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Suffering from delusions

In "Midnight Calls" (September 1987) perhaps David Jarnes was more correct than he knew when he wrote "I didn't meet her need." From his report it appears that Mrs. Carter is suffering from frightening delusions and needs professional help. —W. Noel Brown, Auckland, New Zealand.

"Utter disdain"

Just opened my complimentary copy of MINISTRY and noted someone's "utter disdain." With tongue in cheek I say if I did not like your magazine—since it is free—I would just ask for a refund!

Since I am of another denomination, I cannot say I agree with everything in the magazine, but that's what makes America. Your magazine at least makes one think. For instance, I am a PK and the lady says: "Never say no because they're preacher's kids if you would say yes if they weren't" ("Ten Tips for Raising PKs," November 1987). *Never* is a pretty big word, but she still batted well over .900 and no one on the Twins or Cardinals did that well. —Fred W. Gibson, Kansas City, Missouri.

"Homosexual recovery"

I read the article "Homosexual Recovery—Six Years Later" (September 1987) almost as though it had a second title, to wit: "Sin—Every Believer's Deep Experience of Sanctification!" Mr. Cook's willingness to be openly identified—not so much as a recovering homosexual but as a sinner daily being saved by grace—positions him for ultimate freedom! (See 1 Cor. 1:18; John 8:36.) Too many of us act as though there are only three heinous sins: homosexuality, adultery, and addiction to drugs and/or alcohol. Yet the Scriptures are careful to notify us of the myriad sin traps into which we all fall! Whatever

the act, it becomes sin because we wallow in the mush of our humanity, thus denying the sovereignty and supremacy of the triune God! —Shirley B. Dean, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

■ God will bless you for the interview you conducted with Colin Cook. And Colin and Sharon Cook will experience more grace than previously received, because "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6, NIV). —Wayne D. Lawton, Silver Spring, Maryland.

■ I was shocked to read your interview with Colin Cook in the September issue of MINISTRY. As the first public acknowledgment from the church of the reasons for the closing of the Quest Institute, it did little to address the blatant abuse of counselees that occurred. Surely any counselor with credentials would have been called in by his professional licensing association and had his license revoked for such behavior. Regrettably, Colin has no such license and thus is under the scrutiny of no agency other than the church.

In their zeal to perpetuate the theories Cook espouses, the church and MINISTRY have blindly accepted his statement of repentance. Neither has investigated the harm done to the counselees, nor, to my knowledge, even attempted to contact them in an effort to offer healing. One might liken this to situations of incest where, within the family, denial and abandonment of the victim prevail. —Marge Doyle, Rancho Cucamonga, California.

■ I have been *deeply moved* by the courage in grace Colin Cook displayed and the sound principles for dealing with sin and sinners he established. Seldom if ever are we heterosexuals humble enough to denounce our sins and con-

fess them publicly. You are right, Colin. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). —Carlos Turcios, Miami, Florida.

■ We appreciate you and MINISTRY so much that it is difficult to say anything less than positive about the September lead article, "Homosexual Recovery—Six Years Later." I do believe it was well meant and perhaps even timely and helpful to some in the terrible moral climate of today.

But I was ashamed to see the dirty laundry of a relatively few brought out so vividly to the shame and disgust of many. And I was well reminded of God's counsel to the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:12 (NKJV) that "it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret." —Paul Jensen, Reading, Pennsylvania.

■ I was deeply moved by Colin Cook's forthrightness about his "becoming," but even more so by his ability to express the Christian concepts of repentance, forgiveness, and growth in Christ. —E. Guy Longshore, Jr., Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Superficial logic

The superficiality of Ken Wade's logic regarding evolutionary theory and the AIDS epidemic ("Cicadas, Creation, and AIDS," September 1987) is glaring. At the human level, natural selection and survival of the fittest presents a far different picture than it does in primordial jungles. An ugly weakling with a lovely spiritual nature may be much more suited to success in our society than is a handsome and burly jerk. Compassion is an evolutionary trait. There is no contradiction in believing in evolutionary theory and demonstrating compassion for the vic-

(Continued on page 29)

If you're receiving MINISTRY bimonthly without having paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928, MINISTRY has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers, but we believe the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We want to share with you our aspirations and faith in a way that we trust will provide inspiration and help to you too. We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulders, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you cannot use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy; requests should be on church letterhead.

A year or so ago, pro-life demonstrators picketed in front of the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church, Takoma Park, Maryland, protesting abortions done in Washington Adventist Hospital. Their protest highlighted a conundrum the Adventist Church, which operates some 487 hospitals, clinics, and dispensaries around the world, faces: what to do regarding abortion. During a nine month period in 1970 and 1971, the church produced two sets of recommended abortion guidelines; since then it has made no official statement on the matter.

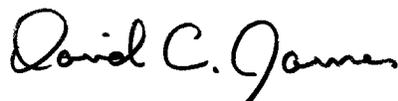
In his editorial in this issue, J. R. Spangler looks at some early Adventist views on abortion and reveals the results of an informal survey MINISTRY has taken of the top administrative officers of North American Adventist hospitals. In an article, Michael Pearson suggests reasons underlying the church's reluctance to take an unequivocal stand on the issue and points to the consequences, both positive and negative. And because the two sets of recommended guidelines developed in the 1970s have occasioned no small confusion in the church, MINISTRY is publishing both sets in full following the editorials.

Some ministers' wives have expressed disappointment that we're no longer publishing Shepherdess articles. We haven't stopped. We're still apportioning 10 percent of our article space to the minister's wife. As has been our custom each January, this month's Biblio File is dedicated to books the minister's wife may find of special interest.

The confusion may have arisen because two years ago we stopped identifying the articles we include for wives of ministers. We did so for two reasons: we didn't want to discourage ministers themselves from reading the articles—as if they were intended *only* for the spouses—and we didn't want the wives to feel that the articles included for them were the only part of the magazine they should be interested in or benefit from.

Has our approach worked? Do you like it or dislike it? Write to us and let us know.

Finally, in this issue we begin a new feature—the Pastor's Pastor. Every month on that page Floyd Bresee, secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association, will speak to you on topics of interest to pastors. I'd describe the column further, but he does so himself, so I'll direct you there. Don't miss it.



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VOLUME 61 NUMBER 1

Abortion: the Adventist dilemma

Michael Pearson

Opinions about abortion vary widely within the church. Can a consensus be reached? On what basis?



Michael Pearson received his Ph.D. from Oxford University, and teaches at Newbold College, Bracknell, Berkshire, England.

In the early 1980s the refugee camp at Sangkhla in southern Thailand received large numbers of Vietnamese who had crossed the Gulf of Thailand. Many of the refugee women had been raped by marauding fishermen. On arrival at Sangkhla, a significant number of the refugees were found to be pregnant and suffering from venereal disease. For reasons of conscience the Catholic physicians in the camp refused to perform abortions. Adventist doctors there were faced with requests to terminate such pregnancies, which, after careful deliberation, they agreed to do.¹

This is one example of Adventist practice with regard to abortion in exceptional circumstances. The contrast between Adventist and Catholic responses in less extreme situations would not, however, be so marked. Indeed many Adventists would be sympathetic to the peaceful pro-life campaigns waged by Catholics.

The above case highlights the predicament in which Adventists find themselves over abortion. On the one hand, their theology inclines them toward a conservative, anti-abortion stance. On the other, they operate an extensive network of hospitals around the world, to which many women have turned at a time of personal crisis no less deep, in their opinion, than that of the Vietnamese women.

The Adventists' dilemma is compounded by the fact that the major sources to which they normally turn for direction in matters of faith and prac-

tice—the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White—are silent, or at least less than unequivocal about abortion. Some have argued cogently that there is an anti-abortion ethic implicit in Scripture. A recent MINISTRY article, containing a careful interpretation of Exodus 21:22, 23, was a persuasive example of this viewpoint.²

Others believe that even though abortion is offensive to them personally, it is impossible to derive an imperative on the matter from Scripture. They argue that those passages commonly used to support the anti-abortion stance (e.g., Jer. 1:4,5; Ps. 139:13-16; Eccl. 11:5) do not directly address the issue. Even the sixth commandment has to be reconciled with the scriptural claim that there is “a time to kill” (Eccl. 3:3).

Ellen White's writings are equally inconclusive. It is not difficult to select quotations from her writings to support the view that abortion violates the purpose of God, and as such is a sinful act. The following is but one example: “Life is mysterious and sacred. It is the manifestation of God Himself, the source of all life. Precious are its opportunities, and earnestly should they be improved. Once lost, they are gone forever. . . .

“God looks into the tiny seed that He Himself has formed, and sees wrapped within it the beautiful flower, the shrub, or the lofty, wide-spreading tree. So does He see the possibilities in every human being.”³

It is safe to conjecture that Ellen White found abortion a deeply repugnant act. It is interesting, however, that she refrained from condemning it, even though it was of widespread concern in

society in her day.⁴ While there are, no doubt, perfectly adequate reasons that she omitted any reference to abortion in her work, the point here is simply that at no time did Ellen White directly address the issue in a way that could supply a norm for Adventists.

Thus an editorial writer in the *Adventist Review* was prompted to observe that "our church leaders have noted that neither the Bible nor Ellen White say anything definite about elective abortion. They have felt that where Inspiration is silent, we should not legislate."⁵

Since church leadership has not taken a clear stand against abortion, it is not surprising that church members hold widely divergent views. The issue arouses strong emotions whenever it is discussed, and a number of tensions have developed in Adventism concerning it.

Institutional v. individual norms

In 1971 *MINISTRY* magazine published a set of guidelines recommended by the General Conference officers to be followed by Adventist medical institutions on the matter of abortion.⁶ That same year a study committee amended and considerably liberalized these guidelines (see "Abortion guidelines for Adventist medical institutions" in this issue of *MINISTRY*). The recommendations closely resemble the model code created by the American Law Institute and the provisions that were later enshrined in law by the Supreme Court ruling of 1973. It was a relatively liberal provision and very much in the spirit of the age. It stated that therapeutic abortions could be performed when the following indications were established:

"1. When continuation of the pregnancy may threaten the life of the woman or impair her health.

"2. When continuation of the pregnancy is likely to result in the birth of a child with physical deformities or mental retardation.

"3. When conception has occurred as a result of rape or incest.

"4. When the case involves an unwed child under 15 years of age.

"5. When for some reason the requirements of functional human life demand the sacrifice of the lesser potential human value.

"When indicated interruptions of pregnancy are done, they should be performed as early as possible, preferably during the first trimester of pregnancy."

It is not difficult to understand why the

church should have adopted a relatively permissive policy for abortion practice in its hospitals. First, it could be argued that the church administration felt a responsibility to give physicians the right to perform procedures they considered necessary for meeting patients' needs. The administrators left it up to individual physicians and hospital ethics committees to apply the highest professional and Christian standards in formulating policies and making decisions.

But the fact that many of the physicians employed in obstetric and gynecological facilities were not Adventists complicated the issue, diluting the distinctive ethos of denominational hospitals.⁷ The same sort of process was observed in Roman Catholic hospitals in Belgium.⁸ Furthermore, Adventist hospitals have to function as facilities for the wider community, and face the pressure of a demand that derives from a secular source. The prospect of a growing secularization in Adventist hospitals is only heightened when the network of denominational health-care facilities grows significantly, as it has done recently.

Rightly or wrongly, some Adventist hospitals are perceived to have a relatively permissive attitude toward abortion. This contrasts sharply with the recommendations for personal behavior that have been carried regularly by Adventist periodicals over the past 15 years. Following the publication of the General Conference guidelines, the *Review and Herald* published an article that implicitly opposed them.⁹ Articles printed subsequently in the *Review*, *MINISTRY*, *Insight*, *Spectrum*, and denominational family magazines, have consistently defended an anti-abortion stance.

So we face a situation in which recommendations for personal behavior appear to conflict with standards for institutional practice. It should not surprise us if members, discerning what they take to be an ambivalence in standards, sometimes use abortion as a way out of personal crisis.

Difference in Adventist practice

This ambivalence in Adventist attitudes is reflected in the way in which practice varies with location. A survey of practice in Adventist hospitals in the United States showed considerable regional variation.¹⁰

Some hospitals in the East and South apparently approve or provide no abortion services whatever. One facility re-

corded only three abortions among 5,000 admissions to the Ob-gyn department, but another institution, farther west, had one abortion in every nine admissions to the Ob-gyn facility.

A similar piece of research carried out in Adventist hospitals outside the United States offered an instructive comparison.¹¹ Most such hospitals were situated in the Third World and followed strict policies. Some were located in countries where abortion was illegal and merely complied with the law. Even those located in countries where the law was more permissive performed abortions only when there were pressing medical indications, particularly when the life of the mother was threatened. Some hospitals refused to perform an abortion on the ground that it was an immoral act.

Explanations of the incongruity between Adventist attitudes in the western United States and in the Third World may be sought in several directions. It may be that believers in the Third World perceive behavioral and doctrinal matters in more clear-cut terms. Or the attitudes of physicians who are attracted to mission service may tend toward the conservative end of the spectrum. It would also be inevitable that practice would vary somewhat in accordance with the general social expectations in a given culture.

Development of public opinion

The publication of the General Conference guidelines antedated the U.S. Supreme Court ruling by almost two years. But that ruling was only the culmination of a process of evolution in public opinion that had begun a decade before with the distressing realities brought about by the thalidomide tragedy and several severe epidemics of rubella. Thus, though the denominational guidelines undoubtedly reflected the spirit of the age, they were, in part, borne of a genuine humanitarian concern to meet the needs of women whose pregnancies brought them deep distress.

Since the Supreme Court ruling, more than 20 million pregnancies have been terminated in the United States, many for rather flimsy reasons. At the same time there has been a general shift to the right in American public opinion. With its 1971 guidelines still in place, the Adventist Church now finds itself to the left of center in the spectrum of opinion on this issue. The church is uncomfortable with the resulting perception that it has

struck a liberal pose. It may also be uncomfortable with the fact that individual members may understand the permission granted in denominational policy to be moral legitimation of abortion.

Abortion and the Adventist ethos

There is some disagreement over the extent to which religious affiliation affects readiness to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. Some have argued that the evidence demonstrates that, in an emergency, churchgoers seek abortion regardless of their own religious convictions or the official position of their church and that the main effect of religious affiliation is not to stop abortion but to create problems of conscience.¹² On the other hand, some observers find evidence to suggest that the more religiously active a woman is, the more likely she is to oppose abortion as a personal option.

Others contend that what may appear to be a religious dimension to the issue is in fact a function of socioeconomic factors. In other words, denominations tend to attract their members from a particular part of the socioeconomic spectrum, with its own characteristic norms, expectations, and strategies for solving problems. Variations in attitudes to abortion and in actual resort to it will basically reflect social differences rather than religious principles.¹³ If this is the case, what socioeconomic influences at work within Adventism may affect the resort to abortion?

Adventists are, as a group, occupationally ambitious. Obtaining a good education has high priority among them. An unplanned pregnancy might seriously disrupt the plans of a young Adventist couple who had high vocational aspirations. Similarly, an Adventist couple in a higher age category who wished to provide a denominational education for their children might find that goal jeopardized by an unplanned pregnancy.

