



International Journal for Clergy

October 1992

"I, IF I  
BE LIFTED UP"

## Children and the Lord's Supper

I appreciate Carl Hartman ("Mommy, May I Have a Sip?" February 1992) trying to be creative with his young people; that is something we all need to strive for. My question is Why cannot these young people receive Communion? Nowhere does it say that a person has to be baptized to receive Communion. A person needs to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the only requirement for coming to the table.

I have two boys ages 6 and 4, and my wife and I let them participate. Neither of them is baptized. I believe that they have an experience with the Lord that is in keeping with their years. They understand Jesus and what it means to follow Him. Before Communion we talk about its meaning, how it reminds us of Jesus and His love for us. They enjoy the foot washing as well. We pray together and ask for forgiveness from each other and the Lord. It is a special time.

What message are we sending our young people when we don't let them participate? When we say they "don't understand yet," are they hearing a message that religion is complicated and above them? When we say "Wait until you're older and baptized," are they hearing that Jesus is not for them yet, even though we sing songs that Jesus loves the little children?—Pastor Joseph Wamack, Roan Mountain, Tennessee.

■ It puzzles me why a pastor would start a ceremony, framed by prayers, to dispose of the leftovers from the Communion service, inasmuch as the *Church Manual* and *Ministers' Manual* have said for years that the bread should be burned—doubtless in keeping with Exodus 12:10. Are we not cautioned against substitution and innovation?—Edward Niemann, Williamsburg, Kentucky.

■ I am a pre-seminary student at Reformed Bible College and have just completed a paper on the topic "Children and the Lord's Supper." I am distressed by Hartman's article. He does not use any biblical references for his views.

The Lord's Supper should not be given to children who do not know what the elements mean or who do not express

a genuine love for Jesus Christ. If they eat unworthily, then they eat judgment unto themselves (1 Cor. 11:17-34).

I believe that only children who express a genuine love for the Lord should be allowed to participate. To allow any child to participate is taking the Lord's Supper too lightly, and that therefore diminishes the meaning of the Supper. To participate in the Lord's Supper requires an act of faith, and I highly doubt that all these children understand what the Communion is all about.

The Communion meal nurtures our faith and brings union with Christ. To undermine the meal is dangerous and can be spiritually damaging.—Doug Nieuwstraten, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

## Independent ministry

I was appalled when I read Cyril Miller's article "Sending Tithe to Independent Ministries" (April 1992). In 1989 the North American Division published the document *Guideline for Acceptable Independent Ministries*. Guideline 6 reads: "The independent ministry encourages its supporters to be faithful in the returning of their tithes and giving of appropriate offerings to the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church and does not knowingly accept tithe from Seventh-day Adventist members." Membership in the Adventist Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) organization is contingent upon not knowingly accepting tithe funds. I consider myself to be fairly well informed regarding these ministries, yet it is a surprise to me as well as to others involved in this line of work that there are 800 private organizations. Less than 100 would be more accurate. Nearly all strive to conduct their business in cooperation with the ASI and General Conference guidelines.

Elder Miller charges that because private organizations accept funds from church members, the "North American conferences have been forced to cut back their budgets and reduce pastors and teachers drastically" and "the General Conference to cut back its home and overseas budgets \$8 million this year and call home some missionaries." In 1985 the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University conducted a study

entitled *Study of Attitudes Toward Giving Among Seventh-day Adventists in the North American Division*. This study reveals that the vast majority of Adventist members giving their offerings to parachurch organizations also faithfully support their local church, conference, and the General Conference. To cast all the blame for current giving trends on these organizations is to miss the forest for the trees. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is afflicted with the same problems as churches of other denominations: namely, that the little old lady who would gladly do without her winter coat or give her life savings of \$300 for the sake of the work is a dying breed. Babyboomers of all denominations are notorious for poor giving, and this has nothing to do with private ministries within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Statistics show that in 1930 the average Adventist gave 70 percent of his or her offering dollars for missions and 30 percent to the local church and conference. Today most Adventists give as little as 6 percent for missions and the rest for local use.

Is it really true that the financial records of all private ministries are not audited and are not available upon request? Many of the supporting ministries I know publish an annual financial statement and make their records available upon request. By stating that private ministries do not reveal how much their workers are paid, Elder Miller implies these individuals are in the business for personal gain. Most people I know in supporting ministries work for a stipend, often less than \$100 per month. They are committed to the task of ministering to the world and make tremendous sacrifices for the sake of their church.—Cathy Morgan, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

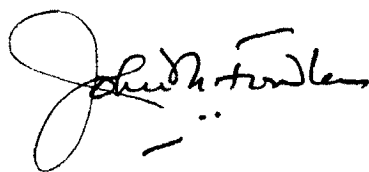
■ What should be most alarming to the church is the success of these independent ministries, not the independent ministries themselves. The symptoms speak of an infinitely large underlying problem within the church. The church seems to be fighting the *symptoms*, not the underlying spiritual problems. It is these needs that some of the independent ministries are innocuously

(Continued on page 30)

Last June when *Ministry* asked the president of the General Conference to name the great challenges he faces, Elder Robert Folkenberg replied: "The first on my list and most important is to emphasize assurance in Christ. . . . God does not save me because I am victorious, but because of Jesus' victory." A second challenge, the president pointed out, is the Global Mission of the church—the faith objective of taking the gospel to every unentered area or people group.

**The message and the mission.** In a rare open letter to the General Conference president, Editor David Newman defines both the message and the mission in terms of the centrality of the Cross. The burden of every sermon, the praise of every song, the focus of every prayer—indeed, life itself—must be to lift up the Cross. As you read and reflect on Newman's editorial, don't miss the rich and reassuring thoughts on the Cross from the pen of Ellen White.

**Also from Ellen White** is a reprint of an 1890 article, "Be Zealous and Repent." The article is a warning on the Laodicean condition of the church and a call to possess the mind of Jesus. Global Mission will not work unless we see our unworthiness and seek the all-sufficiency of Christ.



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ASSOCIATION SECRETARY:  
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ASSOCIATE EDITORS:  
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INTERNATIONAL EDITORS:  
Walton Whaley, Ministerial Secretary  
Africa-Indian Ocean Division of SDA  
22 Boite Postale 1764  
Abidjan 22, Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa

Baraka Muganda, Ministerial Secretary  
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Zimbabwe, Africa

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Euro-Africa Division of SDA  
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V. P. Bocala, Ministerial Secretary  
Far Eastern Division of SDA  
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Jaime Castrejon, Ministerial Secretary  
Inter-American Division of SDA  
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Miami, FL 33114-0760

William C. Scales, Jr., Ministerial Secretary  
North American Division of SDA

12501 Old Columbia Pike  
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Amasias Justiniano, Ministerial Secretary  
South American Division of SDA  
Caixa Postal 12-2600  
70279 Brasilia, DF, Brazil

John H. Gate, Ministerial Secretary  
South Pacific Division of SDA  
148 Fox Valley Road  
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P. V. Jesudas, Ministerial Secretary  
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SDA Complex  
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Tamil Nadu, India

A. David C. Currie, Ministerial Secretary  
Trans-European Division of SDA  
119 St. Peter's Street  
St. Albans, Herts, AL1 3EY, England

Mikhail P. Kulakov  
ul. Severodvinskaya 9  
Apt. 407  
Moscow 129224, Russia

COVER DESIGN/LAYOUT  
Trent Truman/Ann Taylor

ADVERTISING SALES:  
Ella Rydzewski

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:  
Larry Burnett

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# Three counterfeit christs

Martin Weber

**H**

ow would a demon pray? The following devotional instruction, called "Jesus Is Lord," was channeled from a spirit guide to a New

Age meditation group in Los Angeles:

"The spiritual aspirant on the lighted way meditates every morning for at least 10 minutes in his or her garden. . . . See your body, emotions, and mind filled with the golden light of Christ. . . . Enter into your garden. Look at the trees, flowers, and lake that you have. This is the space God created for you. Enjoy your space! Invite Jesus into your garden. . . . Talk to Jesus. Speak to Him of your needs, ask Him anything your heart desires. Listen to Jesus. He will talk with you. This is the very beginning of a relationship with Christ that will take you into immortality."

This New Age "Jesus," channeled in the inner rooms of meditation chambers, is a counterfeit christ now fulfilling prophecy (see Matt. 24:24, 26). His neopagan devotional guide even invites meditators to thank the Father—in Jesus' name—that their names are in the book of life! The deception is fierce, but none need be fooled. One crucial omission betrays the demonic origin of this "Jesus." We will note it later after looking at two more counterfeit christs.

Paul the apostle warned the Corinthian church of "another Jesus": "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches

another Jesus whom we have not preached, . . . or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it" (2 Cor. 11:3, 4, NKJV).

Another "Jesus" and another gospel, destroying Christian faith! Long ago God created us in His image, and ever since we've been trying to redesign Him into ours. We've made ourselves a living graven image, a permissive Jesus. This counterfeit christ cruises around Palm Springs in a Rolls Royce, hobnobbing with televangelists who squander millions of widows' mites. He panders to the whims of his devoted celebrants, asking nothing but that they keep praising him, never doubting his ability to save them in their cherished sins.

This permissive Jesus can be kind or cruel, depending upon what is expected of him. Medieval clerics incinerated fellow Christians and then sang praises to the god who inspired their cruel crusades. In the American Civil War, Confederate general Stonewall Jackson devoutly worshiped a counterfeit christ who enslaved Black people. Hitler even preached about such a god, transforming devout Catholics and Lutherans into SS storm troopers. Soon the whole world will worship such a god, except for the saints, who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus [the real one]" (Rev. 14:12).

Unless we cherish God's commandments along with His gift at Calvary, the christ we worship is sure to be a counterfeit. Repentance is not optional; it's a vital element of saving faith. Recently a friend argued with me that everyone will be saved who believes that Jesus is the Son of God who died for our sins, rose the

third day, and ascended to heaven. I reminded him that even New Agers now have a Jesus who did all that—and their false christ is channeled by a demon. I suggested that rejecting the biblical revelation of Christ and His truth makes one a candidate for demonic possession. Some well-known American religious leaders considered themselves anointed by God through the gift of tongues, for example, but their lives bore the immoral fruit of another power in control.

Now we come to the third counterfeit christ, the legalistic Jesus. Paul was specifically warning about legalism when he mentioned "another Jesus" with "a different gospel" that "brings you into bondage" (2 Cor. 11:4, 20, NKJV). He explained: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:13-15, NKJV).

Now, that's something to think about—a false gospel of legalism from servants of Satan who pose as ministers of righteousness!

So there we have our three counterfeit christs. All are a real and present danger within the ranks of Adventists. The legalistic Jesus has been with us for a long time and continues to do big business. He is particularly active in many independent ministries. At the other extreme, the permissive Jesus has seduced some Adventists who insist upon indulging and adorning themselves as they celebrate

*(Continued on page 29)*



# “I, if I be lifted up from the earth”

An open letter from the editor of *Ministry* to the General Conference President

**D**

ear Brother Folkenberg:

You recently received a letter, with a copy to me, that began: “The officers of the ——— Conference

have read and discussed David Newman’s article ‘Global Mission, My Mission’ which appeared in the April issue of *Ministry*. Elder Folkenberg, we took an action in our officers’ meeting April 2, 1992. The action is one of displeasure and disgust relative to the content of Elder Newman’s article.”

“You will be pleased to know that we approve of what David pretends to hold forth as his theme and focus to preach ‘Christ and him crucified.’ However, his article, with very minor changes, could have been penned by Baptists or Pentecostals. Instead of holding forth Jesus, this article will discourage many and will feed the fire of criticism.”

These conference leaders went on to say that I had discredited the church, evangelists, honesty of conference records, and church doctrines, and given ammunition to critics of the church by sharing some of the problems within our church.

The letter highlights two crucial problems in our church today: 1. What is our message? 2. How well are we converting people to this message?

Robert Spangler, my predecessor, wrote an open letter to the General Conference president (see December 1979), but this is my first as editor. There is no doubt that good things are happening in our church. Many pastors and churches

are on fire for Jesus Christ and winning people to His kingdom. We are still one of the fastest growing religious groups. Our people still give generously of their tithes and offerings. And so many like these conference leaders believe there is nothing fundamentally wrong with our church. However, there are many other church leaders and lay people who believe the opposite. That is the burden of this open letter.

This letter is also prompted by the overwhelming response (most letters ever received on one article) I received to my Global Mission article (April) and the discussion at the Perth 1991 Annual Council concerning the Laodicean condition of the church. It is also prompted by the mission statement of *Ministry*, which reads in part: “*Ministry* intends to serve as a prophetic voice calling the church back to the biblical fundamentals that constitute Adventist truth, ideals, and values.”

There is a tendency for us to deny there are any real problems because of the strident criticisms we receive from some independent groups. Anyone who raises the question that all is not well faces suspicion and charges of disloyalty to this church. However, the problem with the Laodicean church is its unwillingness to admit that it is anything but rich and increased with goods (Rev. 3:17).

## Perth Declaration

Pastor Folkenberg, I well remember the discussion about the Perth Declaration voted at the 1991 Annual Council. Pastor N. C. Wilson made an eloquent plea for some reference to the Laodicean condition of our church. The Perth Dec-

laration called our members to renewed commitment to Christ and also appealed to the independent groups among us to stop their divisive ways.

