

Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

April 1991



**DOES
OUR
PAST
EMBARRASS
US?**

An unfortunate article?

It's most unfortunate that at a time when clinical, experimental, and epidemiological research points to fat as the primary factor in the etiology of obesity, gallstones, diabetes (Type II), coronary heart disease, and cancers of breast, colon, and prostate, *Ministry* published an article that presents a vigorous defense of vegetable fats in the diet ("The Story on Fat in the Diet," October 1990).

Just prior to the publication of your article in defense of vegetable oils, Dean Ornish, M.D., made national headlines. Using a basically Pritikin diet (no extracted fats), he conclusively demonstrated that the atherosclerotic processes are reversible. Coronary arteries, severely narrowed by atherosclerosis, opened up in 90 percent of his patients—who actually had been scheduled for bypass surgery. Contrast this with the results Dr. Ornish found when he gave the "Prudent Diet" of the American Heart Association to a control group of heart disease patients. This diet allows "only" 30 percent of the calories consumed to come from fat (instead of the 42 percent of the average American diet). Examination of the arteries after one year on this Prudent Diet revealed that it had promoted further narrowing of the coronary arteries.

The scientific verdict emerges that all excess fats and oils are a burden to the body. The less fat, oil, and grease, the better the human body performs. — Hans A. Diehl, Dr.H.Sc., M.P.H. (nutrition), director, Lifestyle Medicine Institute, Loma Linda, California.

Ministry editors asked the author of the article to reply to this letter and the one by Dr. Aileen Ludington published in our February 1991 issue.

Adequate oil (linoleic) acid in the diet lowers blood cholesterol further than a "no oil" diet, decreases the platelet stickiness and therefore the tendency to clot, reduces heart attack risk, lowers blood pressure, and increases heart muscle contractility.

Research has even shown that a high fat diet, if of the right type, actually causes a reversal of atherosclerosis—as

long as there is no cholesterol in the diet. But a high fat diet is not to be recommended due to an increased cancer risk.

Regarding my references to the Bible and Ellen White's writings: People consumed many of the sacrificial offerings—including the bread prepared with oil. And when, in 1868, Ellen White spoke against the use of "grease" (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 83) she was still using butter. "Grease" in her mind did not include butter. As far as can be ascertained she also used oil.

The strictest diet Ellen White spoke of is one without milk or eggs. Some today have been attempting to develop a diet that is stricter than her strictest. The General Conference Nutrition Council—which consists of the top nutritional scientists in the church, including Ph.D.s and M.D.s from both Andrews and Loma Linda universities—believes such a diet is without foundation both from a scientific and from a religious standpoint. Progressive reform in diet should have scientific justification. The "no oil" diet has no such justification, although a diet that limits the use of oil has great scientific justification. Even the therapeutic diet should generally include the advantages a limited use of oil of the right type offers, as noted above.

After reviewing all the evidence, the Nutrition Council has recommended a diet in which 20 to 30 percent of the calories come from fat. They further recommend that Seventh-day Adventists in the North American Division adopt a vegetarian diet, learn to cook without eggs, reduce the amount of fat from dairy products that they consume, and substitute polyunsaturated fats for saturated fats and use even these in limited amounts. These are the most far-reaching nutritional recommendations ever made by an official body of the church.

The Nutrition Council—has developed a position paper on the subject of fats and a booklet showing the scientific support for that position. These may be obtained from the General Conference Health and Temperance Department. — John A.

Scharffenberg, M.D., adjunct professor of nutrition, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California.

Correction

Bob Pickle of Fort Dodge, Iowa, alerted me to a misstatement I made in my interview ("Olson Discusses the Veltman Study," December 1990). I stated that Ellen White placed the Tower of Babel before the Flood (*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 301), but subsequently corrected the error in *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Brother Pickle pointed out to me that the preface to the facsimile edition of *Spiritual Gifts* attributes the mistake to a printer's error. Brother Pickle and the preface are both right. I had forgotten that preface completely. However, my point still stands; I just used the wrong illustration. Ellen White's "amalgamation of man and beast" statement in *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 3, page 75, was not carried over into her account of the Flood in *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Her later account is more carefully crafted than the earlier one. — Robert W. Olson, Ellen G. White Estate, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

No paper pope

Thank you for the two articles by Fred Veltman ("The Desire of Ages Project," October and December 1990). I am certain there will be mixed reactions, but be of good courage—we are making progress.

As a ministerial director I, along with fellow ministers and believers, agonized over the validity of Mrs. White's inspiration and, unfortunately, witnessed several leave the faith altogether. I think the problem began years ago when we were taught in academy, college, and seminary a different version of inspiration than what is evolving today.

There is a positive side to all we are learning. It has caused me to turn to the Bible for my faith instead of making Ellen G. White my primary source of study and information. The individuals who have thrown the proverbial baby out with the bathwater have been those who have made Ellen G. White their

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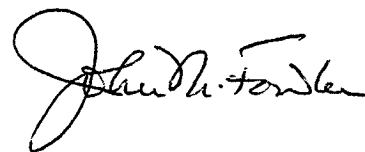
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VOLUME 64 NUMBER 4

First Glance

Gandhi once remarked that the happiest people are those without any history. That was his whimsical way of saying that history sometimes can be an embarrassing and inescapable burden. Is Adventist theological history an embarrassment to our present belief and proclamation? Do we have skeletons in our historical closet? A frank understanding of the historical development of church doctrine and organization will bridge the gulf between then and now, and ensure a more cohesive and creative future. You will find Arthur Patrick's handling of the issue both provocative and challenging.

Digging into history also leads to the reaffirmation of precious and timeless jewels. One such is "Christ Our Righteousness," an 1891 Ellen G. White manuscript. The article captures the beauty, the balance, and the biblical perspective of justification by faith.



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Dancing and worship

J. David Newman

My comments on dancing in my editorial " 'Celebration' Is a Naughty Word" (December 1990) stirred many readers' emotions.

One writer said, "I used to be very good at dancing, but I'm not sure which steps will accompany the celebration order of service. Mr. Newman didn't elaborate in his article. I learned how to dance in high school with little difficulty, so it should be duck soup. However, I am worried about my wife, who was raised an Adventist and has never been able to 'cut a rug,' if you know what I mean."

Some correspondents accused me of promoting dancing during the worship service and others of exegeting poorly. Some acknowledged that the Old Testament did put in a good word for dancing but said that since the New Testament never approved of it, we must disapprove of it. One wrote that on a recent trip to Israel he had visited a synagogue on Sabbath. He concluded that since he found no dancing there, people did not dance as a part of worship in Bible times.

Let me put the record straight. I am not advocating dancing as a part of our worship services—though we forget that there are many forms of dancing, not all of which are necessarily lascivious.

In my editorial I said that the Bible mentioned dancing as a part of worshipping God. Since many Adventists know only one way to worship God—Sabbath morning church services—it apparently is hard for us to imagine the diverse ways in which people worshiped God in ancient times.

Worship is simply giving to God His

worth. It can be expressed through the emotions as well as the intellect. But Adventists, as a whole, tend to be wary of the use of emotion in worship—and not without good reason.

Ellen White opposed the use of musical instruments in worship when they are used to whip up people's emotions. She said that the devil works through our emotions to control us, while God works through our minds, our intellects, to guide us. Satan "will endeavor to excite the emotions, to arouse the passions, to fasten the affections on that which is not for your good; but it is for you to hold every emotion and passion under control, in calm subjection to reason and conscience. Then Satan loses his power to control the mind."¹

"We do not want an emotional religion,"² Ellen White wrote. "It is not your feelings, your emotions, that make you a child of God, but the doing of God's will."³ "We are not to look into our hearts for a joyful emotion as an evidence of our acceptance with Heaven, but we are to take God's promises and say, 'They are mine.'"⁴

She was also concerned about how non-Adventists would react to extremism in worship. She wrote: "In this stage of our history we must be very careful to guard against everything that savors of fanaticism and disorder. We must guard against all peculiar exercises that would be likely to stir up the minds of unbelievers, and lead them to think that as a people we are led by impulse, and delight in noise and confusion accompanied by eccentricities of action."⁵

She attended one meeting where "there was much excitement, with noise and confusion. One could not tell what was piped or what was harped. Some ap-

peared to be in vision, and fell to the floor. Others were jumping, dancing, and shouting."⁶

Ellen White did not oppose emotion but emotionalism, which is excessive appeal to or dependence on the emotions. She recognized that emotion constitutes an important component of the human being. Her writings remind us that "we must gather about the cross. Christ and Him crucified should be the theme of contemplation, of conversation, and of our most joyful emotion."⁷ It is just that "emotions are as changeable as the clouds. You must have something solid for the foundation of your faith. The word of the Lord is a word of infinite power, upon which you may rely."⁸ "We are to find the assurance of our acceptance with God in His written promise, not in a happy flight of feeling. Were we to ground our hope upon joyful emotions, there are many of God's true people who would be without assurance."⁹

While Ellen White generally reacted negatively to dancing, she does mention some biblical dancing in a positive way: the dancing of Miriam¹⁰ and David,¹¹ for example. Commenting on the Feast of Tabernacles as conducted during Jesus' ministry on earth, she said: "At evening when the lamps were lighted, the court was a scene of great rejoicing. Gray-haired men, the priests of the temple and the rulers of the people, united in the festive dances to the sound of instrumental music and the chants of the Levites."¹²

Salvation always comes through an act of the will—routed through the intellect. It should result in our feeling peace and joy (emotions)—but only as a result, never as a cause. We must always found our mode of worship upon the Bible; it

should center on acknowledging Jesus as Lord as well as Saviour. Only our need commends us to God, and when we surrender to His will He imputes the righteousness of God to us and also simultaneously transforms us through the new birth experience.

So we should worship God with both our mind and our emotions—praising Him. “I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart” (Ps. 138:1, NIV). ■

Do we worship a seventeenth-century God?

During a church service a few weeks ago, someone read from a King James Version Bible a passage from the book of Romans. As I followed along in my New International Version, I was struck by the contrast between what I was hearing and what I was reading. What I was hearing came across as obscure, requiring considerable effort to follow. In my modern translation, on the other hand, Paul’s argument stood out plainly; there was no question what he was saying.

As the difference between the old translation and the new impressed itself on me, I wondered, Why in the world are we still using the King James Version (KJV) for public worship? I know the argument that we need something that is uniform so we can read the Bible together, and that the KJV is the obvious choice because more people use it than any other version. But for me this argument doesn’t hold water anymore. We can have the uniformity we need for responsive reading by using the scriptures supplied in the back of our hymnals or by printing in our bulletins the passage to be read. I believe that the advantages of using more up-to-date translations outweigh any of the arguments favoring the KJV.

- ¹ *Our High Calling*, p. 87.
- ² *Signs of the Times*, Mar. 4, 1889.
- ³ *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 124.
- ⁴ *The Faith I Live By*, p. 9.
- ⁵ *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 41.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- ⁷ *Steps to Christ*, p. 103.
- ⁸ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 328.
- ⁹ *Signs of the Times*, Apr. 18, 1895.
- ¹⁰ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 410.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 707.
- ¹² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 463. (Italics supplied.)

What are the advantages of using a modern translation? For one thing, we’ve learned a lot about the text of the Bible since the KJV was translated. We now have manuscripts that are significantly closer to the originals. And subsequent study has added to our understanding of the original languages as well.

These improvements in the text have not brought major changes in the Bible’s message, but the Bible is the word of the infinite God—so why should we be satisfied with less than the best? Isn’t the removal of some of the “static” on the line sufficient reason to change our practice?¹

Second, the language we use to speak of God conveys subliminal messages. In *Your God Is Too Small*, J. B. Phillips wrote that a group of high school students were asked whether God understood radar. (This happened when radar was a relatively new invention.) Their first, natural response was no. Then, when they had thought about it for a moment, they laughed and said, Well, of course He must. Their first answer revealed that they tended to think of God as out of touch, as part of the ages past.

