old manual?

**Wade:** Yes. It is divided into 27 lessons rather than 12, and each lesson begins with the full text of one of the fundamental beliefs. The lessons then deal with the chief points of the beliefs individually,

supplying texts for the student to look up on the point under consideration. We used every text that is listed in the fundamental beliefs, and of course added many more as well.

After that factual portion comes a very important addition. Each lesson has one or more personal applications of the truths taught in the lesson. In writing these, I tried very hard to make them practical and relevant to every believer—to help the student see that truth is not just abstract facts.

After the personal application, each lesson calls for a specific commitment to living the principles taught in the lesson. The commitments called for are relationship-oriented. In other words, they don't just call for the candidate to be committed to believing something about God. They call for him to be committed to the God who has revealed the truth.

**MINISTRY:** Which was the hardest doctrine to write on and why?

**Wade:** Number 23, "Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary," presented some special challenges because it is so long. But the one that took the most time and discussion was number 21, "Christian Behaviour." Finally the committee came to the conclusion that this belief is "where the rubber meets the road" in Christian living, so we devoted two pages to it. In the end I think most people were quite pleased with the way this came out because we handled it from a very positive perspective—emphasizing the importance of modeling our lives on Christ and glorifying Him. The principles—rules if you must—are there, but always based on the positive motivation.

**MINISTRY:** What are some of the different ways this baptismal guide can be used?

**Wade:** In preparing to write the manual, I sought the counsel of pastors and evangelists. The consensus of opinion was that it should be supplied in loose-leaf format with a plastic strip as a binder, just like the old manual. This allows the one doing the teaching to deal with lessons in any order that seems suitable. Evangelists can use it in a baptismal class as a review, and can give out the lessons in the order of their own presentations. Laypeople or pastors can use it in individual homes, going through it in order. We've really tried to make it as versatile as possible so that it can become what it is intended to be—the standard tool for helping candidates prepare for baptism into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I think it could also provide a good study guide for a series of prayer meetings.

**MINISTRY:** The Annual Council action calls for this to be "the official adult baptismal teaching guide for the Seventh-day Adventist Church." Has provision been made for it to be translated into other languages?

**Wade:** Yes. Each division has been supplied with a copy, and is responsible for translating and publishing the manual in the various languages in its territory.

**MINISTRY:** How can an individual purchase copies of *In His Steps*?

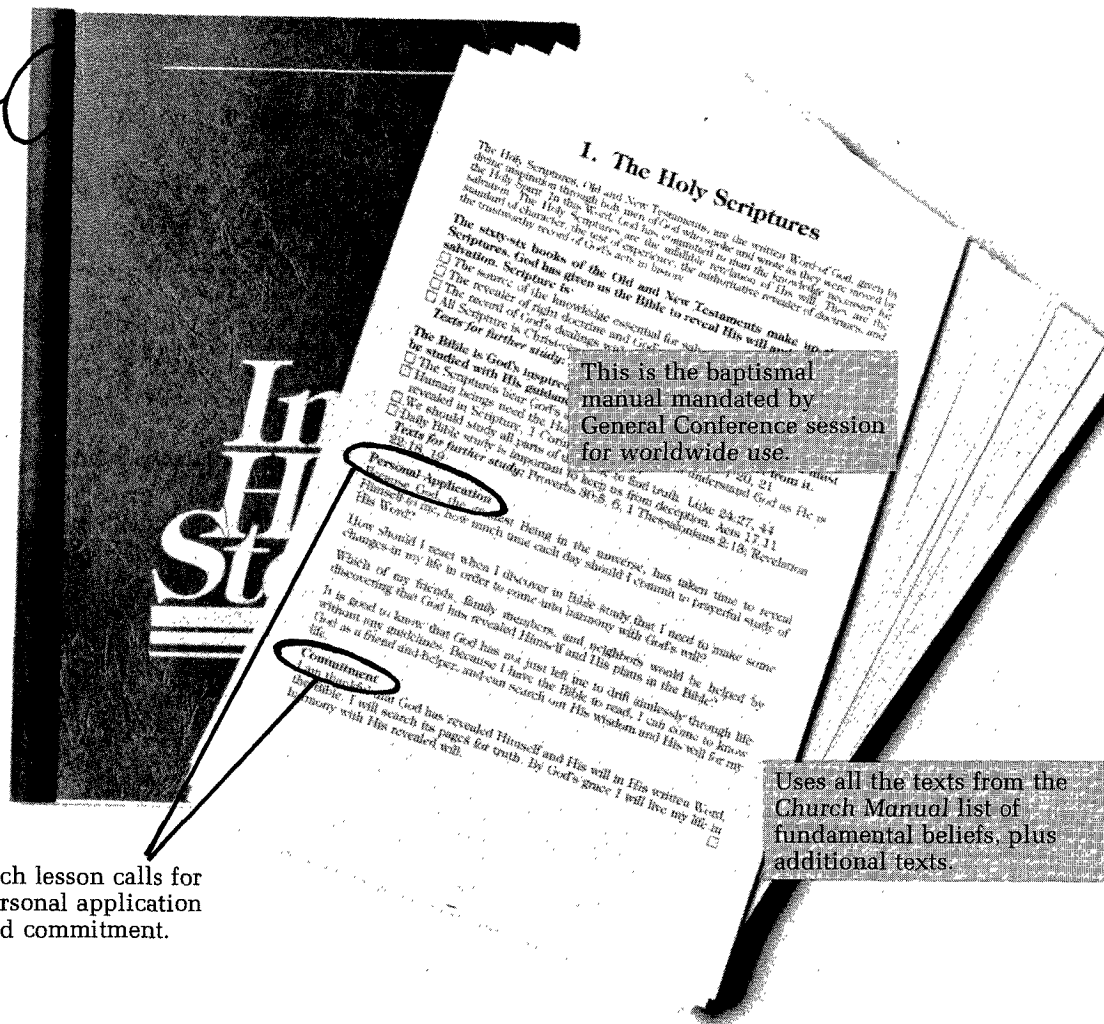
**Wade:** In North America, many ABCs are stocking them, and in some conferences the local ministerial association stocks them. Anyone with questions should contact the local ministerial secretary. ■



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As a pastor you know that it is discipleship that makes the real difference in your members' lives. The all-new *In His Steps* will help you teach your baptismal candidates and church members to walk as Jesus walked.

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—Neal C. Wilson,  
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—Kenneth J. Mittleider, Evangelist, General Conference Vice President.

**Contact your conference or  
mission Ministerial Association to order.**



### Unmasking the New Age

Douglas R. Groothuis, *Inter-Varsity Press*, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1986, 175 pages, \$6.95, paper. Reviewed by Norman Yergen, pastor, Kenai Seventh-day Adventist Church, Kenai, Alaska.

As Bible-believing Christians we usually take the idea of the occult seriously. We see spiritualism as a force in the final events leading up to the Second Coming. But when we think of the occult we typically conjure up images of satanism, human sacrifice, and seances. The occult is no longer limited to such obviously evil manifestations.