Moreover, there is considerable evidence to show that those who use birth control techniques efficiently are more likely to resort to abortion in the event of contraceptive failure than those who do not.¹⁴ It is also clear that Adventists employ contraceptive techniques carefully and efficiently. Purely according to the criterion of socioeconomic status, then, Adventist women seem to figure strongly as candidates for abortion in the event of an unwanted pregnancy.

Bernard Haring, the eminent Catholic moral theologian, has observed that

in the United States, legality is often taken to confer moral rightness on behavior.¹⁵ Adventists have generally been careful in performing their civic responsibilities and in maintaining solidarity with the surrounding society where possible. It is conceivable therefore that legalization of abortion has shaped Adventist perceptions of its morality.

On the other hand, certain attitudes inherent in Adventism are likely to have an influence against abortion. Adventism encourages its members to cultivate great moral sensitivity, so many members undoubtedly regard abortion as a sinful act. For them the dominant reaction after abortion is likely to be guilt rather than relief. The anticipation of post-abortion guilt probably encourages some to carry their pregnancy to term. The strong emphasis in Adventism on the maintenance of good physical health might also incline a woman to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term rather than submit her body temple to an unnatural procedure and its possible complications.

Adventist theology

Plausible though such explanations may be, we prefer to believe that our decisions are rational and derive from a spiritually sensitive conscience. What elements in Adventist theology might figure in the abortion decision? The doctrine of conditional mortality is clearly relevant to the debate, though surprisingly little has been said about it in Adventist publications. The Catholic view that a soul is infused into the embryo at conception, and that it, as an inheritor of original sin, must not be allowed to perish without baptism, clearly dictates a certain course of action. In contrast, Adventists believe neither that there exists a separate entity called a soul, nor that baptism is essential to salvation. They prefer to say that man "becomes a soul" rather than that he "possesses a soul." *Soul* is therefore understood to mean both "life" and "individuality."¹⁶ This then allows them to say that "a new soul comes into existence every time a child is born."¹⁷ which might seem to permit some concession to the abortion option.

On the other hand, this view of humanity means that a soul cannot exist without a body. Possessing a body—material entity—is part of what it means to be a soul. Thus it could be argued that since a material entity with a unique genetic inheritance is formed at conception, a soul exists from that point and

absolute value should be attached to it.

Adventist doctrine overlaps with the abortion issue at several other points, and we as a church can only acknowledge our delinquency in failing to chart the area more adequately.

Strong belief in an imminent Second Advent might, for example, lead some to ignore one common justification for abortion—the spiralling world population. Adventists might argue that no humanly contrived strategy could avert the march to ecological disaster and thus that no embryos should be sacrificed to this lost cause.

The strong Adventist attachment to the Decalogue might encourage some members to avoid abortion for fear of transgressing the sixth commandment.

A common argument in favor of termination is that in the evolutionary process the body has developed a mechanism for aborting abnormal fetuses. It is then asserted that induced abortion is, in cases of abnormal development, only an extension of that process. Adventists are more likely to believe that it is the prerogative of a personal, interventionist God to dispose of human life.

Much remains to be done in grounding our ethics securely in our doctrine.

It cannot be denied that the Adventist approach to the question of abortion has been pragmatic. The absence of any sustained debate within the denomination has averted a debilitating internal dispute and prevented the church from becoming involved in a wider and highly politicized debate. It has had the further virtue of allowing church medical institutions to respond in a flexible way to the kind of need experienced at the Thai refugee camp. The major disservice of such an approach has been that the church has failed to demand of its leaders and its scholars a careful investigation of ethical concerns. The danger is that Adventist moral action may sometimes lack consistency and may gradually become merely an ethic of self-interest. ■

¹ Roy Branson, "Massacre at Sea," *Spectrum*, vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 22-24.

² Richard Müller, "Abortion: a Moral Issue?" *MINISTRY*, January 1985, pp. 18-20, 31.

³ *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 397. Other statements can be found in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 516; manuscript 43, 1900; *Counsels on Health*, p. 41; *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 378; letter 16a, 1861.

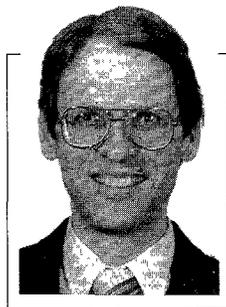
⁴ See *A Solemn Appeal to the Church*, pp. 100, 101. This volume, published by James White, and to which Ellen White was the major contributor, contained a couple of pages of anti-abortion sentiment by a non-Adventist. Furthermore, the

(Continued on page 28)

How culture conditions our view of Scripture

Jon Dybdahl

While Westerners tend to ask historical questions of Scripture, the Hmong people want to know of its power, and the Chinese of its pragmatism.



Jon Dybdahl, Ph.D., teaches religion at Walla Walla College, Walla Walla, Washington.

The Bible students I have had have demonstrated to me that a person's religious and cultural conditioning affects the way he or she relates to Scripture. What they have taught me has broadened my approach to the Scriptures.

Case studies from a trio of religious cultures form the outline of this study. How each culture relates to the Old Testament story of Joseph is the subject of discussion.

Case 1—Western Students

First and most obvious are my Walla Walla College students, most coming from a conservative Christian background. I find my students are primarily concerned about the *history* of Joseph. What they want to hear are historical facts about Joseph's life. What were customs like then? Who was the Pharaoh when Joseph went down into Egypt? Who were the Midianites, and where did they come from? When did all this take place? Braver ones may ask, "Did this story really happen? Was Joseph a real person?"

For them the knowledge of this history performs two major functions. It explains the story by fleshing out details and giving background, and it helps demonstrate (or not demonstrate) the factuality of the story. This factuality forms a basis for their belief in the Bible as sacred text.

My students are conservative Bible believers, but they are not alone in asking historical questions. *All* types of Christians and non-Christians in North America ask the same kind of questions.

Some Americans do not accept any of the Bible as historical and deny it as sacred text, and some accept it all in minute detail as historical. And there are all kinds of shades and variations between these two extremes. But all ask the same type of question—the historical one.

Even academically trained Western Bible scholars ponder the same question. They differ only in asking it in more depth and with greater persistence. They not only query about the story itself but go on to investigate the history of the text that tells the story. And they ask about the factors giving rise to both text and story.

My Western students seek to apply the story in terms of *personal* ethics. Mention Joseph, and the first thing they think of is his encounter with Potiphar's wife. To them, the Joseph story teaches chastity and other moral principles.

As a college Bible teacher, then, they expect me to move, in a certain, almost prescribed way, beyond the simple tale they have heard many times since childhood. They expect me to give new and more extensive facts regarding the historical background and to show ways to apply the story to personal morality.

Case 2—The Hmong

Originating in China, the Hmong are for the most part illiterate, animistic, spirit worshipers. Their homeland stretches across mountainous areas in southern China and into northern Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. They have a love-hate relationship with the spirits whom they serve. These spirits, bringers of both good and evil, must be dealt with carefully. In the story of the Bible they

immediately recognize a conflict between the old and the new—the one great God of the Bible versus the many spirits.

They cannot read or do library research or truth evaluation on the basis of history. The conflict between the spirit way and the Bible way must be resolved by other means. The most common method is a power encounter between the two. Can the God of the Bible really interpret dreams when spirit doctors can't? Can God heal when spirit doctors prove unable, and protect from spirit hexes and curses? If the answer is yes, the Bible claims are true, and Joseph's story becomes authoritative. For these people, stories such as Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream are very meaningful.

Scripture, however, is heard, not read. How do you grow in understanding if you can't read books about what you are interested in? First, by *listening* carefully. These illiterates have phenomenal memories. (Never confuse illiteracy with low intelligence.) They memorize, repeat, and cherish Scripture.

They also very rapidly turn Scripture into song and drama. One understands it and learns new meanings as he or she sings and acts it out. I can still recall those Friday night Bible dramas. They didn't come out of the *MV Kit*. The muggy air, hordes of bugs, and hard benches were all forgotten as actors were caught up in the story. They *were* Joseph. Like him they were a despised minority in their land. They had suffered and been abused, but they now served the same God as Joseph. God had shown His reality in a power encounter, and thus Joseph's emancipation and final triumph were theirs. They were acting it out just now. It was real. The light on their faces showed it. In the encounter with the gods and powers of Egypt, Joseph's God won. So would they.

The Joseph story could, of course, be

How do you grow in understanding if you can't read books about what you are interested in?

applied in an ethical sense as well. Personal ethics, however, were not their primary concern. They viewed the Joseph story as a saga of *family* ethics. Joseph was a man loyal to family and clan in spite of how they mistreated him. The Hmongs saw even the story of Potiphar's wife in that light. Family consultation on choice of mate and loyalty to household were undoubtedly in Joseph's mind. God blesses those who are loyal to family!

In short, for the Hmong, Scripture is tested by its power in life now. If true, it can be applied to present life experience and it can be proclaimed in word, song, and drama. The teacher is primarily a person of power. He knows the story and can read and tell it. He is also able to do battle with the demons and show Christ's victory.

Case 3—The Chinese

The Chinese of Singapore exist in two worlds at the same time—a highly competitive modern society in which business and technology are the main fields of endeavor, and a traditional society in which Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian ideals and practices govern life. While the first society claims most of their time and effort, a majority still venerate their ancestors, make occasional temple visits, and are proud of their "Chineseness."

The majority of the students in the Bible classes I taught at Southeast Asia Union College were non-Christian or recent converts. When I began teaching there, my objective was to show them the inspiration of the Bible. I talked about history, geography, and archeology—things many North American Christians traditionally use to show the truth of Scripture.

These efforts proved fruitless. Students were bored in a polite sort of way. I asked one of them the reason. He told me that the Chinese consider valuable any religious book revered as sacred for long ages. They accept the *Analects of Confucianism*, the *Tao Te Ching* of Taoism, and various Buddhist writings as sacred. They were happy to revere the Bible along with the others. They didn't see the value or relevance of what I was teaching in class. They didn't care about "proving" any scripture by history. What they needed to know about the Bible was why it was valuable, applicable, and authoritative.

Further dialogue revealed three major ways they tested the Bible. The first was system coherence. To take one doctrine or idea and prove it didn't convince

They didn't care about "proving" any scripture by history. They needed to know why it was valuable, applicable, and authoritative.

them. They wanted to see whether the Bible made sense as a system of truth.

The second test concerned the Bible's pragmatism. They wanted to know whether what it taught benefited everyday life. Traditionally, Chinese religions, and especially the Confucian tradition, have been concerned with this world. They have not dealt primarily with esoteric and dogmatic concerns, but with ethics, government, society, and family. The Bible message must relate to these latter issues, or it remains a respected but dead book.

In relating to the Joseph story, the Chinese student would be impressed with Joseph as a man who was successful in all areas of life. He rose to a high post in government, was rich, had successful relationships with both his own people and the Egyptians, and succeeded as a family man. He was a worthy ideal. They would ask, Does responding to the God of the Bible mean that similar things can happen in the lives of people today? If following the Bible does in fact produce people like Joseph, it has merit.

The third test is the teacher's life. Like the Indian faiths, Chinese religions have a long tradition of the guru. The one who tells the story cannot be separated from the message, so the Chinese scrutinize the teacher, as well as his message. If the teacher does not model the message, they reject both.

I can remember in particular a young Singaporean who visited often in our home. He was quiet, and the first few times he came, I struggled valiantly to keep conversation going in good Western tradition. There were often long si-

lences. Sometimes frustration grew in me to the point that I wanted to jump up and scream. I eventually learned that he didn't expect me to talk all the time. He didn't even need me to sit down with him. I could go about my work and just let him be there.

One day I got up the nerve to inquire, in as gentle and subtle a way as possible, the purpose of his visits. Smiling, he said, "We Chinese do not accept people easily. We must see what they are truly like first. The only way I can do that is to come to your house and sit and observe for long periods of time."

I never had the courage to ask whether his research was just for his own benefit or whether he represented a group of people!

For the Chinese, then, the Bible is authoritative if it is a coherent system, if it is applicable to everyday life in many areas, and if the teacher embodies the message. The teacher is primarily a *model*—personifying the message in a practical way in life.

These case studies demonstrate the way people's religious and cultural conditioning affects how they perceive and approach Scripture. Our differing situations affect us in such basic ways that we often fail to realize our bent—or to deal with it in our approach to others.

North Americans in particular should examine other views with humility. We tend to see our way of coming to Scripture, and in particular our historical questions, as a superior approach. I question whether our approach has given us a better understanding of the Bible as scripture than have those of the Hmong and Chinese.

The simple fact that to us the Bible is basically a *read* document blinds us in many ways. We are victims of what Hans-Ruedi Weber calls the "Gutenberg captivity" of the Bible.¹ And our analytical, left-brain approach to Scripture can lead us to other pitfalls.²

In short, my encounter with other religions has taught me to doubt the breadth and comprehensiveness of the methodology that both my culture and graduate education have steeped me in. These doubts are the midwife facilitating the birth of new ways to present the Eternal Word. ■

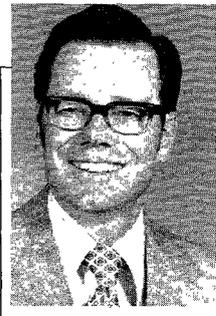
¹ See his book *Experiments With Bible Study* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), pp. 2-42.

² See Walter Wink, *Transforming Bible Study* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980).

Little tin gods?

Clayton R. Jepson

What about ministering in the Adventist Church excites and concerns you? Basing his thoughts on 1 Peter 5:1-4, a veteran tells how pastoring has changed over the past 30 years, and looks to the future.



Clayton R. Jepson pastors the Sequim Seventh-day Adventist Church, Sequim, Washington. He first presented the material comprising this article as a devotional at a Washington Conference Ministers' Retreat.

My life with the church has been a 24-hour-a-day marriage. In spite of what the time-management experts keep saying, I've

never had a vacation from being a pastor. Most of the time I have loved it; other times I've hated it; a few times I have thrown up my hands in despair. I have dreamed of retirement, when it wouldn't be so everlastingly there; but I always awaken to realize that it will continue to be until I slip into a terminal coma.

I've lived with it. I've slept with it. It seems that I've hardly eaten a meal when it didn't interrupt. Would you believe I've actually been making love to my wife when the phone jangled off the wall and I was left with a guilty feeling that it might have been an emergency? Of course you can believe it, because it's happened to you!

I've asked myself, Why have I even stuck with it this long, and why do I intend to stay with it? Answering these questions hasn't been easy. It has something to do with my relationship with the One I'm working *for*. It also has something to do with those *for whom* I'm working. It relates somehow to David's answer to his brother Eliab, "Is there not a cause?" (1 Sam. 17:29).

But then, how do you explain God's hand on your shoulder? There's this compulsion to answer a call, to fill a need, to give yourself to the great Advent cause. And there's the divine imperative brought through the apostle: "Shepherd the flock of God that is your charge" (1 Peter 5:2). The word is not really "feed," as the King James Version has it, nor is it "tend," as in the Revised Stan-

dard Version. Strictly speaking, it is "shepherd"—a much broader concept than either of the other two. The shepherd's *one business* is the welfare of his flock. His heart holds something that the hired hand does not share.

My free translation of this second-person plural aorist imperative runs like this: "As long as you have a flock placed within your oversight, you are under orders to shepherd them." Notice now, it is not the *church*—it is "the flock of God." Peter nowhere used the word *church*. His pastoral heart is looking at individual people rather than organized bodies. Evidently, when Jesus commissioned him to "shepherd my sheep" and "feed my lambs," this apostle learned his lesson well.