Pastor Wilson said that our reluctance to admit our Laodicean condition helps fuel many of the independent ministries. But we failed to grapple with the real issue. All we did was add one sentence in a halfhearted attempt to indicate our awareness of our Laodicean condition. I was there, and I did not speak up. I share in the collective responsibility.

The Perth Declaration sought to point us in the right direction by saying: “In pulpit discourses, in personal instruction, in ministers’ meetings as guided by the Ministerial Association and administrators in every field, in presentations for the public, we must present Jesus in the setting of present truth as the answer to every human need.”

Ellen White first applied the Laodicean message to our church in the 1850s (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 141-146; 185-195) and during the course of her ministry never encouraged the church to consider that it had escaped this Laodicean condition. She said that we would never do the work that God really wants us to do until we wholeheartedly admit that we are in a Laodicean condition and seek the divine remedies as our priority.

God tells us that Laodicea loves to dwell on its success, its accomplishments. For example, we are proud of our baptismal and membership success. In some ways these figures have become more important than the people they represent. A conference president recently took a census of his conference. Membership

## We need an independent review system to check baptisms, memberships, attendance, just as we do with our finances.

records listed more than 3,000 members, but his census could account for only 721. Another president took a census and could account for only 330 out of 1,000. Another field may be able to account for only 1,400 out of more than 8,000 on the books.

If you examine the General Conference's *Annual Statistical Reports* for the past 10 years you will find that in some parts of the world, apostasies are almost nonexistent. Conferences/missions of more than 20,000 and even 30,000 members report one or two or no apostasies in any given year. Now, it could be that these fields hold and nurture their people better than other fields. However, people who have worked in those areas have given me other reasons. I am not implying that all conferences/missions have grossly inflated membership records; some take the counsel of Ellen White seriously: "God would be better pleased to have six thoroughly converted to the truth than to have sixty make a profession and yet not be truly converted" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 370). Some of us believe that if we were to take a global census we might find only half the members that we list on our books. Maybe that is why we are reluctant to invest the effort to find out; we are afraid of what we might discover.

Recognizing that there are some real problems in this area, the General Conference Ministerial Association made a formal request to the division presidents at the 1990 Annual Council for a worldwide church attendance record. We wanted some idea of how many members are actually attending church. Are we discipling the people we are baptizing? But the division presidents turned down the idea.

They cited a number of reasons, such

as too many statistics already, and the difficulty of collecting this information. But without this information no one knows how "soft" our membership figures really are. Pastors tell me that it is very difficult to transfer members from certain conferences. So they wait for six months and if the membership transfer does not come through they accept them on profession of faith. No one knows how many dual memberships exist.

Membership figures are important. Many decisions, such as delegates to constituencies, are made on the basis of these figures. Those areas of the world that are more diligent in dealing with apostasy are in a way penalized for following biblical principles of church discipline. In addition we suffer spiritually when we treat membership figures lightly. Ellen White reminds us: "The Lord does not now work to bring many souls into the truth, because of the church members who have never been converted and those who were once converted but who have backslidden" (*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 371).

### Spiritual Auditors

My first suggestion in this open letter to you, Brother Folkenberg, is that we appoint spiritual auditors separate from church administration. No one suggests that our treasurers are dishonest because we employ financial auditors to check up on their work. We recognize that humans are fallible, make mistakes, and interpret policies differently. Auditors provide some checks and balances.

If we are so concerned about matters in the material world, should we not be just as concerned in the spiritual world? Our leaders are honest men and women. But they are fallible, do make mistakes, and interpret policies differently. Also, when the number of members listed has a direct relationship to financial subsidies and number of delegates to constituencies, it is only human to be as generous to oneself as possible. We need an independent review system to check baptisms, memberships, attendance, just as we do with our finances.

Precise figures can be determined regardless of the area of the world. My father was a conference president in a mission division more than 30 years ago. When he came to that conference, he found a membership figure but no names to go with the figure. He discovered local churches had no records of their members. He visited every church (more than

100) and asked the pastor to write down the name and village of every member. Later on he issued a card in triplicate, recording all the member information (one each for the conference office, local church, and member). When this was completed, he had to adjust the conference membership down by more than 1,000 members.

### Two views of salvation

The second issue of this open letter concerns our mission. I believe this to be the root of all our problems. If we solve this one, we hold the key to solving all our other difficulties.

In 1990 the executive committee of one of our world divisions voted that an expression of concern be lodged with the General Conference concerning the repeated confusion and bias evident in certain of our publications concerning (1) the definition and nature of justification; (2) the relation of justification to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit; (3) perfectionism; (4) the undermining of Christian assurance; and (5) the selective use of Ellen G. White quotations.

The action continued to detail the extent of the problem and concluded with the following: "To request the General Conference to endorse a statement submitted by the ——— Division for publication setting out for our members . . . the church's accepted stand on the nature of justification and the link between justification to the internal renewal of the Holy Spirit."

So far we at the General Conference have not answered this request. Every leader wishes to reach out with the largest embrace possible to include everyone within God's family. But there comes a time when we as leaders must stand up and be counted. We need to clarify the mission of this church. Why did God bring this church into existence? What are we preaching?

Brother president, you have told me that the burden of your heart is to see that our people have the assurance of salvation. Why is it that after almost 150 years of existence our people do not understand this most basic of all doctrines? I and my associate editors find lamentable confusion throughout the world field in this area. I believe it is because we have not settled what is the basis of our salvation. Some of us are teaching a disguised Roman Catholic theology of salvation. Others are confused as to what balance they

should follow in emphasizing the work of Christ for us and the work of Christ in us. Both are necessary, but we need to understand the function of each. The work of Christ in us, however, is always based on accepting the work of Christ for us.

I have been surprised by the letters and comments we have received suggesting our main mission is not to uplift Jesus Christ. They say we are not to try to outdo the Pentecostals in preaching the gospel of Jesus. Others write that our emphasis should not be the same as that of the first-century Christians. Our emphasis now must be victory over sin, achieving a character perfection that no other generation has achieved. Now, I believe strongly that victory over sin is vital; preparing for translation is a unique experience. But is this our emphasis?

Our confusion arises because our church began with one audience while today we have two. Originally we preached to a mainly Christian audience. Then we realized that there was a non-Christian world out there as well. But we were slow to change our emphasis. We must understand the difference between evangelism that has conversion as the goal and evangelism that brings spiritual growth and the acceptance of neglected truths, such as the Sabbath. We must determine which one of these goals is the need of the particular audience we are addressing.

This lack of understanding of the two audiences means that some of us assume we no longer need to emphasize something that happened in the past (the cross). Consequently present truth focuses on the present and getting ready for Jesus, with the greater emphasis on "getting ready."

### Our Mission

What is the primary mission of our church? Let us look at what God called the children of Israel to be. He did not call them as His people because they had large numbers (Deut. 7:7, 8) or because they were righteous and people of integrity (Deut. 9:5); they were even a stubborn and stiff-necked people (verse 6). They could not boast that God had selected them because of their special qualities. God chose them because He is sovereign. He did not need them to prove His character, but He did want them to exalt His name.

God promised Israel prosperity, health, and preeminence (Deut. 28:1, 9-11, 13),

not for their glory but for His glory. Thus, when the queen of Sheba visited Solomon and saw the riches of his kingdom, she was constrained to praise not Solomon but the God of heaven for His greatness (1 Kings 10:9).

Unfortunately, Israel forgot who gave them these riches and began to rely on their success rather than the God who gave them this success. They made the letter of the law more important than the spirit of the law. They placed the task above the relationship. It was never God's purpose that Israel become proud of their success, boast about their numbers (David and the census), and glory in their fame. Their task was to point to God and make His name prominent.

We must not confuse God's role and our role. Just as He did with Job, God wanted to point to Israel as an example of what happens when a people follow God and are obedient to His commands. Obedience is vital in our walk with God, and victory over sin is essential in the plan of salvation (1 John 3:21-24). But that is for God to glory over, not us. Israel's role was to talk about God, tell of His greatness, and then their success would testify to the truth about God.

Today there are still two roles: God's role and ours. Our role is to lift up the cross, talk about Jesus, tell of His wonder, His glory, His salvation. God's part is to show the universe what happens when people surrender to Jesus Christ. Our

## "I, if I be lifted up"

- † "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32).\*
- † "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).
- † "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" (Rom. 1:16).
- † "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" (Rom. 5:9).
- † "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).
- † "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).
- † "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11).
- † "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14).
- † "And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Col. 1:20).
- † "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).
- † "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:18, 19).
- † "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood" (Rev. 1:5).
- † "I answered, 'Sir, you know.' And he said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb'" (Rev. 7:14).
- † "Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people" (Rev. 14:6).

\* Texts are from the New International Version.



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## Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message.

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obedience, imperfect as it might be, is a source of joy to God. God wants to hold us up as examples of what life can be like when people follow Him. However, when we emphasize obedience and under-emphasize the cross; when we talk more about what God does in us than what He has done for us, then we have usurped God's role.

The Jews took the doctrines, the standards, that God had given them and turned them into ends rather than means. For example, God gave them the Sabbath. The Sabbath, which was intended to be a blessing, became a burden. Instead of attracting the heathen to inquire about the God of heaven, the Sabbath repelled them. Instead of being a time for relationship building, the Sabbath became a time for focusing on how to keep the Sabbath rather than getting to know the Lord of the Sabbath.

Paul reminds us that "Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the 'stumbling stone'" (Rom. 9:31, 32).<sup>\*</sup> Have we as a church stumbled over the same stone? Christ—the scandal. His grace is so outside the realm of human experience that it is a constant challenge to comprehend it.

Revelation 14:6-12 is our charter, but we seem to major more on the message of the third angel (the mark of the beast) than on that of the first angel (the everlasting gospel). Because Israel would not follow God's plan, He abandoned the idea of revealing Himself through the material prosperity of a particular group of people. Instead Jesus said that God would be revealed through the depth and passion of personal relationships: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

Paul said that "the entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love

your neighbor as yourself.' If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other (Gal. 5:14, 15). And Peter emphasizes that we are "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9). Then Peter tells us that the reason good works are important, and right living is vital, is not for us to get to heaven, but that non-Christians may "see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" (verse 12).

Do people glorify God when they hear the name Seventh-day Adventist, or do they compliment us for our excellent hospitals, global relief activities, wonderful education system, etc.? Has Christ somehow become eclipsed by all our good works and distinctive doctrines? Jesus said that the unity in God's church between all the various ethnic groups would be a source of wonder to the world (John 13:35). Is that the case in our church?

### Jesus the only answer

Jesus said, "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32). He only is "the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6). "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Paul announced that he is "not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" (Rom. 1:16). After trying various sophisticated ways to reach people, Paul realized that the greatest power comes from preaching Christ alone: "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). And when he boasted it was only "in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal. 6:14). I could cite many other texts that give this same emphasis.

But some feel that our emphasis should be different now, that we are quite right in emphasizing the Sabbath, health reform, victorious living . . . We have fallen into the same trap as the Pharisees. Jesus chided them for neglecting the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, faithfulness, while dwelling on other matters that, while significant,

were of lesser importance (Matt. 23:23, 24). God has called this church to fulfill the same role that He has called His church in all ages to accomplish. He has called us not because we are great, or perfect, or have large numbers, but because He has given us insights into the great controversy that other denominations do not have. He wants us to share the importance of obeying His law. But it must always be in the context of glorifying God and lifting up the cross. Ellen White makes it abundantly clear what our primary focus needs to be.

"Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.' Will not our church members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Saviour, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered? This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol 6, p. 1113).

"The cross of Calvary challenges, and will finally vanquish every earthly and hellish power. In the cross all influence centers, and from it all influence goes forth. It is the great center of attraction; for on it Christ gave up His life for the human race. This sacrifice was offered for the purpose of restoring man to his original perfection. Yea, more, it was offered to give him an entire transformation of character, making him more than a conqueror" (*Ibid.*).

"There is one great central truth to be kept ever before the mind in the searching of Scripture—Christ and Him crucified. Every other truth is invested with influence and power corresponding to its relation to this theme. . . . It is the one great truth to be constantly kept before the minds of men" (*Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, vol. 2, pp. 806, 807).

"Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world. The proclamation of the third angel's message calls for the presentation of the Sabbath truth. This truth, with others included in the message, is to be proclaimed; but the great center of attraction, Christ Jesus, must not be left out" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 156).