Groothuis shows how Satan is infiltrating American culture in subtle ways through the New Age movement. He shows how this purportedly new but actually ancient philosophy is changing our medical practice, our counseling, our science, politics, education, and especially our religious beliefs.

The author traces the roots of the New Age movement back to the counterculture of the sixties. Yesterday's hippies have become today's yuppies, but they have not changed their worldview. The New Age movement is led by many of the same people who led the counterculture movement.

Groothuis identifies six distinctive characteristics of the New Age movement: all is one; all is God; humanity is God; a change in consciousness; all religions are one; and cosmic evolutionary optimism. And he goes on to show how these ideas are having an impact on every aspect of our lives.

After reading this book, you may discover that you have people in your church who are in some way involved with the New Age philosophy. From children watching movies such as *The Dark Crystal* to adults attending seminars sponsored by their employer, many are being misled by this philosophy without even realizing it. If you have a member talking about rebirthing or holistic health, you need to read this book right away!

Groothuis has done his research well, and has avoided sensationalism. Thirteen pages of footnotes thoroughly docu-

ment his thesis, and an appendix contains a list of names, concepts, and sources of further information.

### Tearing the Shroud From the Antichrist

Henry Feyerabend, *ARTS International*, Ontario, Canada, 1986, 136 pages, \$5.95, paper. Reviewed by Norman Gulley, professor of systematic theology, Southern College.

This is a well-written, well-organized, lucid book. Written in popular style but thoroughly documented, it exposes the cover-up that dispensationalism participates in.

Dispensationalists who have a literalistic hermeneutic interpret the 70 weeks of Daniel 9 in such a way that the seventieth week is wrenched from its natural relationship to the other 69 weeks and is pushed into the future as a seven-year period beginning with a secret rapture and ending with the Second Coming.

Feyerabend gives six reasons for disagreeing with this interpretation: 1. It skips over the period of the Christian church and hence does not take the church seriously. 2. Scripture states that the antichrist had already begun to be manifested in Paul's time. 3. It amputates the feet of the Daniel 2 image and disconnects the horns of the Daniel 7 beast. 4. It rejects the teaching of Christ about the presence of the kingdom with His people during the Christian age. 5. It removes Christ's commission, to carry the gospel to all the world, from the church age and places it in the postrapture era. 6. It posits a Protestant purgatory, or second chance, for Christians not ready for the secret rapture. They can be saved after the rapture on the basis of how they treat the Jews, not on the basis of a relationship with Christ.

Perhaps Feyerabend's greatest contribution in this book is to go beyond Dave MacPherson's *The Incredible Cover-up*, which gives credit to the visions Margaret MacDonald had in 1830 as the well-spring of dispensational thought in Protestantism. Feyerabend traces the concept to its source 245 years earlier

during the Counter-Reformation, when two Jesuit priests formulated Catholicism's attack on the historic method of prophetic interpretation. He shows that the Reformers, and even two rival popes, originally taught that the papacy was the antichrist.

The tragedy, as Feyerabend points out, is that this Jesuit cover-up entered Protestantism in the nineteenth century and has, in the form of dispensationalism, permeated nearly every denomination and taken the focus of prophetic interpretation away from the church age. In dispensationalist teaching, the church age is removed from the purview of the biblical prophets, and their writings are made to focus on the last seven years before the Second Coming. This effectively defuses the prophets' warnings about the antichrist because it looks beyond the papacy to a mystery person yet to come.

Today the eyes of the Christian world are largely upon Israel and the Middle East instead of upon spiritual Israel—God's end-time church. Bible students focus on a gathering to Palestine instead of on the gathering of the saved into the church. They look to a future sanctuary on earth instead of to a present sanctuary ministry in heaven.

Feyerabend shares eight biblical insights into the real origin of antichrist. He points out that antichrist (1) arises out of the fourth beast of Daniel 7, (2) is a religiopolitical power, (3) puts down three kings, (4) speaks against God, (5) persecutes God's followers, (6) changes times and laws, (7) was allowed to rule for 1260 years, (8) and has the number 666.

Most Christians today expect a future Hitler-like dictator to be the antichrist. Feyerabend's call back to historical Protestant understanding of prophecy is a timely reminder. He does not call us to dislike Catholics or to disdain Catholicism's many contributions to Christianity, but only to realize that historically the papacy has fulfilled the role prophesied for the antichrist, and that the prophecies shed light on our age, not just a postrapture era.

### Your Home a Lighthouse

Bob and Betty Jacks with Ron Wormser, Sr., Navpress, Colorado Springs, 1986, 156 pages, \$5.95, paper. Reviewed by Kenneth L. Scribner, pastor, Barre, Vermont.

This is a simple, practical, refreshing guide to home Bible study. The study plan described is designed for laypeople to use in their own homes.

The authors make it clear that their reason for writing this book was not to create another program for pastors to run, but rather to provide a self-help guide for lay people to use in reaching out to neighbors and friends. The pastor might lead out in an initial study of the principles and practices set forth in the book, but the practical application is "for members only."

The ideas and principles presented are designed to help laypeople overcome the fear of failure, fear of the unknown, of rejection, and of questions. Success capsules are presented throughout the book to illustrate how others have used this approach, and a practical plan is presented that details what to teach and how to present the gospel in a positive manner.

The authors, who are laypersons, draw on 20 years of experience in helping study groups see the relevance of God in their lives. The authors' approach takes the focus off of church and religion and puts it where it should be, on God.

### Pattern for Progress

W. R. Beach and B. B. Beach, Review and Herald, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1985, 142 pages, \$6.95, paper. Reviewed by Charles B. Hirsch, retired General Conference vice president.

This is indeed a timely book. In these days of sporadic grass roots unrest, leanings toward congregationalism, and pressure for lay control of committees, a book like this is needed to remind us of the roots and reasons for our church's organizational structure.

The first several chapters give a historical sketch of how the structure was developed. Although the authors' sketch sometimes gets bogged down in too much detail, the overview is important and leads to a deeper appreciation of Ellen White's guidance in the establishment of the structure, and also shows the reasons behind what we see today.

The authors continually appeal to us to look to the Bible and Ellen White's writings for the wisdom we need, rather

than looking to non-Christian models for organization.

While the authors take a strong stand against overcentralization and the development of "kingly power" within the administration, they also emphasize the importance of all levels of administration cooperating with the General Conference. Units of the church should not attempt to operate as independent entities without regard to directions from the world headquarters. Some things that have happened over the past decade lend credence to the Beaches' viewpoint. One wonders whether a stronger form of church leadership might not have helped us avoid some rather embarrassing situations.

The book is indeed very useful, and ought to be required reading for those involved in church administration, both lay and clergy.

### Venturing Into a Teenager's World

Richard D. Dobbins, Fleming H. Revell, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1986, 192 pages, \$9.95, hardback. Reviewed by Lester P. Merklin, Jr., pastor, Blue Mountain Academy, Hamburg, Pennsylvania.