Peter seems both idealistic and realistic in his view of God's flock. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9, RSV).

Peter's idealism sees each member as God's priest, all of them building bridges for others to find the way to God; all of them telling others what Christ has done for them personally and what He will do for them. And in this he is appropriating the ancient covenant given to Israel in Exodus 19:5, 6 and applying it to the whole Christian flock.

This still remains the ideal—every member a minister and priest for God! But Pastor, never for a moment think you can build your church program using that as your practical, working assumption. Israel never realized that ideal; and while we keep praying for it, we yet have to see it happen in our churches. There are but few members who see themselves in that role.

So Peter's realistic view is that the flock—far from being a tower of strength to the unbelieving world—is itself weak, easily misled, vulnerable and dependent, and in need of organized, sympathetic shepherding. Hence the imperative: "Shepherd the flock of God."

Please don't misunderstand what I'm saying, but your shepherding work must come even before your evangelistic ministry! Not to eclipse it, nor to exclude it, but to preserve the flock and to prepare for evangelism.

Changing world challenges pastoring

The post-World War II era has not

been the most tranquil period for this shepherding. I find little similarity between the pastoral world of the 1940s and that of the 1980s. Change has been the distinctive hallmark of these years, and these dramatically changing times have contributed much to the stressfulness of our ministry.

One of the changes that has come with these years is the call for relevance. Of course, we all believe that we must be relevant, but the insistence on it has had a rather tricky influence on our preaching. The trend says that guilt-producing sermons are out; building self-esteem among the congregation is in. Some good has come of this—I think life-centered preaching has its place. But is the Word of God still our authority or have the insights of psychotherapy tended to take its place? I'm afraid the Word may have suffered some in our push for relevance.

Another change that has come since the 1950s is the growth in impact of the parachurch organizations, such as the Voice of Prophecy, Faith for Today, Breath of Life, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Concerned Communications, Maranatha Flights, Amazing Facts, Hour of Prophecy, The Quiet Hour, the Student Missionary movement, etc., etc., etc. Valuable as these all are, pastors increasingly have found these parachurch organizations competing for the loyalties, to say nothing of the dollars, of their flocks. And this at the very time when divisive issues have been pressing in and local church budgets are being strained to the utmost.

Also among the changes of the period is the pastor's emerging role as a church executive. While on the one hand the trend toward specialization has accelerated the rate of pastoral dropouts, on the other the pastor's managerial responsibilities have multiplied.

In our larger churches we hear of the "senior" pastor, whose days of shepherding have virtually ended as administering and directing consumes his time. He is caught up with his staff responsibilities, committees, seminars and outreach classes, and his preaching. And pastors of smaller churches must not only do all this, but they must raise the finances and lead out in the whole church program as well.

Management by objective, too, has dropped like a cloud over some of us who hadn't been trained in those lines. Pressures to accommodate the swelling costs

of local outreach are intense. In both large and small churches, motivating lay involvement, a matter of little concern in the past, weighs heavily upon us today. Even though I still aim to touch my people through daily personal visitation, I find myself having to struggle to find the time to do so.

In the face of all these developments, the apostle's imperative still stands: "Shepherd the flock of God." Don't spend your whole time managing! Don't spend your whole time in outreach per se! Look to your flock! They need it, and your own spirit needs it. Keep the foundation of your ministry strong.

Peter pictures perfect pastor

Peter not only holds us to this, but he counsels us on the kind of shepherds we should be. He says that our work with the people is to be done not by constraint, but willingly (see 1 Peter 5:2). The word translated "constraint" was commonly used of methods of handling slaves and also of forcible conscription of men into military service. This shouldn't be necessary for one with the heart of a shepherd.

Who in the flock needs this shepherding? The alcoholic? The pregnant single woman? The youth caught up in drugs? The man who has lost his job and might have to give up his house? The nonattender? All of these, of course. Then add the sick, the bereaved, the youth who needs to catch a vision, the distraught mother with an unbelieving spouse, the young family, the single members, the aged ones, and yes, even the successful ones.

And doesn't your flock include the whole community? Are you not God's messenger for your town? At this point we begin to see a blending of the pastoral and evangelistic emphases. A pastoral approach to your community contacts can't help enhancing your evangelistic efforts too.

Though the pastor may feel inundated with the multiplicity of his responsibilities, it is this involvement with people that Peter says should be done willingly, even eagerly. Forgyce Detamore spoke of how depressed he used to feel in the morning when he pondered the multitudes without Christ. But all that would lift when he got out and began to minister to people in their homes or at their jobs, and joy would fill his soul. I too have found that to be true.

There are many ways to be self-serving in the ministry, but the apostle says there

must be none of that! "Not for shameful gain, but eagerly."

I wonder how often personal ambition has tainted our response to the work or to the calls we have received. Scripture says, "A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men" (Prov. 18:16, RSV). Is that really enough for us or do we need a little extra string-pulling just to be sure?

And what of competition and empire building in our districts—the spirit that makes people their fellow pastors' rivals rather than teammates? I know of a pastor who was noted for carrying on a running pitch inviting the members of neighboring churches in a multichurch metropolitan area to transfer to his! And we have all seen examples of pastors who were unwilling to publicize another congregation's events in spite of the obvious fact that people do find out what is going on and will attend wherever they wish. Sometimes we are reluctant to join in areawide projects, lest our own not stand out so sharply. I wonder if the apostle would style these as examples of "shameful gain"?

Verse 3 touches on our style of leadership in the church: "Not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock" (RSV). Evidently shepherding requires a gentle touch. The methods of military commanders or worldly employers—or even of ancient prophets—do not fit well on a man or woman who is a shepherd. The one who has to "pull rank" on his members to bring them into line has misunderstood his calling.

The warning against domineering over those in our charge includes those of us who think we have the mind of God, yet are so inflexible that we have room in the flock only for mindless followers or those who happen to agree with our own ideas. This point seems to be an important one to J. B. Phillips. His translation reads: "You should aim not at being 'little tin gods' but as examples of Christian living in the eyes of the flock committed to your charge."

The big fisherman seems to sum up his answer to all these problems of leading the flock in verse 5: "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble'" (RSV).

Humility doesn't come naturally to any of us. But Peter uses a word that literally means "put it on." Take humility and consciously tie it on as a slave ties

on his apron or a nobleman his robe of honor.

How do we tie on humility? Perhaps we can learn from John Bunyan, who told how he cured himself of pride: "I was proud of my godliness," he said, "and indeed I did all either to be seen or to be well-spoken of by men." This he overcame by taking a long, hard look at himself and the cross of Christ. He discovered thereby that he was the chief of sinners. Once he realized that, he found peace through a new birth of humility and love.*

Adventist ministry excites and concerns

Yes, the pastorate has come a long way since the 1940s, and the pastor's career has been subjected to many changes. Today I find many things in the Adventist ministry that both excite and concern me.

I am excited about the pastor's freedom to pursue relevance; but I am concerned that that pursuit may lead to a style of life and thought that loses the vital element the apostle Paul called godliness.

I am excited by the enormous advantages the education and methodology available today offer; but I am concerned that we not become overloaded with scholars who are not shepherds, managers who are not leaders, or communicators who do not have the unction of the Spirit of God.

I am excited by the pastoral challenge for soul winning; but I am concerned that it may take such a dominant role as to displace the building up of the lambs of the flock, whatever their chronological age, to maturity in Christ.

I am excited by the possibilities afforded by pastoral specialization; but I am concerned about the disappearing general-practice pastor, and the increasing number of those who are dropping out from the pastorate in favor of so-called higher responsibilities.

I am excited about our better understanding of biblical hermeneutics and eschatology; but I am concerned that we may be losing our sense of the imminence of what Peter called "a living hope, . . . a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5).

And finally, yes, I am still excited by this frustrating, confusing, burdensome, impossible challenge to "shepherd the flock of God." But I am concerned that I, or perhaps many of us, may not be

I am concerned about the disappearing general-practice pastor.

willing enough, compassionate enough, self-denying enough, or humble enough to keep the Adventist movement from squandering its hour on the stage of world recognition and need.

Without question, the pastor's job is chancy and a bit lonely. But this is one job that God has decided He can't do without. And I, for one, am not inclined to trade my calling for that of anyone else. I don't understand it—it seems incredible—yet God *needs* me to be a shepherd of His flock!

Someone put these lovely words in the mouth of the famous old maker of the world's finest violins:

"When any master holds 'twixt hand and chin

A violin of mine, he will be glad
That Stradivari lived, made violins,
And made them of the best. . . .

For while God gives them skill,
I give them instruments to play upon,
God using me to help Him. . . .

If my hand slacked, I should rob God,
Leaving a blank behind, instead of violins.

He could not make Antonio Stradivari's violins

Without Antonio.

Are there some things God can't do or some people He can't reach without you? Is God's hand still on your shoulder? Fellow pastor, is the drive for pastoral excellence still alive in your soul, and does it drive you to be out much among the flock? Has God laid on your heart that *He needs you?*

Then I, for one, will not fear for the Advent cause in the 1980s. Our moment in history will not be lost. Our Father's kingdom soon will come and His will be accomplished, as the flock of God are safely gathered into the eternal fold of the Divine Shepherd ■

*Louis Matthews Sweet and Malcolm Stuart Sweet, *The Pastoral Ministry in Our Time* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1949), p. 23.

Ministry in the second half

J. Grant Swank, Jr.

The second half of your ministry will be different from the first. Times are different. And so are you.



J. Grant Swank, Jr., is pastor of the Church of the Nazarene in Walpole, Massachusetts.

I just mailed a birthday card to a fellow who was my associate in one pastorate. He will turn 81 in a few days, but he still ministers full-time to a congregation in New York. His wife, 10 years younger, pastors alongside him.

For the past several years this man has said he is going to retire. When it comes time, though, he postpones it for another year. "Why should I quit?" he says. "I'm healthy. I love the work. God is good to me, and the congregation is growing."

As I sent greetings to this friend, I received a note from a seminary classmate who lives in the Midwest. He has pastored here and there, mostly small congregations, for the 20 years since our graduation.

His letter was nostalgic as well as tragic. He had read that another member of our seminary graduating class had just been assigned to a church of more than a thousand members. "So where does that leave us?" he asked. And then he went on to write that he had just lost his job and that his wife had left him, saying that she had never loved him. He was asking for my prayers.

While thinking on these things, I stopped in to see a pastor friend in northern New England. On the front page of a morning paper, we chanced to see the news that a well-known Protestant church leader had confessed to adultery, leaving his congregation of several thousand.

My friend read the headlines with me. Then he looked up, astonished, and said, "Is there any guarantee that I will make it

through?" He is in his early 30s, married, with two preschool children. He is pastoring his second church.

When I arrived home from that visit, the phone rang. A close pastor friend in Florida was on the line. He told me that he had just heard that a mutual minister friend on the East Coast had submitted his ordination papers because of immorality. His congregation was in shock.

Yet right across the street from where I live, there pastors a clergyman who will retire soon, after many years of faithful service to one congregation. The people have loved him dearly; he has given his all in service to their needs. When they finally bid farewell and call a younger man to that pulpit, there will be many tears. This man will know that he has lived the good life. He has fulfilled his calling and will retire with fond memories. Both pulpit and pew will be settled in the truth that a man of God has done his best.

I am at a crossroads myself. I am not facing retirement, but the second half. And I catch myself looking both ways—backward and forward. From both directions I hear voices—some encouraging, others warning.

What can I do to be a better person for the Lord? Four suggestions come to mind for making the transition to the second half go smoothly.

Recognize changes

Face up to the changing times. In many ways the ministry is not what it used to be. Consider musical tastes, for example. When I was a boy, our church was enthralled by the evangelist who brought along his pianist wife. Her fin-

gers would fly across the keys. She could play the most fantastic offertories. And she would join him in singing rousing duets that made our spines tingle.

Today our religious entertainers come in threes and fours, and bring their orchestration with them in a collection of black boxes that glower at us from the platform. Microphone wires crisscross the stage, or even hang from the ceiling. Some groups even bring along a choreographer!

Preaching styles have changed too. It used to be that in the "Bible-believing churches" a preacher or evangelist convinced his hearers of his earnestness with sweat on the brow, a high pitch to the voice, and a white handkerchief gripped tightly in the hand.

Today we have many messages delivered with a counseling cadence. Some even add props such as overheads, blackboards, diagram charts, and colored slides. It is not uncommon for fill-in-the-blanks outline sheets to be distributed to the congregation prior to the sermon. Talk-back sessions have been scheduled in some places so that the hearers can dialogue with the speaker over refreshments in a fellowship hall.

Growing up in an evangelically oriented church, I was accustomed to altar invitations. Never did a service close without an invitation hymn. Maybe a Christmas program could get by without it; but even then, more times than not, the invitation was appended in order to make certain that no unsaved soul left the sanctuary without a chance to receive Christ as Saviour.

Today the invitation is still present in most fundamentalist churches, but not necessarily at every service. Where it has disappeared, clergy may ask the hearers to take advantage of speaking with them after the worship or make an appointment to talk about spiritual things.

Camp meetings used to be special summer excursions for the church people. There they could get those heavy doses of evangelistic fervor, spiritual introspection, Bible studies for hours at a time, tent meeting shoutings and handclappings, and gospel sings. No one cared about the clock. All the saints prayed for the blessing to come down. Altars were lined with seekers, especially at the final service.

Today camp meetings are held here and there. But in addition to the evangelistic emphasis, there may be sports events, social pastimes, denominational

promotions, craft hours, and teen extravaganzas. And when it comes to the preaching, much of it rests on nostalgia, recalling for the hearers the old days when the glory descended, conviction came, and sinners fell to the dirt floor with tears streaming down their cheeks.

In gearing up for the second half, you will need to face questions about the old and new in ministry. What is good about the new music, and what is not so good? How would God have us preach in a nuclear age with its fear, sophistication, calloused ears, numb innards, burned-out lives? Are altar invitations still effective? Are other means of reaching people just as effective? Will different approaches work at different times?

Make room

My second suggestion for the second half is: be prepared to move over and let someone else have a crack at it. At this stage in my life, I see members of the hierarchy retiring or near retirement. These were men who commanded. They were in the driver's seat. People held them in awe. Annual reports were woven around them. District meetings were catered to their whims. Denominational goals were hammered out on their anvils. Speeches that came from their lips were published.

But now they are fading. They are becoming shadows. They used to have the power; they don't anymore. Their word was law; now we hardly hear their word at all.

So it is meant to be. That is the way God intended it. He planned it all so that human egos would not grow too large. "All is vanity." Only one Person is finally to reign, and He has seen to it that all others sense their subordinate status.

Now when I flip through church journals I see new photos and read names I have never heard before. Impressive paragraphs follow the opening sentences—where the author attended school, what books he or she has had published, pastorates served, and offices held.

Yet given time, these too will begin to disappear, and still another set of cards will come up. Another line of faces and degrees and places.

If you want to enjoy the second half, be gracious to the young ones.

I recall one fellow who was determined to hold on to his footing. He wore a scowl that was supposed to project his authority. Even the way he walked

seemed to be contrived to strike fear into the younger men. But it didn't work. When he attempted some maneuvering to keep his ground, some of those coming up through the ranks outdid him.

It just might be that if those in the second half treat the younger ones with a winsome hand, the older ones may in turn receive Christian graces as time moves on. Among the young there is always a longing to have someone older to look up to, to revere, to learn from. Those who are smart will take kindly to the younger set while moving on into the second half.