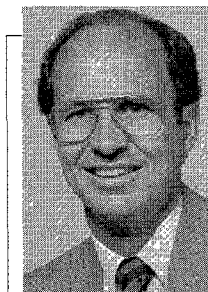
Why did they tend to think of God as out of touch with our times? When the primary text we use to communicate about God speaks in language that be-

longs to the long ago and far away, we give the impression that God and religion belong to the long ago and far away—that they are disconnected from the world we live in. People who have a long acquaintance with God can see through this illusion, but it tends to suggest to the young and those who have grown up outside the church that God and religion are irrelevant to our age.

Third, the use of an old, hard-to-understand translation suggests that to those who are using it, the traditional forms of religion are more important than meaning, than understanding—that we value this particular form of God’s Word more than we do its content.

The men who translated the King James Version apparently anticipated or actually received a lot of criticism for foisting a new English translation on the public. The translators wrote an extensive preface to meet this criticism (which, unfortunately, most current printings of the KJV leave out). Apparently people were asking Why are you making a new translation? Has the church been deceived all this time? The translators’ response: “To deliuer Gods book vnto Gods people in a tongue which they vnderstand. Since of an hidden treasure, and of a fountaine that is sealed, there is no profit.”

Note that they weren’t making the



David C. Jarnes

first English translation. There were other good English translations available—two made within the preceding 50 years. Yet they justified their new translation on the grounds of people’s need to have God’s Word in a language they understood. They went on in the preface to argue that secular books are translated over and over again, and if that be true, how much more important to retranslate the Scriptures because of their infinitely greater value. They said that such retranslation would polish the good and allow the

poor parts of the translation to be corrected.

Nearly 400 years have passed since those wise men did their work. Do we really think that the English language has changed so little since that time and that we have learned so little about the Bible that no new translation is justified? Or are we allowing tradition to hinder our clear understanding of God's Word and our persuasive communication of it to our world?

Fourth, while not a matter of translation, I think the KJV's style, which makes each verse a separate paragraph, tends to lead readers to regard Scripture as a collection of aphorisms or pronouncements rather than as connected thoughts forming narrative and argument. This packaging of Scripture encourages proof texting and discourages reading in context—the single most important principle for understanding the Bible.

Fifth, reading is work. As an editor, I've learned that if I want people to read the articles I edit, I have to make reading them as easy as possible. Every obstacle, whether it be small type or poor layout or redundancy or unclear construction, makes some readers stop reading.

Since we want our people to read the Bible, we need to remove the obstacles that sidetrack them—and unfamiliar, out-of-date language is one of those obstacles.

Sixth, the New Testament was not written in either some holy language or some special literary language. Those who wrote it used Koine Greek—the language of commerce and family letters, the common language of the time. Like the people who first received it, we need the Bible in the common, everyday language of our time.

Finally, our direct spiritual ancestors—Ellen White, among them—have given us the precedent of using modern translations.²

As spiritual leaders, you can educate your people regarding the versions of the Bible. You must do this slowly, carefully, and tactfully. As the translators of the KJV observed: "He that medleth with mens Religion in any part, medleth with their custome, nay, with their freehold; and though they finde no content in that which they haue, yet they cannot abide to heare of altering."

You needn't attempt to take the KJV away from those who are comfortable with it, but encourage them to vary

their reading by using other versions. And when you can do so without causing too much of a disturbance, use a modern translation for your Scripture readings and in your preaching.³ ■

¹ For instance, the manuscripts from which the KJV was translated make scriptural the traditional story that linked healings at the pool of Bethesda with an angel's stirring of the water (see John 5:3, 4). I feel more comfortable with the modern translations that follow the older (better) manuscripts in leaving this tradition out of the Bible. (Ellen G. White identifies the content of this added material as tradition; see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 201.)

For another example, see 1 John 5:7, 8—a notorious instance of how tradition affected the *textus receptus*, from which the KJV New Testament was translated.

² For example, see *The Great Controversy*, p. 479.

³ What of the New King James Version? In my opinion it's unsatisfactory. It is an improvement over the KJV in that the language is more up-to-date. But it's based on the same text as the KJV, and so has the same problems. When it comes to something as important as God's Word, why should we be satisfied with the second rate—why not use the best available?

Recommendations? The New International Version is very good. But look also at the New Revised Standard Version (an updating of the Revised Standard Version) and *The Revised English Bible* (an updating of *The New English Bible*).

What versions are Adventists using?

In September 1989, Pacific Press Publishing Association conducted a survey on Bible study habits and attitudes among North American Seventh-day Adventists. (The survey was weighted toward the West Coast.) One of the questions the survey asked was "Which Bible translation do you use most regularly?" In response, 59 percent indicated the King James Version, and 17 percent the New International Version. The remaining 24 percent were divided among Today's English Version, the *New American Standard Bible*, *The Modern Language Bible*, the New King James Version, foreign language versions, *The New English Bible*, *The Living Bible*, the Revised Standard Version, the Phillips translation, *The Amplified Bible*, Moffatt, "don't know," and no response.

As the table below shows, the King James Version's popularity is age-related. Note that less than 50 percent of those under the age of 60 consider it their primary version of the Bible.

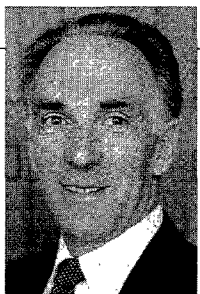
Respondents' age compared with Bible translation preference (percent)

AGE	KJV	NEB	RSV	NASB	NKJV	TLB	NIV	OTHER
70+	73	2	2	4	6	3	9	5
60-69	51	2	7	1	8	2	17	12
50-59	45	2	6	3	10	2	26	6
40-49	39	3	5	6	9	3	32	3
30-39	29	3	13	6	5	5	37	2
23-29	21	0	16	13	3	3	42	2

Does our past embarrass us?

Arthur N. Patrick

Is our theological history an embarrassment to present faith and proclamation? How do we bridge the chasm between faith and history of faith?



Arthur N. Patrick has pastored churches in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Currently he is the registrar of Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

Seventh-day Adventists are a pilgrim people upon whom the past and the future impinge constantly. Part of our pastoral commission

is to help our people remember the journeys of faith that lie behind us, and to explore with them the terrain of the future in the combined light of history and Bible prophecy.

Early Christians were certain that the past experiences of God's people had continuing significance. Paul was convinced that the history of Israel was not simply an example for believers, but that it was recorded as a warning to those "on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" (1 Cor. 10:11, NIV).

Early Adventists grasped this idea and applied it to their theological and ecclesiological development as they sought to learn from both Jewish and Christian history. Our most important periodical, the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, was designed in 1850 with a sense of the past as well as the present: it proposed to review the rise of the Second Advent movement and to herald the seventh day of the week as the Bible Sabbath. In 1858, with the publication of *The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels and Satan and His Angels*, Ellen White began a new phase of her lifetime focus on history. Major revisions of this work, produced in 1884, 1888, and 1911, helped Adventists better understand the Lord's leading throughout Christian history in general, and within their own heritage in particular. In 1903 Ellen White declared: "We must study to

find out the best way in which to take up the review of our experiences from the beginning of our work."¹ Such injunctions have led Adventist publications to make frequent reference to our heritage.

But during recent decades, recourse to the past has been fraught with peril as well as promise. This problem is not unique to Seventh-day Adventists. Indeed, during the second half of the twentieth century many areas of Christian history have undergone fresh scrutiny, often with traumatic results for believers. For instance, a recent article analyzed the ramifications resulting from "the maturation of evangelical historiography and the phenomenon of observer-participant history."² Another article, after listing the important changes that occurred in the short period between 1960 and 1980, concluded that it is no longer adequate to see history as "an act of piety," laudatory in tone and compilatory in nature. Nostalgic antiquarians writing triumphalist or polemical accounts aid the burial of the past, but this is unacceptable to a generation that demands perceptive analysis. No longer do "the traditional themes of heroic survival and unity in the face of many foes" speak to an age that is suspicious of hagiography.³

How should we relate to the history of our faith? Does our church have closet doors better left closed?

In 1970 A. Graham Maxwell pointed out that at great expense the Adventist Church has developed a body of people willing and able to examine critically the movement of which they are a part. Dr. Maxwell also observed that in the past "no religious movement has been able to

survive beyond this point without serious loss of unity and sense of mission.”⁴ Since 1972 our church has planned and opened archival facilities at its headquarters and in major centers around the world. This has made it possible for trained historians to use primary source materials in the writing of observer-participant accounts of the past, thus helping the maturing process of Adventist historiography.

Adventist history is the story of Adventist belief and direction. The story traces the impact of theological ideas on believers and their world. It demarcates passionate struggles and great victories at various levels—personal, theological, organizational, missiological. It shows how the Lord led us, taught us, transformed us, chastised us, and moved us forward. Too often we tend to forget the ups and downs of the past, and imagine that our doctrines have been static. This failure to perceive the nature and extent of historical development of faith, doctrine, and practice in the Adventist Church has caused a chasm of misunderstanding between the faith of many Adventists and the realities of their heritage.

The problem has evoked a number of responses. Some earnest believers deny the existence of the chasm and seek to silence or discipline those who discover or describe it. Others are so troubled by the chasm that they refuse to deal with the past intelligently, and at times abandon the church. Yet others seek to bridge the chasm between the present and the past.

We may applaud the motives of those who state that Adventist faith has not experienced developmental growth and change. Good motives, however, do not necessarily make a position valid. History testifies that we have had the courage to change when it was necessary to do so, and that change or growth in itself need not be equated with collapse. A few examples from the past will illustrate the point.

Evidences of a chasm

The need to understand the development of Adventist doctrine is aptly illustrated by the “shut door” interpretation of 1844. This idea has a unique importance for Adventism because of its bearing on issues that are central to our movement’s identity—the doctrine of the sanctuary, the role of Ellen White, and missiology. The earliest report of Ellen

White’s first vision had references to the shut door theory. James White’s letters from 1845 onward stressed the significance of the doctrine for Adventism. Uriah Smith’s apologetic writings during the 1860s gave a more durable and systematic form to the doctrine. As a result, the shut door doctrine has provided critics of Seventh-day Adventism, from Millerite times to the present, with one of their most convenient offensive weapons.

Yet today few of us would talk about the shut door theory with any theological enthusiasm. In fact, we have an anomalous situation: official Adventist literature until recently has been loath to admit the existence of a chasm between the faith of believers and the facts of history in this area. However, since the International Prophetic Guidance Workshop in 1982 there has been a serious attempt to understand the problem. Instead of denying its existence or underrating its reality, we can now admit that God led our pioneers step by step, and that the shut door concept helped them maintain a sense of identity during a time of difficult transition.⁵ This approach helps us to face our history honestly and creatively, and to interpret the approach of our pioneers toward theology. To relate to history thus is to equip ourselves better in the fulfillment of our pastoral commission.

A second example of the chasm that developed between the past and the present may be cited from a different area—the precious doctrine of righteousness by faith. Beginning around 1950, there has been a continual emphasis on Christ our righteousness and on justification by faith. Efforts have been made to recapture the actual teachings of A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner on justification and sanctification, and no effort has been spared in the reproduction of their writings. But a careful reading of their presentations, so needed when they wrote, has been disappointing for many Adventists. Their writings do not fit the need of the church in the way they once did. Only in the light of history do those writings become cogent. The Lord has continued to lead His people, and that guidance is more fully brought home to us, for instance, in “The Dynamics of Salvation” statement first published in the *Adventist Review*, July 31, 1980.⁶

Let us draw a third illustration, this time from the area of science. Most of the 25 books written by George McCready

Price affirm the doctrine of creation over against the theories of evolution. This emphasis is a continuing necessity. But some of the issues now in focus and the arguments we offer are quite different from those current in the Price era. From 1902 Price’s “theme song” declared: “The arrangement of the fossils in the rocks is merely a taxonomic, or classification, series, a cross section, if you will, of the life of the antediluvian world.”⁷ But informed Adventists who currently continue Price’s crusade for creationism generally agree that there is some sort of order in the geologic column. Instead of devoting their energies to denying geologic structure, they try to explain why it is present.⁸ So we do well to avoid being dogmatic about matters that may be merely our interpretation rather than the explicit teaching of Scripture. Effective pastors nurture their flocks; they do not divide them by dogmatic assertions of controversial ideas.