This is a very practical book for anyone who wants to minister to teenagers or to their parents. It is not just another psychology book telling what is going on inside of a teenager. As the title indicates, Dobbins endeavors to help adults become (or remain) an important part of a teenager's life. This can be accomplished only through a relationship built upon respect and love, and Dobbins shows how to build and maintain this type of relationship.

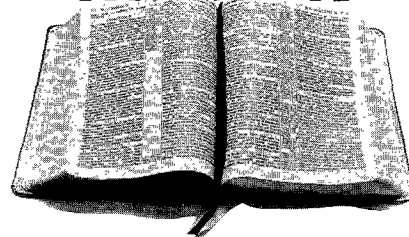
Topics covered include helping youth develop their personalities, self-control, health, faith, and the ability to choose friends and a mate. In each section Dobbins pictures the teenage world for us, then gives suggestions of what to do (or not to do) to venture into that area of their world. He cautions us against shooting gnats with cannons. "Don't panic, don't preach, don't nag, don't abdicate," he urges.

The book is filled with good practical suggestions of what to expect, when to speak up, and when to stay back and pray. ■

**Bible credits:** Texts credited to RSV are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952, 1971, 1973.

## AT THE FAMILY LIFE WORKSHOPS

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## Letters

From page 2

America. How many are of North American origin? How many received all their higher education in the North American educational system? How much dilution is there of the "outside North America" view by an importation of American views? Are exported Americans the ones most likely to respond? It is conceivable that those who didn't respond could view the matter in much the opposite way from the respondents.

In the light of an overall response rate of 58 percent, the researcher's conclusion appears to be, just perhaps, an indulgence of the tiniest bit of wishful thinking.

PS: Re the matter of publishing on controversial issues—my vote is pro (within reason, of course, as you are doing). You're doing a good job!—A. Keith Anderson, Professor of Mathematics (and Statistics), Pacific Union College, Angwin, California.

### Myth of the open mind?

Re: "Can the Church Tolerate Open Minds?" (August 1987). One suspects that those who are dubbed narrow-minded would have no quibble with a genuinely open mind—if one could be found. The integrity issue comes to play when so-called open minds claim neutrality and then pander their adamant hidden personal agendas as they label an alternate opinion intellectually indefensible, shallow, or bigoted. The left becomes as entrenched as their cousins on the right. (I'm afraid of both.)

—John Lomtz, Brunswick, Maine.

### Not an Adventist Chick

Yes, we knew that my cartoon-style book (*The Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation*, Biblio File, August 1987) would be compared to the Chick publications, but the two are as different as night and day. Whereas Chick's comics are extremely anti-Catholic and have the look and feel of cheap comics, my prophecies book is done in a much clearer illustrator's style and it includes all the major aspects of Adventist doctrine. Where a stern warning is to be delivered, it's delivered, and where God's love and grace are center stage,

they are freely proclaimed!—Jim Pinkoski, Hagerstown, Maryland.

### "Satan's Consummate Deception"

Re "Satan's Consummate Deception" (August 1987): there may be some justification for holding that the apparently universal terms used by John in Revelation 13 and by Ellen White in various places in her writings could be taken in a limited sense. Daniel wrote that the fourth beast would devour "the whole earth" (Dan. 7:23). However, Rome did not control the whole world. Paul claimed that the gospel had been preached to every creature "under heaven." But we know it was not. Nor did "all the world" worship the great goddess Artemis (Acts 19:27).

While Revelation 13:12 states that the lamblike beast causes all that dwell on the earth to worship the first beast, yet Ellen White seems, in one place at least, to limit the Sunday controversy to Christendom. In the chapter on the time of trouble in *The Great Controversy* she wrote that after the world passes the boundary of its probation, Satan has full control and plunges it into one great, final trouble (p. 614). But the reaction of the wicked against Sabbathkeepers is apparently confined to "Romanism in the Old World and apostate Protestantism in the New" (p. 616). Thus, though in other places the terminology used seems so strongly to suggest that the Sunday law crisis is universal in scope, it may involve only the "Christian world."

One upshot of this would be that the coming of Christ may take place far sooner than any of us dream, not having to await unanimity among all the non-Christian nations in regard to the keeping of Sunday. —Richard Hammond, Franktown, Colorado.

■ Could Brother Goldstein now write an article using only the Bible to prove that the Sabbath indeed will be an issue? His article was the best on the subject I have ever read. Bible proof would give real credence to his speculation. —H. D. Schmidt, Pleasant Hill, California.

■ The highly interesting article "Satan's Consummate Deception" says one thing that is impossible: "Simeon Bar Kokba . . . led a revolt against the Romans in

A.D. 231." The fact is, he died in A.D. 135. The revolt began in A.D. 132.

—Edward Niemann, Williamsburg, Kentucky.

*You are correct; the date should have been A.D. 132 instead of 231. The author had the right date in the original manuscript. Somehow in retyping it the numbers were transposed. —Editors.*

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# INDEX for 1987

MINISTRY deeply appreciates the indexing service provided by Ed Collins at the Loma Linda University Library Indexing Service. His office, which publishes the annual *Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index*, provided this index for us. The *Periodical Index* indexes articles from 36 Seventh-day Adventist periodicals including Union and Division papers and the Adult Sabbath School Lessons.

Copies of the *Periodical Index* can be ordered from Indexing Services, LLU Webb Memorial Library, Loma Linda, California 92350. The cost is \$40.00 for academies and colleges, \$15.00 for other institutions and individuals.