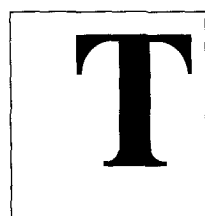
"Christ crucified—talk it, pray it, sing it, and it will break and win hearts. This  
(Continued on page 29)





# The Way of Life engravings: harbingers of Minneapolis?

Woodrow Whidden



he *Way of Life* picture was first shown to James White by Dr. M. G. Kellogg sometime in the early 1870s.<sup>1</sup> The original artist is unknown,

but James White found the picture to be such a "vivid portrayal of the plan of salvation" that he had it published as early as 1874 and advertised it in the *Review and Herald* as an "Allegorical Picture" "showing the Way of Life and Salvation Through Jesus Christ From Paradise Lost to Paradise Restored."<sup>2</sup> Two years later, in October 1876, 1,000 copies of a new and improved edition, with an explanatory brochure, was published.<sup>3</sup>

What is most striking about the 1876 lithograph is the centrality of the Ten Commandments hanging from the limbs of the "law tree." Though the cross is evident, it does not stand out as the law does. Four years later James White began planning a new picture, with a change in emphasis. He wrote to Ellen White in March of 1880:

"I have a sketch . . . of the new picture, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' This differs from the *Way of Life* in these particulars: The law tree is removed. Christ on the cross is made larger, and placed in the center. In other particulars it is about the same excepting the baptism scene and the city will be very much improved."<sup>4</sup>

Throughout the remainder of 1880 and into early 1881 James worked on this new and improved edition, expanding the project to include printing the picture for

other countries, publishing a book to accompany it, and enlarging the key, or explanation, already in print. He planned to entitle it *Christ, the Way of Life. From Paradise Lost to Paradise Restored*.

However, James White died on August 6, 1881, without completing the project. Ellen White, with the help of her sons, fulfilled her husband's plan in 1883 when she copyrighted a new steel plate engraving. The new picture placed Christ on the Cross as the dominating center of the plan of salvation.

## Why the change?

What was it that caused James White to move in such a cross-centered direction in this telling instance of "Adventist" art?

While there is no direct linking of their theological unfolding with the *Way of Life* pictures in their correspondence, there were significant developments in the thinking of James and Ellen White from 1876 to 1883 that suggest a profound linkage.

Previous to 1883 Ellen White had had little to say, by way of theological emphasis, about justification by faith. While her conceptions were clear that justification was "pardon" and "forgiveness," it was not until the 1880s that there began to appear a sharpening focus on a more "Lutheran," by "faith alone," understanding of justification.

In fact, the first published linking of Luther and justification came in the *Signs of the Times* of May 31, 1883. This development resulted probably from her writing of *The Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 4 (1884), which became the immediate forerunner of her classic *The Great Controversy* (1888). This work deals somewhat extensively with Luther and the Reforma-

tion in her historical/providential interpretation of the issues of the "great controversy between Christ and Satan."

In addition to her work on the Reformation, three other crucial trends in the experience and ministry of James and Ellen White during this period need to be noted.

1. In these years Ellen White had experienced some sharp confrontations with the "believe, only believe" advocates who accused Seventh-day Adventists of teaching salvation by lawkeeping. Probably the most striking of such experiences took place during a voyage to Oregon from San Francisco in the summer of 1878, during which she reports overhearing a certain Elder Brown, who was claiming publicly "that it was impossible for any man to keep the law of God," and that "no man will get to heaven by keeping the law." He then went on to declare that "Mrs. White is all law, law; she believes that we must be saved by the law, and no one can be saved unless they keep the law. Now, I believe in Christ. He is my Saviour."<sup>5</sup>

She quickly corrected the elder that his statement was a "false" representation of her position. Such challenges undoubtedly helped to sharpen her understanding and expression of what "believing" really meant. Historically there has never been any factor so efficient in calling forth theological clarification as heresy—real or perceived!

2. Ellen White also seemed to have sensed that there was unwitting legalism creeping into the ranks of Seventh-day Adventists. She was concerned that a preoccupation with obedience and the law was obscuring assurance of acceptance in too many cases (including many Adventist preachers). Probably the most impor-

Woodrow Whidden, Ph.D., is an associate professor of religion, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.



## THE WAY OF LIFE

### FROM PARADISE LOST TO PARADISE RESTORED

tant expression of this concern was seen at the 1883 Battle Creek General Conference session. In fact, I would suggest that for Ellen White, this 1883 conference was a theological “Minneapolis” five years before Minneapolis. Note her deep concern over disturbing developments:

“I have listened to testimonies like this: ‘I have not the light that I desire; I have not the assurance of the favor of God.’ Such testimonies express only unbelief and darkness. Are you expecting that your merit will recommend you to the favor of God, and that you must be free from sin before you trust His power to save? If this is the struggle going on in your mind, I fear you will gain no strength, and will finally become discouraged. . . .

“Some seem to feel that they must be on probation, and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed before they can claim His blessing. . . . Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are—sinful, helpless, dependent. We claim to be chil-

dren of the light, not of the night nor of darkness; what right have we to be unbelieving?”<sup>6</sup>

3. This strong emphasis on justification at Battle Creek in 1883 was probably partially inspired by developments in James White’s thinking. The evidence, reflected in the changes he sought in the *Way of Life* picture, suggests that his experience just before his death had a rather profound effect on his wife.<sup>7</sup>

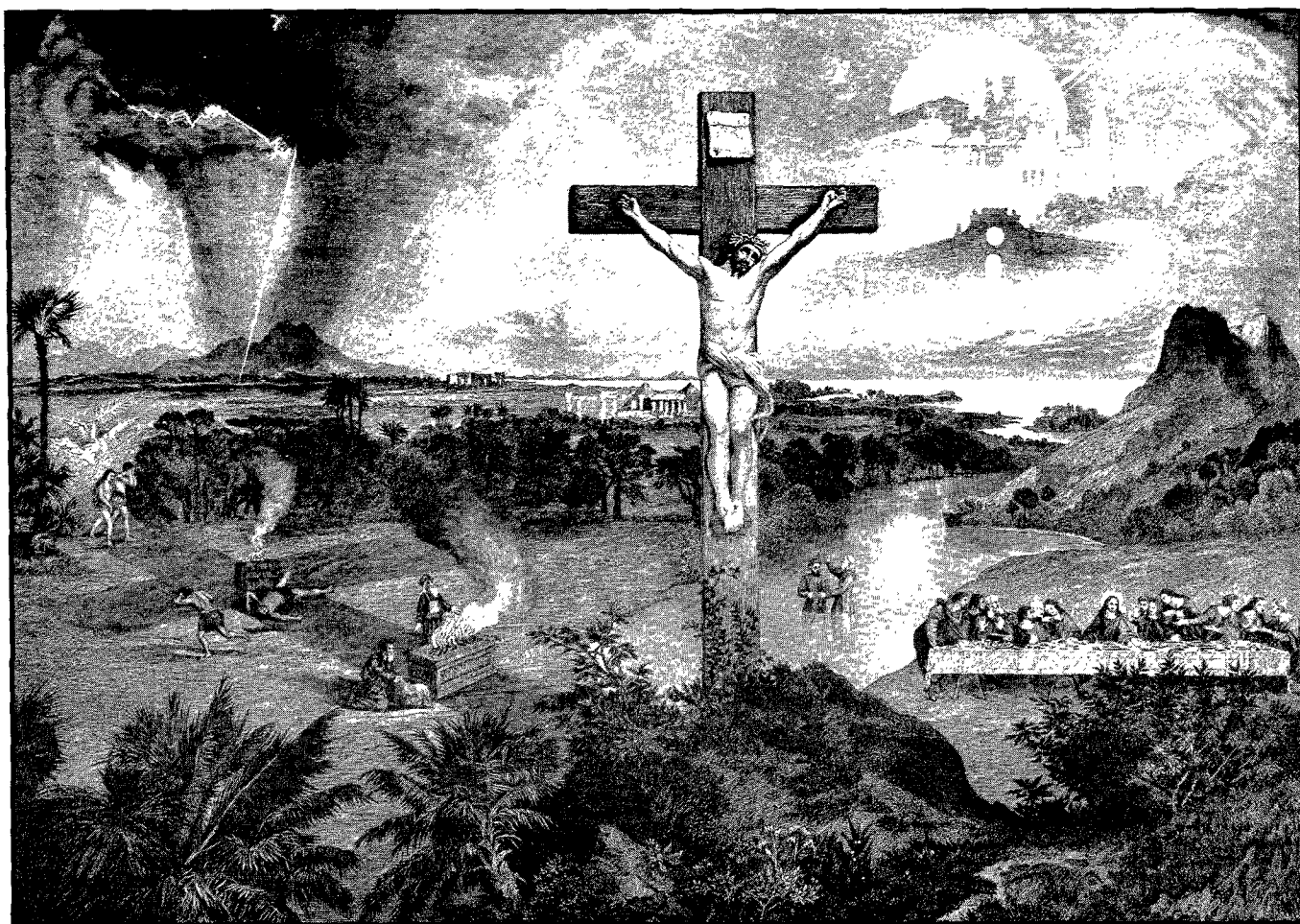
In early 1881 James White had begun to analyze the dangerous direction that the church seemed to be unconsciously pursuing. He informed the readers of the *Review* of his “unutterable yearning of [the] soul for Christ” and urged the ministers to “preach Christ more.” He then went on to share his intention to refocus his message: “We feel that we have a testimony for our people at this time, relative to the exalted character of Christ, and His willingness and power to save.”<sup>8</sup> That he had made good on his intentions was perceived by a

prominent fellow minister who noted that “wherever he preached the past few months, he dwelt largely upon faith in Christ and the boundless love of God.”<sup>9</sup>

The impact on Ellen White was apparent: a month after his death, she recounted in a letter to her son Willie a dream in which she reported James to say:

“We have made a mistake. We have responded to urgent invitations of our brethren to attend important meetings. We had not the heart to refuse. . . . We might have done a great deal for years with our pens, on subjects the people need that we have had light upon and can present before them, which others do not have.”<sup>10</sup>

Speaking to students at the General Conference Bible school in early 1890 at Battle Creek, she recalled vows taken at her husband’s deathbed to stand by her duty that involved bringing “an element in[to] this work that we have not had yet.”<sup>11</sup> That the “element” referred to justification by faith is quite clear from



## CHRIST, THE WAY OF LIFE

the context of this Bible school: it was especially convened in the aftermath of the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference session to promote a clearer understanding of justification by faith. Moreover, this particular Bible school convocation was the setting for some of her most powerful expressions of justification by faith.<sup>12</sup>

### Profound theological shifts

Thus, the changes incorporated into the *Way of Life* engravings were not just artistic touch ups, but were reflective of profound theological shifts in the thought and ministry of James and Ellen White. Such shifts were to have their most emphatic expressions at Minneapolis and its aftermath.

For Ellen White the uplifting of the cross and a renewed emphasis on justification by faith were not matters of mere side interest or theological curiosity, but were the very heart of the great Adventist proc-

lamation. There seems to be a direct line of influence and development arising from the period of the *Way of Life* engravings and the great revivals anticipated by the Whites. Such a revival of Christ-centered preaching would enlighten the earth with its glory in the setting of the proclamation of the third angel's message of Revelation 14.

It is also abundantly clear that the issues evident in the *Way of Life* pictures would eventually come to a head in the crisis of Minneapolis and its controverted aftermath: For James and Ellen White, these issues were not just concerns over failed piety and lack of charity in theological discussion. Their concerns certainly involved these matters, but they also comprehended a lack of Christ-centered emphasis in Adventist preaching and a theological misunderstanding of justification by faith which was frustrating the work of the "latter rain" and the arrival of the long anticipated "loud cry." ■

<sup>1</sup> A "History of the Way of Life Pictures" (no author listed) is available from the Ellen G. White Estate as a shelf document. What follows in the next three paragraphs is a condensation of this document.

<sup>2</sup> *Review and Herald*, Feb. 17, 1874.

<sup>3</sup> According to L. E. Froom, "25,000 were engraved for distribution" (*Movement of Destiny* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1971], p. 183).

<sup>4</sup> James White letter, Mar. 31, 1880.

<sup>5</sup> *Signs of the Times*, July 18, 1878.

<sup>6</sup> These remarks were addressed to the ministers at the General Conference and were published in the *Review*, Apr. 22, 1884.

<sup>7</sup> For this background I am indebted to Bert Haloviak's unpublished book-length manuscript *From Righteousness to Holy Flesh: Judgment at Minneapolis*, especially chapter 1, "Centrality of Justification."

<sup>8</sup> *Review and Herald*, Feb. 8, 1881.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Aug. 30, 1881.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White letter 17, Sept. 12, 1881.

<sup>11</sup> Ellen G. White manuscript 9, Feb. 3, 1890.

<sup>12</sup> Especially manuscript 36, 1890, which is included in the Ellen G. White compilation *Faith and Works* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1979), pp. 15-28.

Reproductions (8" x 10") of these two pictures plus a modern representation by Elfred Lee are available from the Ellen G. White Estate, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20903, USA (US and Canada US\$4.00, overseas US\$5.00)

# Lifting up the cross

## Quotations from Ellen G. White

### Assurance of salvation

"Is He my Saviour? Can I lay hold upon His merits this very hour? Can I commit the keeping of my soul to Jesus Christ today? Yes. How? What assurance have I? I point you to Christ of Calvary. Can you stand under the shadow of the cross and there talk your crosses, your darkness, your wicked feelings? Can you do it? Dare you do it? You never dare to do it when standing under the shadow of the cross, because all that infinite sacrifice was made to make me love God. It was made that I might reflect the image of God in Jesus Christ. Well, then, when all this sacrifice has been made for me, shall I let everybody know that it amounts to something? Shall I let the world know that Jesus, the precious Saviour, has made all this infinite sacrifice that He might be formed within, the hope of glory, and that I might rejoice in His love?" (*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 208).