A fourth example, also relating to science, is even more graphic. In the 1860s Uriah Smith sought to defend Ellen White from 52 objections raised by her critics. James White applauded Smith’s articles in the *Review and Herald* and sold them widely when they were reprinted in book form. In one of those articles, Smith defended Ellen White’s statement on the amalgamation of man and beast. He not only contended that amalgamation was a fact but also declared that its “effect is still visible in certain races of men,” and identified examples from peoples living on two continents. Smith further claimed support for his theory from naturalists who found it impossible “to tell just where the human ends and the animal begins.”⁹

That was history. Now look at a recent analysis. With remarkable courage and clarity, Gordon Shigley has recounted the history of Smith’s apologetic on this point, and noted the various stances that Adventists have taken since Smith’s book was published.¹⁰ Probably no one would contend today that amalgamation is a fact. To do so would suggest that one has failed to profit by the wealth of information that God has made available on creation science. Even so, a proper understanding of the history and development of doctrine would lead us to consider Uriah Smith’s dilemma sympathetically, and perhaps even to appreciate whatever may have led him to his position. Such a stance would make it possible to disagree with Smith on amal-

gamation, without necessarily calling into question his historic contribution to the church or our confidence in our past.

Fifth, during the 1970s Adventists were confronted with fresh data relating to health reform, again indicative of the chasm that lay between the church's faith and its history. In *Prophetess of Health* Ronald Numbers focused on some of the problematic issues.¹¹ Some members and ministers were troubled deeply by some of Numbers' findings. Scholars faced tough issues on sources and interpretations. Slowly the church was made aware that health reform, like our other doctrines, experienced gradual development over many decades before reaching its present status, and that this development took place in response to varying stimuli.

Relating to prophetic ministry

To a large extent the chasm of misunderstanding between present Adventist faith and early Adventist history relates to the prophetic ministry of Ellen White. A wealth of new data concerning her life and writings has surfaced in the past 20 years, leading to interpretations and conclusions that may seem at variance with previous positions. For example, prior to 1970 most believers accepted the following statements with little or no hesitation:

1. Ellen White's writings make a striking appeal to timeless truth.

2. They contain certain unique elements.

3. Her writings on health placed Seventh-day Adventists on vantage ground by relating bodily health to basic spiritual well-being and by pointing out numerous paths to right living.

4. She made effective use of the Bible in her writings.

5. She often helped the church develop and express its theology.

6. She retained control over her literary output.

7. Her writings reveal a remarkable literary beauty.

Are these statements totally adequate for today? Recent studies¹² seem to indicate that they are not. In fact, conclusions from some of these studies argue for some change or modification to the above statements, somewhat along the following lines:

1. Ellen White's writings make a striking appeal to timeless truth even though they are historically conditioned to a significant degree.

2. They contain certain unique elements even though they are related in an evident way to both Adventist and non-Adventist literature of her time.

3. Her writings on health placed Seventh-day Adventists on vantage ground by relating bodily health to basic spiritual well-being and by pointing out numerous paths to right living, even though she reflected some of the ideas of her Adventist and non-Adventist contemporaries.

4. She made effective use of the Bible in her writings even though she employed Scripture in a variety of ways, not all of which express the meaning and intent of the Bible.¹³

5. While she often helped the church develop and express its theology, her doctrinal understandings underwent both growth and change during her lifetime of ministry.¹⁴

6. She retained a position of control over her literary output, but her literary assistants and advisors did have more than a minor mechanical role in the preparation of her writings for publication.

7. Her writings reveal a remarkable literary beauty, but her use of sources and the role she assigned her assistants/advisors indicate that this literary excellence should not be used as a proof of her divine inspiration.

Although the examples given in this article are few in number and are enunciated only in brief form, they illustrate the kind of bridge-building that is essential to care for the chasm that exists between the present faith of the Adventist believer and a historical understanding of Adventist thought. To effectively bring about this building is the pastor's responsibility. This is why pastoral training should include an understanding of "the origin and subsequent modification of characteristic Seventh-day Adventist teachings."¹⁵ But this endeavor should not cease with seminary training; it is a valid part of a pastor's lifetime commitment.

Some earnest believers, unable to live with the reality of doctrinal change and growth, conclude that our heritage is unworthy and needs to be disregarded. They seldom refer to Adventist history or the writings of Ellen White, and they feel a sense of disquiet when others do so. This struggle between faith and history has been a crucial factor in the loss of scores of ministers and members within the past decade. And the struggle can be

The struggle can be met effectively only by recognizing the chasm and accepting the need for change and growth.

met effectively only by recognizing the reality of the chasm, on the one hand, and by accepting the need for change and growth, on the other. To deny the reality of the chasm is to perpetuate the problem. To alienate from our heritage is to experience the loss of spiritual identity. Responsible shepherding requires that we bridge the chasm.

Objectives in bridge-building

If the chasm between faith and history is to be bridged effectively, we need to keep in focus a clear set of objectives. Our study of faith and history should ever remain an exciting quest for:

■ *Truth*—that is, historical accuracy.

■ *Insight*—that is, an understanding of how the past illumines the present and the future.

■ *Stability*—that is, a sufficient grasp of the relevant data so that new items of information do not threaten our belief system.

■ *Identification*—that is, a pervading sense that Adventist history is our personal heritage, and hence precious.

■ *Commitment*—that is, a conviction that the Adventist Church has a mission worthy of our best talents and energies.

■ *Awe*—that is, faith that the God of Scripture and Jesus Christ have led and continue to lead the Second Advent movement.

■ *Celebration*—that is, a desire to commemorate the integrity, achievements, and faith of the past—and thus to inform and inspire the present.

The task of the pastor as interpreter of the past and spy of the future is a demanding one. It calls for the skills of a bridge-builder; it involves the patience of the

saints; it requires an exercise of living faith.

And it can be done, especially if we make one of Adventism's famous affirmations our very own: "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." ¹⁶ ■

¹ Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 145.

² Leonard I. Sweet, "Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves: The New Evangelical Historiography," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. LVI, No. 3 (Fall 1988), pp. 397-416.

³ J. D. Bollen, A. E. Cahill, Bruce Mansfield, and Patrick O'Farrell, "Australian Religious History, 1960-1980," *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. XI, No. 1 (June 1980), pp. 8-44.

⁴ A. Graham Maxwell, "The Distinctive Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," in Vern Carner and Gary Stanhiser, eds., *The Statue of Christ: Essays in Honor of Edward Heppenstall* (Loma Linda: privately printed and published, 1970), pp. 89-96.

⁵ Adventist writers including F. D. Nichol, Arthur L. White, Rolf J. Poehler, Ingemar Linden, and Douglas Hackleman have dealt with this subject. See especially Robert W. Olson, "The 'Shut Door' Documents" (Washington, D.C.: E. G. White Estate, 1982).

⁶ The statement resulted from the work of a consultation group on righteousness by faith, and has since been republished in various parts of the world in periodicals and pamphlets.

⁷ Harold W. Clark, *Crusader for Creation: The Life and Writings of George McCready Price* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1966), pp. 17, 18.

⁸ This approach became important not long after Price's death, as shown in Harold G. Coffin, *Creation: Accident or Design?* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1969), p. 108. See also pages 174-183 for Clark's explanation.

⁹ Uriah Smith, *The Visions of Mrs. E. G. White: A Manifestation of Spiritual Gifts According to the Scriptures* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1868), pp. 102-105.

¹⁰ Gordon Shigley, "Speciation by Amalgamation: A History of the Controversy Surrounding Ellen G. White's Amalgamation Statements" (Hong Kong: South China Union College, 1979). A shortened version of Shigley's research appeared as "Amalgamation of Man and Beast," *Spectrum*, vol. 12, No. 4 (June 1982), pp. 10-19.

¹¹ Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976).

¹² Some of the best studies are available in Roger W. Coon, ed., *Anthology of Recently Published Articles on Selected Issues in Prophetic Guidance 1980-1988*, 6th ed. (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University, 1989).

¹³ Raymond F. Cottrell, "Ellen G. White's Evaluation and Use of the Bible," in Gordon M. Hyde, ed., *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Committee, 1974), pp. 142-161.

¹⁴ Alden Thompson, "From Sinai to Golgotha," *Adventist Review*, December 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, 1981.

¹⁵ The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, has moved wisely to include the course "Development of SDA Theology" as part of its Master of Divinity curriculum. See *SDA Theological Seminary Bulletin*, 1988-1989, p. 89.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1943), p. 196.

Christ our righteousness

Ellen G. White

**Ellen G. White
comments on
righteousness—and
particularly
justification—by
faith.**

This article is a reprint of Ellen G. White's Manuscript 21, 1891 (Manuscript Release 747).

I have attended the closing meeting of the ministerial Bible school—a school composed of conference delegates and those who have been

attending the ministerial institute. At this meeting several were called upon to say something. Remarks appropriate for the occasion were made by Elders Olsen, Waggoner, Prescott, and Smith; also by Elder Haskell, who has been mercifully preserved during his tour around the world.

I spoke in regard to matters that were deeply impressing my mind. I referred to the fear that had been expressed by some who were not members of the ministerial institute, and who had not been present at all the Bible classes of the school—a fear that there was danger of carrying the subject of justification by faith altogether too far, and of not dwelling enough on the law.

Judging from the meetings that I had been privileged to attend, I could see no cause for alarm; and so I felt called upon to say that this fear was cherished by those who had not heard all the precious lessons given, and that therefore they were not warranted in coming to such a conclusion. None of the members of the class who had been studying the Word to learn "What saith the Scriptures?" entertained any such fear. The Bible, and the Bible alone, has been the subject of investigation in this school. Every lesson has been based, not on the ideas and the opinions of men, but on a plain "Thus saith the Lord."

Many remarks have been made to the

effect that in our camp meetings the speakers have dwelt upon the law, the law, and not on Jesus. This statement is not strictly true, but have not the people had some reason for making these remarks? Have not there stood in the desk, as mouthpieces for God, men who had not a genuine experience in heavenly things, men who had not received the righteousness of Christ Jesus? Many of our ministers have merely sermonized, presenting subjects in an argumentative way and scarcely mentioning the saving power of the Redeemer. Not having themselves partaken of the living bread from heaven, their testimony was destitute of nourishment, destitute of the saving blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. Their offering resembled the offering of Cain. He brought to the Lord the fruit of the ground, which, in itself, was acceptable in God's sight. Very good, indeed, was the fruit, but the virtue of the offering, the blood of Christ, represented by the blood of the slain lamb, was lacking. So it is in Christless sermons. Men are not pricked in the heart; they do not inquire, "What shall I do to be saved?"

In His sacrificial character, Christ reveals Himself as the Bread of Life. "Whoso eateth my flesh," He declared to His disciples, "and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life" (John 6:54). Why is not He presented to the people as the Living Bread? Because He is not abiding in the hearts of many of those who think it their duty to preach the law. Christ is left out of their sermonizing, and from east to west, from north to south, the church has been starving for the Bread of Life.

Of all professed Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world. Our ministers should ever be able to direct men and women to Christ, to the One who Himself declared, "I am the bread of life" (verse 35). Let those who minister to the spiritual necessities of the people read to them the words of Christ: "I am the living Bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (verse 51).

The Jews, unable to understand this declaration, "strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (verses 52, 53).

Often there are delivered to the people discourses destitute of the bread of life, the food essential for spiritual growth. Those who have been appropriating for themselves the bread of life will be able to break it to others.

Christ further declares: "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (verses 54-56). These words are very similar to those He used in representing Himself as the Vine, and His followers as the branches: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4, 5).

How can our people be better helped than by being given the bread of life? And this bread is God's Word; for Christ has said: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

The law and the gospel, revealed in the Word, are to be preached to the people; for the law and the gospel, blended, will convict of sin. God's law, while condemning sin, points to the gospel, revealing Jesus Christ, in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The glory of the gospel reflects light upon the Jewish age, giving significance to the whole Jewish economy of types and shadows. Thus both the law and the gospel are blended. In no discourse are they to be divorced.