## Authors:

- Anderson, Eleanor P. Ministering through the gift of writing. Mr 21-22
- Barice, E. Joan interviewed by J. Robert Spangler. Diet doctor weighs Weimar. Ja 13-15
- Bartram, Jerry E. CPA expresses opinion on tithe policy. Ap 19-20
- Bellina, Joan Marie. Modems and ministry. My 28
- Billingsley, Derrell L. Creative congregational singing. [Reprinted in part from *The Church Musician*, April, 1975]. My 14-15
- Blichington, Peter interviewed by Carole Kilcher. Are you shy? JI 20-21
- Bosley, Galen C. Is Adventist health reform scientific? Ap 26-28
- Boyle, Peggy, pseud. Disposing of the defrocked. N 16-17
- Brand, Leonard R. Can science and religion work together? [Adapted from *Origins* 12, No. 2 (1985): 71-88]. N 22-25
- Bressee, Ellen. Successful counseling. Ap 11-13
- Bressee, Floyd. The Ministerial Association at 65. O 4-7
- Bressee, Floyd interviewed by MINISTRY. The minister's resource center. F 9-11
- Burton, Judy. Special family worship for special kids. Ag 12-14
- Carlson, Robert J. Battling sexual indiscretion. Ja 4-6
- Cerna, Miguel A. How I use small groups in evangelism. O 17-19
- Christo, G. J. On being ordained. Je 17
- Colburn, Keith K. Understanding the arthritis patient. S 26-27
- Cook, Colin interviewed by J. Robert Spangler. Homosexual recovery—six years later. S 4-9
- Crosby, Tim. Is the hell of the Bible unending? JI 10-13
- Why I don't believe in *sola scriptura*. O 11-15
- Doran, Eric. Search for success. S 10
- Drumm, Jack, pseud. Must I shepherd all the flock? JI 6-8
- Dudley, Roger L. Religion teachers' opinions on the role of women. Ag 14-18
- Dudley, Roger L., and Mark Weir. Mission or moonlighting? Je 4-7
- Dudley, Roger L., Bruce Wrenn, Slimen Saliba, and Kermit Netteburg. Marketing our church. F 4-8
- Edwards, Rex D. Baptism: Pastoral perplexities. D 7-9
- "A-bummin' . . . like a buzzard-clock" [E]. O 22-23
- The minister: a perpetual student [E]. Mr 23
- Ellithorpe, James. Data base management and church growth. Mr 27
- Elver, Anne. Handling drop-in visitors. Ja 18-19
- Firebaugh, Robert D. Whose funeral is it, anyway? S 18-19
- Fleck, Alcyon Ruth. A shared ministry. Ag 19-20
- Florence, Jim, and Gunter Reiss. Meditation for Christians? O 26-27
- Fuentes, Gerry, and Jose Fuentes. Understanding hospitalase. Ag 9-11
- Fuentes, Jose, and Gerry Fuentes. Understanding hospitalase. Ag 9-11
- Fuentes, Jose A. Recognizing and handling burnout. JI 14-17
- Gallimore, Linda M. Finding fulfillment [Adapted from *Homemaking: a Bible study for women at home*, published by Navpress, P. O. Box 6000, Colorado Springs, CO 80934]. My 8-9
- Goldstein, Clifford. Satan's consummate deception. Ag 6-8
- Hadley, G. Gordon. Medical ministry misconceptions. Ag 25-27
- Hegstad, Roland R. Soviet sponsored peace forum [E]. My 21-23
- Holbrook, Frank. For members only? F 12-14
- Holt, B. Russell. The small church advantage. Mr 18-20
- Horn, Siegfried H. The Old Testament text in antiquity. N 4-8
- Hunt, Angela E. Christian education: too much of a good thing? JI 18-19
- Irland, Nancy Beck. Stillborn: how the pastor can help. Ja 10-12
- James, David C. "Master of none?" [E]. Ja 20
- But no cheap novels. F 15-16
- Confessions of a PK [E]. Je 23-24
- The devil and the waiting Father. D 14-16
- Midnight calls [E]. S 23-24
- Johnsson, Noelene. The call—her side of the story. My 4-8
- Juberg, Morten. NAD evangelism council. Ap 14-16
- Kidder, Marion E. Bible instructors: key to personal ministry. Je 18-19
- Kitsen, Mary Louise. Just being there. JI 9
- Kuzma, Kay. Ten tips for raising PKs. N 13-15
- Londis, James J. Can the church tolerate open minds? Ag 4-5
- Maehre, Bob and Kenneth R. Wade. Computer concordances. N 20-21
- Maynard-Reid, Pednto U. Discrimination at the Lord's Supper. D 18-19
- McBride, Cathy. Come on, ring those bells! D 20-21
- Should a minister's wife weep? O 20-21
- McDowell, Lyndon K. Demons and deliverance. Ap 4-7
- McNeill, Robert. Discipline yourself. JI 4-5
- How I use my church computer. Ja 29
- Muller, Richard. Sabbatarian Anabaptists? Ja 15-17
- Neil, Richard L. Preserving the vital force. Je 24-25
- Netteburg, Kermit, Bruce Wrenn, Slimen Saliba, and Roger L. Dudley. Marketing our church. F 4-8
- Newman, J. David. Are you a kitchen leader? [E]. Je 22
- Church institutions are not necessarily Christian [E]. Ja 21
- Conflicting church conflict [E]. Mr 23-24
- Only children make it to heaven [E]. D 23
- Status seekers in the church [E]. S 24-25
- Nuesse, Karen. Those PKs: clues to our kids. S 20-22
- Rasco, Francine. Bulimics and anorexics—children of fear and anger. JI 24-26
- Reid, George W. Daniel and Revelation committee meets in Germany. Ag 24
- Sola scriptura*: a response. O 16
- Reiss, Gunter. Chemically dependent families. My 26-28
- Reiss, Gunter, and Jim Florence. Meditation for Christians? O 26-27
- Rice, George E. Adoption. Mr 13
- The church: voice of God? D 4-6
- Within which veil? Je 20-21
- Rice, Richard. Reconciling faith and reason. Mr 10-13
- Roper, David. Satisfaction. Ja 7-8
- Rosado, Caleb. The deceptive theology of institutionalism. N 9-12
- Russell, Freddie. When it's time to move on. D 10-11
- Saliba, Slimen, Kermit Netteburg, Bruce Wrenn, and Roger L. Dudley. Marketing our church. F 4-8
- Seibold, Loren. Growth and the small-town church. Je 7-10
- Seventh-day Adventists. General Conference. Annual Council. Methods of Bible study. Ap 22-24
- Seventh-day Adventists. North American Division. Jewelry: a clarification and appeal. Ap 25
- Use of tithe policy revision. Ap 20-22
- Smith, Dennis. Working with a guest evangelist. Je 12-13
- Spangler, J. Robert. Are our tithe policies important? [E]. Ap 17-18
- ASI—shaping the future of the church. F 16-17
- Christian pomp [E]. JI 23
- How's your service department? [E] O 22
- The prophets of profit [E]. N 18-19
- Religion and Communism. Mr 4-9
- Second thoughts on tithe [E]. Ag 22-23
- Staples, Russell. To ordain or not. Mr 14-17
- Sterndale, Elizabeth. Alcohol and the pregnant woman. Mr 25-26
- Stevens, James L. From the evangelist's viewpoint. Je 14-16
- Swanson, Gary B. Smokeless tobacco: the ticking time bomb. Ja 23-25
- Tennyson, Mack. Internal control. My 16-17
- Thomas, Jean. Loneliness in the parsonage. My 10-12
- Thompson, Garth D. Listening is more than hearing. S 11-13
- Tibbys, Dick. When should you refer? My 20
- Van Ens, Jack R. Visiting the grief-stricken. S 17
- Veninga, Robert L. When tragedy strikes the pastor. S 14-16
- Wade, Kenneth R. Can we harvest where we have not sowed? [E]. Je 22-23
- Cicadas, creation, and AIDS [E]. S 23
- The danger of freedom [E]. Ja 22
- Delight in the Lord [E]. O 23-24
- Fallen idols [E]. JI 22
- Free software. JI 27
- Freebies: My list. S 22
- Open or shut door? [E]. D 22
- Wade, Kenneth R., and Bob Maehre. Computer concordances. N 20-21
- Wade, Kenneth R. interviewed by MINISTRY. Our new baptismal manual. D 24
- Wallenkampf, Arnold V. The reprieve of Martin Luther. O 8-11
- Wangai, Paul interviewed by Gary Swanson. Health evangelism in the third world. F 23-25
- Weber, Martin interviewed by J. R. Spangler. Some call it heresy. Ap 8-10
- Weir, Mark, and Roger L. Dudley. Mission or moonlighting? Je 4-6
- Weis, William L. Smoking and unemployment. N 26-27
- Whitney, Dean H. A dream that started as a nightmare. My 18-19
- Wilson, Neal C. Proposal for peace and understanding [Paper presented to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and to Konstantin Kharchev, chairman of the Council on Church Affairs, at the February Soviet-sponsored International Forum for a Non-nuclear World and the Survival of Humanity.]. My 23-25
- Wrenn, Bruce, Kermit Netteburg, Slimen Saliba, and Roger L. Dudley. Marketing our church. F 4-8