### Assurance of salvation

"Through Christ, restoration as well as reconciliation is provided for man. The gulf that was made by sin has been spanned by the cross of Calvary. A full, complete ransom has been paid by Jesus, by virtue of which the sinner is pardoned and the justice of the law is maintained. All who believe that Christ is the atoning sacrifice may come and receive pardon for their sins; for through the merit of Christ, communication has been opened between God and man. God can accept me as His child, and I can claim Him and rejoice in

Him as my loving Father" (*Faith and Works*, p. 93).

### Blot from sky

"To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting out the sun from the sky" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 209).

### Burden of every sermon

"Let the science of salvation be the burden of every sermon, the theme of every song. Let it be poured forth in every supplication. Bring nothing into your preaching to supplement Christ, the wisdom and power of God" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 160).

### Burden of the work

"If the Holy Spirit dwells in us, our work will testify to the fact—we shall lift up Jesus. Not one can afford to be silent now; the burden of the work is to present Christ to the world" (*Review and Herald Extra*, Dec. 23, 1890).

### Center for all schools

"The cross of Christ, how many believe it to be what it is? How many bring it into their studies, and know its true significance? There could not be a Christian in our world without the cross of Christ. Then keep it before the schools as the foundation of all true education" (*Youth's Instructor*, July 7, 1898).

### Center for all institutions

"The cross is the center of all religious institutions. These institutions are to be under the control of the Spirit of God; in no institution is any one man to be the sole head. The divine mind has men for every

place" (*Counsels on Health*, p. 524).

### Center of all truth

"The knowledge of truth is the great power of God unto salvation to all who believe. The atoning sacrifice, the righteousness of Christ, is to us the vital center of all truth. In the cross of Calvary, mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. The law and the gospel are in perfect harmony; they are interwoven as the warp and the woof. They shed a flood of light amid the moral darkness of the world, stimulating, renovating, sanctifying all who will believe the truth, all who will gladly and gratefully accept the light coming from the throne of God" (*Review and Herald*, Sept. 29, 1891).

### Central truth

"There is one great central truth to be kept ever before the mind in the searching of Scripture—Christ and Him crucified. Every other truth is invested with influence and power corresponding to its relation to this theme. It is only in the light of the cross that we can discern the exalted character of the law of God. The soul palsied by sin can be endowed with life only through the work wrought out upon the cross by the Author of our salvation. The love of Christ constrains man to unite with Him in His labors and sacrifice. The revelation of divine love awakens in them a sense of their neglected obligation to be the light bearers to the world, and inspires them with a missionary spirit. This truth enlightens the mind and sanctifies the soul. It will banish unbelief and inspire faith. It is the one great truth to be constantly kept before the minds of men. Yet

how dimly is the love of God understood; and in the teaching of the Word it makes but a faint impression.

When Christ in His work of redemption is seen to be the great central truth of the system of truth, a new light is shed upon all the events of the past and the future. They are seen in a new relation, and possess a new and deeper significance" (The *Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, vol. 2, pp. 806, 807).

### Christ is the gospel

"Hanging upon the cross Christ was the gospel. Now we have a message, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.' Will not our church members keep their eyes fixed on a crucified and risen Saviour, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered? This is our message, our argument, our doctrine, our warning to the impenitent, our encouragement for the sorrowing, the hope for every believer" (The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1113).

### Christ crucified

"Christ crucified—talk it, pray it, sing it, and it will break and win hearts. This is the power and wisdom of God to gather souls for Christ" (*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 67).

### Christ more than law

"The message of the gospel of His grace was to be given to the church in clear and distinct lines, that the world should no longer say that Seventh-day Adventists talk the law, the law, but do not teach or believe Christ" (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 92).

### Cling to the cross

"If Satan comes to cast his shadow between you and God, accusing you of sin, tempting you to distrust God and doubt His mercy, say: I cannot allow my weakness to come between me and God; for He is my strength. My sins, which are many, are laid upon Jesus, my divine Substitute and Sacrifice.

'Nothing in my hand I bring.

Simply to thy cross I cling'" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 332).

### Contemplate His sacrifice

"It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination

grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 83).

### Doubt forever settled

"It was in order that the heavenly universe might see the conditions of the covenant of redemption that Christ bore the penalty in behalf of the human race. The throne of Justice must be eternally and forever made secure. . . . By the sacrifice Christ was about to make, all doubts would be forever settled, and the human race would be saved if they would return to their allegiance. Christ alone could restore honor to God's government. The cross of Calvary would be looked upon by the unfallen worlds, by the heavenly universe, by Satanic agencies, by the fallen race, and every mouth would be stopped. In making His infinite sacrifice Christ would exalt and honor the law. He would make known the exalted character of God's government, which could not in any way be changed to meet man in his sinful condition" (*Lift Him Up*, p. 257).

### Dwell too much?

"Some of our brethren have expressed fears that we shall dwell too much upon the subject of justification by faith, but I hope and pray that none will be needlessly alarmed; for there is no danger in presenting this doctrine as it is set forth in the Scriptures. If there had not been a remissness in the past to properly instruct the people of God, there would not now be a necessity of calling special attention to it. . . . The exceeding great and precious promises given us in the Holy Scriptures have been lost sight of to a great extent, just as the enemy of all righteousness designed that they should be. He has cast his own dark shadow between us and our God, that we may not see the true character of God. The Lord has proclaimed Himself to be 'merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth' (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 372).

### Dwell more on the cross

"I long to see our ministers dwell more upon the cross of Christ, their own

hearts, meanwhile, softened and subdued by the Saviour's matchless love which prompted that infinite sacrifice" (*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 374, 375).

### Every sermon

"Never should a sermon be preached, or Bible instruction in any line be given, without pointing the hearers to 'the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' Every true doctrine makes Christ the center, every precept receives force from His words" (*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 54).

### Faith before works

"But must works come first? No, it is faith first. And how? The cross of Christ is lifted up between heaven and earth. Here comes the Father and the whole train of holy angels; and as they approach that cross, the Father bows to the cross and the sacrifice is accepted. Then comes sinful man, with his burden of sin, to the cross, and he there looks up to Christ on the cross of Calvary, and he rolls his sins at the foot of the cross. Here mercy and truth have met together and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. And Christ says, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me'" (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, vol. 1, p. 344).

### First among Christians

"Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world. The proclamation of the third angel's message calls for the presentation of the Sabbath truth. This truth, with others included in the message, is to be proclaimed; but the great center of attraction, Christ Jesus, must not be left out" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 156).

### Foundation of every sermon

"No discourse should ever be delivered without presenting Christ and Him crucified as the foundation of the gospel" (*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 394).

### Influence of cross

"Our work in all its lines is to demonstrate the influence of the cross" (*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 235).

### Influence centers in

"The cross of Calvary challenges and will finally vanquish every earthly and hellish power. In the cross all influence centers, and from it all influence goes



forth. It is the great center of attraction; for on it Christ gave up His life for the human race. This sacrifice was offered for the purpose of restoring man to his original perfection. Yea, more, it was offered to give him an entire transformation of character, making him more than a conqueror" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1113).

### Inspire enthusiasm

"If there is anything in our world that should inspire enthusiasm, it is the cross of Calvary. 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.' Christ, made unto us 'wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,' should be humbly and thankfully received by us. His sacrifice should inspire us with zeal to work in His service, calling upon others to behold in Him 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world'" (*Review and Herald*, Sept. 29, 1896).

### Life insurance policy

"Here is brought to view our eternal life insurance policy. We had better make sure that we are living on this plan of addition, and God will work for us on the plan of multiplication. He will multiply unto us grace and peace. Let us fix our eyes on the cross of Calvary, and behold the sacrifice of Christ to secure for us this life insurance policy—'If ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'" (*The Upward Look*, p. 267).

### Lift the cross higher

"Lift the cross higher, that many may behold, and look and live. Christ died for the world, and His command is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The Lord would give us no such commission without placing resources at our command sufficient for the work. Will men act the part of faithful stewards, appropriating God's means where He designed it should be used? Shall souls famishing for the bread of life be denied the heavenly manna? Who will sacrifice for Christ's sake? Who will present in its rich fullness the righteousness of Christ? Will the church who claim to believe the truth, the blood-bought church, do this work?" (*Testimo-*

*nies to Southern Africa*, pp. 64, 65).

### Light from Calvary

"Every truth . . . must be studied in the light which streams from the cross of Calvary" (*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 221).

### Matchless love

"Often doctrinal subjects are presented with no special effect; for men expect others to press upon them their doctrines; but when the matchless love of Christ is dwelt upon, His grace impresses the heart. There are many who are sincerely seeking for light, who know not what they must do to be saved. Oh, tell them of the love of God, of the sacrifice made on Calvary's cross to save the perishing! Tell them to place their will on the side of God's will; and 'if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.' John 7:17" (*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 42).

### Means to move world

"Christ declares, 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' If the cross does not find an influence in its favor, it creates an influence. Through generation succeeding generation, the truth for this time is revealed as present truth. Christ on the cross was the medium whereby mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. This is the means that is to move the world" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1113).

### Meeting place

"Meet around the cross of Calvary in self-sacrifice and self-denial. God will bless you as you do your best. As you approach the throne of grace, as you find yourself bound to this throne by the golden chain let down from heaven to earth to draw men from the pit of sin, your heart will go out in love for your brethren and sisters who are without God and without hope in the world" (*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 256).

### Motivates

"'The love of Christ,' said Paul, 'constraineth us' [2 Cor. 5:14]. This was the actuating principle of his conduct; it was his motive-power. If ever his ardor in the path of duty flagged for a moment, one glance at the cross caused him to gird up anew the loins of his mind, and press

forward in the way of self-denial. In his labors for his brethren he relied much upon the manifestation of infinite love in the sacrifice of Christ, with its subduing, constraining power" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 293).

### One object of supreme interest

"To Paul the cross was the one object of supreme interest. Ever since he had been arrested in his career of persecution against the followers of the crucified Nazarene he had never ceased to glory in the cross. . . . He knew by personal experience that when a sinner once beholds the love of the Father, as seen in the sacrifice of His Son, and yields to the divine influence, a change of heart takes place, and henceforth Christ is all and in all" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 245).

### One interest

"One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other—Christ our righteousness" (*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 259).

### Our only hope

"Justification by faith is to many a mystery. A sinner is justified by God when he repents of his sins. He sees Jesus upon the cross of Calvary. . . . He looks to the atoning Sacrifice as his only hope, through repentance toward God—because the laws of His government have been broken—and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ as the One who can save and cleanse the sinner from every transgression" (*Our High Calling*, p. 52).

### Point to the cross

"I point you to the cross of Calvary. I ask you to consider the infinite sacrifice made in your behalf that through faith in Jesus Christ you may not perish but have everlasting life. . . . I point you to Jesus. You are safe in committing to Him the innermost working of your mind. The Lord Jesus hath purchased you with an infinite price. You may commit the keeping of your soul to Jesus. You may trust Him as your Counselor. . . . Constantly draw nigh unto God. He will help you" (*That I May Know Him*, p. 341).

### Power of the cross

"The cross of Calvary appeals in power, affording a reason why we should love Christ now, and why we should consider Him first, and best, and last, in everything. We should take our fitting

place in humble penitence at the foot of the cross. We may learn the lessons of meekness and lowliness of mind as we go up to Mount Calvary, and, looking upon the cross, see our Saviour in agony, the Son of God dying, the Just for the unjust" (*"That I May Know Him,"* p. 65).

#### Stamped on every loaf

"To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every waterspring. All this Christ has taught in appointing the emblems of His great sacrifice. The light shining from that Communion service in the upper chamber makes sacred the provisions for our daily life. The family board becomes as the table of the Lord, and every meal a sacrament" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660).

#### Talk the cross

"Let those whose hearts glow with the Saviour's love talk of Jesus, dwelling upon His infinite sacrifice in behalf of man. Dwell much upon His second appearing to our world; tell also of His first coming from heaven, His life of constant humiliation and sacrifice. With softened heart and tearful eye, tell the story of His dying upon Calvary's cross, because He loved us, that we might be saved" (*Review and Herald*, Dec. 2, 1890).

#### Third angel's message

"Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity' " (*Evangelism*, p. 190).

#### Truths cluster around cross

"The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption—the Son of God uplifted on the cross. This is to be the foundation of every discourse given by our ministers" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 315). ■

# "Be zealous and repent"

Ellen G. White

**If the church is to escape its Laodicean condition it must make Christ its consuming passion.**



Ellen G. White is God's special messenger to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Reprinted from the *Review and Herald—Extra*, vol. 67, no. 50, Battle Creek, Michigan, December 23, 1890.

**T**he Lord has seen our backslidings, and He has a controversy with His people. Their pride, their selfishness, their opening of the mind to doubt and unbelief, are manifest in His sight, and grieve His heart of love. Many gather darkness about their souls as a garment, and virtually say, "We want not a knowledge of Thy way, O God; we choose our own way." These are the things that separate the soul from God. There is in the soul of man an obstacle which he holds there with stubborn persistency, and which interposes between his soul and God. It is unbelief. God gives sufficient evidence, but man, with his unsanctified will, refuses to receive evidence unless it comes in his own way, to favor his own ideas. With a spirit of bravado he cries, "Proof, proof, is what we want," and turns away from the evidence that God gives. He talks doubt, unbelief, sowing the seeds of evil which will spring up and yield their harvest. He is separating his soul farther and farther from God.