Over the spiritual eyes of altogether too many there has been hanging a veil. Many have been teaching the binding claims of God's law, but have not been able to see to the end of that which was abolished. They have not seen that Jesus Christ is the glory of the law. The bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness are to be reflected from His messengers upon the minds of sinners, in order that they may be led to say, with one of old, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Ps. 119:18).

Many of our brethren and sisters do not discern the wondrous things that are to be seen in God's law. They have not beheld that which was revealed to Moses when he prayed, "I beseech thee, shew

Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world.

me thy glory" (Ex. 33:18). To Moses was revealed God's character. "The Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. 34:5-7).

The apostle John, in his first Epistle, gives the definition of sin. He declares: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).

To Moses, the character of God was revealed as His glory. In like manner, we behold the glory of Christ by beholding His character. Paul says: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory [from character to character] even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Why, then, is there manifested in the church so great a lack of love, of true, elevated, sanctified, ennobling sympathy, of tender pity and loving forbearance? It is because Christ is not constantly brought before the people. His attributes of character are not brought into the practical life. Men and women are not eating of the bread that cometh down from heaven.

I have felt very sad as I have seen ministers walking and working in the light of the sparks of their own kindling; ministers who were not obtaining spiritual nourishment from Christ, the Bread of Life. Their own souls were as destitute of the heavenly manna as the hills of Gilboa were destitute of dew and rain. In their hearts Christ was not an abiding presence. How could they speak intelligently of Him whom they had never known by

The religion of many is very much like an icicle—freezingly cold.

experimental knowledge?

We must see Christ as He is. By the eye of faith we must discern the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. By failing to cherish the Spirit of Christ, by taking wrong positions in the controversy over the law in Galatians—a question that many have not fully understood before taking a wrong position—the church has sustained a sad loss. The spiritual condition of the church, generally, is represented by the words of the True Witness: “Nevertheless,” saith the One who loves the souls for whom He has died, “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” The position taken by many during the Minneapolis General Conference testifies to their Christless condition. The admonition to every such an one is: “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

Have not many in this ministerial school seen their mistake of not abiding in Christ? Cannot they have the privilege of repenting, and of doing their first works? Who shall condemn this work of repentance, of confession, of baptism? If some conscientiously feel that their first duty is to repent of their sins, confess them, and be baptized, is not this the first work that they must do?

When precious rays of light from the Sun of Righteousness have shone upon our pathway, some have opened wide the door of the heart, welcoming the Heaven-sent light into the chambers of the soul. They receive the words of Christ Jesus gladly. Others have needed the divine anointing to improve their spiritual eyesight, in order that they may distinguish the light of truth from the darkness of error. Because of their blindness, they have lost an experience that would have been more precious to them

than silver and gold. Some, I fear, will never recover that which they have lost.

When strong-minded men once set their will against God's will, it is not easy for them to admit that they have erred in judgment. It is very difficult for such men to come fully into the light by honestly confessing their sins; for Satan has great power over the minds of many to whom God has granted evidence sufficient to encourage faith and inspire confidence. Many will not be convinced, because they are not inclined to confess. To resist and reject even one ray of light from Heaven because of pride and stubbornness of heart makes it easier to refuse light the second time. Thus men form the habit of rejecting light.

So long had the Jews refused to walk in the light of truth, that they rejected their Saviour. Jesus said of the Jews: “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (John 5:40). He, the Light of life, came to enlighten every man that comes into the world, so that no man need walk in darkness. The light of truth is constantly shining, but many men and women comprehend it not. And why? Because selfishness, egotism, pride, blinds their spiritual eyesight. Standing between them and the true light is the idol of their own opinion. They can see very readily that which they wish to see. Saith the True Witness: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7). “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him” (Ps. 25:14).

My brethren in the ministry, we need Jesus every moment. To lose His love from our hearts means much. Yet He Himself says: “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love” (Rev. 2:4). There is danger of presenting the truth in such a way that the intellect is exalted, leaving the souls of the hearers unsatisfied. A correct theory of the truth may be presented, and yet there may not be manifested the warmth of affection that the God of truth requires every one of His messengers to cherish and manifest.

The religion of many is very much like an icicle—freezingly cold. The hearts of not a few are still unmelted, unsubdued. They cannot touch the hearts of others, because their own hearts are not surcharged with the blessed love that flows from the heart of Christ. There are others who speak of religion as a matter of the will. They dwell upon stern duty as if it

were a master ruling with a scepter of iron—a master, stern, inflexible, all-powerful—devoid of the sweet, melting love and tender compassion of Christ. Still others go to the opposite extreme, making religious emotions prominent, and on special occasions manifesting intense zeal. Their religion seems to be more of the nature of a stimulus rather than an abiding faith in Christ.

True ministers know the value of the inward working of the Holy Spirit upon human hearts. They are content with simplicity in religious services. Instead of making much of popular singing, they give their principal attention to the study of the Word, and render praise to God from the heart. Above the outward adorning they regard the inward adorning, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. In their mouths is found no guile. In the lives of many more ministers there should be revealed the eternal verity of the kingdom of God. Those who practice the truth in daily life are represented as trees of righteousness, bearing the fruits of the Spirit.

Genuine religion is based upon a belief in the Scriptures. God's Word is to be believed without question. No part of it is to be cut and carved to fit certain theories. Men are not to exalt human wisdom by sitting in judgment upon God's Word. The Bible was written by holy men of old, as they were moved upon by the Holy Spirit, and this Book contains all that we know for certain and all that we can ever hope to learn in regard to God and Christ, unless, like Paul, we are taken to the third heaven to hear “unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Cor. 12:4). This revelation to the apostle did not spoil his humility.

The life of a Christian is a life regulated by the Word of God just as it reads. All the truths of the Old and the New Testaments form a complete whole. These truths we are to cherish, believe, and obey. To the true disciple, faith in God's Word is a living, active principle; for “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). By faith man believes that he receives the righteousness of Christ.

Faith, in itself, is an act of the mind. Jesus Himself is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. He gave His life for us, and His blood speaks in our behalf better things than spoke the blood of Abel, which cried unto God against Cain the murderer. Christ's blood was shed to remit our sins.

Many commit the error of trying to define minutely the fine points of distinction between justification and sanctification. Into the definitions of these two terms they often bring their own ideas and speculations. Why try to be more minute than is Inspiration on the vital question of righteousness by faith? Why try to work out every minute point, as if the salvation of the soul depended upon all having exactly your understanding of this matter? All cannot see in the same line of vision. You are in danger of making a world of an atom, and an atom of a world.

As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God's will, and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer, and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory.

Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child

of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety. The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: "This is My child. I relieve him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy—eternal life—because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son." Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness, stands faultless before God.

The sinner may err, but he is not cast off without mercy. His only hope, however, is repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Father's prerogative to forgive our transgressions and sins, because Christ has taken upon Himself our guilt and reprieved us, imputing to us His own righteousness. His sacrifice satisfies fully the demands of justice.

Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God's boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly undeserving. He forgives transgressions and

sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins. Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal.

David was pardoned of his transgression because he humbled his heart before God in repentance and contrition of soul, and believed that God's promise to forgive would be fulfilled. He confessed his sin, repented, and was reconverted. In the rapture of the assurance of forgiveness, he exclaimed, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." The blessing comes because of pardon; pardon comes through faith that the sin, confessed and repented of, is borne by the great Sin-bearer. Thus from Christ cometh all our blessings. His death is an atoning sacrifice for our sins. He is the great medium through whom we receive the mercy and favor of God. He, then, is indeed the Originator, the Author, as well as the Finisher, of our faith. ■

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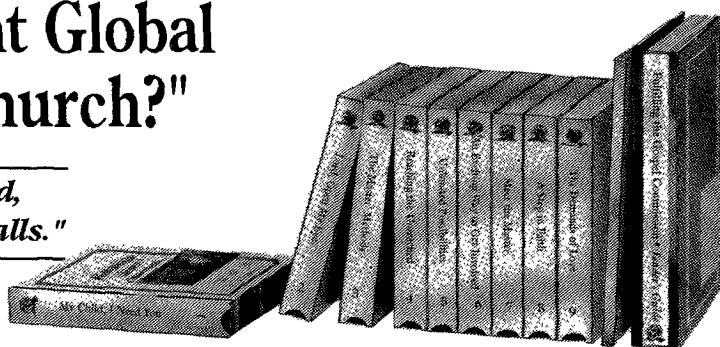
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Improving the image of your church

Chad McComas

Ours is an age of packaging. The medium is as significant as the message. The wrapper is as important as the gift.

What kind of image does your church portray? Positive, optimistic, visionary, alive, ongoing, caring, and inviting? Or pessimistic, dying, deserted, indifferent, sick? The image of your church may be as crucial to its success as the message you preach, and so here are some tips to ensure an image of health, life, and vitality in your church.

1. Begin with the sign. Within seconds of sighting a church, people form opinions of what they think its worship and fellowship must be like. Is your church sign indicative of an alive and orderly church, or an indifferent and worn-out one? The name of your church should stand out clearly in large, bold letters. A few words of welcome are always appropriate, such as "A place of worship for all people" or "Come and worship with us." Time of worship and other church appointments may be listed too. Maintain the signboard in good repair at all times.

2. Keep the exterior of the church beautiful. "Beauty," someone has said, "is in the eye of the beholder." Visitors will see the exterior of your church first before they get to know the interior, so keep the grounds and the outside of your place of worship attractive and inviting. Paint the church be-

fore it becomes absolutely necessary. Care for the lawn regularly. Keep the weeds pulled and the hedges trimmed. Plant seasonal flowers, and let the beauty of nature's colors attract members and visitors alike to come in and worship the God who created such beauty.

3. Make that first greeting the warmest possible. The difference between a warm and a cold church, a friendly and an indifferent one, is often that first human contact—a smile, a handshake, an inquiry. It is important that this contact make the most positive impression possible. A happy, radiant, and friendly greeter transmits an important message: a message of love and care. If the greeter looks unhappy, spends time gossiping with friends while visitors go unnoticed, or just conveys a formal welcome, the church is not going to be exactly overflowing with worshippers. The best way to see visitors return to your church is to make them feel at home and part of the family when they visit you the first time.

4. Transmit a positive image in and through your printed media.

Is your church bulletin attractive in looks and content? I have often walked into a nice church and been handed a bulletin that was duplicated on a piece of plain white paper. My first reaction? "This church isn't making it financially." I am not advocating the use of generic bulletins, the ones that have nice four-color pictures on them, but we need to make sure that what we do is attractive, legible, and imaginative. A customized bulletin for the church, with contemporary design and type style, sets a good image, and its cost need not be any more than

generic stock, especially if you plan for a whole year.

The content of the bulletin is an excellent tool in image-building for your church. Make the bulletin creative, avoiding repetitive phrases, ideas, and remarks. Vary your welcoming note. Include warm and caring messages. Use quotes from the Spirit of Prophecy. Try a poem. A scriptural promise can convey just the needed message.

Check out your stationery. Is it contemporary? Or are you using the same style used years ago?

Another communication medium I find helpful in image-building for the local church is the newsletter. Is your newsletter well produced? Does it have a distinctive masthead? Is it printed, duplicated, or photocopied? Is there plenty of white space in the newsletter to make it easy to read? Do you use graphics to make it attractive? Since you probably mail your newsletter to nonmembers, make sure you project your church as alive, active, and caring.

Many churches are now developing brochures that outline the various activities and ministries they offer to the community. If prepared and produced well, these brochures can carry a message of a living, loving, and serving church, not just in a formal way, but in its serious involvement with the spiritual and personal struggles that mark life all around us.