## Subjects:

- Adoption—Bible: Adoption. Rice, George E. Mr 13
- Adventist Laymen's Services and Industries: ASI—shaping the future

- of the church. Spangler, J. Robert [E]. F 16-17
- Aged: Midnight calls [E]. James, David C. S 23-24
- AIDS: Cicadas, creation, and AIDS [E]. Wade, Kenneth R. S 23
- Anabaptists: Sabbatarian Anabaptists? Muller, Richard. Ja 15-17
- Appetite disorders: Bulimics and anorexics—children of fear and anger. Rasco, Francine. Jl 24-26
- Arthritis: Understanding the arthritis patient. Colburn, Keith. S 26-27
- Authors: Ministering through the gift of writing. Anderson, Eleanor P. Mr 21-22
- Babylon: The church: voice of God? Rice, George E. D 4-6
- Baptism: Baptism: Pastoral perplexities. Edwards, Rex D. D 7-9  
Our new baptismal manual. Wade, Kenneth R. interviewed by MINISTRY. D 24
- Belief and doubt: Some call it heresy. Weber, Martin interviewed by J. R. Spangler. Ap 8-10
- Bible instructors: Bible instructors: key to personal ministry. Kidder, Marion E. Je 18-19
- Bible—Study: Methods of Bible study. Seventh-day Adventists. General Conference. Annual Council. Ap 22-24
- Bible. N.T. Revelation: Daniel and Revelation committee meets in Germany. Reid, George W. Ag 24
- Bible. O.T. Daniel: Daniel and Revelation committee meets in Germany. Reid, George W. Ag 24
- Bible. O.T.—Criticism, textual: The Old Testament text in antiquity. Horn, Siegfried H. N 4-8
- Book Reviews:  
Allen, Joseph J. *The Ministry of the Church—Image of Pastoral Care*. Edwards, Rex D. N 28  
Anderson, Gerald. *Forty Devotions That Work with Youth*. Connell, Jerry. Ag 30  
Bacchiocchi, Samuele. *Women in the Church*. Holmes, C. Raymond and Daniel Augsburg. O 28-29  
Beach, W. R. and B. B. Beach. *Pattern for Progress*. Hirsch, Charles B. D 27  
Becker, Arthur H. *Ministry with Older Persons: a Guide for Clergy and Congregations*. Ap 29  
Belasic, David S. and Paul M. Schmidt. *The Penguin Principles*. Merklin, Lester, Jr. My 31  
Belli, Humberto. *Breaking Faith: the Sandinista Revolution and Its Impact on Freedom and the Christian Faith in Nicaragua*. Sepulveda, Ciro. N 29  
Berthelsen, Bobetta. *48 Attention-Getters*. F 30  
Bruce, F. F. *Jesus: Lord and Savior*. Wheeler, Gerald. F 29  
Buckingham, Jamie. *A Way through the Wilderness*. Mauldin, Anita. Ja 27  
Butterworth, Bill. *Peanut Butter Families Stick Together*. Buckingham, Althea. Ja 27  
Calkins, Harold. *Master Preachers*. Fowler, John. N 28  
Coleman, Robert. *Evangelism on the Cutting Edge*. Stevens, James L. Je 26-27  
Cook, Jerry with Stanley C. Baldwin. *Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness*. Wade, Kenneth R. Ag 31  
Dobbins, Richard A. *Venturing into a Teenager's World*. Merklin, Lester P., Jr. D 27  
Evans, W. Glyn. *Beloved Adversary*. Elver, Anne. S 28  
Faulkner, Brooks R. *Forced Termination*. Boyle, Patrick. Mr 28  
Faulstich, E. W. *History, Harmony, and the Hebrew Kings*. Shea, William H. F 28-29  
Feyerabend, Henry. *Tearing the Shroud From the Antichrist*. Guley, Norman. D 26  
Frankl, Razelle. *Televangelism—the Marketing of Popular Religion*. Cooper, Victor. N 28-29  
Friesen, Duane K. *Christian Peacemaking and International Conflict*. Ap 29  
Gentry, Robert V. *Creation's Tiny Mystery*. Humphrey, Russell. Jl 28-29  
Groothuis, Douglas R. *Unmasking the New Age*. Yergen, Norman. D 26  
Hagner, Donald A. *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus: an Analysis and Critique of the Modern Jewish Study of Jesus*. Willey, Wayne. S 30  
Heinz, Daniel. *Ludwig Richard Conradi, Missionar de Siebenten-Tags Adventisten*. Kiesler, Herbert. Ap 28  
Hudnut, Robert K. *This People, This Parish*. Greer, David J. Mr 29  
Hunt, Dave. *Beyond Seduction*. Wade, Kenneth R. S 30  
Iverson, John Orville. *Air to the Kingdom*. Cooper, Victor. F 29-30  
Jacks, Bob and Betty with Ron Wormser Sr. *Your Home a Light-house*. Scribner, Kenneth L. D 27  
Jeffrey, David L. *Toward a Perfect Love: the Spiritual Counsel of Walter Hilton*. Goodrich, Donna Clark. My 30-31  
Jones, Lucile H. *It's All Right to Cry*. O 29  
Keller, W. P. *Walking with God*. Wharton, Heidi. Ag 31  
Killing, John. *The Tender Shepherd*. Willsey, Steve. F 30  
Klotz, John W. *Studies in Creation*. Coffin, Harold G. Mr 28  
Kopp, Ruth. *When Someone You Love is Dying*. Collins, William. S 28  
Kvamme, Rodney A. *Miracles Today: Understanding How God Participates in Our Lives*. Rydzewski, Ella. S 29  
Lindars, Barnabas. *Jesus Son of Man*. Lay, Michael J. Ag 30  
Linman, Gail. *God's People, a Book of Children's Sermons*. Bridgen, Bruce. Je 26  
Lohne, Alf. *Adventists in Russia*. Pierson, Robert H. S 30  
Lovelace, Richard F. *Renewal As a Way of Life*. Willey, Wayne. F 30  
Lyall, Francis. *Slaves, Citizens, Sons: Legal Metaphors in the Epistles*. Willey, Wayne. Ap 28-29  
MacDonald, Gordon. *Ordering Your Private World*. Seibold, Carmen. Ja 26  
Maston, T. B. *To Walk as He Walked*. Ag 31  