Is it proof that such men need? Is it evidence that is wanting? No; the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is given to help all such souls who are turning away from positive evidence, and crying, "Proof"! The rich man asked that one might be sent from the dead to warn his brethren, lest they come to the place of torment. "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the



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## **It is in looking to Jesus and beholding His loveliness, having our eyes steadfastly fixed upon Him, that we become changed into His image.**

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prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

Why is it that men do not believe upon sufficient evidence? Because they do not want to be convinced. They have no disposition to give up their own will for God’s will. They are unwilling to acknowledge that they have cherished sinful unbelief in resisting the light that God has given them. They have been hunting for doubts, for pegs upon which to hang their unbelief. They have been ready to accept testimony which is weak and insufficient, testimony which God has not given them in His Word, but which pleases them because it agrees with their ideas, and is in harmony with their disposition and will. These souls are in great peril. If they will bow their proud will, and put it on God’s side of the question; if they will with humble, contrite hearts seek for the light, believing that there is light for them, then they will see light, because the eye is single to discern the light which comes from God. They will acknowledge the evidence of divine authority. Spiritual truths will shine forth from the divine page. But the heart must be open for the reception of light, for Satan is ever ready to obscure the precious truth which would make them wise unto salvation. If any do not receive it, it will forever remain a mystery of mysteries to them.

We should earnestly seek to know and appreciate the truth, that we may present it to others as it is in Jesus. We need to have a correct estimate of the value of our own souls; then we would not be as reckless in regard to our course of action as at present. We would seek most earnestly to know God’s way; we would work in an opposite direction from selfishness, and our constant prayer would be that we might have the mind of Christ, that we might be molded and fashioned

after His likeness. It is in looking to Jesus and beholding His loveliness, having our eyes steadfastly fixed upon Him, that we become changed into His image. He will give grace to all that keep His way, and do His will, and walk in truth. But those who love their own way, who worship their idols of opinion, and do not love God and obey His word, will continue to walk in darkness. Oh, how terrible is unbelief! As well let light be poured upon the blind, as to present truth to these souls; the one cannot see, and the other will not see.

I beseech you whose names are registered on the church book as worthy members to be indeed worthy, through the virtue of Christ. Mercy and truth and the love of God are promised to the humble and contrite soul. The displeasure and judgments of God are against those who persist in walking in their own ways, loving self, loving the praise of men. They will certainly be swept into the satanic delusions of these last days, because they received not the love of the truth. Because the Lord has, in former days, blessed and honored them, they flatter themselves that they are chosen and true, and do not need warning and instruction and reproof. The True Witness says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” The professed people of God have the charge against them, “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 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.”

The love to Jesus that once burned upon the altar of the heart has become dimmed and nearly extinguished. Spiritual strength has become enfeebled. The displeasure of the Lord is against His people. In their present condition it is impossible for them to represent the character of Christ. And when the True Witness has sent them counsel, reproof, and warnings because He loves them, they have refused to receive the message; they have refused to come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved. Jesus said, “I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . Therefore doth my Father love me.” “By taking your sins upon Myself, I am opening a channel through which His grace can flow to all who will accept it. In giving Myself for the sin of the world, I have prepared a way for the unrepressed

tide of His love to flow to men.”

All heaven is filled with amazement, that when this love, so broad, so deep, so rich and full, is presented to men who have known the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, they are so indifferent, so cold and unmoved. What does it mean that such amazing grace does not soften our hard hearts? O! it is because of the power of unbelief; because “thou hast left thy first love.” This is why the Word of God has so little influence. It is as a fire, but it cannot penetrate nor warm the ice-bound heart that cherishes unbelief.

The infinite treasures of truth have been accumulating from age to age. No representation could adequately impress us with the extent, the richness, of these vast resources. They are awaiting the demand of those who appreciate them. These gems of truth are to be gathered up by God’s remnant people, to be given by them to the world; but self-confidence and obduracy of soul refuse the blessed treasure. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Such love cannot be measured, neither can it be expressed. John calls upon the world to “behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” It is a love that passeth knowledge. In the fullness of the sacrifice, nothing was withheld. Jesus gave Himself. God designs that His people shall love one another as Christ loved us. They are to educate and train the soul for this love. They are to reflect this love in their own character, to reflect it to the world. Each should look upon this as his work. In his prayer to the Father, Jesus said: “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” Christ’s fullness is to be presented to the world by those who have become partakers of His grace. They are to do that for Christ which Christ did for the Father—represent His character.

There is a lack of moral and spiritual power throughout our conferences. Many churches do not have light in themselves. The members do not give evidence that they are branches of the True Vine, by bearing much fruit to the glory of God, but appear to be withering away. Their Redeemer has withdrawn His light, the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, from their assemblies; for they have ceased to represent the self-denial, the sympathy and compassionate love, of the world’s Re-

deemer; they have not love for the souls for whom Christ has died. They have ceased to be true and faithful. It is a sad picture,—the feeble piety, the want of consecration and devotion to God. There has been a separation of the soul from God; many have cut off the communication between Him and the soul by refusing His messengers and His message.

In our largest churches the greatest evils exist, because these have had the greatest light. They have not a true knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent. The leaven of unbelief is working, and unless these evils which bring the displeasure of God are corrected in its members, the whole church stands accountable for them. The deep movings of the Spirit of God are not with them; the glorious presence of the King of saints, and His power to cleanse from all moral defilement, are not manifest among them. Many come to the assembly as worshipers, like the door upon its hinges. They understand not the true application of the Scriptures, nor the power of God. They have eyes, but they see not; ears have they, but they hear not; they continue in their evil ways, yet regard themselves as the privileged, obedient people who are doers of the word. A carnal security and ease in Zion prevail. Peace, peace, is sounded in her borders, when God has not spoken peace. They have forfeited the terms of peace; there is reason for an alarm to be sounded in all "my holy mountain." The sinners in Zion should be afraid; in a time when they do not expect it, sudden destruction will surely come upon all who are at ease.

The Holy Spirit strives to make apparent the claims of God, but men pay heed only for a moment, and turn their minds to other things: Satan catches away the seeds of truth; the gracious influence of the Spirit of God is effectually resisted. Thus many are grieving away the Holy Spirit for the last time, and they know it not.

The words spoken by Christ of Jerusalem are "Your house is left unto you desolate." What anguish of soul did Jesus feel when all His appeals, His warnings and reproofs, were resisted! At the time He brought them home to the soul, impressions were made; but self-love, self-sufficiency, love of the world, came in and choked the good seed sown. Pride of heart prevented His hearers from humbling themselves before God, and confessing their sin in resisting His Holy

Spirit, and reluctantly it left them. On the crest of Olivet, as He beheld the city, he wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" Here He paused; He was loth to utter the irrevocable sentence. O that Jerusalem would repent! When the fast westering sun should pass out of sight, her day of mercy would be ended. Jesus closed His sentence, "But now they are hid from thine eyes." On another occasion He lamented the impenitence of the chosen city: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." The Lord forbid that this scene should now be repeated in the experience of God's professed people! "My Spirit," He says, "shall not always strive with man." The time will come when it must be said of the impenitent, "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone."

Will the church see where she has fallen? A coldness, hardness of heart, a want of sympathy for the brethren, exists in the church. An absence of love for the erring is manifested. There is a withdrawing from the very ones who need pity and help. A severity, an overbearing spirit, such as existed among the Pharisees, exists in our churches, and especially in those intrusted with sacred responsibilities. They are lifted up in self-esteem and self-assurance. The widow and the fatherless have not their sympathy or their love. This is entirely unlike the spirit of Christ. The Lord looks with displeasure upon the coarse, harsh spirit that has been manifested by some—a spirit so devoid of sympathy, of tender appreciation of those whom He loves. Brethren, you who close the heart against Christ's suffering ones, remember, that as you deal with them, God will deal with you. When you call, He will not say, "Here I am"; when you cry, He will not answer. Satan is watching, preparing his delusions to ensnare those who are filled with self-importance while they are spiritually destitute.

The road to paradise is not one of self-exaltation, but of repentance, confession, humiliation, of faith and obedience. The message to the Laodicean Church is appropriate to the church at this time: "And unto the angel of the church of the

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## **The road to paradise is not one of self-exaltation, but of repentance, confession, humiliation, of faith and obedience.**

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Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." There are many who are priding themselves upon their spiritual riches, their knowledge of the truth, and are living in guilty self-deception. When the members of the church humble themselves before God by zealous, not half-hearted, lifeless action, the Lord will receive them. But He declares, "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." How long shall this warning be resisted? How long shall it be slighted?

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The position of Christ is the attitude of forbearance and importunity. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." Oh the soul poverty is alarming! And those who are most in need of the gold of love, feel rich and increased with goods, when they lack every grace. Having lost faith and love, they have lost everything.

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## One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other,—Christ our righteousness.

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The Lord has sent a message to arouse His people to repent, and do their first works; but how has His message been received? While some have heeded it, others have cast contempt and reproach on the message and the messenger. Spirituality deadened, humility and childlike simplicity gone, a mechanical, formal profession of faith has taken the place of love and devotion. Is this mournful condition of things to continue? Is the lamp of God's love to go out in darkness? The Saviour calls; listen to His voice: "Be zealous and repent." Repent, confess your sins, and you will be forgiven. "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?" Why will you try to rekindle a mere fitful fire, and walk in the sparks of your own kindling?

The True Witness declares, "I know thy works." "Repent, and do the first works." This is the true test, the evidence that the Spirit of God is working in the heart to imbue you with his love. "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." The church is like the unproductive tree that, receiving the dew and rain and sunshine, should have produced an abundance of fruit, but on which the divine search discovers *nothing but leaves*. Solemn thought for our churches! solemn, indeed, for every individual! Marvelous is the patience and forbearance of God; but "except thou repent," it will be exhausted; the churches, our institutions, will go from weakness to weakness, from cold formality to deadness, while they are saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." The True Witness says, "And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Will they ever see clearly their condition?

There is to be in the churches a won-

derful manifestation of the power of God, but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves before the Lord, and opened the door of the heart by confession and repentance. In the manifestation of that power which lightens the earth with the glory of God, they will see only something which in their blindness they think dangerous, something which will arouse their fears, and they will brace themselves to resist it. Because the Lord does not work according to their ideas and expectations, they will oppose the work. "Why," they say, "should not we know the Spirit of God, when we have been in the work so many years?" Because they did not respond to the warnings, the entreaties of the messages of God, but persistently said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Talent, long experience, will not make men channels of light, unless they place themselves under the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and are called, and chosen, and prepared by the endowment of the Holy Spirit. When men who handle sacred things will humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, the Lord will lift them up. He will make them men of discernment—men rich in the grace of His Spirit. Their strong, selfish traits of character, their stubbornness, will be seen in the light shining from the Light of the world. "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." If you seek the Lord with all your heart, he will be found of you.

The end is near! We have not a moment to lose! Light is to shine forth from God's people in clear, distinct rays, bringing Jesus before the churches and before the world. Our work is not to be restricted to those who already know the truth; our field is the world. The instrumentalities to be used are those souls who gladly receive the light of truth which God communicates to them. These are God's agencies for communicating the knowledge of truth to the world. If through the grace of Christ His people will become new bottles, He will fill them with the new wine. God will give additional light, and old truths will be recovered, and replaced in the framework of truth; and wherever the laborers go, they will triumph. As Christ's ambassadors, they are to search the Scriptures, to seek for the truths that have been hidden beneath the rubbish of error. And every ray of light received is to be com-

municated to others. One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other,—Christ our righteousness.

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: *for in these things I delight*, saith the Lord." This is what needs to be brought into the experience of every worker, high or low, in all our institutions, in all our churches. God wants every soul to return to the first love. He wants all to have the gold of faith and love, so that they can draw from the treasure to impart to others who need it.

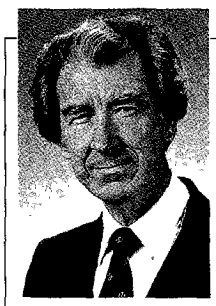
Then the believers will be of one heart and of one mind, and the Lord will make His Word powerful in the earth. New cities and villages and territories will be entered; the church will arise and shine, because her light has come, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon her. New converts will be added to the churches, and those who now claim to be converted will feel in their own hearts the transforming power of the grace of Christ. Then Satan will be aroused, and will excite the bitterest persecution against God's people. But those not of our faith, who have not rejected light, will recognize the spirit of Christ in His true followers, and will take their stand with the people of God.