These are just a few of the externals that can help or hinder in building a good image for your church. Involve the entire church and give yourself a good image. You will be surprised how much it helps in the worship, fellowship, and outreach activities of the church. ■

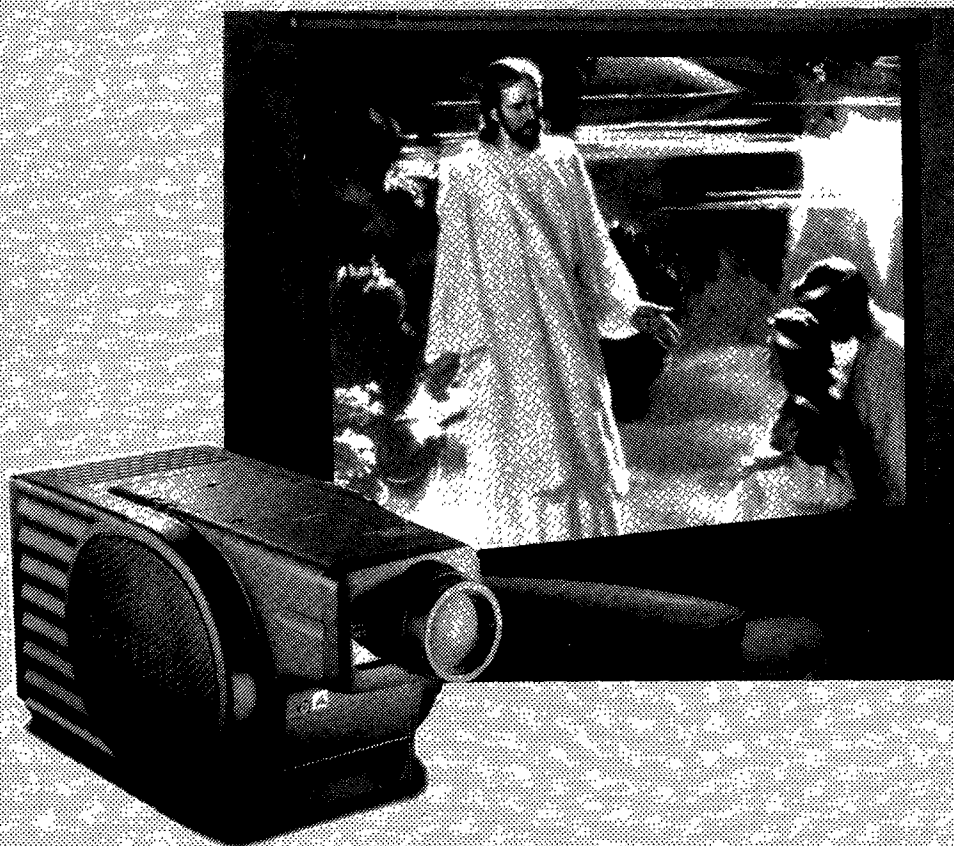
Chad McComas is pastor of the Corvallis Seventh-day Adventist Church in Oregon.

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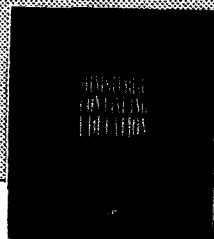
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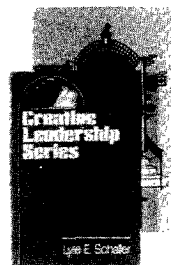
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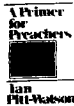
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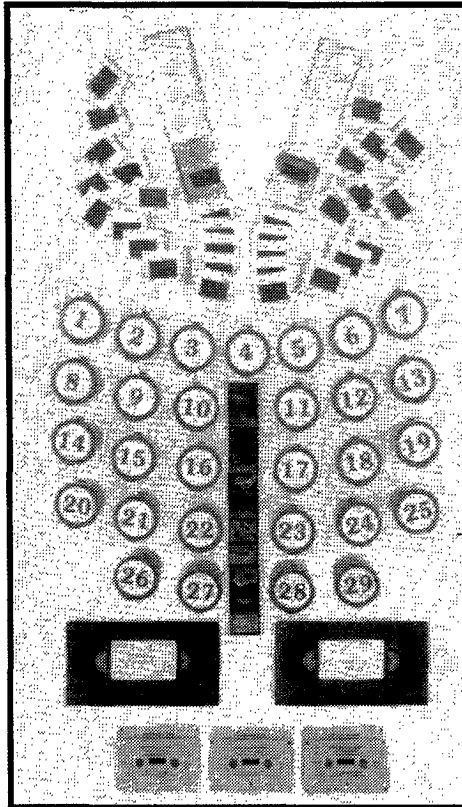
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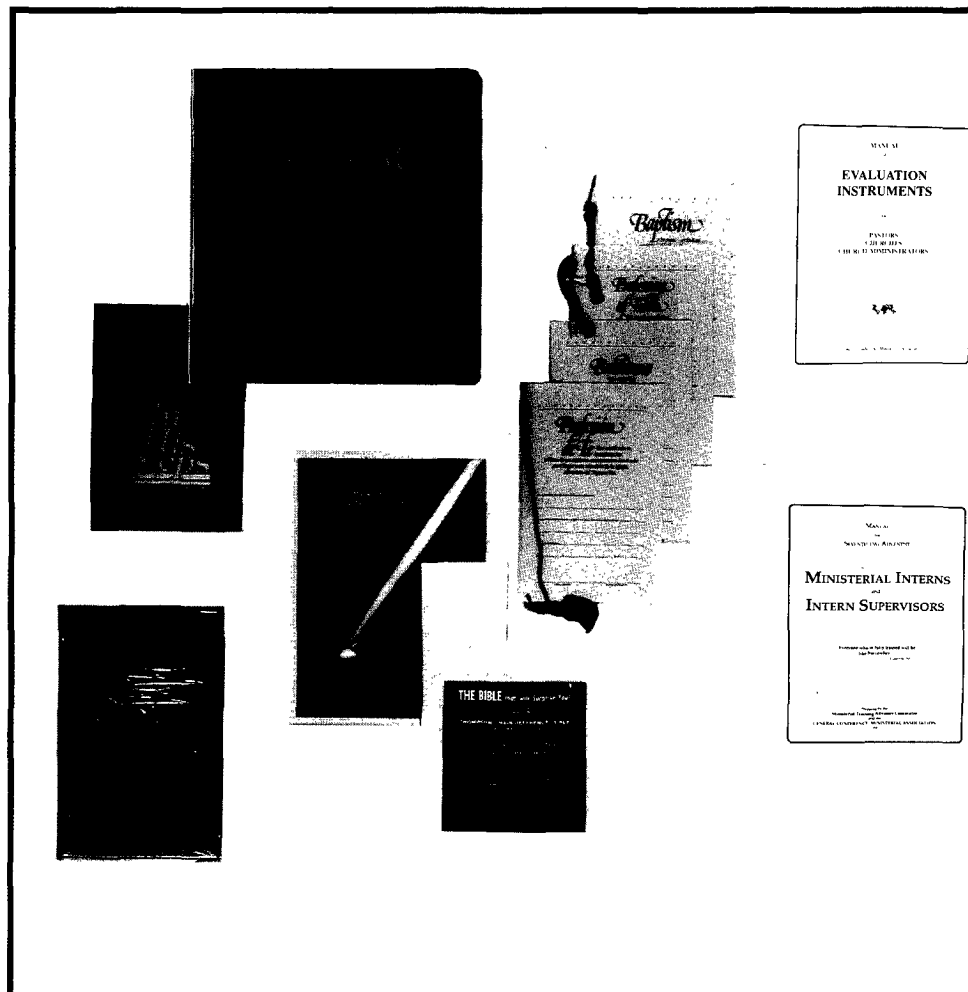
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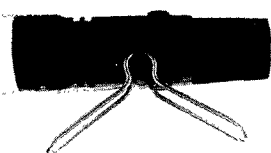
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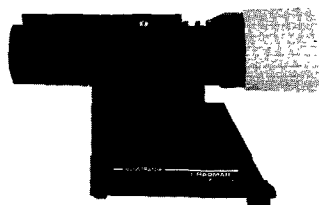
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Polygamy: an enduring problem

Josephat R. Siron

**Church leaders
have taken two
basic approaches
to dealing with
polygamy.**



Josephat R. Siron pastors the Kabokyek Seventh-day Adventist Church, Kericho, Kenya.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27).^{*} The Scriptures state that God created a couple, male and female; and that these two, not three or four, became the parents of the human race. It was a monogamous family that was first settled on this planet. There is every reason to believe that this was the ideal arrangement, because "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (verse 31).

The New Testament confirms this ideal. Jesus asked, "Haven't you read, . . . 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one" (Matt. 19:4-6). Undoubtedly God intended that the first marriage serve as a model for every succeeding family in every generation. The original form of marriage is integral to society; it is, in fact, the basis on which society exists.

That in marriage a man and woman become one flesh also makes it evident that marriage is a lifelong union between those who covenant together in this way. The solemnity of marriage does not lie in the signing of a marriage certificate, but in the agreement, with God's approval, between those who make up the marriage and who yield one to the other physically, mentally, and spiritually.

With the entrance of sin on this planet and after some few generations people began to practice polygamy. "The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were

beautiful, and they married any of them they chose" (Gen. 6:2).

It must be noted that in societies where polygamy is legal, it is regarded as acceptable and even desirable. In many communities of East and West Africa, it is the first wife who looks for a cowife for her husband. I met a man whose wife had persuaded him to take on a second wife. Later the family members were converted and wanted to be baptized and to be admitted as church members while still in their polygamous state. The husband argued that he considered both women his legal wives and that the women also recognized each other as cowife.

Problems having to do with marriage are among the most complex and taxing of any of the problems pastors must deal with. Marriage problems are complex because they affect the most basic of human institutions, and they tax pastors because regarding many of them the Bible gives no clear-cut statements of aye or nay. So pastors must employ exegetical approaches and must place themselves in the right positions and look at the problems from God's perspective. If Jesus were walking the streets of our cities or villages and He met and converted a polygamous family—as He might have done 2,000 years ago in Palestine—what would He do with that family?

Stance N

Today's theologians have reached varied stances of nays and ayes regarding polygamy. I see two basic positions. One I call stance N, and the other, stance A.

Stance N requires polygamists to make a complete change before baptism and admission into the church as members.

Proponents of this stance appeal to Genesis 1:27; 2:22, 24; and Mark 10:7. They also apply the symbol of one church as the bride and Christ as the bridegroom (see Hosea 2:19).

Those who hold this position are divided into two camps: N_1 and N_2 . The members of stance N_1 say that when a polygamist is converted he has to choose only one wife among those he has. He must put the rest aside and maintain a marital relationship only with the one he has chosen. This stance says that the man continues to have the responsibility of supplying the material needs of his former wives. In other words, all the wives have an equal claim to the man's property.

The difficulty with this approach is that, human nature being what it is, the man tends to choose to keep the youngest or the prettiest wife and separate from the older ones, while biblically, the one the man married first may have more right in the family.¹ The cases in which some of the wives are not persuaded to the faith of the husband (or vice versa) and may not see the reason for separation also pose problems.

Those who favor stance N_2 recognize only the first marriage—whether solemnized in a law court or in a commissioner's office or according to a traditional customary wedding. They do not recognize any of the rest regardless of where solemnized. They find support for their position in Proverbs 5:18. In their view, when a man in a polygamous marriage is converted, he has to separate from all his wives other than the one with whom he first entered into a marriage relationship. Those who favor this stance agree with the proponents of stance N_1 that the man should supply the material needs of the separated wives.

The proponents of both N_1 and N_2 suggest that since, in their view, there was no valid marriage in the case of the wives from whom the husband separated, these wives are free to marry other men. But this is unpracticable in many societies because the social environment holds marriage in high esteem, even to the point of regarding a wife as still married to someone who has died.² When the church suggests that these wives may marry others, while the community regards them as still married to the first man, the church's image can be greatly marred—as a promoter of immorality and a destroyer of home and family.

Both sections of stance N may encourage a very serious problem to arise, a problem that may be perpetuated to the

following generations. Many of the separated wives may not be able to remarry, yet they still desire the love of a man. Often they end up in immoral relationships and bear illegitimate children.

Stance A

Stance A is more liberal. Those who hold this stance believe that what affects people socially will also affect them spiritually, so they seek a solution that deals with both the sociological and spiritual aspects of the problem of polygamy. They carry the spade in one hand and the hoe in the other. Pull the weeds and cultivate the seedling is their unwritten motto.