McGavran, Donald A. *Momentous Decisions in Missions Today*. Blanco, Jack. Ag 30-31  
McLellan, Vern. *Christians in the Political Arena*. Goldstein, Clifford. Mr 28-29  
Miller, Calvin. *Fred 'n' Erma*. F 30  
Moore, Marvin. *When Religion Doesn't Work*. Rydzewski, Ella. Ap 29  
Murphy, Judith K. *Sharing Care, the Christian Ministry of Respite Care*. McComas, Chad. Je 27  
Murray, Andrew. *The Blessings of Obedience*. Guild, Lillian R. Ja 27-28  
Murray, Andrew. *Confession: The Road to Forgiveness*. Ja 28  
Murray, Andrew. *How to Be Perfect*. Ja 28-29  
Murray, Andrew. *How to Work for God*. Ja 29  
Murray, Andrew. *Humility*. Ja 29  
Murray, Andrew. *Like Christ*. Ja 28  
Nunez, Emilio A. *Liberation Theology*. Sepulveda, Ciro. Je 26  
Packer, J. I. *Here We Stand: Justification by Faith Today*. Boyle, Patrick. My 30  
Paulson, Kevin D. *Coming to Terms*. Merklin, Lester, Jr. F 28  
Peck, M. Scott. *People of the Lie*. Akers, George. Mr 29  
Pinkoski, Jim. *The Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation*. Wade, Kenneth R. Ag 30  
Pollock, Shirley. *Building Teen Excitement: a Youth Worker's Guide*. Ap 29  
Postema, Don. *Space for God: the Study and Practice of Prayer and Spirituality*. Randall, Jacquie Z. Ja 26  
Price, Nelson. *Tenderness and 24 Other Ways to Make a Marriage Work*. Mazat, Alberta. Ap 29  
Rice, Richard. *When Bad Things Happen to God's People*. Wharton, Hedi. Ag 31  
Richards, Larry. *Personal Ministry Handbook*. Wright, Ed. S 29-30  
Richards, Latty. *When It Hurts Too Much to Wait*. Seibold, Carmen. Ja 26  
Richardson, E. Allen. *East Comes West*. Ap 29  
Ross, Bette M. *Our Special Child*. Mauldin, Anita. Ja 27  
Runk, Wesley T. *On Jesus' Team: Children's Object Lessons*. Bridgen, Bruce. N 29  
Scott, Sharon. *PPR—Peer Pressure Reversal*. Soper, Francis A. F 28  
Smedes, Lewis B. *How Can It Be All Right When Everything Is All Wrong?* Bunker, David. S 28-29  
Sproul, R. C. *Lifeviews: Understanding the Ideas That Shape Society Today*. Willey, Wayne. Mr 29  
Stafford, Kenneth. *Handbook for Helping Others*. Scribner, Kenneth L. Je 27  
Stedman, Ray C. *The Man of Faith*. Rentfro, Dick. F 29  
Stott, John R. W. *The Cross of Christ*. Boyle, Patrick. S 29  
Stout, Martha. *Without Child: a Compassionate Look at Infertility*. Seibold, Carmen. Ja 26  
Strom, Kay Marshall. *Helping Women in Crisis*. Lastine, Jerry. Ap 28  
Studzinski, Raymond. *Spiritual Direction and Midlife Development*. Rydzewski, Ella M. My 30  
Swindoll, Charles R. *Growing Deep in the Christian Life*. Lastine, Jerry. My 30  
Taulman, James E. *Encouragers: the Sunday School Worker's Counseling Ministry*. Bennett, Lester. O 29  
Thaxton, C. B., Walter L. Bradley, and Roger L. Olsen. *The Mystery of Life's Origin*. Haré, P. E. N 29  
Vandeman, George R. *The Rise and Fall of Antichrist*. F 30  
Venden, Morris L. *How Jesus Treated People*. Ap 29  
Wagner, C. Peter. *Church Growth: the State of the Art*. Bennett, Lester. Ag 31  
Wall, Ronald E. *Sermons on Prayer*. Ap 29  
Walton, Lewis R. *Advent. Bohr, Stephen P.* F 28  
Watson, David. *Fear No Evil*. Connell, Jerry. S 28  
Weisheit, Eldon. *God's Word in a Child's World*. Bridgen, R. Bruce. My 31  
Whybrew, Lyndon E. *Minister, Wife, and Church: Unlocking the Triangle*. Bresee, Ellen. Ja 27  
Woodbridge, John D. *Renewing Your Mind in a Secular World*. Akers, George H. Je 27  
Wurmbrand, Richard. *Marx and Satan*. Goldstein, Clifford. Je 26  
Yagel, Bobbie. *Living with Yourself and Other Imperfect People*. Streib, Sally. Ja 27  
Zehr, Paul M. *Biblical Criticism in the Life of the Church*. Blanco, Jack. O 29  
**Burnout (Psychology):** Recognizing and handling burnout. Fuentes, Jose A. Jl 14-17  
Satisfaction. Roper, David. Ja 7-8  
**Caring:** How's your service department? [E]. Spangler, J. Robert. O 22  
**Christian education:** Christian education: too much of a good thing? Hunt, Angela E. Jl 18-19  
**Church architecture:** Open or shut door? [E]. Wade, Kenneth R. D 22  
**Church controversies:** Can the church tolerate open minds? Londis, James J. Ag 4-5  
Conflicting church conflict [E]. Newman, J. David. Mr 23-24  
**Church finance:** Internal control. Tennyson, Mack. My 16-17  
**Church growth:** But no cheap novels [E]. James, David C. F 15-16  
Can we harvest where we have not sowed? [E]. Wade, Kenneth R. Je 22-23  
Growth and the small-town church. Seibold, Loren. Je 7-10  
Marketing our church. Netteburg, Kermit, Bruce Wrenn, Slimen Saliba, and Roger Dudley. F 4-8  
**Church management:** The small church advantage. Holt, B. Russell. Mr 18-20  
**Church polity:** The church: voice of God? Rice, George. D 4-6  
**Cicadidae:** Cicadas, creation, and AIDS [E]. Wade, Kenneth R. S 23  
**Clergy:** "Master of none?" [E]. James, David C. Ja 20  
The minister's resource center. Bresee, Floyd interviewed by MINISTRY. F 9-11  
**Clergy—Appointment, call, and election:** The call—her side of the story. Johnson, Noelene. My 4-8