Simplify

Third, learn to enjoy the simple things in life more and more. As life moves on, it is good to count your blessings more frequently. Little things take on a special glow—good food, some favorite items of clothing, a fire in winter, one's spouse, a few particular books and records, a well-worn vacation spot, and some trusted friends.

When we are young, we have an ambitious agenda. We hear of the "step up" and determine to go for it. Even in the pastoral ministry, we have our temptations. Or should I say *especially* in the pastoral ministry we have our baiting?

But when spying out the second half, your dreams can take on a more refined perspective. Questions may linger: Could I have it better in the second half? Can I now do the balancing act so as to have my cake and eat it too? Why must life pass by so quickly, with still so much unaccomplished? But deep inside, you know that experience has already given you the answers.

As you move into the second half, it is time to take stock of your marriage and family. Family is always important to a minister, and it becomes even more so in the second half. With the empty nest period around the corner, husband and wife will have more opportunities to be together. Will it be a good time, rich in companionship, or will you just keep the treadmill moving?

An ever higher regard for the pastor's wife should come to the fore in the second half. She should be allowed her individuality, allowed to exercise her creativity and find fulfillment. She will be applauded for her strengths and achievements. And the minister himself should shield her from those who would seek to rob her of her personal time.

Slow down

Fourth, in the second half you can anticipate a slower but steadier pace. When I was young, I never scaled a staircase one step at a time. I always skipped a step, maybe two. I can remember my mother telling my father that there would come a day when all that would stop. It has.

For years I was never home evenings. There were too many souls to be won, too many programs to see through, committees to get under way, buses to run, lights to burn. I kept a checklist of things to do the next day beside my bed, and checked them off one by one.

When the phone wasn't ringing, I was dialing it. I read books while driving, and listened to tapes while falling asleep. Then came 18 trips to the hospital emergency room to get heart tests. Pains shooting from my chest down the left arm signaled trouble.

When the doctor completed his test, he would look at me and say, "Tension." I would climb off the examining table and head home, determined to slow down. But I didn't.

Now I have slowed down. I realize now that all that running around was senseless. Of course, no one could have told me that when I first began. Some tried. But I couldn't hear them.

It is true that in one sense life is short. But in another sense life is long. There really is enough time to do what God wants us to. So there really is no need to sacrifice one's family and marriage in order to do the King's work.

If we follow the Lord, not running before Him "whatever betide," there will be time for everything worthwhile. And that includes hobbies, refreshments, reading hours, and walks by the brook. After all, if David had been caught up in the same sort of rat race we live in, we never would have had Psalm 23.

I think that the second half is the special time for cultivating the luscious gardens of the soul. When younger, we are fortunate to have a few dandelions sprouting; but when getting older, we should have some rare flowers blooming—even if we don't make the denomination's statistical charts.

To everything there is a season. Youth is so exciting with its outlandish promises and dreams. But following the Lord requires more than dreams and promises. Through the years the currents that move more deeply take effect, and our ministry can grow stronger, even in the midst of our changing world. ■

Eating the word

Chester H. Schurch

Memorizing Scripture has many benefits. Here's how to do it.



Chester H. Schurch is pastor of the Burlington and Fort Madison, Iowa, Seventh-day Adventist churches.

If you were offered a tool that would equip you with a deeper understanding of Scripture, give you greater expressiveness in sermon delivery, and enlarge your capacity to be used by the Holy Spirit, would you be interested?

I am glad to tell you that such a tool does exist, and that it is yours for the taking. The tool is Scripture memorization, and it can add new and exciting possibilities to your ministry.

I was first challenged to memorize Scripture by an evangelist who had memorized the entire New Testament. When I was 14 years old I attended meetings he held. His eyes seemed to focus directly on me as he smilingly challenged the congregation, "Go ahead! Look up these verses in your own Bible! See if I misquote anything!" I gazed in awe at his unopened Bible lying on the pulpit, and I accepted his challenge. Scrambling to look up the texts, I waited breathlessly, only to hear him quote each one from memory with amazing accuracy. Needless to say, this made a profound impression on me.

I have not committed the entire New Testament to memory in the 15 years since those meetings. But after memorizing many chapters, I can testify that the new dimensions memorization has added to my ministry.

I know of at least six ways Scripture memorization can enhance your ministry:

1. *Increased understanding of Scripture.* Repeating a text over and over while you memorize it gives you the opportunity to

The most practical way to memorize is simply to read a portion of Scripture several times, one phrase at a time.

view its various facets and better understand it.

2. *Increased confidence in exposition.* As a result of committing Scripture to memory you can enjoy a greater degree of confidence as you wield the "Sword of the Lord" in the pulpit, in Bible studies, and in discussion of biblical topics.

3. *More natural expression in reading.* Memorized passages allow you the opportunity to use natural expression when you read Scripture aloud.

4. *Increased freedom.* Reciting texts from memory allows you the freedom to maintain eye contact with your audience while sharing the Word with them. It helps eliminate the feeling of being tied to your notes or Bible.

5. *Increased usefulness.* Each passage committed to memory provides you greater opportunity to be a more effective tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit in His work to "bring all things to your remembrance" (John 14:26). Often, during a sermon presentation or a Bible study, a memorized passage will flash into your mind and add just the right emphasis to the point you are making.

6. *Increased satisfaction.* Scripture memorization gives you the satisfaction of knowing that you are fortifying your mind with an arsenal of texts that will be a permanent part of your thought process. Memorized Scripture is a personal possession that can never be taken from you.

How to memorize

Many techniques for speeding up the process of memorization have been set forth in books and magazines. Some of these short cuts include drawing complicated pictures and other gimmicks. I have found these techniques to be of little help in memorizing Scripture.

The most practical way to memorize is simply to read a portion of Scripture several times, one phrase at a time. Then look away and try to repeat it from memory. It would be wise to begin with a chapter or set of verses that interest you. It is always easier to concentrate on something that holds your interest.

I am often tempted to try to digest and memorize too many verses at one time. Keep in mind that memorization is a slow process at best.

Variety is an important key to help you keep working at memorization. By being creative in your approaches to memorization, you won't get as discouraged. If you are the kind of person who likes to get maximum use out of your time, try memorizing as you walk, jog, or do other activities. I memorized the entire Sermon on the Mount while hauling hay bales one summer. A pocket-sized Bible, or a typed 3 x 5 note card is just the right size to carry in your hand or in a jogging suit pocket.

An important part of the memorization process is reviewing what you've already memorized. You can repeat a memorized verse and then check your Bible to see if you've said it correctly, or you may

wish to listen to Scripture cassettes as a review. Probably the most effective way to review is to find someone who will sit down with you and follow along in a Bible while you repeat what you have memorized. This gives you the benefit of immediately being alerted to any mistakes. It also gives you excellent practice for reciting your memorized verses before an audience. And it can benefit your listener as well.

A most important element that you should include in your process of memorization is *prayer*. A simple prayer for wisdom and guidance each time you memorize allows the Holy Spirit the opportunity to fill the avenues of your mind with understanding and appreciation of what you are learning.

The tool of memorization is hanging in your own workshop. Why not take it down, dust it off, and use it? If you do, you will be entering a most challenging and rewarding phase of your ministry. Your experience will best be described by the words of Jeremiah 15:16, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."

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From the pastor's pastor

Floyd Bresee

Once upon a time God called three ministers to preach. To Preacher A He gave the ability to preach five-talent sermons, to Preacher B the ability to preach two-talent sermons, and to Preacher C the ability to preach one-talent sermons.

Each went to preaching. Preacher A preached five-talent sermons, and Preacher B preached two-talent sermons.

Preacher C, however, said to himself, "I'm just no good at this preaching business. Preacher B is twice as good as I am, and I'm not even in the same league with A. I can 'occupy the hour' with something or other, but when it comes to expecting my preaching to make a significant difference or have much effect on anybody, I give up."

Eventually God called the three before His judgment bar to give account for the preaching gifts He had given them. When the angel opened the book, here's how their records read:

Preacher	A	B	C
Accomplishment	5	2	0
Ability	5	2	1

And what was God's judgment? With whom was He most pleased—A or B? Applying to homiletics the principles Jesus set forth in the story recorded in Matthew 25, we can say that God would give the very same commendation to both—even though A's sermons were two and a half times as good!

God measures success far differently than we do. We tend to measure by comparing our accomplishments with someone else's. God measures by comparing our accomplishments with our abilities,

and mathematics says that 5/5 is no greater than 2/2. In fact, God is just as pleased with 1/1 as He is with 5/5.

Two lessons about preaching:

1. *Your best is good enough no matter how poor it is.* Good news for the minister who feels himself a failure because he's just a one-talent preacher: If God has called you to preach, He has given you all the ability you need to preach as well as He means for you to preach. To say otherwise is not to feel humble about yourself, but to feel doubtful about God.

The tragedy of being a one-talent preacher is not that you preach one-talent sermons. Rather, it is that since your best is not as good as someone else's, you are tempted to give up and do less than your best. Remember, God is very pleased with 1/1.

2. *Anything less than your best is not good enough no matter how good it is.* What if A had preached four-talent sermons? They would still have been twice as good as B's. Too many A preachers are preaching B sermons. Preaching is hard work, and they are tempted to feel con-

tent with doing less than their best so long as they are doing better than most. Surely God is no more pleased with lazy A's than with ungrateful C's.

MINISTRY's new column

MINISTRY has been kind enough to ask me, as head of the ministerial association that produces the magazine, to begin writing a column for each issue. How can I possibly make a worthwhile contribution to your ministry? I intend to vary the column within three areas:

1. *Practical pastoral suggestions.* I left my last pastorate in 1982. It gets very presumptuous and even dangerous to give pastoral pointers after you've been away from that field of service too long. I'd like to share a few pointers out of my own experience before they grow too stale.

2. *Preaching tips and sermon ideas.* Having taught preaching for 16 years and having received my degree from Northwestern University and Garrett Theological Seminary in the teaching of preaching, I yearn to share a few thoughts on the subject. We receive many requests for sermon ideas and sermon illustrations, and so I plan to include some of these from time to time.

3. *Spiritual encouragement.* We all have many needs as ministers, but the greatest need of every one of us is a closer walk with Christ. The work of the Lord becomes very tedious without the Lord of the work. In my present job as "pastor's pastor" I've a great longing for each of us to come closer to Jesus.

This new column comes with the prayer that God will use it to help you learn to measure success as God measures it and to experience that success to the fullest in your ministry. ■

God has given you all the ability you need to preach as well as He means for you to preach.



Reflections on Adventists and abortion

In the United States, the debate over abortion is far from being dead. The impact of this debate reaches the highest circles of government, touching those under consideration for seats on the Supreme Court. Six months ago the president of the United States received a pro-life petition with nearly 3 million signatures. Pro-life and pro-abortion forces have their marches and rallies, their speeches and debates. The articles and books on the subject would fill a small library. Yet the staggering number of abortions performed every year on both married and unwed women continues, and is seen by many as an indication of the enormity of the problem.

Naturally, the debate in the secular and religious worlds has affected Adventist thinking. We don't live in a vacuum. We've been embarrassed by several demonstrations that focused on our hospitals. One demonstrator held up a placard that especially brought the issue home to our seventh-day Sabbathkeeping church. It read "Adventists—Remember the sixth commandment, too."

During a nine-month period in the early 1970s, our church produced two sets of guidelines on abortion for our hospital system (see box following editorials). These guidelines represent the church's closest approach to taking a position regarding this practice. But they do not relate to the individual member, and, since they were voted upon by the General Conference officers and not the General Conference Committee, they have only the force of recommendations.

Early Adventist thinking

George B. Gainer, a religion teacher at our Takoma Park, Maryland, high school, has produced a well-documented paper surveying the history of the position of our church on abortion. He gave me permission to excerpt from his document sections that reveal the thinking of some of our pioneer leaders on the subject.

Noting that the practice of abortion was widespread in nineteenth-century America,¹ and that the first "right-to-life" movement here, the Physicians' Crusade Against Abortion, took place between 1850 and 1890,² Gainer says, "The June 25, 1867, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* contained what apparently was the first statement on abortion to appear in Adventist literature. In an article titled 'Fashionable Murder,' the author, John Todd, praised the work of the Physicians' Crusade. He said that in the sight of God abortion is 'willful murder,' and called the practice 'a direct war against human society . . . against the family order, against the health, the peace, the conscience, and the moral well-being of the mother, and against a child which could otherwise have an immortal existence.'³

"Two years later, in an article titled 'A Few Words Concerning a Great Sin,' the *Review*, calling abortion 'the murder of unborn infants,' said it was 'one of the most shocking, and yet one of the most prevalent sins of this generation,' and warned that 'God will not pass unnoticed the murder of such children.'⁴

"*A Solemn Appeal*, which James White edited in 1870, contains the next reference to abortion to appear in the Adventist press. That he excerpted the following statement from Dr. E. P. Miller's

Exhausted Vitality gives an indication of where early Adventist leadership stood on this issue: 'Few are aware of the fearful extent to which this . . . worse than devilish practice is carried on in all classes of society! Many a woman determines that she will not become a mother, and subjects herself to the vilest treatment, committing the basest crime to carry out her purpose. And many a man, who has "as many children as he can support," instead of restraining his passions, aids in the destruction of the babes he has begotten.

"The sin lies at the door of both parents in equal measure.'⁵

"Where did those composing the 'right arm' of the church, the medical work, stand on the abortion question? In his book *Man, the Masterpiece*, published in 1894, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg wrote: 'The idea held by many that the destruction of foetal life is not a crime until after "quickening" has occurred is a gross and mischievous error. No change occurs in the developing human being at this period. The so-called period of "quickening" is simply the period at which the movements of the little one become sufficiently active and vigorous to attract the attention of the mother. . . . From the very moment of conception, those processes have been in operation which result in the production of a fully developed human being from a mere jelly drop, a minute cell. As soon as this development begins, a new human being has come into existence. . . . From this moment, it acquires the right to life, a right so sacred that in every land to violate it is to incur the penalty of death. How many murderers and murderesses have gone unpunished!'"⁶

According to Robert Olson, secretary

of the Ellen G. White Estate, although Ellen G. White, the most influential pioneer of our church, never used the word *abortion*, she appears to have used the term *murder* in connection with the death of fetuses. After noting that the hoop dresses worn in the mid-nineteenth century had originated in a brothel in Paris, she stated, "Never was such iniquity practiced as since this hoop invention; never were there so many murders of infants."⁷

While the exact meaning of her statement is not clear, it appears that the phrase "so many murders of infants" may well refer to abortions.

Adventist Health System survey

To see where things stand today, *Ministry* informally surveyed 52 of our North American Division hospitals as to their abortion policies. Thirty-nine responded; and we feel their responses give a fairly accurate picture of the dilemma Adventists face.

The responses indicate a varied approach to the matter of performing abortions. No Seventh-day Adventist hospital admits doing elective abortions. One institution, with no official abortion policy, states they perform, on rare occasions, "social" abortions, whatever that means. Twenty-eight hospitals do therapeutic abortions. And six hospitals reported doing very few or virtually no abortions in recent years.

As to official policies on abortion, about a dozen specifically mention the 1971 guidelines. Another dozen have their own policies, most of which favor the more conservative 1970 guidelines over the 1971 guidelines. A few of the institutions are in the process of developing an abortion policy.