They see two categories of cases: those who were already in polygamous marriages when reached by the gospel and those who had professed Christianity and then backslidden into polygamous practice. Stance A proponents argue that those whose present conversion to Christianity is their first experience, who had not confessed Christian faith before and then lapsed from it, should be fully accepted into church membership through baptism without necessarily separating from any of the wives. In this group's view, separation is not a prerequisite for baptism and acceptance into the church.

Those who hold this view believe that those welcomed into the church in a polygamous state should not be elected to any leadership office in the church (see 1 Tim. 3:2). Like those in Stance N, they also hold that in those cases where there is separation, the welfare of the children must be looked into.

The main problem that this stance poses is that it is sometimes difficult to determine whether those desiring baptism are really experiencing their first conversion to Christian faith. This is particularly true in the case of mass responses during crusades. The desire to be baptized may so move some of the converts that the testimony they give of their life history may not be very reliable. Opposers of this view argue that it is not backed by Scripture, and that since the Bible makes no clear-cut statement allowing the baptizing of those in polygamous situations, we must not accept this practice.

Polygamy is a real issue, especially in Africa, so we must deal with the problem. But how do we answer questions the Bible does not directly deal with?

First, we must realize that our primary objective here on earth is to preach the gospel of salvation, and not to settle social issues.

Second, we must study how God dealt with similar situations, searching for the guiding principle that will enable us to deal with the issue we face. Here we must beware of appealing to man's example, even as recorded in Scripture, unless the behavior received God's commendation. We know that not every action or practice in the Bible received God's stamp of approval.

Third, when an issue is not directly addressed in the Bible, we must apply reason, making sure that our conclusions harmonize with general biblical practice and with doctrinal orthodoxy.

In certain environments and in our dealing with some social issues, our solutions may suggest that we are endorsing unorthodox practices when we actually are not. We as a church must be willing to allow the gospel we preach to fulfill its function of transforming human beings and their society without the aid of human hands. When the gospel is presented in its purity, we shall see society itself rising against the evils within it. When, on the other hand, some evil is perpetuated in society, it may be because we have failed in our responsibility to take the true message to the people. In the case of polygamy, we have the opportunity to do this; the church must show the lapsed members that this gospel transforms sinners and that if they go back to sin, their situation is worse than before they received knowledge of the truth.

There can be no genuine reason that we should deny people the privilege of salvation simply because they were polygamists when they heard the gospel. If we do this, we become mere methodologists who formulate many rules and regulations without biblical principle; we become no less than judges in the church. The major concern of the minister is not to devise ways and means of admitting and/or screening out polygamists, but to save by preaching the gospel of salvation as it relates to the marriage institution. ■

* All Bible quotations in this article are from the New International Version.

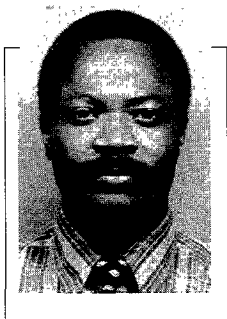
¹ Further complicating the situation, many of those who hold stance N_1 consider all marriages outside the Christian church as invalid and the traditional customary marriage as evil and barbaric. They consider those who have been joined by the latter as not truly married but rather as living as concubines with the man. This group is still perplexed as to how to answer the question of a polygamous family in which each of the marriages took place in a law court or in a commissioner's office.

² J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1983), p. 144.

Victor over the demons

Moses Oladele
Taiwo

In our preaching we must show not only the gospel's implications for the hereafter, but also its meaning for the world in which our hearers live now.



Moses Oladele Taiwo serves concurrently as a pastor and as a theology teacher at the Adventist Seminary of West Africa, Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Christianity seems to be gaining more ground than any of the other religions on the African continent. Nevertheless, as in the time of the Colossian heresy (see Col. 1:13-23; 2:8-3:5), many have not seen the sufficiency of Christ. Many converts see no conflict in going to church, listening to sermons, praying, singing, and giving tithe and offerings while at the same time, especially in trying and difficult situations, visiting an oracle diviner (*babalawo*) or a traditional practitioner (*onisegun*) to find what the future holds.

I strongly believe that our missionaries, pastors, evangelists, and local preachers need to address their gospel messages to this situation. I am not saying that we should change the gospel as presented in the Scriptures, but I am quite sure that in New Testament times the gospel was never preached in a vacuum that distanced it from the environment. We must relate our preaching of Christ to our diverse cultural milieus.¹

The Colossian and the African worlds

The world the church faces in Africa today closely resembles that of Colossae in Paul's day. That was a world filled with spirits and all forms of cosmic powers that had to be placated constantly for one to sense the Divine Presence. The inhabitants of that world faced a hostile universe with its numberless *archai* (principalities) and *exousiai* (powers). Their observance of the orderly movements of the stars had led many to conclude that the stars pos-

sessed power over human affairs and that the particular configurations of the heavenly bodies at the time of birth shaped one's destiny. They believed that to gain happiness in life, people must try to understand and if necessary to placate the astral spirits.²

Similar beliefs exist today in many parts of the world—as they do in Nigeria, particularly among the Yoruba-speaking people. Africans live in constant fear in a world infested by spirits and demons, which they believe abide in stars and in natural forces like wind, thunder, lightning, and rain. They fear also those who they believe can use these spiritual forces for good or evil ends.

The Yoruba believe there are hundreds of spirits and divinities not only to be revered but also to be worshiped. Traditionally, nobody would act without consulting one of the divinities because it was believed that these gods and spirits control access to the Divine Presence. For this reason Africans look to religion to provide not only salvation for the soul and direction in the moral life but also protection against these empirical cosmic powers.

Only as it addresses the above problems is the preaching of Christ fully meaningful to an African. To African Christians, "salvation in Christ alone" must cover the whole sphere of life. It must offer victory over demonic powers, continued protection from these powers, the provision of daily needs, and security for the society in which Africans find themselves—in other words, it must provide for the person's total well-being.

But I am sorry to say that our evangelists and local preachers and pastors have

woefully failed in addressing these needs. Some have totally denied the reality of demonic powers, characterizing belief in them as superstitious. Others have halfheartedly accepted their reality, but have made little effort to relate the gospel message to these problems. Instead, they have emphasized the salvation of the soul and the moral life.

This failure to relate Christianity to the world in which Africans live has led to the idea that Christian salvation is primarily concerned with the life to come. Because of this approach many Africans believe either that Christ is not concerned with the cosmic beings that they must fight daily or that He has no power over them. A song popular at festivals among the Yoruba tribe to which I belong says:

Awa O s'oro ile wa O.

Awa O s'oro ile wa O.

Igbagbo o pe ka'wa ma s'oro.

Awa os'oro ile wa O.

"We shall celebrate the cultic festival of our home.

"We shall celebrate the cultic festival of our home.

"Christianity never forbids, no, Christianity never forbids participation in cultic festivals.

"We shall celebrate the cultic festivals of our homeland."

It is because Christian churches have seldom dealt adequately with this situation that many African independent churches are emerging today and the African Mission churches increasing. This approach has also influenced the trend of Christian theology on the African continent.

What must we do?

Our preachers must contextualize their evangelistic inreach and outreach. They must show how the gospel of Christ meets people's diverse needs. While in our evangelism we must preach the forgiveness of sin through Christ, we must also show people the total adequacy of Christ for all their needs now and in the hereafter. They must see this in their day-to-day experience.

The proclamation of the gospel must not only present the reality of demonic enslavement, but also proclaim the emancipation Christ provides. As K. Koch wrote: "Where the unusual phenomenon of possession, as the extreme manifestation of the evil dominion of the wicked one, actually appears, we must

confront it with the glad tidings of the message of deliverance."³

We must make people aware of the constant presence of Jesus and the victory His death and resurrection achieved on behalf of believers. Our people need to know about the power of prayer.

We must preach Christ in the light of the cultural understanding of our audience, with a view to eliminating the problems of the double life with which many of them still wrestle daily. Only as we relate Jesus to their everyday world can they see Him not only as the Saviour from sin but as the Victor, to whom all power both in heaven and on earth has been delivered; the One who is sufficient for all their needs. Here Paul is our greatest example. ■

¹ J. Warneck, *The Living Forces of the Gospel* (New York: Fountainhead Pub., Inc., 1970), p. 232; see also S. O. Abogunrin, "The Background to St. Paul's Concept of Freedom," *Orita*, June 1977, pp. 28-40.

² H. C. Kee and F. W. Young, *The Living World of the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1974), pp. 18, 19.

³ K. Koch, *Christian Counseling and Occultism* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Pubs., 1973), p. 338.

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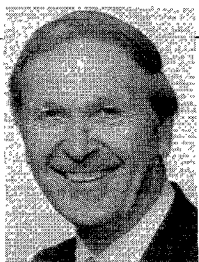
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Don Hawley

EMBARK ON AN EXCITING NEW ADVENTURE IN CHRIST!



How to keep what you reap—2

Floyd Bresee

Newly transplanted trees need lots of attention. Established ones need only a little pruning now and then. Previously I mentioned two ways we can help newly planted Christians survive: prepare them carefully before baptism and make their baptism a big church event.* Here are three more suggestions:

1. Get them close to someone they respect who cares about them. Note the three qualifiers. We need to get them close to someone. Romans 15:1 counsels, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." To "bear" a weak friend, you put his arm around your neck, your arm around his waist, and invite him to lean on you. You must get very close before your strength can make up for his weakness. By nature we tend to deal with new members' weaknesses by correcting or rejecting, by distancing ourselves. The Christian way is to get close enough to help bear them.

We get new Christians close to Adventist members by making sure that they have invitations to their homes, especially on Sabbath. There's no better way to teach them Sabbathkeeping, vegetarianism, and other details of the Adventist lifestyle.

Research indicates that new members who make six to eight Adventist friends in the first six months almost always remain in the church.

Get them close to someone they respect. Spiritual guardianship works well if the guardian is someone respected by, matched with, and attractive to the new member. But if the more successful, better-educated members, longer in the

church, refuse to give time to the rough-hewn new members, the new members won't prosper.

Get new members close to someone who *cares* about them. People seldom choose to leave an environment where they feel wanted, important, needed, loved. If the new members had felt loved elsewhere, chances are they wouldn't have come. If they don't feel loved here, chances are they won't stay. When members are absent from church activities without being missed, it proves they aren't being actively loved—whether we admit it or not.

2. Continue their instruction. Nobody ever ate enough at one banquet to last a lifetime. No evangelistic series or Bible study series provides enough spiritual food to last the rest of one's life. Instruction must be continued after baptism.

Jesus pointed out that spiritual birth resembles physical birth (John 3). Extending that metaphor, we can say that new babies don't know how to feed themselves. Parents can't tell them "The food's in the cupboard. Just help yourself." On the contrary, when a baby is born, the work of the father and mother is just begun. Providing food for and feeding a baby take enormous amounts of time and energy. Helping "baby" Christians who haven't yet learned to "feed" themselves develop a meaningful devotional life and getting Christian literature into their homes is part of the process of nourishing their growth.

New babies don't eat adult food. You can't expect them to thrive on the same beans and rice older family members eat. A pastor's class or a new-member class ought to be part of every church program. If taught at Sabbath school lesson study time, it encourages the habit of attend-

ing Sabbath school and church. And such a class offers food that fits the new member's appetite and digestion.

Family members usually don't eat right if they don't come to the table. At the very least, we must include Sabbath school and church attendance in our discipling formula. Attendance as a percentage of membership is a better indicator of the quality of life in a church family than is either membership or the number of baptisms.

Some divisions of the church are already experimenting with such an approach. The North American Division is counting those in attendance at the worship service on certain Sabbaths. The Far Eastern Division is experimenting with a formula: Membership *plus* Sabbath school attendance *plus* worship service attendance *divided by 3 equals* composite membership.

3. Put them to work. One of the surest signs that new members have been disciplined is when they start discipling others. People may be more successful at soulwinning when they are first converted than they will ever be again. While eventually friendships with those who are Adventists will predominate, at first their family and friends are for the most part non-Adventists. The combined effect of the new member's influence on old friends and the attractive example of a changed life make powerful soul-winning tools.

Let's unite to fulfill Jesus' purpose: "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16). ■

*See "How to Keep What You Reap—1," *Ministry*, June 1990, p. 25.