- Come on, ring those bells! McBride, Cathy. D 20-21
- When it's time to move on. Russell, Freddie. D 10-11
- Clergy—Religious life:** The devil and the waiting Father. Jarnes, David C. D 14-16
- Clergy—Salaries, pensions, etc:** Mission or moonlighting? Dudley, Roger L., and Mark Weir. Je 4-7
- Clergy—Study and teaching (Continuing education):** The minister: a perpetual student [E]. Edwards, Rex D. Mr 23
- Clergy—Time management:** Handling drop-in visitors. Elver, Anne. Ja 18-19
- Clergymen's families:** Confessions of a PK [E]. Jarnes, David C. Je 23-24
- Ten tips for raising PKs. Kuzma, Kay. N 13-15
- Those PKs: clues to our kids. Nuessle, Karen. S 20-22
- Clergymen's wives:** Are you shy? Blitchington, Peter interviewed by Carole Kilcher. Jl 20-21
- Disposing of the defrocked. Boyle, Peggy, pseud. N 16-17
- Loneliness in the parsonage. Thomas, Jean. My 10-12
- A shared ministry. Fleck, Alcyon Ruth. Ag 19-20
- Should a minister's wife weep? McBride, Cathy. O 20-21
- Communism and Christianity:** Religion and Communism. Spangler, J. Robert. Mr 4-9
- Computer Corner:** Computer concordances. Maehre, Bob and Kenneth R. Wade. N 20-21
- Data base management and church growth. Ellithorpe, James. Mr 27
- Free software. Wade, Kenneth R. Jl 27
- Freebies: My list. Wade, Kenneth R. S 22
- How I use my church computer. McNeill, Robert. Ja 29
- Modems and ministry. Bellina, Joan Marie. My 28
- Counseling:** Successful counseling. Bresee, Ellen. Ap 11-13
- Death—Psychological aspects:** Visiting the grief-stricken. Van Ens, Jack R. S 17
- Demon possession:** Demons and deliverance. McDowell, Lyndon K. Ap 4-7
- Dependency (Psychology):** Only children make it to heaven [E]. Newman, J. David. D 23
- Diet: Diet doctor weighs Weimar. Barice, E. Joan interviewed by J. Robert Spangler. Ja 13-15
- Drug abuse:** Chemically dependent families. Reiss, Gunter. My 26-28
- Evangelistic work:** From the evangelist's viewpoint. Stevens, James L. Je 14-16
- NAD evangelism council. Juberg, Morten. Ap 14-16
- Working with a guest evangelist. Smith, Dennis. Je 12-13
- Faith and reason:** Reconciling faith and reason. Rice, Richard. Mr 10-13
- Family—Religious life:** Special family workshops for special kids. Burton, Judy. Ag 12-14
- Freedom (Theology):** The danger of freedom [E]. Wade, Kenneth R. Ja 22
- Funeral service:** Whose funeral is it, anyway? Firebaugh, Robert D. S 18-19
- Gay liberation movement:** Homosexual recovery—six years later. Cook, Colin interviewed by J. Robert Spangler. S 4-9
- Grief:** Stillborn: how the pastor can help. Irland, Nancy Beck. Ja 10-12
- Health:** Preserving the vital force. Neil, Richard L. Je 24-25
- Health education:** Is Adventist health reform scientific? Bosley, Galen C. Ap 26-28
- Health evangelism:** Health evangelism in the third world. Wangai, Paul interviewed by Gary Swanson. F 23-25
- Hell:** Is the hell of the Bible unending? Crosby, Tim. Jl 10-13
- Jeremiah, the prophet:** The deceptive theology of institutionalism. Rosado, Caleb. N 9-12
- Jewelry—Religious aspects:** Jewelry: a clarification and appeal. Seventh-day Adventists. North American Division. Ap 25
- Listening:** Listening is more than hearing. Thompson, Garth D. S 11-13
- Lord's supper:** For members only? Holbrook, Frank. F 12-14
- Lord's Supper:** Discrimination at the Lord's Supper. Maynard-Reid, Pedro U. D 18-19
- Loss (Psychology):** When tragedy strikes the pastor. Veninga, Robert L. S 14-16
- Luther, Martin:** The reprieve of Martin Luther. Wallenkamp, Arnold V. O 8-11
- Sola scriptura:* a response. Reid, George W. O 16
- Why I don't believe in *sola scriptura*. Crosby, Tim. O 11-15
- Married people—Employment:** Finding fulfillment [Adapted from "Homemaking: a Bible study for women at home," published by Navpress, P. O. Box 6000, Colorado Springs, CO 80934]. Gallimore, Linda M. My 8-9
- Medicine—Religious aspects:** Medical ministry misconceptions. Hadley, G. Gordon. Ag 25-27
- Meditation:** Meditation for Christians? Reiss, Gunter, and Jim Florence. O 26-27
- MINISTRY (Periodical):** They like us, they like us not [E]. Wade, Kenneth R. F 15
- Ordination:** On being ordained. Christo, G. J. Je 17
- Ordination of women:** Religion teachers' opinions on the role of women. Dudley, Roger L. Ag 14-18
- To ordain or not. Staples, Russell. Mr 14-17
- Pastoral counseling:** A dream that started as a nightmare. Whitney, Dean H. My 18-19
- When should you refer? Tibbits, Dick. My 20
- Peace:** Proposal for peace and understanding [Paper presented to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and to Konstantin Kharachev, chairman of the Council on Church Affairs, at the February Soviet-sponsored International Forum for a Non-nuclear World and the Survival of Humanity]. Wilson, Neal C. My 23-25
- Soviet sponsored peace forum [E]. Hegstad, Roland R. My 21-23
- Preaching:** "A-bummin' . . . like a buzzard-clock" [E]. Edwards, Rex D. O 22-23
- Pregnant women—Alcohol use:** Alcohol and the pregnant woman. Sterndale, Elizabeth. Mr 25-26
- Problem solving:** Just being there. Kitsen, Mary Louise. Jl 9
- Religion and science:** Can science and religion work together? [adapted from *Origins* 12, No. 2 (1985): 71-88]. Brand, Leonard R. N 22-25
- Religious and ecclesiastical institutions:** Church institutions are not necessarily Christian [E]. Newman, J. David. Ja 21
- Sabbath:** Delight in the Lord [E]. Wade, Kenneth R. O 23-24
- Sabbath:** Sabbatarian Anabaptists? Muller, Richard. Ja 15-17
- Sanctuary doctrine:** Within which veil? Rice, George E. Je 20-21
- Self-control:** Discipline yourself. McNeill, Robert. Jl 4-5
- Seventh-day Adventists. General Conference. Annual Council:** Rio in retrospect. Bresee, Floyd. F 18-22
- Seventh-day Adventists. General Conference. Ministerial Association.** The minister's resource center. Bresee, Floyd interviewed by MINISTRY. F 9-11
- Seventh-day Adventists. General Conference. Ministerial Association.** Ministerial Association at 65. Bresee, Floyd. O 4-7
- Sex (Psychology):** Bartling sexual indiscretion. Carlson, Robert J. Ja 4-6
- Shop Talk:** \$10 for your ideas. My 32, Jl 31, Ag 32, O 31, "Reach out and touch." N 31
- Adventist church music workshop. Ag 32
- Adventist Computer Association membership special. Ag 32
- Adventist *Ideals*. Ap 30
- Alban Institute opens west coast office. My 32
- A Bible marking course for your members and you. F 31
- Bible worker/evangelism training. D 32
- Calendar calling card. D 32
- Call for papers on abortion. D 32
- Catalog lists programs like NEW-START. Ja 31
- Church secretary's newsletter. F 31
- Civil Air Patrol chaplaincies available. Mr 31
- Clinical pastoral education stipends offered. S 31, O 31
- Computer information retrieval. Jl 31
- Computer power for churches. N 31
- Continuing ministry to the grieving. Jl 31
- Corrections. F 31
- Could you use some help with In-gathering? O 31
- CPE stipends offered. F 31
- Creation: The evidence from science. My 32
- Creation's Tiny Mystery*. N 31
- Crisis hotline available. Jl 31
- Critique of New Age movement. D 32
- Devotional book at a discount. Jl 31
- Direct mail evangelism available free. D 32
- Establish your new members. Ap 30
- Evangelism and church growth manual. D 32
- Free subscription to Adventist pastors. O 31
- A gift for your givers. S 31
- Guest speaker insurance. F 31
- Health and Happiness*. Mr 31
- Hear the word of the Lord. Mr 31
- Help for the Adventist wedding. O 31
- Increase the fellowship within your church. Ja 31
- Make your invitation tangible. Je 31
- Missions Extension offering to two divisions. Ag 32
- Nominate a missionary. S 31
- Omega; Agape and Eros*. Je 31
- Sample book free. Mr 31
- Save someone's life. N 31
- Sermon resources. My 32
- Social Security opening for those who opted out. Ap 31
- Strengthening our schools. Ap 30-31
- Try a Sabbath morning countdown. Je 31
- Watershed offering? F 31
- Singing:** Creative congregational singing [Reprinted in part from *The Church Musician*, April, 1975]. Billingsley, Derrell L. My 14-15
- Small groups:** How I use small groups in evangelism. Cerna, Miguel A. O 17-19
- Smoking:** Smoking and unemployment. Weis, William L. N 26-27
- Snuff:** Smokeless tobacco: the ticking time bomb. Swanson, Gary B. Ja 23-25
- Social status:** Status seekers in the church [E]. Newman, J. David. S 24-25
- Soviet Union—Description and travel:** Religion and communism. Spangler, J. Robert. Mr 4-9
- Still-birth:** Stillborn: how the pastor can help. Irland, Nancy Beck. Ja 10-12
- Success:** Search for success. Doran, Eric. S 10
- Sunday legislation:** Satan's consummate deception. Goldstein, Clifford. Ag 6-8
- Supplementary employment:** Mission or moonlighting? Dudley, Roger L., and Mark Weir. Je 4-7
- Television in religion:** The prophets of profit [E]. Spangler, J. Robert. N 18-19
- Tithes:** Are our tithe policies important? [E]. Spangler, J. Robert. Ap 17-18
- CPA expresses opinion on tithe policy. Bartram, Jerry E. Ap 19-20
- Second thoughts on tithe [E]. Spangler, J. Robert. Ag 22-23
- Use of tithe policy revision. Seventh-day Adventists. North American Division. Ap 20-22
- Visitation (church flock):** Must I shepherd all the flock? Drumm, Jack, pseud. Jl 6-8
- Visiting the sick:** Understanding hospitaless. Fuentes, Jose, and Gerry Fuentes. Ag 9-11
- Weimar Institute (California):** Barice, E. Joan interviewed by J. Robert Spangler. Ja 13-15