Several administrators revealed a deep concern over the fact that the church really has no official policy. They pointed out that they are being pressured to declare publicly the Adventist stance. One administrator wrote: "Some pro-life activists, believing that abortion is a black and white issue, feel that the Adventist Church is pro-choice because it appears to have equivocated in its position. They refused to concede that the ethical considerations are quite complex and they fail to realize that it is difficult to generalize and say that in every instance abortion is the 'senseless murder of helpless human beings.'"

Another wrote: "One must keep in mind that hospitals in the Adventist

Health System look to the leadership in the church to provide some guidance and direction in matters that, in the eyes of many, have theological implications."

And yet another hospital president wrote: "Actually, many of the Adventist Health System hospitals are awaiting the development of a position on the part of the church. However, we have not received anything yet."

Our survey highlighted two major points that need attention. First, these hospital leaders are sincerely doing their best to cope with the pressures. Second, many of them want the church to take the lead in developing carefully thought through guidelines that will help unify our health system in a critical area.

A statement made by the vice chairman of the ethics committee at one of our hospitals emphasizes the need of prioritizing our time and energy in dealing with the issues that face our church. He wrote: "It seems to me that the church should espouse some positions relative to the value of human life that could be somewhat universal throughout our system. Many of our Seventh-day Adventist and

non-Adventist colleagues find it difficult to believe that we have rather firm positions regarding dancing, card playing, adornment, etc., but have taken no position on the abortion issue."

We believe that the appeals from some of our hospital administrators and the concerns of many of our leaders and members over the abortion issue are calling the church to give careful study to this issue from theological and ethical viewpoints. From this study we could formulate a viable Adventist position on abortion, especially as it relates to policies governing our hospital system. —J. R. Spangler. ■

¹ Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984), p. 18.

² Luker, pp. 14, 147.

³ John Todd, "Fashionable Murder," *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, June 25, 1867.

⁴ "A Few Words Concerning a Great Sin," *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, Nov. 30, 1869.

⁵ James White, ed., *A Solemn Appeal* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press, 1870), p. 100.

⁶ J. H. Kellogg, *Man, the Masterpiece* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Modern Medicine Pub. Co., 1894), pp. 424, 425.

⁷ Ellen G. White letter 16a, 1861.

Abortion guidelines for Adventist medical institutions

Although the Adventist Church has taken no official stand on the matter of abortion, it has published guidelines that serve as recommendations to its medical institutions. These are valuable in that they reveal the church's thinking on the issue. Because there has been considerable confusion between the 1970 and the 1971 guidelines, we are publishing both in full. —Editors.

1970 Abortion Guidelines

Agreed, To accept the following as suggestive guidelines for therapeutic abortions which might need to be performed in denominational hospitals in the United States.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church's position on specific programs in any country must relate to its world involvements. Thus, the church has taken no position establishing general regulations governing the performing of abortions in church-controlled medical institutions everywhere. This does not mean that the

church does not favor and does not uphold standards, nor that it does not establish regulations; but rather that these standards and regulations are established in the various countries in which the church conducts hospitals.

The church is cognizant that attitudes and laws relating to permitted abortions are changing in the United States of America today. It opposes a laxity of regulations and practice which might contribute primarily to the lowering of moral standards of society. It is the position of the church that regulations relating to the performing of abortions are the proper business of responsible medical staffs of hospitals, such regulations to be approved by the hospital's controlling board, and always to be in harmony with the laws of the state.

The termination of pregnancy by therapeutic abortion is a surgical procedure and should be performed only by qualified and licensed practitioners in accredited hospitals.

This procedure may be performed only with the informed written consent of the patient and her husband, or herself if she is unmarried, or her nearest responsible relative if she is under the age of consent. Under no circumstances should a patient be compelled to undergo, or a physician to perform, a therapeutic abortion if either has a religious or ethical objection to it.

In the consideration of the indications for a therapeutic abortion the consultative opinion of at least two licensed physicians other than the one who is to perform the procedure must be obtained and on file. This opinion must state that the procedure is medically indicated, except in case of rape or incest. One consultant should be a qualified obstetrician-gynecologist and one should be recognized as having special competence in the medical area in which the indications for the procedure reside.

The hospital in which the procedure is to be done should have a standing committee, selected by the staff according to a method approved by the board, that is empowered to deal with abortion problems, to receive and to pass on the consultative opinion relating to a proposed procedure, and to review all cases, including physicians who have requested and have carried out such procedures.

The board of trustees of a Seventh-day Adventist-sponsored institution should insist that the performing of therapeutic abortions be well controlled, that the practice and clientele of the institution not be placed in jeopardy by the abuse of the privilege, and that in all cases the staff act in accordance with the laws of the state, acceptable social standards of the community, and the moral principles taught by the sponsoring church.

It is believed that therapeutic abortions may be performed for the following established indications:

1. When continuation of the pregnancy may threaten the life of the woman or seriously impair her health.
2. When continuation of the pregnancy is likely to result in the birth of a child with grave physical deformities or mental retardation.
3. When conception has occurred as a result of rape or incest.

When indicated therapeutic abortions are done, they should be performed during the first trimester of pregnancy. — General Conference Officers, May 13, 1970.

1971 Abortion Guidelines

(The officers received from the appointed representative committee of theologians, physicians, nurses, teachers, psychiatrists, laymen, etc., who met at Loma Linda, California, January 25, 1971, a report of opinion on intentional interruption of pregnancy. The report, slightly amended by the officers, is the following:)

Interruption of pregnancy

(Recommendations to SDA medical institutions.)

Statement of principles

The intentional interruption of pregnancy involves complicated, subtle, and sometimes morally obscure issues. Because of this, no set of moral generalizations can substitute for individual conscience. The following statement is intended to provide a measure of guidance by clarifying the questions and by emphasizing the general principles and values with which specific actions should be consistent.

An Adventist position must, first of all, be conditioned by the Bible's teaching on the nature of man. According to the Bible, man's soul is a functional, rather than an objective, reality. Man does not *have* a soul; man *is* a soul. The soul is not infused in a "thing" at a specific moment in life such as at the time of conception. It is rather a human capacity to function rationally and morally, achieved fully through growth and development and an increasing investment of human life; at the time of fetal viability (the ability to live after birth—approximately 20 weeks) and thereafter, that development and investment are such that only another human life could balance the scale.

Second, the Adventist position does not measure a human being's right to live primarily in terms of happiness, utility, functional viability, or the desires of the mother, the family, or the society, but rather in terms of a human being's uniqueness as a child of the Creator. Humanity is first a God-given endowment, then an achievement.

Third, the Adventist position recognizes that no Bible passage expressly condemns abortion or speaks of man as fully human before birth. The Mosaic law is relatively thorough and explicit in dealing with all areas of sexual ethics, but it fails to mention abortion—though abortion was common in ancient times and

some other legal codes severely condemned it. One relevant scripture is Exodus 21:22-25, which reads as follows (*Jerusalem Bible*): "If, when men come to blows, they hurt a woman who is pregnant and she suffers a miscarriage, though she does not die of it, the man responsible must pay the compensation commanded of him by the woman's master; he shall hand it over, after arbitration. But should she die, you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stroke for stroke."

It is to be noted that the fetus was not considered a human life to the point where "life for life" was to be demanded. Thus a distinction is made between the destruction of a fetus and the killing of a person.

Fourth, the Adventist position must be conditioned by the Bible's exalted sensitivity for life in general and for human life in particular. This includes a protective regard for what is "not yet" or "no longer" functionally human but "means" (symbolizes) human, as well as for those social institutions such as the family that serve to nurture and preserve "humanness." Any act that immediately or potentially threatens such real or symbolic values or institutions must never be carried out lightly. Even when for some reason the requirements of functional human life demand the sacrifice of the lesser real or symbolic human values, this must never be done for trivial or self-serving reasons or carried out in such a manner as to diminish respect for them lest reverence for the prior human values to which they point be also sacrificed.

Fifth, the Adventist position must be conditioned by the prophetic function of the church and its members, that is to say, by their vocation to "stand for" something in the world. The church has something to say to the world regarding the value of human existence and of the social institutions designed to preserve it. Its members and institutions should at all times govern their actions so as to maximize resistance to the dehumanizing and demoralizing pressures that so often characterize our contemporary society.

It is in this spirit that the following guidelines have been developed:

Guidelines

The intentional interruption of pregnancy is a surgical procedure and should

be performed only by qualified and licensed practitioners in accredited hospitals.

Under no circumstances should a patient be compelled to undergo, or a physician, nurse, or attendant personnel be forced to participate in, an interruption of pregnancy if he or she has a religious or ethical objection to it.

To preserve regard for the sanctity of life and yet have concern for people, abortion shall not be done without serious consideration of the indications. Consultation shall be obtained as required by hospital rules.

The hospital in which the procedure is to be done should have a standing committee, selected by the staff according to a method approved by the board, that is empowered to deal with interruption of pregnancy problems, to receive and pass on consultative opinions relating to a proposed procedure. This committee should review all cases, including the records of physicians who have requested and have carried out such procedures.

The board of trustees of a Seventh-day Adventist-sponsored institution should insist that interruptions of pregnancy be well controlled by the highest medical, ethical, and professional requirements of the hospital council and/or the medical community; that the operation and clientele of the institution not be placed in jeopardy by the abuse of privilege; and that in all cases the staff act in accordance with the principles taught by the sponsoring church.

It is believed that interruptions of pregnancy may be performed for the following established indications:

1. When continuation of the pregnancy may threaten the life of the woman or impair her health.

2. When continuation of the pregnancy is likely to result in the birth of a child with physical deformities or mental retardation.

3. When conception has occurred as a result of rape or incest.

4. When the case involves an unwed child under 15 years of age.

5. When for some reason the requirements of functional human life demand the sacrifice of the lesser potential human value.

When indicated interruptions of pregnancy are done, they should be performed as early as possible, preferably during the first trimester of pregnancy. ■

Who says we're a cult?

There is a lot of excitement in Christian circles today about cults and New Age thinking. Evangelicals in particular seem concerned about the rise of cults, and books and articles about these groups are multiplying like May mosquitos in Minnesota.

Browsing the shelves of several Christian bookstores recently, I was struck, not only by the number of new books on cults, but by the drastic evolution of subject matter for such books. From doing battle with Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Seventh-day Adventists, evangelical cult fighters have turned their attention to Eastern gurus and New Age thinkers. It's hard to find even a brief mention of Adventism in the new books.

Are we Adventists, who used to figure prominently in all books about cults, suddenly being allowed to sneak in the back door of Christian brotherhood while all the watchmen on the walls fix their eyes eastward? Or is it only because Walter Martin consigned us to an appendix in *The Kingdom of the Cults* that we're not coming up on authors' "people to be feared" lists anymore?

Perhaps the real reason for the change in the contents of books on cults is to be found in what every aspiring author discovers sooner or later. For the most part it's not editors and theologians who decide what books will be published by Christian publishing houses—it's the marketing department. There just happens to be a lot of interest in, and fear of, Eastern religions these days, so books on the topic are sure sellers.

Which brings up the real reason why the subject of cults is always popular: fear. In Boston in 1660, Mary Dyer was sentenced to death by hanging for her "enthusiastick preaching." Her preaching style and unwillingness to submit to the orthodoxy of the city fathers made them fearful enough of her influence that they felt compelled to end her life. We (especially the more excitable preachers among us) can be thankful that religious toleration in America has moved beyond that point. But fascination with and fear

of those who dare to be different has not disappeared.

The question is just how different does one have to be in order to be branded a cultist? In England during the 1950s, evangelicals in general and Billy Graham in particular were labeled cultists. One of the most interesting books I came upon in my research on cults is titled *Old Time Religion Is a Cult*. The author, who pastors the Positive Attitude Celebration (church?) in California maintains that all religious bodies that demand that their members believe anything except that God loves them unconditionally are cults!

So how does one really identify a cult? Definitions abound—all carefully tailored by their authors to exclude themselves.

To a careful Bible student, truth shines out from error like a full moon in a clear night sky. Labeling a group a cult seems to me to be a defensive ploy that has been used throughout history by the majority against minorities. Were not Christians called a cult in Rome? Did not the Pharisees regard Christ's apostles as a cult?

Whenever we allow others to close our minds by affixing labels to groups we know nothing about, the search for truth cannot succeed. One need not exhaustively examine every group before accepting or rejecting its teachings. If a group is teaching error, it doesn't take long to discover that fact if we compare their message with Scripture. But if we allow the cult label to keep us from even a cursory look at a group, then we must give up looking for a group that teaches truth, because every group is called a cult by someone.

The real way to fight error is to proclaim truth, not just to label error as a cult teaching. —Kenneth R. Wade ■



Kenneth R. Wade

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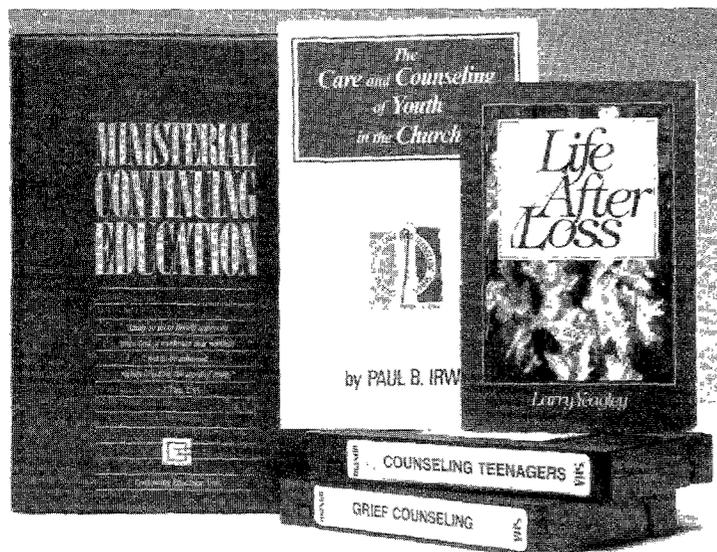
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Resolving the conflict between science and religion

Leonard R. Brand

In a previous article ("Can Science and Religion Work Together?" November 1987), the author pointed out that scientific theories are useful tools, but they are not necessarily true. The origins of a theory do not determine either its truthfulness or whether it is scientific. While science can never prove or disprove God's involvement in influencing earth history, it can demonstrate that it is not unreasonable to believe in the Bible. This article concludes this series. —Editors.

Such fields of science as physiology have few disputes with religion. They either complement the Bible or deal with subject matter that is not discussed in the Bible. But in fields like paleontology, geology, and evolutionary biology, we see severe conflicts between the claims of science and the teachings of the Bible. These conflicts lead us to ask what roles science and religion each play in our search for truth. Must we either accept science and reject the Bible or vice versa, or is there a better way?

The scientific process is a good way of discovering truth, both in areas that the Bible doesn't discuss and in those that it does. Following the scientific method, we postulate explanations for the things we observe in nature and collect research data to test the validity of those explana-

tions. Usually we do not have enough data to be completely certain that we have the correct explanation, or theory, but the data enable us to eliminate some of the incorrect theories.

For example, at one time nutritionists knew that certain types of food were beneficial and that some others were definitely harmful, but they did not know much about specific nutritional requirements. The relatively few limits provided by the known facts allowed a broad range of theories about diet. The research that has given us more knowledge about physiology and nutrition—about vitamins, cholesterol, parasites, and other dietary factors—has shown that some of the old theories were wrong.