Christ says, speaking of the Comforter, "He shall not speak of himself"; "He shall testify of me"; "He shall glorify me." How little has Christ been preached! The laborers have presented theories, plenty of them, but little of Christ and His love. As the Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of his love, so the Spirit came to glorify Christ by revealing to the world the riches of his love and grace. If the Holy Spirit dwells in us, our work will testify to the fact, we shall lift up Jesus. Not one can afford to be silent now; the burden of the work is to present Christ to the world. All who venture to have their own way, who do not join the angels who are sent from heaven with a message to fill the whole earth with its glory, will be passed by. The work will go forward to victory without them, and they will have no part in its triumph. ■

# Well read or widely read?

**Rex D. Edwards**

**You can be a better reader.**



*Rex D. Edwards, D.Min., is director of ministerial continuing education for the General Conference Ministerial Association.*

**T**he Rev. Mr. Ingham was a studious New England minister sorely beset with demands upon his schedule. He attended so many public gatherings that he found himself unable to devote due time to sermons and pastoral work, let alone systematic reading. In desperation he hired a double—an ignorant, irascible Irishman—who resembled him closely in form and feature. This double he sent in his stead to all the inconsequential and time-consuming meetings he had heretofore felt it advisable to attend.

For a short while all went well. Ingham now had time to prepare his sermons carefully, enjoy his pastoral calls, and even resume his scholarly studies. But alas, one day the Irishman's fiery temper got the better of him. He resorted to most unclerical language, forcing Ingham to leave town promptly and in disgrace.

Edward Everett Hale's satirical tale of more than a century ago, "My Double, and How He Undid Me," illustrates how the image of the pastor has changed. Once the most scholarly and best-read members of the community, nowadays pastors are so burdened with administrative and promotional work that they have little time for intensive reading. Their labor is chiefly with people and programs rather than with books and periodicals. As John Stott reflected: "Many are essentially administrators, whose symbols of ministry are the office rather than the study, and the telephone rather than the Bible."<sup>1</sup>

Despite the various and sundry demands upon their time, however, pastors must manage to be readers. Output neces-

sitates input. Anyone who gives much mentally and spiritually must first receive much, and reading is the best channel from the hearts and minds of others. Reading is also essential for spiritual renewal, intellectual growth, and for vitality and freshness in preaching. Preachers who fail to read may even draw down upon their heads the censure once passed upon a parson by a caustic attorney, who, on leaving the church after a sermon, remarked to another worshipper, "How do you like skimmed milk?"

Besides reading for their own good and growth, ministers need to read for pure pleasure, since "a bow that is never unstrung loses its spring."

## **Reading a priority**

Writers on pastoral theology emphasize the importance of reading for preachers. One asserts that new books are essential to improvement in the pulpit; the surest "way to prevent mental and sermonic stagnation is a persistent use of fresh literature alongside the permanent literature which is at his command." Another author suggests that wide reading is invaluable for pastors, and those who neglect to read are shutting the door to "greater service and personal efficiency." Yet another writer proposes that finding time to read is more important for pastors than official routine and organizational chores; they must maintain a study, not an office. Still another author asserts that no pastor can be a wise and effective leader without being also a patient learner. And in this process of patient learning, reading occupies a large place.

As James Russell Lowell once remarked, "the better part of our education is the part we give ourselves," that is, after

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## Intermittent and desultory reading, only when the spirit moves or when there is nothing else to be done, is never satisfactory.

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completing formal schooling. This part, he argues, we get largely through reading. Ellen White contended that "our first duty toward God and our fellow human beings . . . is self-development."<sup>2</sup>

### Reading habitually

The question naturally arises, How much can the busy pastor be expected to read? John Stott prescribes the minimum amount: "Every day at least one hour, every week one morning, afternoon, or evening; every month a full day; every year a week. Set out like this it sounds very little. . . . Yet everybody who tries it is surprised to discover how much reading can be done within such a disciplined framework. It totals up to nearly 600 hours in the course of a year."<sup>3</sup> Incidentally, a useful device is to keep open on your desk a book you are trying to read, and when you have a fragment of time, plunge quickly into the volume and read for the spare moments at your disposal. Fred Craddock reasons, "The person who has a comfortable chair in a quiet corner beside which is always a book with a marker and who reads 20 minutes after dinner and before retiring will read dozens of books each year."<sup>4</sup>

It is of primary importance for pastors to be both systematic and regular in their reading habits. Intermittent and desultory reading, only when the spirit moves or when there is nothing else to be done, is never satisfactory.

So how do you get into the mood for reading? First, develop the habit. Reading at the same time and place maintains momentum. George Sweazey reasons, "The rooster salutes the dawn because the recurrence of the expected time makes him feel like crowing."<sup>5</sup> Second, simply read. The heartbeat does not pick up until

the exercise has started. And what do we do when our minds are reluctant? Paul Scherer lets us glimpse into his study as he advises, "Just do not quit . . . change your position from desk to the chair . . . walk up and down, but keep at it. . . . There is virtue in laying down the law to these recalcitrant selves inside of ours. If they will not agree to your schedule, you stage a sit-down. You say to them, 'No work, no do anything else. We'll see who's who.'"<sup>6</sup>

### Reading intelligently

Another question suggests itself: How can the pastor read to best advantage? Martyn Lloyd-Jones recommends: "A preacher has to be like a squirrel and has to learn to collect and store matter for the future days of winter."<sup>7</sup> Every reader of books develops his or her own practice of marking, underlining, or note-taking. Few of us have memories so retentive that we can dispense with written notes. Most commendable was the practice of Ralph Waldo Emerson in scrupulously keeping a notebook or journal. In this journal, which he indexed, he maintained a record of the significant thoughts and observations he had gleaned from his reading, thinking, and travel. When he came to prepare the lyceum lectures, he first chose a topic and then consulted his journal for material already gathered on the subject. So useful did he find this notebook that he called it his "savings bank."

It is essential when making notes to be thorough enough to revive later the thought that prompted it. Otherwise, as Fred Craddock warns, "the note is not only worthless; it haunts the edges of one's mind like an almost-heard conversation in the next room."<sup>8</sup> John Stott testifies: "I have found it helpful, while the theme of an important book is fresh in my mind, to make a brief synopsis of its argument. After finishing each book, I also try not to begin another until I have written out . . . [on 3" x 5" cards], a few of its striking quotations." He keeps two files, "the one running from Genesis to Revelation, and the other from A to Z, and [I] file each card where I think I am most likely to find it again." So persuaded is he with this simple yet flexible system that he confesses, "If I were to begin my ministry again, I would adopt the same system."<sup>9</sup>

### Reading discriminately

Not all reading requires the same level of concentration. Ordinary prose, it has been said, can be read with a 60 percent

attention rate in contrast to scientific, theological, or philosophical prose, which requires a higher level. Newspapers and much fiction need only to be skimmed. Indeed, as Oliver Wendell Holmes once put it, most books we should read *in*, not *through*. Some writers lack the "subtle choice of omission" as well as the admirable conciseness of a Francis Bacon or Abraham Lincoln. I have considerable sympathy for the senior pastor of a multi-staffed congregation who said to one of his former theological professors, "If you run across any new books you think I should read, please tell me of them. But I hope they will be little books."

Many scholarly books are written in a dull, involved style; they fail to live up to the fundamental principle of good writing: "economize your reader's attention." As Craddock comments, they "are experts in subject matter, but only rarely are they masters in the use of language."<sup>10</sup>

The classic statement on the art of reading is still that of Francis Bacon: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested—that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be entirely but not curiously [closely]; and some few are to be read wholly and with diligence and attention."

### Reading selectively

Now, what books and periodicals should pastors read? Religious magazines will keep them informed about trends. Slavishly reading a daily newspaper consumes time with no adequate return, but glancing at the headlines and scanning its columns and editorials—along with reviewing a well-edited weekly—will keep one abreast of significant events. Access to a high-grade monthly such as *Atlantic Monthly* or an excellent quarterly like *Yale Review* will yield an occasional illuminating article, along with dependable reviews of current books of note. Of these new books pastors can hope to read only a few. They may benefit from *Pastor's Book Service*, which contains a 10 to 12-page abridged version of current religious books, and also *Reader's Digest* with its condensed magazine articles.

Pastors might also cultivate the habit of Edgar Allan Poe, who, because of his editorial duties, had little time for general reading. Poe read with intense concentration—chewing and digesting—some handbook on a certain subject. Thus he gained mastery of the subject equal to that of

many who had read much more on it. For to be widely read is not necessarily to be well read. A choice restricted menu of reading is better than an elaborate but indiscriminate diet.

Are there any particular sorts of religious books that pastors should read? Writers on pastoral theology, I find, recommend three kinds. First, biographies of great religious leaders. Learning how God dealt with other Christians in other times and places brings balance, wisdom, and encouragement. Second, volumes of great sermons; these should be read not only for ideas and illustrations but also for points on structure and style. Third and foremost, the Bible. "Be masters of your Bibles, brethren," said Spurgeon to his students "Whatever other works you have not searched, be at home with the writings of the prophets and apostles. 'Let the Word of God dwell in you richly.'" <sup>11</sup> Any number of lectionaries will enable you, in a systematic way, to fulfill the counsel of Dr. Lloyd-Jones that "all preachers should read the whole Bible through once every year . . . that should be the very minimum of the preacher's Bible reading." <sup>12</sup> John Huxtable warns against "making weekly sallies into the Good Book to discover some peg on which to hang some scattered observations about men and affairs." <sup>13</sup> This sporadic and haphazard dipping into the Scriptures, he writes, disqualifies one as a preacher of the Word. The minister who "makes a constant companion of the Word of God," writes Ellen White, "gains an increased ability to labor. Continually advancing in knowledge, he becomes constantly better able to represent Christ. He is strengthened in faith. . . . The Bible is the best book in the world for giving intellectual culture. Its study taxes the mind, strengthens the memory, and sharpens the intellect more than the study of all the subjects that human philosophy embraces." <sup>14</sup>

No wonder Ellen White urged ministers to "set aside a portion of each day for a study of the Scriptures." <sup>15</sup>

The preacher should occasionally read books of immediate relevance, such as Richard J. Foster's *Celebration of Discipline*, <sup>16</sup> Clark Pinnock's *Tracking the Maze*, <sup>17</sup> John Naisbitt's *Megatrends* <sup>18</sup>, or Carl George's *Prepare Your Church for the Future*. <sup>19</sup> Once in a while ministers will do well to refresh their preaching by examining some new homiletical methodology (as in Fred Craddock's inductive method in *As One Without Authority*, <sup>20</sup> or

by exploring the "preaching as storytelling" method, as in Elizabeth Achtemeier's *Creative Preaching*. <sup>21</sup> Reading the symposium *Handbook for Congregational Studies* <sup>22</sup> will lead to increased effectiveness in parish work. Finally, pastors can always read with profit great literature—novels, short stories, and poetry. In these classic works of fiction, as in epic poems and dramas, they find moving interpretations of people and life here on earth.

Following this article you will find additional books recommended by some of your colleagues.

### Reading contextually

If we are to build bridges into the real world," writes Stott, "and seek to relate the Word of God to the major themes of life and the major issues of the day, then we must take seriously both the biblical text and the contemporary scene. . . . We cannot afford to remain on either side of the cultural divide. To withdraw from the world into the Bible (which is escapism), or from the Bible into the world (which is conformity), will be fatal to our preaching ministry." <sup>23</sup> Pastors' reading, then, should extend to selected secular books. Such exposure will keep them informed about and help them understand the mind-set of the post-Christian West. They will grapple with popular modern philosophers and novelists, and struggle with the debates about feminism, abortion, and euthanasia. Such reading from the contemporary perspective will help them discern what answers should be given if the Word is to be contextualized in the world. The pastor who does not keep stimulated by current reading will be seen as an anachronism, still displaying as new ideas what people were talking about a decade ago.

The late Washington Gladden went so far as to assert that ministers should continue studying in the pastorate all the subjects they began studying in the seminary. While this counsel may represent an illusive ideal, ministers cannot afford to become functionally illiterate. Our minds are on display with every word we utter, and a flabby, unexercised mind is a repellent spectacle. There must be a balance, naturally. While bookworms produce pendants who are ill at ease with people, even the practical human-interest types still have to read. Ministers need not be scholars, but they must have respectable minds, working with a range of information that will not make educated members of the congregation feel patronizing.

## The minister who "makes a constant companion of the Word of God gains an increased ability to labor."

Francis Bacon long ago pointed out that it is reading that makes a "complete man." It enlarges one's capacities as a creative human being and has a cumulative effect on one's vocabulary, use of language, and power of imagination. And the pastor who can preach week after week, year in and year out, without tedious repetition or discomforting depletion is the pastor who is the reader. ■

<sup>1</sup> John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1938), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Stott, p. 204.

<sup>4</sup> Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> George Sweazey, *Preaching the Good News* (New York: Prentice-Hall Pub. Assn., 1976), p. 113.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Scherer, *For We Have This Treasure* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1944), pp. 181, 182.

<sup>7</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), pp. 182, 183.

<sup>8</sup> Craddock, p. 83.

<sup>9</sup> Stott, pp. 204, 205.

<sup>10</sup> Craddock, p. 79.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, second series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> Lloyd-Jones, p. 172.

<sup>13</sup> John Huxtable, *The Preacher's Integrity and Other Lectures* (London: Epworth Press, Ltd., 1966).

<sup>14</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1948), pp. 99, 100.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>16</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1988).

<sup>17</sup> Clark Pinnock, *Tracking the Maze* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1990).

<sup>18</sup> John Naisbitt, *Megatrends* (New York: Warner Books, 1988).