Letters

From page 2

only source of truth. Therefore, when doubt is cast on their beloved prophet they flounder and have no anchor to hold them steady.

My prayer is that our teachers and ministers will be properly informed so they do not create a paper pope and put our prophet on a pedestal that is neither correct nor in harmony with Ellen G. White's wishes. Please continue to inform and inspire the ministry. —Harold K. West, pastor, Mount Dora, Florida.

■ Many years ago, after listening to leaders such as Harry Washburn, Guy Wolfkill, Percy Magan, W. A. Spicer, E. A. Sutherland, Ernest Lloyd, and others who knew this humble woman and *experimented* with her instructions, I decided to experiment too. Since much of her counsel is unconventional, I learned to expect challenges, even ridicule. Yet if learning by doing is ever valid, it is with her writings. They're so true that leading educators, legislators, and even royalty have expressed astonishment over my "advanced concepts," which I had to confess were hers. God gave her the *why* and *how* answers for us today.

What would happen if we ministers first read her carefully, then took our people with us in experimentation? Some years ago an Andrews Theological Seminary study found that few ministers study her beyond such books as *The Desire of Ages*, *The Great Controversy*, *Education*, and *Steps to Christ*. Inspiring as these books are, they are only a tithe of the total. What a pity we don't read the rest and bring the wisdom of God into our committees and congregations when we treat matters of schools, health systems, sports, finance, and a thousand others.

Is it possible that we relax under a curse for ignoring divine instructions? (See Deuteronomy 28.) God, through Hosea, sent us the message "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." One day such experimentation will be understood. —Raymond S. Moore, Camas, Washington.

■ I hope that the publication of the study by Fred Veltman will kindle a renewed interest in *The Desire of Ages*. I believe we should pay as much atten-

tion to what she said as we do to how she wrote.

I think the late Elder Spicer came closer to telling us what the Spirit of Prophecy is all about than anyone else. He wrote: "Not a critic has there been who could produce anything like these writings that he criticizes. There is something here that baffles the critic and holds him smiting in vain against the monumental rock of truth" (as quoted in Godfrey J. Anderson, *Spicer: Leader With the Common Touch*, pp. 48, 49). —Clifford Laurell, Apple Valley, California.

■ Why has God kept this information from His people for so many years? Did you not find while making this study that somebody during these years stumbled onto this information and wanted to bring it out into the open but was "ordered" to keep his mouth shut? —H. D. Schmidt, Pleasant Hill, California.

In Bible conferences since the 1930s and in publications on the writings of Ellen White, the fact of her literary dependency has been admitted. Until the 1970s, when Walter Rea's studies pushed the question to the forefront again and with greater urgency, the literary dependency was minimized and the question was usually quickly passed over. In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was enough interest and concern over the issue to lead Elder Neal Wilson and his advisors to pursue the answer.

The introduction of the major research report provides a brief history of previous publications on the question of Ellen White's use of sources. I know of no official action ordering anyone to maintain silence. —Fred Veltman, Angwin, California.

■ Ten years down the track, in the light of supportive findings, what justification does the Seventh-day Adventist Church now have for penalizing Pastor Walter T. Rea? Dr. Veltman was asked, "Will you be able to report the results of your study without having your ministerial credentials revoked?" (*Ministry*, "The Desire of Ages Project: The Data," October 1990, p. 5). It appears Pastor Rea was not. —E. John Rosendahl, J.P., Dharruk, New South Wales, Australia.

Rea's dismissal from the ministry was not simply because he reported the facts about Ellen White's literary borrowing. Unlike Veltman, Rea interpreted those facts as calling into question her inspiration. —Editors.

That naughty word again

Regarding your editorial " 'Celebration' Is a Naughty Word" (December 1990): There is much arguing about what is or is not "celebration." It seems to be an issue of similar proportions to one that stirred the 1888 General Conference session: whether it was the Alamanis or the Huns who were among the 10 kingdoms of Daniel 7. Could we again be in danger of missing the great blessing the Lord has in store for us because we are so caught up in tearing one another apart over a word?

Having said all that, however, I do have a few concerns. I am not against musical instruments in church. I have played the trombone, guitar, piano, and organ many times for special music or as part of the church service. Sad to say, I have at times played in ways I now feel were inappropriate. But the problems were not the instruments. The problems were the style of music and the reason for playing—to show off my talent. I am afraid that some types of amplification systems, sound tracks, and lighting arrangements could be spotlighting the performers more than is healthy for them or the congregation. If that is being incorporated into a church—whether "celebration" or not—I am opposed to it!

We need to be very careful not only of our own motives ("The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jer. 17:9), but of what response will be evoked in the beholders. Could certain styles of worship and the use of certain types of instruments, although used sincerely, be successful in terms of numbers because they give the impression that "finally the church is loosening up a bit"? Are some, perhaps, trying to make the statement that we are a more easygoing, entertainment-oriented social club than we used to be?

Whatever our church services are called, let's make sure that they keep our eyes focused on Jesus—His work, the holiness of His character, and the victory over sin that He holds out to each one of us. May God help us not to become embroiled in an issue that can only sidetrack us from doing the work that the world desperately needs us to do in these last days—afflicting our souls and carrying the gospel to every man, woman, and child. —Homer Trecartin, pastor, Gaylord Seventh-day Adventist Church, Gaylord, Michigan.

■ It is true that neither the Bible nor Ellen White opposes the use of instruments in the worship service. However, it is important to consider the problems of association when deciding which instruments to include in the musical portions of the service. In ancient times musical instruments were widely used in pagan services that were totally immoral. Since for many people instrumental music had a strong association with the immorality of pagan rites, the early Christians refused to have such music in their services.

Today amplified guitars, trap drum sets, and electronic keyboards are very much in evidence in rock music concerts and on the popular MTV videos. These musical events probably stimulate as much immorality as did the pagan music of many centuries ago. For this reason, ought not our present-day church leadership to exercise caution when introducing these particular instruments as a part of worship? This is not to say that they should never be used. But more than most, these instruments can be (and often are) played in church in a way that reminds one more of secular activities than of a sublime worship experience. — Paul E. Hamel, professor emeritus of music, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

■ In your editorial you state, "So far as we are aware, no conference administrator has prohibited these forms of worship." I have made it very clear to our conference workers that we do not advocate the celebration-type church in our conference at this time, and that we have some questions as to where this movement might lead.

I wish we could talk less about this subject and get on with God's work. I recognize a great need for us to make our services more meaningful and something our folk look forward to. I don't know that we need to make tremendous changes, but I would like to see more music and praise in our services. But this needs to be done tastefully and not in a Pentecostal-type way. — W. D. Wampler, president, Iowa-Missouri Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, West Des Moines, Iowa.

■ Dancing in worship is still being done in Israel. Before the beginning of Sabbath, late Friday afternoon, the Jewish young men come down from Old Jerusalem. They place a hand on the shoulder

of the person ahead of them and make their way down to the Western Wall, chanting and keeping time together. This is called a dance. To us it would be a procession. To make their dance anything else is not being fair and is an injustice to the true biblical meaning of the word. — Lyle Hamel, Yucaipa, California.

■ Do these celebration-style churches preach revival and reformation, which is our greatest need as a people?

It would be very easy for me as a pastor to change the church sign and attract large numbers of people, and then preach to them what they want to hear. I live in the Bible Belt, and these types of people want to hear that Jesus loves them and that they can be saved in their sins. The crowds will continue to grow if I don't preach to them about giving up their caffeine, tobacco, jewelry, and impure TV and videos.

God has given us our marching orders as pastors: "Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me" (Eze. 33:7). "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58:1).

Christ Himself stated, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, . . . and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14). Are these celebration centers leading our church to the straight and narrow lifestyle of Jesus? If they are—praise God! If not, then beware of the counterfeit! — Pat Milligan, pastor, Enid Seventh-day Adventist Church, Enid, Oklahoma.

■ In spite of the positive reaction of interested members, there are aspects subject to criticism, such as: (1) the entertainment flavor of celebration worship; (2) the subjective approach; (3) the often overlooked fact that celebration in praise is just one element in a well-balanced worship service—and not necessarily the major one; (4) the praise, which should come in response to God's speaking through Scripture and sermon, often coming too early in the service; and (5) the tendency to use contemporary gospel songs rather than the tried and tested hymns of the church.

There are a number of serious questions that need to be addressed as well, such as: 1. Where will this approach take us? 2. To what extent is celebration wor-

ship a form of neo-Pentecostalism? 3. How far afield are we willing to look for inspiration today? 4. Is there a problem in the theology that supports celebration worship and that informs the preaching taking place in that context?

We ought to avoid taking extreme positions pro or con. Careful study and analysis are required so that extremists do not determine the outcome.

I agree with your observation that "perhaps the bigger issue really concerns our theology of worship—or our lack of one." In my opinion, we have not given worship the attention Revelation 14:6, 7 demands. This lack of attention has produced a vacuum, and we should not be surprised by what fills it. — C. Raymond Holmes, professor of worship and preaching, Andrews University Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

■ After reading the letters regarding celebration churches (October 1990), I offer one piece of advice: Limit future letters to people who have attended a celebration church with enough interest to find out what is going on.

In my church, teaching, discipling, evangelism, and small group ministries flourish. We aren't "pulpit-centered," we are Christ-centered. The musicians don't entertain us, they simply accompany our congregational singing. "Celebration of the Word" rarely stops before 1:00 p.m.

For special music, choir numbers, a big pipe organ, and a quickie sermon that's over by 12:00, look up a more conventional church! — Aileen Ludington, M.D., Loma Linda, California.

Endorses Maxson's practice

Ben Maxson's devotional practice ("Are You a Day's Journey From God," January 1991) is a most interesting and effectual means of becoming well instructed in the Bible. Being retired, I make bold to relate my experience as an endorsement of his practice. Five o'clock in the morning finds me at my desk with my books and Bibles for an extended devotional session. More follows later in the day. I recommend this routine to all, but especially to those who find in retirement a boredom that comes from the lack of doing something. What better way could a Christian employ the first hours of the day?

Thank you, *Ministry*, for asking Ben to describe his devotional life!
—William Ritz, Santa Cruz, California.

Escaping Materialism: Living a Life That's Rich Towards God

George Caywood, Questar Publishers, Sisters, Oregon, 1989, 256 pages, \$12.95. Reviewed by *Ciro Sepulveda*, pastor, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Pico Rivera, California.

I began reading *Escaping Materialism* expecting a book on the use and misuse of money. Those expectations hindered my understanding the central message that lay hidden behind its misleading title. A better title for the book would have been "Reflections of a Christian on Homelessness in America."

As the author reflects on his own life in the light of a series of biblical texts, he forces us to face disturbing issues. Caywood's first job involved getting out the payroll for the Marriott Corporation. After an uneventful stay in corporate America he accepted the directorship of one of the biggest rescue missions in the United States. The most informative part of the book concerns Caywood's work in that mission, located in downtown Los Angeles.

Daily contact with homeless men and women who are stripped of self-esteem allows Caywood to write about poverty with a sensitivity rarely found in Christian literature. The experience with the disinherited of Los Angeles that his family shared pushes into our attention human conditions that shake our dearly held myths. Our perception of the lower levels of our society cannot remain the same after reading this book.

Caywood expresses frustration in planning a new building. "As far as the public image goes, rescue missions are like jail. . . . If it's legal to put up buildings for the rich, like expensive condos, then it ought to be legal in the same neighborhood to build low-cost apartments for the poor."

Although there are times readers might feel they have picked up a book on liberation theology, it soon becomes clear that the writer's thoughts flow from the prophets and the gospel.

Money is not the topic of this excellent volume. Instead, Caywood gives us some unique and valuable insights on homelessness in America.

The Case for Christianity

C. S. Lewis, Macmillan Publishing Company (Collier Books), New York, 1989, 64 pages, \$3.95, paper. Reviewed by *Caesar Wamalika Mwachi*, chaplain, Chebawai Seventh-day Adventist School, Kenya, East Africa.