Thus we see that the more inadequate our data are, the more room there is for uncertainty as to what is correct theory. As more data accumulate, we learn which theories are wrong, and our range of uncertainty is reduced (see figure 1). The accumulating data also enable us to develop theories that we had not thought of before. These new theories may be stepping stones to even better theories, or they may themselves stand the test of time and prove to be correct.

Let us look at another example, this time from the field of geology. Prior to 1950, sedimentary rocks composed of coarse-grained, graded beds (figure 2) were believed to have been deposited slowly, in shallow water. For instance, the Pliocene rocks in the Ventura Basin, near Ventura, California, consist of hundreds of graded beds. In accord with the then-current theory, scientists believed that these layers were deposited in shallow water, and that it took several years to deposit each layer.¹ Then in 1950 a paper was published reporting the dis-

covery of a previously unknown phenomenon—turbidity currents.² Turbidity currents are rapid, underwater mudflows that can deposit a layer of sand or mud over a large area. These layers, called turbidites, are often graded.

Turbidity currents provided an even more satisfactory explanation for the graded beds in the Ventura Basin.³ Each bed was now understood to have been deposited in minutes rather than years, and in comparatively deep water. Figure 3 illustrates how theory changes as new data accumulate, as previously unknown processes are discovered.

Relating science and the Bible

Many such changes have occurred in the history of science, and many more will undoubtedly yet occur as new discoveries are made. Science is always a progress report on the road to truth, not final, absolute truth. In contrast to that, the Bible claims to have originated with the God who has seen it all—who understands all of earth history and all natural law. How shall we relate the revelations of science and those of the Bible? To do so, we must decide how much confidence to place in the Bible and to what extent science can "correct" the Bible.

The more important of the many possible approaches to the relationship between science and Bible-oriented religion are:

1. Science only
2. Science and biblical faith separate
3. Science and Bible (dualist)
4. Bible superior
5. Bible only⁴

Those who accept the first model consider science the only reliable source of information. This model maintains that the Bible may contain inspirational reli-

Leonard R. Brand is professor of biology at Loma Linda University, Riverside, California. This article is adapted from one that appeared in Origins, Vol. 12, No. 2, (1985).

who accepts this view reinterprets or disclaims anything in the Bible that current scientific interpretations contradict.

Those who follow model 2 take the Bible more seriously than those who use model 1, but they keep science and biblical faith in two separate compartments and make no attempt to relate one to the other.

Dualists (model 3) consider both the Bible and science authoritative and, in the search for truth, take both sources seriously. They believe that conflict between these two sources arises only because of human limitations to the scientific process and/or in understanding the Bible.

Advocates of model 4 take both science and the Bible seriously, but recognize in the Bible a higher level of authority than they concede to science.

And finally, those who follow model 5 accept only the Bible as being reliable. They tend to reject all of science as a tool of the devil, designed by him to destroy faith.

Of the five models described above, numbers 1 and 5 represent the easiest ways to make a decision. They are essentially all-or-nothing approaches, and do not require much thought. I do not believe that either comes to grips with the problem realistically.

Model 2, keeping science and religious faith separate, is a popular model. It may even work well for a scientist whose field does not require him to think much about the history of life on earth. But what does the advocate of this model do when he encounters a Bible statement that contradicts the conclusions of sci-

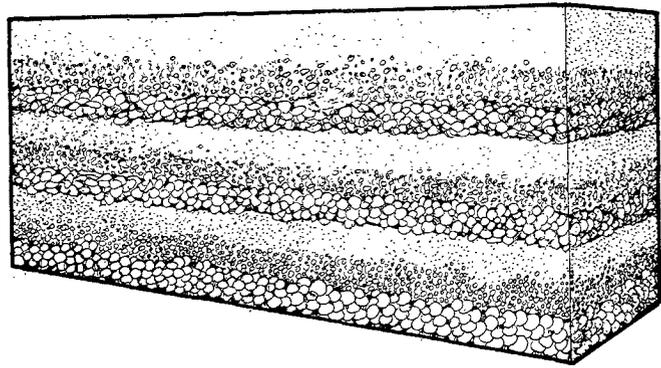


FIGURE 2. A block diagram showing a cross-section through three graded sedimentary beds. In each bed, the larger particles are at the bottom, and the smaller particles at the top.

ence? When faced with such a contradiction, Christians cannot keep the two sources isolated without putting their minds in neutral. They will then, even though they may not realize it, move from model 2 to one of the other models.

Model 2 fails at the very point where it is supposed to help direct our search for truth. It avoids the issue, or pretends that it doesn't exist, and so I conclude that this model is not worthy of further discussion.

Models 3 and 4 resemble each other, except that model 4 places more confidence in the Bible and man's ability to correctly understand the Bible than in man's ability to interpret scientific data correctly. This difference is likely to be more pronounced in areas of philosophical conflict, such as theories of origins.

I propose that the most fruitful approach to the study of origins and of earth history is to be found somewhere in the vicinity of models 3 and 4. Furthermore, I believe that one of the most crucial

features of this ideal model will be its definition of the approach to be taken in resolving conflicts that arise between science and religion—between our interpretation of revelation and our interpretation of scientific data. The rest of this article proposes such an approach.

A working relationship

My approach is founded on a conviction, supported by many lines of evidence, that the prophets do indeed speak for a loving and all-knowing God whose messages we can trust. When the accumulating data from scientific research suggest new ideas or hypotheses, we can build an effective working relationship between science and revelation by following these two steps:

1. If the new idea involves a subject about which we think the Bible may speak, we should examine all relevant Bible texts, comparing scripture with scripture and using the Bible as its own interpreter. In addition, we must use all the latest information that can help us to understand the meaning of the text. Exactly what does the Bible say—and what does it not say—about our new idea? Is the idea compatible with the Bible or not? Do the relevant biblical statements say what we thought they said, or have we been reading between the lines?

2. We then must draw one of the following conclusions, or some appropriate variation of one of these:

- a. Revelation does not speak to this issue at all, and does not help us in our research.

- b. Revelation does address this topic, but does not say anything against the new idea; there is no biblical reason not to accept it as a possibility. If we come to this conclusion, we must then proceed

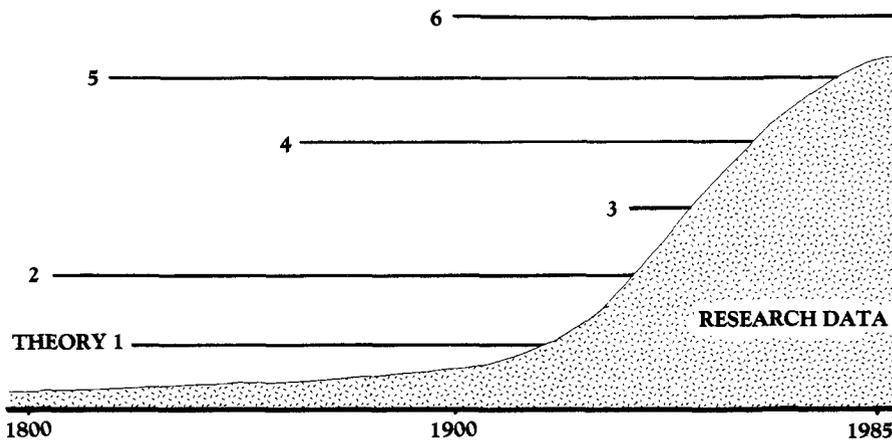


FIGURE 1. A diagrammatic representation of the relationship between theories and data. In this diagram and in Figures 3 through 5, the height of the stippled area at any given date represents the amount of data available at that time. Horizontal lines represent the lifespan of various theories. A theory's lifespan ends by collision with accumulating evidence that contradicts the theory, or by radical alteration (a scientific revolution, represented by a vertical line) into a new theory which is not contradicted by the available evidence.

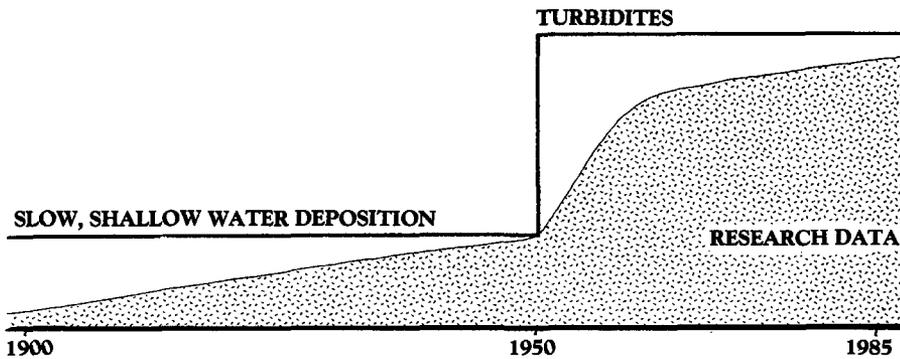


FIGURE 3. A diagrammatic representation of the change from the shallow water theory of graded bed deposition to the turbidite theory. This change occurred through a scientific revolution stimulated by the accumulation of new data.

with further scientific research to test the idea rigorously. This research may give us increased confidence in the idea, or it may lead to even better hypotheses that we must also compare with the Scriptures.

c. Revelation clearly contradicts the new idea. This conclusion tells us to go back and do some more research because there is something wrong with our interpretation of the data.

If we follow this process, we maintain the Bible as the standard for religious doctrines, and yet allow science and the Bible to shed light on each other. In some instances, science will suggest ideas that may help us to recognize that we have been reading some preconceived idea into the Bible that really is not there. In other cases the Bible may help us to recognize incorrect scientific theories, so that we can turn our efforts toward developing more accurate interpretations of the data.

Copernicus, Darwin, and the church

Examples from the history of science and from current conflicts illustrate the application of this approach:

1. *The Copernican revolution in astronomy.* Long before the Middle Ages scientists had developed the theory that the earth is the center of the universe and all other heavenly bodies rotate around our earth—a theory we refer to as the theory of geocentricity. This concept was not merely a bit of fuzzy superstition; it was a carefully developed theory with sophisticated mathematical models describing the movements of stars and planets, supported by volumes of observational data.⁵ As the Christian church developed, it so incorporated the theory of geocentricity into its dogma that a challenge to this theory was considered a

challenge to the Scriptures and to the church itself.

Copernicus introduced a new theory—the theory of heliocentricity. According to his radical new idea, the earth and the other planets rotate around the sun. If, instead of persecuting the advocates of the new theory, the church had carefully investigated what the Scriptures said, it could have avoided a serious mistake. The church would have found that the Bible does not address itself to the issue of whether the earth rotates around the sun or vice versa. One can only claim that the Bible supports the theory of geocentricity by resorting to arguments akin to saying that twentieth-century scientists must believe in that theory because they speak of the sun's rising and setting.

Careful Bible study would have shown that Copernicus's theory was not unbiblical. Instead of being made to oppose each other, both science and Scripture could have been used to explore this issue.

2. *The theory of evolution.* Prior to the nineteenth century, it was generally believed that animal and plant species do not change, that every species has remained the same since it was created—a concept known as "fixity of species."

The church, assuming that the Genesis creation account supported this very static concept of nature, again incorporated contemporary scientific thought into its dogma. Charles Darwin and his contemporaries saw evidence that animals and plants do change, and so another conflict between science and the church started. Because of the complexity of this issue, I will discuss the conflict in two parts: (a) the theory that organisms do change, resulting in variations within created groups, and (b) the theory that the major groups of animals originated by evolution and not by creation.

a. *Microevolution and speciation.* When the theory of evolution was proposed, it was generally believed that the entire concept of evolutionary change was incompatible with the biblical account of creation. But if Darwin and his contemporaries had studied the Bible carefully, they would surely have concluded that it in no way denies the possibility of changes occurring within the created groups of plants and animals⁶ nor the production of new types of organisms to at least the species and generic level. In fact, a creationist must believe that some changes have occurred, or else believe that God designed and made even the destructive things that we see in nature.

However, Darwin apparently did not reexamine the scriptural teachings. He concluded that since his evidence invalidated what he believed to be the biblical creation account, we must explain the origin of all living things by some mechanism other than creation. This brings us to the second part of the theory of evolution.

b. *Evolution of the major groups of organisms.* Darwin's theory proposes that even the major groups of living things have arisen by evolution, and thus all life is the result of evolution, not creation. If

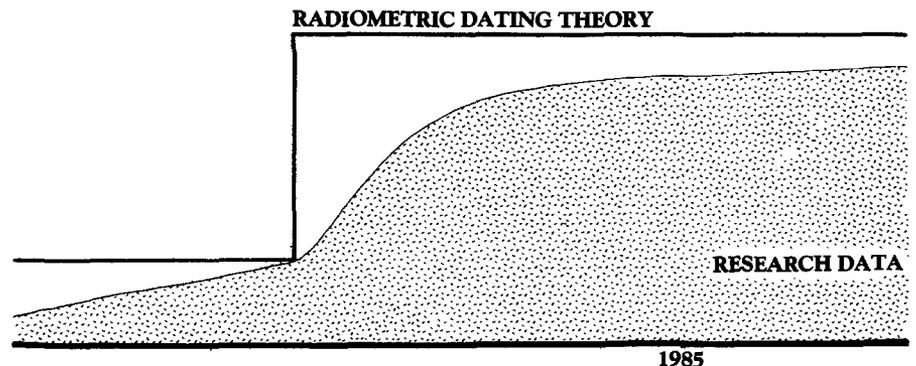


FIGURE 4. Hypothetical history of radiometric dating theory if there are no major changes to occur in the future of this theory.

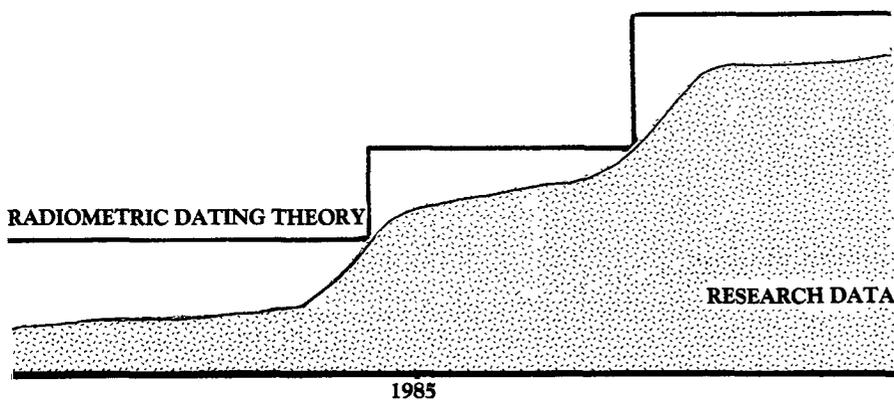


FIGURE 5. Hypothetical history of radiometric dating theory if future data accumulation will necessitate a major change in the theory.

Charles Darwin had been comparing his Bible with his theory, he would have found that although the Bible doesn't say anything against microevolution, it does clearly state that the major groups of both plants and animals (including fruit trees, fish, reptiles, birds, mammals, and man) were created by the end of creation week. This is definitely not compatible with part of the theory of evolution.

If the approach I have described above had been followed, it could have led to the development of a theory that included creation of the major groups of living things, with limited evolutionary changes occurring within the created groups after creation. Such a theory would be consistent with Scripture and with the scientific data, and could have been an excellent example of the Bible and science shedding light on each other.