<sup>19</sup> Carl George, *Prepare Your Church for the Future* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Flemming H. Revell, 1988).

<sup>20</sup> Fred Craddock, *As One Without Authority* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979).

<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Creative Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980).

<sup>22</sup> *Handbook for Congregational Studies*, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney, eds. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991).

<sup>23</sup> Stott, p. 180.

# A Recent Book I've Enjoyed Reading

**Suffering and Hope, J. Christiaan Beker** (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

Tackling the "why" of suffering is as frustrating and unproductive to a sufferer as the unraveling of a sweater. Keeping the scriptural tension between suffering and hope, anchoring hope to the integrity of God's redemptive plan,



grounding hope in Christ's love and loyalty, envisioning the kingdom-come termination of suffering, and making inroads into present suffering are some of the author's compelling alternatives in *Suffering and Hope*.—Larry Yeagley, Muskegon, Michigan.

**The Keys of This Blood, Malachi Martin** (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990).

This book exhibits three political systems that were contending for the supreme leadership of the new world order: (1) the Communist system; (2) the democratic capitalist system of the West; and (3) the papal hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church.



My reading of this book has benefited my ministry in the following ways: 1. It has added to my ministry a sense of relevance. Who knows but that I was called to be a minister of the gospel for such a time as this?

2. It has confirmed the necessity of my ministry of preaching the full gospel. 3. And it has added to my ministry a sense of urgency. The full gospel that I should preach I must preach quickly.—Samuel Núñez, San Marcos, California.

**Honest to God? Bill Hybels** (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishers, 1990).

Bill Hybels startled me with his transparent and vulnerable recollection of his personal journey toward what he describes as "authentic" Christianity. He proceeds to interface with his reader as to what typical



"inauthentic" faith was for him, a fellow pastor. His graphic portrayal of his high-powered, seemingly compulsive ministry schedule and his courageous decision to face his superficial relationship with God brought conviction to my heart. His successful transformation brought me encouragement to press on to "authenticity" in Christ.—David J. Huber, Burtonsville, Maryland.

**Mastering Worship, Jack Hayford, John Killinger, Howard Stevenson** (Portland, Oreg.: Multnomah Press, 1990).

*Mastering Worship* provides a balanced approach for adding creativity in worship. The authors address how to prepare for worship,

how to integrate the elements of worship for continuity and meaning, and how to provide variety in special services. I found many ideas adaptable to our smaller church setting.—Leslie Bumgardner, Dublin, Ohio.



**Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination, Eugene H. Peterson** (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988).

This is the best recent book on John's Apocalypse that I have seen. Until recently Peterson was a distinguished Presbyterian pastor as well as a writer. One reason he identifies with Revelation is that he sees John as himself, a pastor who loves his seven congregations.

If you think John wrote for distantly future generations but not for his own, this book will offend you. But if you hunger for a rich pastoral interpretation of the Apocalypse, hock the car if need be in order to buy this book.—Charles Scriven, Takoma Park, Maryland.



**The Moral Life of Children, Robert Coles**, (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1986).

I recommend reading anything by Psychiatrist Robert Coles, who won the Pulitzer

Prize for his series *Children of Crisis*. His book *The Moral Life of Children* gives insights into how children make moral choices. His observations on what it takes to live a morally courageous life along with the stories of his personal contacts with Ruby Bridges, the



Black 6-year-old girl who initiated school desegregation in New Orleans, are worth the price of the book.—Gordon Bietz, Collegedale, Tennessee.

**John, the Gospel of Belief, Merrill C. Tenney** (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1989).

This volume is for those who wish to make a study of John's Gospel and understand more thoroughly the conflict between belief and unbelief.

This book has three parts: the structure of John's Gospel; an exposition of the six phases of Christ's ministry; and a topical analysis of vocabulary, signs, symbols, and interviews.



From prologue to epilogue Tenney's book has heightened my appreciation of Jesus' power, person, and presence.—Eric Calvin Ward, Huntsville, Alabama.



# Building a church's self-esteem

**Rodney W. Draggon**

**It's more important than we may think.**



*Rodney W. Draggon is pastor of the Mount Tahoma SDA Church in Tacoma, Washington.*

**S**elf-esteem for churches is an important subject we hear little about. Along with being vital to a congregation's spiritual well-being, corporate self-esteem is a barometer of its standing both in the community and among other churches. When a church feels good about itself in the Lord, that church grows.

People don't function well when their self-esteem is low; likewise with churches. Many are labeled "problem churches" when they just need some love and respect. Blessed is the pastor who meets that need.

When a pastor comes to a new church, the conference usually has an agenda waiting. So does the local congregation. Sometimes the two are the same; other times they are worlds apart. The pastor's responsibility is to deal with both agendas in a way that the local church can progress. To accomplish this, pastors need to find out how their church feels about itself and its existing programs. They also need to help the church assess its strengths and weaknesses.

One way to accomplish this is to counsel with local elders and other decision-makers on the church board. Another way is to survey the congregation at large. As pastors we need to listen to what members say about their felt needs, which are often ignored. Members find themselves forced to accept goals, projects, and plans that do not scratch them where they are itching. This can damage a church's respect and esteem. At the first opportunity we should restore these and help the church feel good about itself.

Corporate self-esteem is enhanced when leaders trust and respect the group's ideas and concepts. It works the same as when you respect an individual's ideas. Suppose your children ask you to help them find a job, but instead you insist on helping them with their homework. In your judgment, helping with their homework will help them get a job. But the message they hear you saying is: "What you think is not important." That hurts their self-esteem.

Pastors must beware not to make that kind of mistake. We are the spiritual physicians of our churches, trained to deal with problems after hearing the members explain their symptoms. We should be careful how we proceed in implementing our remedies, taking into account suggestions the members themselves may have. I remember one church where upon my arrival the first elder said, "We need a stewardship drive right away." Sure enough, that was just what was needed.

If members relate their symptoms and we ignore them, we are harming their spiritual health and damaging our own ability to serve them. I am not recommending a concept of "don't plan; just wait for the members to give me my marching orders." I'm saying only that in order to help our churches fulfill their goals and God-given responsibilities we need to listen before we act.

Much of the time churches know what their needs are, and we can best serve them by assisting them in solving the dilemma themselves. Churches with good esteem tend to work harder, love one another and support the conference. You will have fewer headaches.

Here are some specific actions you can take to nurture a church's self-esteem:

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## In order to help our churches fulfill their goals and God-given responsibilities we need to listen before we act.

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### 1. Find out what needs immediate attention.

It may be remodeling, evangelism, stewardship, or community involvement. Listen to the needs of the church and start from there. I remember one church was trying to finish its basement. Unable to hold programs there as it was, members did not invite many friends and neighbors to church. So we organized a plan to finish the basement, and sure enough, the church was happy to welcome visitors. The visitors themselves, in turn, were pleased to come to the church in increasing numbers. Listening to my members before taking action helped me build the church's self-respect.

### 2. Keep the church and its surroundings neat and clean.

The appearance of the property says a lot about its members and their relationship with God. Have a nice sign in front. Mow the grass—nothing is worse than seeing a church with an untended lawn. Organize a general cleanup day at least twice a year. Keep the bathrooms clean. All this reminds our people that the church building is God's house.

### 3. Invite conference officials to your pulpit at least three times a year.

The president or secretary should come at least once a year. These visits provide a boost to members, helping them feel a part of the conference. The further you are from the conference office, the more often you should invite conference officials.

Recently Kay Orr, a former governor of Nebraska, spoke at one of our academies. While explaining her responsibilities, she observed that citizens of the

state's panhandle feel isolated. To remedy this, she instituted "Governor's Day," when she and some of her staff travel to remote areas and listen to suggestions and complaints. We need to do the same for our churches by making sure conference officials visit them. If members never see anybody from headquarters, they feel that no one cares and that they are not worth much. No matter how small your church, invite conference and union officials to meet with your people. You are not imposing on them—visiting your church is part of their job. You might also bring in well-known speakers from outside your territory for a special day once or twice a year.

### 4. Stand up for your people.

Don't let your church or district be pushed around (for lack of a better term). Stand up for your people. Not only does the good shepherd lead sheep in green pastures and look for them when they are lost; he also stands up for them in difficult situations. So take some heat for your members. It makes them know you are concerned for them.

I remember in one church it was a foregone conclusion that the youth federation Sabbath services were held at a larger church. A midsize church nearby had the Friday night meeting. Although my church had the fewest members, it could hold as many visitors as the bigger churches. So I suggested that my church have the Sabbath services. Without being obnoxious about it, I firmly held my ground and won my case. My folks were beside themselves in unbelief; they felt so proud to host the program.

I play basketball and believe in rebounding, blocking shots, and playing defense. But I also want to shoot the ball now and then. Even if I miss, at least I get a chance to shoot. We must all give and take, as individuals and as churches, but when you are only giving and never receiving, you endanger your members' sense of respect and esteem.

### 5. Sponsor an outreach program unique to your church.

It may be a Community Services center, radio or TV program, prison ministry, literacy classes, or a food bank. Help the members make a contribution to their community so people will say, "If you need this and so, go to the Seventh-day Adventist church." Get to know your

local public school principal, the mayor, and other city officials. All this means a lot to your church's sense of esteem.

### 6. Publicize activities in your church.

It does not cost much, but it certainly pays a lot to take advantage of any available avenues of communication. You might arrange local TV coverage for a special event or put articles in the local newspaper and your union paper. Your members will be thrilled when they see an article about their church. Always put the church's name in big bold print; your people will love you for it.

### 7. As pastors we need to look our best and be our best.

Some feel, "I don't want to be above the people; I want to blend in among my members." In reality, our people expect a higher standard from us—and rightly so. Along with maintaining a sharp appearance, we need to keep our minds sharp. Avail yourself of continuing education. Other professionals do, and so should we.

### 8. Accept occasional opportunities to minister outside your church.

When members see their pastor in demand, they want a pastor others want—that's human nature. If the only time we get away from our own districts is for camp meeting and vacation, they may think, *How come nobody is inviting our pastor to come and speak?* I'm not advocating a popularity contest or that you go on the road so much that others are almost paying your salary. But take an outside sermon appointment or conduct a workshop at least twice a year. You will be surprised how your people relate to you after you take another engagement.

In summary, think of the many ways the devil tries to discourage our members. How important it is for the church to be a positive force in their lives. Through nurturing a sense of corporate self-worth, pastors also enhance individual self-esteem. ■

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# The pastor/elder leadership team—I

J. H. Zachary

**T**

he Adventist ministry faces a grueling challenge in providing pastoral care for our worldwide flock. Just 17,000 ministers

are available to serve more than 7 million members. When we subtract those in nonpastoral positions, one can quickly discern the scope of the shortfall. Only through the faithful ministry of local church elders can churches survive and thrive. In close cooperation with the pastor they must provide vital services to the congregation.

This month we will look at the pastor's responsibility to the leadership team; next month we will examine the role of elders. I am targeting my advice to the average pastor, who is a district supervisor of five to 25 or more congregations.

**1. Delegate.** Some pastors are overly protective of their work. For greater strength they must delegate to local elders and other lay members. Elders are often the most talented lay leaders in the congregation, fully capable of shouldering responsibility. The pastor needs to entrust them with specific duties.

**2. Train.** One of the most important tasks of a pastor in multichurch districts is training. Beyond equipping the entire membership in soul-winning and nurturing new members, pastors must devote prime time to the training of the elders in all their churches. This can be accomplished through a monthly or bimonthly meeting with all members of the elder/pastor team. The agenda of these meetings will cover all the needs of the district, from preaching

to caring for church property.

**3. Prepare a sermon plan.** To avoid haphazard content in sermons preached by different speakers, the pastor should develop a sermon plan of topics to preach about week by week. It is so easy to spend time with pet subjects and avoid presenting a balanced spiritual menu.

**4. Plan outreach.** Together with the elders and church board, the pastor will develop a plan for evangelism, for the district as a whole and for each church individually. I've seen this done effectively in the South Philippine Union. During a visit to a pastor's home, I noticed a map of his district with each church marked. From each church was a ribbon leading to an unentered town that the members had targeted for evangelism. Elders led the congregations in the soul-winning efforts. The results were dramatic. One of the pastor's interns supervised a district of 12 churches and had the highest baptisms of any pastor in that mission.

I've witnessed similar success in evangelism by local elders in the East Indonesia Union Mission. One congregation had a special service dedicating eight couples to begin personal work in eight unentered villages. The entire church made plans to support their missionaries. Little wonder that in portions of northern Sulawesi in Indonesia there is an Adventist church in almost every village.

**5. Plan nurture.** The strength of pastors' work lies in their ability to establish a strong visitation program in all churches of the district. They must develop a plan involving elders, deacons, and Sabbath school teachers in regular visitation of members, backsliders, the sick, and the youth. Nothing will fortify the church and close the "back door" like a meaningful, regular visitation program.