The Case for Christianity is a compilation of Lewis' famed radio addresses during World War II. Lewis argues that a careful examination of our philosophical presuppositions will compel us to come to terms with the basics of Christian faith. He condenses his argument into two parts: "Right and wrong as a clue to the meaning of the universe" and "what Christians believe."

When we come to the realization that a real moral law exists, that there is a Power behind that law, and that we have broken that law—then Christianity begins to speak to us. "The just shall live by faith" has real meaning to people who understand their desperate spiritual condition.

Lewis, who was a layman and who had been a non-Christian for many years, speaks with authority. He understands the difficulties that ordinary people feel about religion. His clear and compelling reason forces nonbelievers to reexamine their attitudes toward Christianity. For this reason Lewis's writings speak as persuasively today as they did in the 1940s. Their cogency still recommends them as the best missionary literature for secularists.

Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road

J. Dudley Woodberry, ed., MARC Publications, Pomona, California, 1990, 392 pages, \$15.95, paper. Reviewed by *Borge Schantz*, director, Global Centre for Islamic Studies, Newbold College, Bracknell, Berkshire, England.

Woodberry, professor of Islamic Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, draws his material from papers presented by 24 evangelical Christian scholars. They bring to this book their expertise on Islamics, missiology, anthropology, theology, education, evangelism, and mission administration.

With such a variety of writers come

differing styles of writing and ways of conveying ideas. I did not find all the articles equally easy to understand. However, they are generally complete and authoritative. Although the purpose of the book is to equip the Christian in discussing and sharing the Christian faith with Muslims, all contributors take seriously the challenges of Islam and the sincerity of Muslim behavior. For this reason the book will enhance better understanding and co-existence between adherents of the two largest world religions.

Raising Wise Children

Carolyn Kohlenberger and Noel Wescombe, Multnomah, Portland, Oregon, 1990, 265 pages, \$8.95, paper. Reviewed by *Clarence U. Dunbein*, associate superintendent of education, Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

An essential of Christian education is teaching children and youth to think for themselves and not merely to reflect others' thoughts. Unfortunately we seldom hear about how to teach others to think, thus the volume these authors have provided pastors, teachers, and parents is much needed.

Divided into three sections of 13 chapters each, this book teaches the reader "wisdom thinking" skills. Each skill has clearly described subsets. The authors don't waste space and time citing horror stories about nonthinking children. They jump right in and describe their process while showing the reader how to make personal use of the skills and how to feel comfortable teaching them to others.

The authors remind us that recent changes in our world make thinking skills even more important now than they were 50 years ago. During the late sixties and early seventies, society questioned and rejected traditional moral standards. The information explosion that has come in the intervening 20 years forces us to cope with mountains of data. As a result, we are faced with evaluating what makes up responsible moral choice and learning how to make sense of stacks of data.

When Kohlenberger and Wescombe decided to write their book, they re-

searched biblical records and modern accounts of successful thinking. Their research uncovered three basic skills wise thinkers possess. These include (1) having a basis on which to build (gathering, sorting, and choosing); (2) thinking about thinking (focusing on the problem, being fair-minded, using your feelings, reviewing what you have done); and (3) thinking about God (finding principles from the Scriptures, learning to read the Bible, listening to wise counselors).

The authors cite examples from Scripture that add believability to their instruction. And they offer illustrations from real life. For example, the chapter on "rethinking" what has happened will be of great value to parents who want to help their children think through choices based on poor thinking.

While reading this book, I found myself saying frequently, "This makes sense—I'll try it." In fact, I have tried some ideas already. I also believe this book can be used as a text for teacher inservice (Sabbath school and church school) and family life seminars. It is a book worth having in your personal library and the church library.

Many how-to books become cumbersome with their long lists. But these authors, one a librarian and the other a teacher, have followed an essential concept of teaching. They present only six or seven ideas, and they present these ideas clearly, using illustrative stories. They also repeatedly remind the reader, "You can begin to use this one step at a time according to the ability the children have to use the ideas. There is no need to rush things."

If you have not given careful attention to the thinking process, you'll find this book a good short course to use in brushing up on your own skills as well as learning to teach others to think.

AIDS, A Manual for Pastoral Care

Ronald H. Sunderland and Earl E. Shelp, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1987, 76 pages, \$6.95, paper. Reviewed by Monte Sahlin, adult ministries coordinator, Church Ministries Department, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Recent surveys of Seventh-day Adventist church members in North America report that one member in eight has a relative or close friend with AIDS—acquired immune deficiency syndrome. Anecdotal evidence from some Southern

Hemisphere nations indicates that the incidence there is higher. A book like this one is a necessity on the library shelf of every Adventist pastor who desires to respond effectively to the needs of his or her congregation.

This concise book gets right to the point without being simplistic or incomplete. It gives a clear statement of the known medical facts about AIDS, graphically describes the reality of the disease as it is encountered in hospitals and in homes of sufferers, and then covers the key elements of a Christlike and professional response on the part of clergy caregivers.

Forthright discussion of the fear associated with AIDS is necessary if anyone is to deal with it, yet clergy often find it difficult to admit their fears and hear the fears of those to whom they minister. "The pastor or chaplain must choose whether to be open to the patient's pain," write Sunderland and Shelp. "It may be tempting to remain aloof, since to be present is to become vulnerable."

The authors give a practical and theological discussion of five fears—fear of infection, uncertainty, ostracism, sexuality, and death. Not all of the book's theology lines up with Adventist understanding, but each statement and Bible story provides a starting point for a Bible study with an individual or family in need, or a series of sermons or seminars.

The authors give one of the best summaries of the grief stages I have read. The diagrams are useful in individual and pastoral care conversations and group work.

The authors could have said more about the pastoral care of the families of AIDS victims. They hint at the explosive issues, but do not go far enough in suggesting pastoral responses. "Parents may learn at the same time that their son is gay and that he has AIDS. . . . Parents may learn that their son-in-law is bisexual or has slept with a prostitute and that their daughter has been infected by him . . . [and] denial and confusion will often be replaced quickly by a sense of helplessness. Such anger may be vented toward the 'guilty' one."

An experienced Adventist pastor can imagine the graphic reality stated so coolly in this quote. In the typical small, family-like Adventist congregation the kind and degree of implicit anger can rip apart generations of faith and relationships. If one in eight Adventists in North America currently reports a relative or friend with AIDS, then there are almost

absolute odds that any given pastor will face this situation at some time in the next five years of his or her ministry.

Recently Noted

Observations on the Meteors of November 13th, 1833, *Denison Olsted*, American Journal of Science, 1:25:363 and 1:26:132, 1833 and 1834. Reproduced by The Sourcebook Project, P.O. Box 107, Glen Arm, Maryland 21057, \$8.

The morning of November 13, 1833 "was rendered memorable by an exhibition of the phenomenon called shooting stars, which was probably more extensive and magnificent than any similar one hitherto recorded." Thus begins these writings that give an account of a day long revered in Adventist history—the "falling of the stars."

This xeroxed material gives eyewitness reports and nineteenth-century scientific discussion on that unique happening. The material is not only interesting but helpful in the study of Adventist history and eschatology.

The Revell Bible Dictionary, deluxe color ed., *Lawrence O. Richards*, gen. ed., *Fleming H. Revell Co.*, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1990, 1,156 pages, \$29.95, hardcover.

We commend Revell for producing this inexpensive yet comprehensive and up-to-date Bible dictionary. Developed by a team of widely respected Bible scholars, editors, teachers, authors, and church leaders, this volume adds an extra dimension to personal and group study. Easily understood by laypersons, it is also an excellent supplementary reference for Bible workers and pastors. Among numerous other helps, there are reading and study guides for every book of the Bible.

Eldercare for the Christian Family, What to Do When a Loved One Becomes Dependent, *Timothy S. Smick, et al.*, Word Publishing, Dallas, Texas, 1990, 240 pages, \$14.99, hardcover.

Life's greatest demands fall upon the "sandwiched" generation between old age and youth. Raising children, building careers, and caring for a multitude of necessities fill their days. Yet this generation must take on the added responsibility of aging parents. Smick and his colleagues discuss the aging process and the problems confronting those involved in senior caregiving.

Ministerial internship: reviving the art

"In gaining a preparation for the ministry, young men should be associated with older ministers. Those who have gained an experience in active service are to take young, inexperienced workers with them into the harvest field, teaching them how to labor successfully for the conversion of souls." So wrote Ellen White (*Gospel Workers*, p. 101) as she counseled the church on how best to train pastors and evangelists. Her counsel was in line with biblical practice. Elijah and Elisha, Eli and Samuel, and Paul and Timothy were all involved in the internship program, and what great success attended their ministry!

The church cannot afford to let ministerial internship be a historic relic or a lost piece of art. To keep it alive, to make it a vibrant part of ministerial on-the-job training, the General Conference Ministerial Association has come up with a detailed, easy-to-follow guide: *Manual for Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Interns and Intern Supervisors*.

The first part of the manual deals with supervisory responsibility: relationships, teaching tasks, evaluation, and assignments. The second part details 50 skills that the emerging pastor needs to learn as he or she undertakes internship—skills such as personal growth, personal relationships, evangelism, church growth, lay training, pastoral care, and nurture. The manual also includes several

required and optional evaluation instruments.

This 120-page tool for both the supervising pastor and the intern comes in a convenient binder and is priced at US\$11.50, postpaid. Contact Ministerial Supply Center, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

Training the adult Sabbath school teacher

Did you as a pastor ever feel in need of some material you could give to your adult Sabbath school teachers to improve their teaching effectiveness? Or did you ever want to conduct a Sabbath school teacher training program for your members? A new training system worked out by the Church Ministries departments of the Pacific Union and the North American Division may provide just the help you are looking for.

The training plan consists of three 30-minute videotapes, a 65-page user's guide, and materials for a group workshop or for independent learning. The package includes discussion questions, mini-lectures, group activities, additional readings, and reproducible masters for handouts and overhead transparencies.

Based on actual teaching situations that pastors encounter in small or large churches, the program provides help in three areas: group dynamics to assist the prospective teacher in mastering the skills involved in directing class discussions; learning styles and instructional skills; and the caring nature of the Sabbath

school class, where the relational dynamic brings the lesson to its most practical point of application.

The complete package is priced at US\$29.95. Available at local Adventist Book Centers or from the Church Ministries Distribution Center (Phone: 402-486-2519).

An old book, a new name, a timeless message

Ellen G. White's *Prophecies and Kings* is an eloquent commentary on God's dealings with the children of Israel from the glorious reign of Solomon to the return from the Exile. It is a book that chronicles the unerring wisdom of God, the unfailing mercies of His love, and the vicissitudes of Israel. It is a book that ought to be read by all, especially by the ones who form the major part of the story—the Jewish people.

With those readers in mind, the book has been renamed *Israel, Its Captivity and Restoration*, and is published particularly to reach Jewish readers. Changes, approved by the Ellen G. White Estate, include appropriate Jewish terminology. Regular price: US\$9.95. Special outreach offer for a limited time: US\$3.95, including shipping. San Enterprises, P.O. Box 623, Thorsby, AL 35171. (Phone: 205-646-3290.)

Share your ideas with ministers around the world

Do you have a creative idea for services such as anointings of the sick, baby

dedications, baptisms, church dedications, church ground-breakings, dedications of church officers, Communion, funerals, house blessings, ordinations of deacons, elders, and ministers, and installations of pastors?

Did you ever write a litany for one of these services that brought an enthusiastic response from your parishioners? Or a prayer that somehow captured the spiritual fervor of the moment? Or have you tried something original in a service that fitted it for some particular ethnic, cultural, or linguistic situation?

Why not share your idea with *Ministry* readers? We pay \$25 for each item accepted. Some outstanding items will be used in the updated *Manual for Ministers*. Send your submissions to Shop Talk Editor, *Ministry*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904.

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We'll pay you \$25 for your ideas as to how pastors can make their ministry less taxing and/or more effective, provided that these suggestions do not involve a product or service that you are selling. (We'll consider the latter for publication also, but we won't pay for the privilege of using them!) Send your ideas to *Ministry*, Attn. Shop Talk Editor, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904. U.S. citizens, please include your Social Security number. We pay for Shop Talk items upon publication.