3. *Geology.* The church has been in conflict with geologists for more than a century, but we will look at this issue from the perspective of the 1980s. Science has proposed a theory that claims that the geologic deposits and the fossils they contain have accumulated over hundreds of millions of years. When we come to the inspired writings, we find that, while the prophets had little to say about astronomy or microevolution, they did make statements indicating that life on earth (and thus also the rocks containing fossils) has only existed for a few thousand years. We also find that during that time there was a worldwide flood of major geological significance.⁷

From this I conclude that Scripture indicates that current geological theory is not correct; the data are not being interpreted properly. Our task, then, is to go back to the research lab and develop a better theory, one that is in harmony

with both the scientific and the revealed data.

Harmonizing impossible data

How do we deal with data such as that derived from radiometric dating, data that seem impossible to harmonize with the biblical view of earth history? In doing so, we have to consider the following two propositions:

1. There are no significant new principles to be discovered in this field; the data are mostly being interpreted correctly.
2. There are new principles to be discovered that will lead to significant reinterpretations of data.

Do we have data that will allow us to test between propositions 1 and 2; to determine whether radiometric dating theory is more like theories of graded bed deposition after the discovery of turbidites, or before their discovery? If science could determine which proposition is true, we would have the key to answering a lot of difficult questions. But science cannot make such a determination. To do so would require that we go into the past and observe what really happened, or go into the future and see what data will be available then, or talk to someone who has done one of these. The prophets claim to have some of that type of information, but science definitely does not.

Since we cannot prove which is correct, should we assume that 1 is correct if there is no definite evidence for 2? Science would normally take that approach, but we must remember that that is only a practical working approach, not a method for determining truth. A scientist must push ahead with the most successful theory available at the time, trusting that the data will eventually tell us if the theory is wrong. That approach may not be satisfactory for us as Christians as

we compare the Word of God with current scientific theories and make decisions regarding eternal truth.

I believe that there are fundamental scientific principles yet to be discovered that will explain the data that seem to contradict Scripture. The history of science does not support the notion that a well-developed theory must be true if at a given time there is little or no convincing evidence against it. Before the discovery of turbidites there seemed to be good evidence that the then-current theory was correct. Even as some problems with that theory began to appear, scientists did not have the information necessary to envision a better explanation until turbidites were discovered. A Christian who is convinced that there is sufficient evidence that God's revelations to us through His prophets are trustworthy will believe that in the field of radiometric dating there must be one or more discoveries yet to be made as significant as or more significant than the discovery of turbidites.

The decision in favor of the current scientific interpretation of radiometric dating and the decision against that interpretation are both made on the basis of faith. Those with more faith in current scientific theories than in revelation will likely conclude that radiometric dates as currently interpreted are accurate. However, those whose faith in the prophetic writings is stronger than their faith in current scientific theories will be convinced that radiometric dates of fossiliferous deposits are not correct. Scientific progress can result from our search for harmony between science and revelation if we take the next step and use the scientific method to develop and test new theories to explain radiometric phenomena and other data. ■

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Preventing osteoporosis

Galen C. Bosley

Nature's best just got better," says the Citrus Hill orange juice commercial. Another company announces that their product is "made by a nutritional expert: nature."

What do the products these slogans advertise have in common with soda pop, antacids, milk, cereals, and a new whipped dessert topping? Calcium! All these products have added calcium to capitalize on the rising concern over the effects of osteoporosis.

In the past few years the concern about osteoporosis has exceeded that regarding heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States.¹ In only six years calcium supplement sales have surged from \$18 million to more than \$240 million, and they are still growing.²

Osteoporosis is a disease of the bones. It involves bone calcium loss, and is the major cause of bone fractures in one third of U.S. women of middle and retirement age. A Michigan study revealed that 18 percent of women 45 to 49 years of age show signs of this disease, and in the 70 to 74 age group, the rate rises to 84 percent.³

Osteoporosis is the twelfth-leading cause of death in the United States,⁴ and is estimated to cost \$6 billion annually.⁵ In both the United States and Great Britain incidence of this disease is increasing both in numbers and rate.⁶ Between 1970 and 1980 the incidence of hip fractures increased 35 percent and vertebral

fractures 40 percent, whereas the number of people in this age group increased by only 30 percent.

While the United States has one of the highest rates of this disease,⁷ as the population of people over age 65 increases, all developed nations will see a corresponding increase in the burden the disease brings.

Bone mineralization and demineralization

Most people seldom think about their bones, and if they do, they don't think of them as biologically active organs. Actually bones are constantly remodeling their structure.

This remodeling is carried on by two kinds of cells—*osteoclasts* and *osteoblasts*. The dynamics between these bone cells is important. Osteoclasts dissolve old bone minerals, and osteoblasts lay down new bone minerals. If osteoclasts remove more calcium than osteoblasts replace, bone strength will gradually decline. Over time the bone weakens to the point where even simple daily activities will cause it to fracture.

The bones most affected by osteoporosis are the femoral neck (hip), the wrists, and the vertebrae.⁸ Vertebral fractures slowly collapse the spine, resulting in a bent-over appearance and a hump. This degeneration of the vertebrae can become severe enough to cause the ribs to rest on the pelvic bones.

One symptom of osteoporosis is pain in the ribs or back following coughing or straining. Such pain may signal fractured vertebrae and nerve compression, but this is not always the case. Many people are unaware they have osteoporosis until a serious fracture occurs.

In 85 percent of non-osteoporotic

women who suffer a fracture, the bone will heal again. Women who have osteoporosis experience only a 30 percent rate of healing. Among elderly persons who suffer a hip fracture, only 25 percent of those who were able to walk prior to the fracture are ever able to walk again.⁹ And, most tragically, those requiring open surgery suffer a 20 percent mortality rate within the first year.

Factors leading to the disease

The table that accompanies this article lists the factors known to cause bone mineral loss. In the left column are those factors about which we can do little. The right column lists the factors that we can control.

Osteoporosis afflicts women at a rate double that of men: one in every three women suffer from it as compared with one in every six men.¹⁰ The fact that men generally have 30 percent greater bone mass than do women may underlie their relative freedom from the disease. A similar factor may explain why Blacks have less osteoporosis than do Whites: Blacks have 10 percent greater bone mass.¹¹

As we have already noted, age is another factor in osteoporosis. Peak bone mass is reached around age 35. Following this peak both men and women begin to lose bone mass; women experiencing loss earlier than men. The average bone loss is about 1 percent per year, although it can be higher for women.¹² Ninety-seven percent of hip fractures occur in those more than 65 years old;¹³ 267,000 of these serious injuries occur annually, resulting in 17,191 deaths.¹⁴

Preventing osteoporosis

The interval between the onset of

Galen C. Bosley, D.H.Sc., is science research associate of the Health and Temperance Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which has supplied this article.

bone depletion and an osteoporotic fracture depends on two factors—the strength of the bone, which is related to the original extent of mineral deposits, and the rate of mineral loss once it has begun. The stronger the bones, the longer it will take to weaken them to the point of fracture. And by reducing the rate of demineralization, a person can live longer without fractures.

Herein lies hope! Like many other chronic diseases of the twentieth century, osteoporosis can be prevented by lifestyle changes. While we cannot control such factors as our race, sex, or age, we can, by lifestyle changes, slow the rate of demineralization. Among the controllable factors:

1. *Cigarette smoking.* Mayo Clinic investigations have found that smokers more than double their risk of developing osteoporosis. This finding has been confirmed by other studies. Slender women who smoke are affected most.¹⁵

2. *Sedentary lifestyle.* That lack of exercise leads to the thinning of the bones is also well known. Early in the U.S. space program and in Skylab studies, medical scientists recognized that weightlessness increased calcium excretion in the urine and brought on bone-mineral loss.¹⁶ As a result of this observation, astronauts in space are now given time to do exercises that increase stress on the bones, thus decreasing or halting bone-mineral loss.

Therapeutic bed rest in which the patient is not allowed to get up and about decreases the physical stress needed to stimulate bone formation. Measurements taken in studies of short-term bed rest indicate a bone mineral loss of 1.2 percent per week.¹⁷

Exercise helps in a number of ways. First, it increases the flow of blood to the bone, thereby increasing mineral availability. Second, exercise changes the hormonal balance favoring bone growth. Third, bone stress strengthens and maintains bones. Exercise also generates small electrical currents within the bone that stimulate bone growth.¹⁸

Studies of exercise in female nursing home patients have shown that bone mass can be increased. Over a three-year period, patients on an exercise program increased bone mass 4.2 percent, whereas patients who didn't exercise through that time experienced a 2 percent loss of bone minerals.¹⁹

3. *Alcohol consumption.* Alcoholics have a greater incidence of hip and rib

fractures and compression of vertebrae than do the rest of the population. Alcohol is toxic to bone cells. When given to rats, it rapidly decreases the blood calcium level and prevents its rise, even when parathyroid hormone (which increases blood calcium) is administered.

Mayo Clinic researchers studying the risk factors of osteoporosis in men found that the social use of alcohol does not appear to have an effect until after the age of 60. But from age 60 to 69, the risk of bone fracture is nearly double for a nonsmoking drinker. When alcohol use is coupled with smoking, the risk triples. In men 70 years or older, a nonsmoking drinker's risk rises to 6.5 times that of the nondrinker, and when smoking is added, the risk increases to more than 20 times that of the abstainer.²⁰

Autopsies performed on young alcoholic men show thinner bones than nonalcoholics of similar age have. Researchers conclude that smoking and alcohol consumption increases bone calcium loss above that which age incurs.

4. *Excess phosphorus.* Scientists have found that phosphorus inhibits the body's absorption of dietary calcium. A diet containing twice as much calcium as phosphorus is ideal for bone health. But the average American diet, which contains large amounts of meat and carbonated soft drinks, inhibits calcium absorption since these foods contain 15 to 45 times more phosphorus than calcium.²¹

5. *Excess protein.* Meats are also high in protein, which has been shown to increase calcium elimination through the kidneys. Bones are one source of replenishment for the calcium excreted.²²

Researchers have found that subjects who consume meat in quantities characteristic of the average American diet have less bone mass than do vegetarians.²³ In fact, vegetarian men in

Subjects who consume meat in quantities, characteristic of the average American diet, have less bone mass than do vegetarians.

their 70's had bone mass equal to that of nonvegetarian men 11 to 20 years younger.²⁴ Since protein consumption by Americans is nearly double the recommended dietary allowance set by the National Academy of Science Food and Nutrition Board, most people could cut their meat consumption by about half and still be within recommended levels.

University of Wisconsin researchers found that, at the level protein is consumed in the typical American diet, a daily intake of 800 milligrams of calcium was insufficient. In fact, calcium intakes nearly double, 1,400 milligrams, were insufficient or only marginally successful in balancing daily calcium absorption with daily losses.²⁵

U.S. recommended dietary calcium levels have been set at 800 milligrams per day. At a recent NIH consensus meeting on osteoporosis, however, it was recommended that women past 40 years of age should take 1,000 to 1,500 milligrams daily.²⁶ But, although some evidence indicates a partial slowing of postmenopausal osteoporosis by dietary compensa-

Factors in the development of osteoporosis

Noncontrollable factors

- Family predisposition
- Early menopause or ovariectomy
- Total hysterectomy
- Small stature
- Racial predisposition (White, Oriental)
- Advancing age
- Cortisone therapy
- Having never given birth

Controllable factors

- Sedentary lifestyle
- Excessive exercise (for women)
- Calcium-deficient diet
- Excessive protein consumption
- Alcohol consumption
- Cigarette smoking
- Caffeine intake
- Soft drink consumption
- Excessive sugar consumption
- Use of aluminum antacids

tion, the most recent studies look grim.²⁷ Presently it is viewed as an irreversible condition, though high daily calcium supplements of 1,500 milligrams daily appear to slow its advance.

Estrogen replacement is considered more effective than calcium supplementation, but it also may increase a woman's risk of endometrial cancer. To help counter this risk, estrogen is given for 25 days per month, and a progesterone is added the last 10 days of the cycle.

Those individuals who decide to take a calcium supplement should be aware that such supplements come in various forms with varying amounts of usable calcium available. Some of these supplements include calcium gluconate (9 percent calcium), calcium lactate (13 percent), dolomite (22 percent), bone meal (31 percent), calcium chloride (36 percent), tricalcium phosphate (38 percent), and calcium carbonate (40 percent).²⁸ Tricalcium phosphate, bone meal, and dolomite are not good supplements. Tricalcium phosphate is thought to be poorly absorbed, and the other two substances may contain heavy metals such as mercury, lead, and arsenic, and other toxic substances as well.²⁹

Although it has been stressed that postmenopausal women need 1,500 milligrams of calcium, it is still fair to say that this is not the key. The problem with this approach is that Americans, Europeans, and the people of other industrial nations eat luxurious diets and are ailing from excesses in calories, protein, refined carbohydrates, and fats, resulting in hypertriglyceridemia, hypercholesterolemia, hyperinsulinemia, hyperglucemia, and hypertension. The solution to the problem of osteoporosis, created by excesses in diet, is not to be found in adding an excess of calcium.

The human body can survive on considerably less calcium than what has been proposed. Many nations, and the World Health Organization as well, recognize 400 to 500 milligrams of calcium per day as sufficient for good bone health,³⁰ while some people in less affluent countries survive on as little as 50 milligrams per day and still maintain good bone health.³¹ We must recognize that it is not poor calcium nutrition that is costing such a heavy toll in lives and suffering. Rather, it is our socially acceptable drug addictions such as coffee, tea, alcohol, and caffeine-containing soft drinks; our poor diet choices in excess meats, soft

drinks, and sugar; and our sedentary lifestyles.

Dr. Myron Winick, director of the Institute of Nutrition at Columbia University, says, "A well-balanced, vegetarian diet that allows milk and milk products is probably the best diet for the prevention of osteoporosis. The closer we all come to eating such a diet, the better."³²

By instituting good nutritional practices and eliminating the lifestyle habits that prepare the way for osteoporosis—even as early as adolescence—we can prevent the onset of this disease. ■

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Abortion

From page 6

Whites' protégé, John H. Kellogg was very much alive to the issue and wrote vehemently against the practice.

⁵ Eugene F. Durand, "About Abortion," *Adventist Review*, Sept. 1, 1983, pp. 13, 14.

⁶ MINISTRY, March 1971, p. 11.

⁷ Survey of abortion practice in Adventist hospitals in the United States completed for "Seventh-day Adventist Responses to Some Contemporary Ethical Issues" (Ph.D. thesis by Michael Pearson submitted to the University of Oxford, 1986).

⁸ Karel Dobbelaere, "Professionalization and Secularization in the Belgian Catholic Pillar," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 6, Nos. 1, 2 (March-June 1979): 39-64.

⁹ W. G. Dick, "A Look at Abortion," *Review and Herald*, May 13, 1971, p. 11.

¹⁰ Pearson, pp. 120-122.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹² Malcolm Potts, Peter Diggory, and John Peel, *Abortion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 119.

¹³ D. Callahan, *Abortion: Law, Choice, and Morality* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), p. 298; N. B. Ryder and C. F. Westoff, *Reproduction in the United States: 1965* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 279.

¹⁴ Potts, Diggory, and Peel, pp. 454-504.