### Direct-mail evangelism packet available free

Many are finding that direct mail can be a very effective part of a balanced program of church growth. You can obtain a packet of information about the use of direct mail as an outreach tool for the local church by sending US\$1 to Direct Mail Evangelism Packet, Monte Sahlin, Adult Ministries Coordinator, North American Division Church Ministries Department, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

But if you would like to obtain the packet at no cost, you may do so by sending Monte the name and address of a local church that has used this approach.

### Call for papers on abortion

Loma Linda University's Center for Christian Bioethics is sponsoring a conference on Seventh-day Adventism and abortion to convene in the fall of 1988. David Larson, the center's director, has issued a call for papers to be presented at that conference and then published as a book.

Larson says the conference is not intended to decide the matter of abortion for Adventists, or even to achieve a consensus. Rather it is to provide an opportunity for Adventists to present their varying points of view regarding abortion in a setting of mutual support and analysis. The resulting book will enable thoughtful individuals and institutions to come to their own conclusions regarding the morality of abortion within the perspective of

what their denominational colleagues are thinking. Larson says the center wants to hear from all sectors of the Adventist Church—conservative, moderate, and liberal.

The papers should be approximately 30 pages in length and documented in the normal fashion. They may be either descriptive or prescriptive. Descriptive papers should assess past and present Adventist understanding and practice—around the world—with respect to abortion. Prescriptive papers should detail the author's views on what Adventist understanding and practice ought to be.

Anyone interested in presenting a paper at the conference should write David Larson as soon as possible. Write to him at: The Center for Christian Bioethics, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California 92350; phone (714) 824-4956.

### Bible worker/evangelism training

The Uchee Pines Institute is offering Bible worker training and a six-month evangelism field school to run January 17 through June 4, 1988. The students will study door-to-door work, Bible work, health seminars in the home, home-based Revelation seminars, getting decisions, and literature evangelism. And, in conjunction with churches belonging to four area conferences, the field school offers participation in evangelistic campaigns to be conducted in Columbus, Georgia, and Phenix City, Alabama.

There is no tuition

charge for this field school; however, students will be responsible for the cost of their room and board. To apply, contact: Field School, 1217 Eberhart Avenue, Columbus, Georgia 31906.

### Critique of New Age movement

Housewives, shopping for groceries, hold pendulums over heads of lettuce to determine their wholesomeness. A practitioner places one hand on a patient's pain-wracked leg and with the other directs a pendulum over depictions of a variety of diseases. He interprets the spinning of the pendulum over a picture of tuberculosis of the bone as a diagnosis of the patient's affliction. Participants in a 14-hour videotape course entitled *Achieve Your Potential* are taught to exercise the "God power" that "everyone has within."

Indications that even twentieth-century Westerners are superstitious and gullible? Yes, but more than that. These instances all involved Seventh-day Adventists and demonstrate the intrusion of the New Age movement into the ranks of Adventism.

The General Conference's Biblical Research Institute has prepared a 27-page paper on the New Age movement. It details some of the beliefs common to those who are part of this movement, devotes a chapter to psychometry and radionics/radiaesthesia, another to holistic health, and yet another distinguishing the Adventist approach to health from that of this movement. The paper offers a biblical critique of the

New Age movement and an annotated bibliography for those who wish to do more reading about it.

You may obtain *New Age Movement and Seventh-day Adventists* for US\$1 by ordering it from Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012. Price includes postage.

### Evangelism and Church Growth Manual

This comprehensive, 333-page manual, produced by W. C. Scales, Jr., North American Division Ministerial Association secretary, contains practical information concerning pre-effort preparation, new member follow-up, personal evangelism, health evangelism, and summer day-camp evangelism. It also provides a variety of evangelistic sermon outlines, and gives information on the Real Truth Bible Course series, the Kindness Crusade, spiritual guardianship ministry, hospitality ministry, and special contact teams.

This volume is a tremendous resource for pastors, church officers, evangelists, ministerial students, and church members who are interested in evangelism and church growth. It costs, including postage, US\$10. You may order it by sending a purchase order or check to: NAD Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012. Please make checks payable to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. ■