¹⁵ B. Haring, "A Theological Evaluation," by J. T. Noonan, ed., *Morality of Abortion: Legal and Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 142, 143.

¹⁶ *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*, pp. 511-519.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 512.

Picking good software

Ken Wade

How do you pick a good computer program? The first program I ever tried to learn to use on my personal computer almost persuaded me that computers were too complicated for me. Fortunately, the next program I tried proved much more user-friendly; otherwise, my computer might have ended up stored in a dark closet.

Since then I've had opportunity to look at dozens of programs, and have developed somewhat of a connoisseur's taste. I hope the tastes I've acquired through the years can help you pick and choose among programs and find ones that will help rather than hinder your ministry. So here, and in my next column, I'll list characteristics that I think every program written for the average user should have.

1. *Menu*: Good multifunction programs (such as a data base program that will sort, print labels, and do many other functions) typically run from an opening menu that allows you to choose the function you want to perform by pressing one key. One-function programs such as word processors do not need a menu, but rather should allow you to go directly into editing a manuscript.

2. *Manual*: If the manual is hard to use, contains confusing terminology, is not adequately cross-referenced, or has an inadequate index, you'll spend hours trying to solve simple problems. The manuals I like best are divided into a teaching section and a reference section. One I used recently raises usability to unexcelled heights by thorough cross-referencing. Each step in the learning section is referenced to a page in the reference section so if you have problems or want to know more about the function

you are learning, you know just where to look.

3. *Help*: All good programs have readily accessible on-screen help, typically accessed by a function key. Context-sensitive help, which tells of specific things you might want to do at the point you are in the program, is one good option. Equally good is a help menu that allows you to choose, by the touch of a key, what function you want help with.

4. *Screen speed*: By this I mean how fast the screen redraws itself as you move through a document you are working on. When you go to the bottom of the screen and push the down arrow, does the entire screen slowly redraw itself, starting at the top and working down? Or does the material on the screen move like an inchworm up the screen, redrawing one line at a time? If the answer to either question is yes, you'll soon tire of watching the redraw. The entire screen should redraw at once, instantaneously, so that you are not even aware of the process.

5. *Quick commands*: Frequently used commands should not require more than one or two keystrokes. WordPerfect is an example of a good program that does poorly here. To save a document requires three strokes in response to questions that appear on the screen. To exit the program requires five. Personally I don't enjoy playing 20 questions when I want a program to do a simple task that ought to require only one keystroke.

6. *Protection*: The program ought to protect you from yourself and from machine failure as thoroughly as possible. It ought to automatically save your material to disk periodically, or at least ask you whether you want to save it. Otherwise you can lose a day's work to a minor power fluctuation.

I'll continue next time with more of my prejudices about what makes a good program.

Letters

From page 2

tims of AIDS. —James F. Lawrence, San Francisco, California.

The Jewish Jesus

I feel compelled to share two notes with you regarding the review of *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus* (September 1987): 1. Wayne Willey states that "there is a growing acceptance of Jesus as a good Jew and a prophet." Though most rabbis do look upon Jesus as a good Jew and as a great teacher, I know of none in the major branches of Judaism who refer to Jesus as a prophet. 2. "The Reformed branch" never refers to itself that way but always as the Reform branch.

Keep up the good work you're doing. The more we understand each other, the more hope there is that there will be a future. —Rabbi N. William Schwartz, Pensacola, Florida.

Extend the application

I read with interest the Shop Talk item from William Wolfe concerning contacting bereaved families on the anniversary of their loved one's death (July 1987). I have been doing this for about two years now and find that the family really appreciates it.

I'd like to encourage pastors to go one step further. I keep track of anniversaries of baptisms, weddings, and births that have taken place in my district since I have been here. I send a note to the person involved and find that people really appreciate the pastor remembering their special event. —Chad McComas, Corvallis, Oregon.

"Religion and Communism"

"Religion and Communism" (March 1987) makes a sincere attempt, overall, to come to terms with the conflicting needs of sensitive reporting, honesty, and forthrightness. The way the author deals with the question of whether Christians suffer in Communist countries, however, borders on naivete.

We should be thankful for some encouraging features of *glasnost*, but we cannot overlook that many Christians are still in Soviet jails, that children are compelled to attend school on the Sabbath, and that there is no representative Adventist church building in the Soviet capital. —W. Rieger, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

Teenagers: Parental Guidance Suggested

Rich Wilkerson, *Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1983, 171 pages, \$5.95, paper. Reviewed by Angela Hunt, a school teacher and pastor's wife.*

Rich Wilkerson is president of Mainstream, a ministry for youth workers. In this volume he offers practical advice to parents who need guidance and support during their children's turbulent teen years. He gives rules ("Double dates should be started in the tenth grade") that some parents may find too simplistic, but his advice on dating, drugs, communication, and spiritual leadership is firmly grounded on spiritual principles.

With a special chapter on the confusing junior high years, as well as up-to-date insights on the increasingly bawdy sexual revolution, Wilkerson's book will be especially helpful to parents who are new Christians, temporarily frustrated, or desperate. Parents who have healthy relationships with their teenage children will gain no new insights, but those facing rough times will find encouraging reminders of the guiding spiritual principles that often become hidden from view in a storm.

Women at the Crossroads

Kari Torjeson Malcolm, *Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1982, 220 pages, \$6.95, paper. Reviewed by Carmen Seibold.*

Women today see two paths before them—one marked tradition and the other feminism. Malcolm observes that both of these choices serve up certain roles that give women their identity. But, she insists, for Christian women there is a third path: a woman must find her identity in her relationship with Jesus Christ.

Malcolm's years in the mission field immersed her in cultures where the lady—regardless of gender—took turns preaching and exercising spiritual gifts. When she returned to America she found an evangelical backlash against women's liberation that attempted to limit women to house and family. Malcolm asserts that discipleship and the gospel commission are a Christian woman's first priority. Only then will all

other relationships and roles find their rightful places.

The author traces the contribution of women to the church from Christ's time to the present. She admits that true discipleship will always mean following a narrow road: "few there be that find it." As He revealed to Mary and Martha, Christ is more interested in a woman's obedience to God than in her role.

Malcolm challenges women to ask whether fear, low self-image, or sociological conditioning is keeping them from becoming anointed channels of God's love. And she calls women to a love relationship with Christ in which they will become prophetic voices, catalysts for His changes, and healing agents in a suffering world.

Women Under Stress

Randy and Nanci Alcorn, *Multnomah Press, Portland, Oregon, 1986, 247 pages, \$7.95, paper. Reviewed by Miriam Wood, who has written numerous books and been a columnist for 25 years.*

This Christian husband and wife writing team approach the popular subject of stress from the viewpoint of women. The approach is standard—they discuss reasons for stress, what it is, how to cope with it, the dilemma of trying to be a wonder-wife and supermom, etc. At the end of each chapter, however, thought discussion questions make this book valuable by encouraging the reader to apply the information to her own situation.

Probably the most original and helpful chapter is the one entitled "How God Uses Stress for Your Good and His Glory." Here the authors use several very clever illustrations, and mastery of this chapter would be especially beneficial to ministerial wives. One statement from the chapter struck me so forcibly that I have memorized it: "Stress tugs at the corners of our lives, stretching us always a little more, enabling us to broaden our impact for Christ."

Women Under Stress will make a worthwhile addition to the library of any ministerial wife, both in a personal way and in assisting women members.

Choices, Changes

Joni Eareckson Tada, *Zondervan Books,*

Grand Rapids, 1986, 286 pages, \$12.95, hardcover. Reviewed by Barbara Mittelreider, travel coordinator, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Joni, a young woman in a wheelchair who learned to create beautiful paintings by working with a paintbrush in her teeth, has inspired millions by her courageous life. Although she can hardly move, her faith has moved mountains. Now, in a long-awaited third book, Joni tells of three major choices she has made in the past eight years that have dramatically changed her life. These choices concerned whether to have a film made of her life, what her ministry should be, and her marriage to Ken Tada, a teacher and athletic coach.

The film necessitated her having to relive the painful days of her traumatic accident, and the book reveals how her faith was tried and strengthened by the reliving.

Joni left a sheltered life on a farm in Maryland to begin her ministry in California. Faced with proving she could "do it," she, in her ministry, Joni and Her Friends, has reached out to others as she has continued to grow emotionally and spiritually. From hardly being able to drink a glass of water alone, she went on to learn to drive her own van and gain independence.

Then after resigning herself to a life of singleness, Joni met Ken and fell in love.

This is a warm, honest narrative that can inspire the least motivated of us to let the Lord use our capabilities in whatever way He feels best. Each of us has something to contribute by living our lives to the fullest. If you sometimes wonder what you can accomplish for others, you will be inspired by Joni.

Every Woman's Privilege

Joy P. Gage, *Multnomah Press, Portland, Oregon, 1987, 126 pages, \$6.95, paper. Reviewed by Ella M. Rydzewski, editorial secretary at MINISTRY.*

This book is about women taking responsibility for their own spiritual growth. Such growth need not depend on one man (husband) or a group of men, and we need to question any theory that modifies the individual's responsibility toward God.

Gage points out the frustrations of being female in the 1980s and the confusion of the churches on what role women should play in ministry. In the debate, one group sacrifices the relationship of marriage as it encourages women to pursue their rights of personhood, while another group sacrifices personhood to preserve the institution of marriage, and equates passivity with submission. The author emphasizes that individual spiritual accountability begins with a response to the cross of Christ.

How does a woman function in a malfunctioning society? How does she serve in a church where she is underchallenged, her talents largely unused, and her potential ignored? Joy Gage holds a kind of "bloom where you are planted" philosophy in which she challenges a woman to grow spiritually in whatever situation she finds herself, to prepare for opportunities that may arise in ministry, and to take advantage of what is available. She sees fighting the system as a time-consuming process and suggests that a woman needs to "look for creative, personal solutions to system-imposed problems." Spiritual inner strength is seen as more valuable than self-sufficiency.

Gage writes with such wisdom, taking a realistic look at what women can expect in the church today, that I found myself underlining much of the book. She points out that regardless of the barriers of gender restriction, there is no barrier in exercising love—"this is the greatest ministry priority women can have."

Open Heart—Open Home

Karen Burton Mains, *David C. Cook Publishing Company, Elgin, Illinois, 1976, 224 pages, \$5.95, hardcover; 1980, \$5.95, paper. Reviewed by Blossom Engen, who works in the Church Ministries Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*

Those who follow the suggestions that Karen Burton Mains makes in this refreshing book will discover the joy hospitality can bring to a pastor's home, as well as to the whole church.

Mains says that the difference between hospitality and entertainment is that hospitality puts people before things—it does not try to impress, but serves; it liberates.

David and Karen Mains decided they could rarely entertain, but they could be hospitable. The attitude they adopted was "It doesn't matter whether or not the

house is a mess. These people are our friends—let's have this time together anyway." "When I put away my pride, lovely things occurred," Karen says. "And others discovered they could be hospitable to us. I have developed many cherished friends."

Hospitality must begin at home, according to Mains, for when openness has been developed toward our immediate families, we can more easily impart it to others.

There is a chapter on shortcuts for busy pastors' homes, and other material and stories you will want to share with your members. This book could spark a revolution in your church.

How to Speak to Youth . . . and Keep Them Awake at the Same Time

Ken Davis, *Group Books, Loveland, Colorado, 1986, 180 pages, \$8.95, paper. Reviewed by Angela Hunt.*

Ken Davis is a talented motivational and inspirational speaker, and he shares his techniques of vibrant public speaking with those who aspire to address the church's most critical audience—young people.

Davis covers such topics as body language, microphone usage, topic selection, content organization, humor, diction, and how to establish instant rapport.

Ministers and teachers will find both fresh and familiar material in this volume, and any speaker can improve greatly by using some of Davis' techniques. If you're a teacher or preacher, you will especially want to pick up a copy of this book.

Restoring Your Spiritual Passion

Gordon MacDonald, *Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1986, 223 pages, \$12.95, hardcover. Reviewed by Carmen Seibold, pastor's wife in Palo Alto, California, and student at Fuller Theological Seminary.*

The problem: spiritual weariness. It's not bitterness or burnout, but a loss of the passion that Christ called the abundant life. Gordon MacDonald says that men and women in positions of Christian responsibility are currently in more danger of this loss than ever before in the history of the church. The proliferation of information, experiences, and choices both in and outside the religious world can stimulate us to the point of spiritual dullness. Serving the Lord can easily become a going-through-the-motions ritual

without power or delight.

With his flair for catch categories, the author pinpoints the prevailing conditions, personal encounters, and spiritual battles that deplete spiritual passion. This passion is found in intimacy with God, and MacDonald feels that it must be restored in a simple way. He describes the safe places, still moments, and special friends that can create room for God to speak to us.

MacDonald challenges those wearied by too many choices and obligations to once again be empowered to join the task of kingdom building. He is candid about the vulnerabilities of spiritual leaders, and his insights will prove valuable to all in the ministry.

Winning Over Sinning

Patricia Maxwell, *Pacific Press, Boise, Idaho, 1987, 95 pages, \$6.95, paper. Reviewed by Lillian Knowles, homemaker, Adelphi, Maryland.*

Like the apostle Paul, author Patricia Maxwell uses the Olympic Games to illustrate God's principles for winning in the battle with temptation and sin. Interesting vignettes from the lives of participants in the 1984 Olympics give the book a freshness that ties in with life in the eighties.

Author Maxwell raises relevant questions and offers practical and satisfying answers. Questions such as "How do you become a winner if you've always been short on self-discipline and self-control? Suppose you're the type who can't stick to a diet more than two days or keep an exercise program going more than a weekend? Or practice forgiveness, love, joy, peace, or any other Christian virtue for any time at all? Yet you want to be a winner. You dream about it, but you can't seem to put substance into your vision."

Twenty years of experience as a pastor's wife, together with an obvious gift for communicating, qualify Patricia Maxwell to write a book that will be a blessing to pastors' wives, both for their own spiritual nurture and for sharing with others.

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Social Security: last chance

April 15, 1988, is the final deadline for ministers in the United States who previously opted out of Social Security coverage to apply for its benefits.

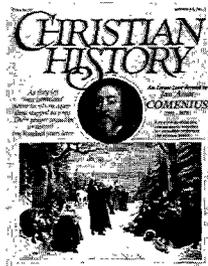
When Social Security became available to ministers, they participated only when they elected coverage. Since 1968, ministers have had to be part of the program unless they filed an irrevocable exemption with the Internal Revenue Service on the grounds that they were either conscientiously opposed to participation in a public insurance program or were opposed on the basis of religious principles. But many who opted out of coverage did so for economic reasons; they can now correct that decision by filing IRS Form 2031 in triplicate and beginning to pay the appropriate tax. No questions will be asked as to the basis for the previous decision and no back payments are required.

The 1987 Annual Council took an action urging conference and institutional administrators to advise all Adventist ministers not previously covered by Social Security to consider carefully this final opportunity to get into the program. The denominational health care assistance plan for retirees is based on the assumption that they are eligible for Medicare coverage. Without this coverage, a serious illness could devastate the financial reserves of a retiree in a very short time.

Ministers in their mid-50s or older should contact their local Social Security office before joining the

program. They may not be able to get in enough quarters of active service to qualify before retiring.

Those wanting further information should contact their employing organization, or write to the Internal Revenue Service and request Form 2031.



Christian History

Ministers interested in history may want to subscribe to a relatively new publication, *Christian History* magazine.

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