I happened to visit a remote church in

the Philippines several years ago. The pastor was supervising more than 30 churches. Ministerial students from the college and local elders did most of the pastoral work. During the previous week the elders had compiled a list of all missing members. Early Sabbath morning each of them had made visits to these homes. As I arrived at the church I noticed little groups walking across the rice paddies. Two of the elders were bringing missing members back to church. That day there was a lovely reconsecration service for a young mother whose husband had deserted her. Led by an elder, we all gathered around and prayed that God would bless her and her three children. Then we stepped into the churchyard as the head elder led us in another special service. One brother he had visited requested that some magic charms be burned because they had drawn him away from the Lord. What rejoicing erupted among the members as the fire was lit. Within a year that church had to enlarge its building to accommodate a flock of new members, all through the soul-winning leadership of local elders.

**6. Ordain.** The pastor will arrange for each elder to be ordained. In some areas of the world there is reluctance to ordain elders until they have proven themselves for a long time. Actually the *Church Manual* suggests that ordination should occur soon after the election of church officers. This gives elders the full support of the church and publicly invites the Holy Spirit to bless their leadership.

**7. Maintain team spirit.** The pastor will take whatever steps are necessary to encourage and maintain a team spirit among the elders in the district.

All of this pastors can do to fulfill their responsibilities in the leadership team. Next month we will consider the role of local elders. ■

J. H. Zachary is an associate secretary of the Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

### Adventist Hot Potatoes

Martin Weber, *Pacific Press Publishing Association, Boise, Idaho, 1991, 128 pages, US\$7.95, Cdn\$9.95, paper.* Reviewed by Gary B. Patterson, administrative assistant to the president, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

In *Adventist Hot Potatoes* Martin Weber revives a contrapuntal writing style common to early Adventism that became al-

most extinct in the 1900s. During most of this century the church has avoided dialogue in its official published works, preferring the homogenized imprimatur method of reading committees and official consensus.

The latter approach proves less controversial and may serve as a safeguard against error, but it removes much of the vigor from discussion of church issues and denies members the accuracy

of written dialogue.

Weber is part of a renaissance of that earlier more forthright writing style. He opens discussion on topics that would make even the most secure debater among us blanch. Weber addresses the more notable public behaviors and taboos of the typical Adventist lifestyle. He also ventures into questions regarding private matters that we generally avoid discussing in print.

The author does not confine his exposé to lifestyle issues. He probes the Adventist psyche, asking us to analyze our positions on such vital matters as theodicy, the doctrine of inspiration, and ecclesiology.

You probably will not agree with all Weber has to say, or if you do, you may be annoyed by how he says it. As he indicates in his first chapter, the author expects such a response. But Adventists seem to like his style. *Adventist Hot Potatoes* has been a hot seller in church bookstores ever since it rolled off the presses.

Weber has the temerity to put in print what most of us will discuss only in safe circles. As he states on page 8, "How can we bury our heads while honest Adventists are confused on issues of importance? We've got to help them. That's why I'm writing this book."

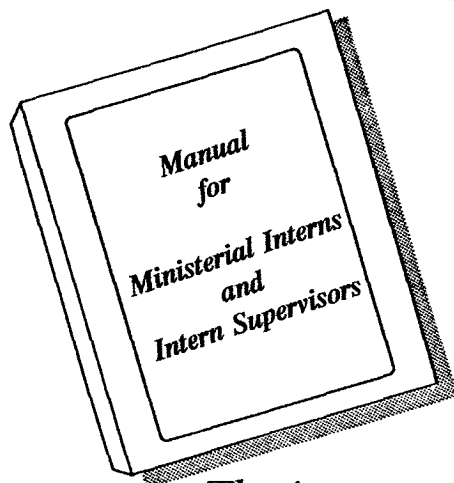
The book can be read quickly, yet the material is substantive. Weber examines questions the church cannot ignore. He sees legalism as the root cause of the problems he addresses. If you like what he says, join his crusade. If you do not like his conclusions, write your own book and get in on the dialogue.

### More Adventist Hot Potatoes

Martin Weber, *Pacific Press Publishing Association, Boise, Idaho, 1992, 128 pages, US\$8.95, Cdn\$11.20, paper.* Reviewed by Ron Thomsen, businessman, Houston, Texas.

A year has passed since Martin Weber wrote *Adventist Hot Potatoes*. Since he did not have the time nor space to address all necessary issues in that volume, Weber has followed up with *More Adventist Hot Potatoes*. This second book focuses on church and institutional issues, independent ministries, the nature of Christ and character development, and prophetic interpretation.

Those who read the first book will note a change of tone in this volume. The first *Adventist Hot Potatoes* uses aggressive terms like "Khomeini Christians," "terrorists of the Testimonies," "Sister Stern,"



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and the humorous "pantry patrol." This second book, while still dealing with controversial issues, avoids such combative language. Instead, Weber gently leads the reader through his personal experiences and observations.

The book begins with a chapter on education. Weber tells why Adventists need to maintain a commitment to their school system. He asserts that Seventh-day Adventist schools do well academically. He concedes there are problems with both legalism and liberalism in the schools. He recommends that parents shop around to find the right Adventist school for their children and gives some tips on how to conduct the search. He also makes suggestions for streamlining the educational system.

The second chapter discusses independent ministries, acknowledging that many perform valuable services that the denomination cannot provide. Weber laments the legalistic tendencies found in some self-supporting ministries, citing his own involvement with one that derailed his career for several years. He opposes those who attack the church

while operating off its membership base.

In the third chapter the author writes about his brush with Romanism, saying that although he rejected their ceremonies, he unwittingly bought into their doctrine of meritorious works. He believes that righteousness by faith is not God giving us the power to develop a perfect character, but God pronouncing us righteous because Christ was declared sinful on the cross. Romanists teach that grace enables us to develop our own righteousness. The quest for a perfect character deteriorates into what Weber brands "legalism by faith" and robs people of the assurance of salvation.

Next the author includes two chapters on the humanity of Christ and the question of perfect character development. His assertion that Jesus' humanity was prefallen without original sin (being conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit) puts character development into perspective. Although God gives us power to overcome sinful behaviors, we will always have a sinful nature in this present life.

The book's three chapters on prophetic interpretation tell why Weber believes the

Seventh-day Adventist platform is basically valid with only minor adjustments necessary. He discusses 1844 and why it fits the gospel as well as the law. He helped me recognize 1844's importance in the great controversy theme, by tying it to God's final resolution of the sin problem in the universe. Concerning his discussion of the last days, I would consider his speculations probable.


The last chapter, on the Adventist health system, raises many questions. He talks about the dangerous precedent of secular wage scales that could bankrupt the church. He laments the retreat from church principles and identity in a few hospitals, questioning why we operate them if they are not evangelistic. He asks why some Adventist hospitals seem to be in the abortion business.

Weber makes valuable points that Adventists need to address. I do wish he had covered some issues in greater detail. The book ended somewhat awkwardly, as neither the style nor the subject offered a clear finishing point. Nonetheless, I am pleased with the author's adherence to the gospel and his belief that the church's

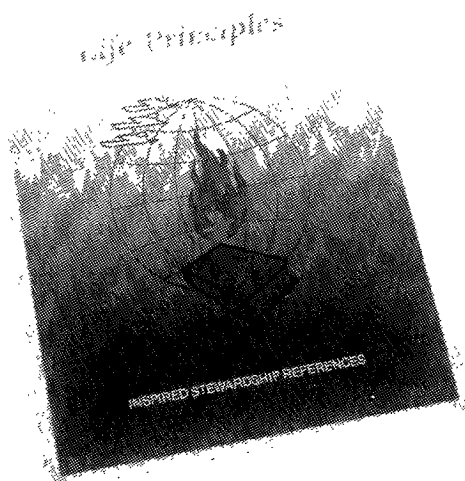
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prophetic structure is valid. All church administrators, pastors, and others interested in current Adventist issues need to read this book and carefully study its concepts.

### Old Testament Grace

*Jon Dybdahl, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Boise, Idaho, 1990, 152 pages, US\$9.99, Cdn\$12.50, hardcover. Reviewed by Eric Webster, editor, South African Signs of the Times.*

While written in a simple style, Jon Dybdahl's book handles important issues in a profound manner. He writes about the challenge of reconciling the God of the Old Testament with the God of the New. Some have solved this problem with a dispensational scheme; others simply accept a dichotomy between law and grace; and yet others see the solution in progressive revelation. Dybdahl believes "that the God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament, and He is very gracious."

Defining grace as unmerited favor, the author proceeds to show God's grace in the Old Testament. He finds in many Old Testament stories object lessons of grace.

He finds grace preceding duty, salvation coming before obligation, and acts of love antecedent to law.

Dybdahl shows God's grace revealed in sanctuary and temple; in sacrifices, rituals, and feasts; and also in the law, the Sabbath, and the covenant. The author also finds God's grace revealed in selected Old Testament texts and particular words.

I found his section on our response to grace helpful. He feels we must first react to grace with worship and celebration. Obedience, another important part of the response, is too often our emphasis.

Dybdahl demonstrates unity between the Old and New Testaments. While the New Testament presentation of righteousness by faith challenges our intellect, the Old Testament gives the same message in more tangible ways. But the God of both is gracious!

The author uses the effective method of telling an appropriate story from his life at the end of each chapter.

I enjoyed reading this book, and know it will become a seed basket for many preachers and teachers, as well as an antidote for dispensationalism,

legalism, and perfectionism.

### Paul Among Friends and Enemies

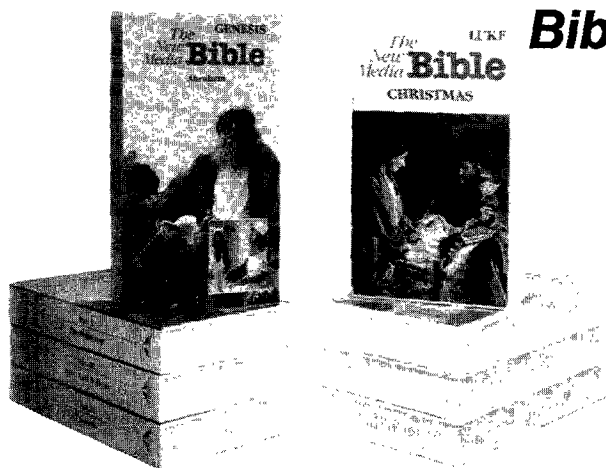
*William E. Richardson, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Boise, Idaho, 1992, 190 pages, US\$9.95, Cdn\$12.45, paper. Reviewed by Michael J. Lay, pastor, Belleville and Kingston District, Ontario, Canada.*

This rich and readable book will delight anyone wanting to learn more about the apostle Paul's life and letters. William Richardson's writing is concise, yet thorough and well organized. A skillful introduction gives principles that enhance our appreciation of the book and help prevent extreme interpretations of Paul's writings.

Sixteen chapters follow the introduction: two for Acts and chronologically sequenced chapters for the epistles. Among these, 1 Corinthians receives three chapters and Romans five.

As they surface, Richardson addresses various questions about Paul's writings: authorship, dating, setting of and occasions for the letters (including discussions of contemporary heresies), their purposes and themes. He treats issues logically, giving his work credibility.

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I liked the author's insights on tongues, the status of women in Corinth, divorce, singleness, and Christology. Each chapter provides commentary and observations. I found much to highlight, and expect to come back to this volume often for help in sermon preparation.

There was an occasional term I did not fully grasp, smacking of academe, a place where not all of us are privileged to dwell. And an index would have enhanced the book's usefulness. But overall, this is a book I highly recommend.

## Three counterfeit christs

*From page 4*

their salvation. Although genuine celebration worship has brought life and joy to many faithful and obedient members, a perversion of it has polluted Sabbath services in a few places. I warned in one of my books that some members may soon be dancing around a golden calf of Pentecostal fanaticism. That day is soon upon us. And now we have the mystical New Age Jesus, who is seeking to infiltrate sophisticated church centers through questionable meditation practices.

Those three counterfeit christs are destroying the souls of numerous Adventists. I promised at the beginning to discuss one crucial omission in the New Age Jesus. My friend Will Baron, author of *Deceived by the New Age*, belonged to a group of New Age meditators who received channeled instruction from their spirit guide to begin a saving relationship with Jesus. The devil actually told them to shun all sin and trust Christ's blood shed on the cross to forgive the past—but not their present unworthiness. Do you see the deception? The Bible says we are "complete in Him" (Col. 2:10, NKJV), but the New Age counterfeit refuses any imputation of Christ's substitutionary accomplishments. This false christ will even concede forgiveness for **past** sins—but **not for present shortcomings**. Demon-possessed New Agers unceasingly pray to become worthy through the perfecting power of their indwelling "christ." Beware of their false gospel. ■

## "I, if I be lifted up from the earth"

*From page 8*

is the power and wisdom of God to gather souls for Christ" (*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 67).

### Two pictures

The controversy concerning the mission and emphasis of our church is graphically portrayed in two paintings commissioned by James and Ellen White (see illustrations on pages 10, 11). These paintings reveal two ways of looking at mission.

In 1878 James White produced the first picture illustrating the plan of salvation from Eden to the new earth. The law and Christ received equal recognition. However, James White began to have second thoughts about this depiction and was in the process of revising it when he died. Ellen White completed the revised picture in 1883. Notice the remarkable change in emphasis. The law and the tree disappear altogether, although the law is still present in the symbolism of Mount Sinai in the background. Now the eye is riveted on the focus of the picture, which is Christ lifted up on the cross.

Too many of our people, and dare I say some of our preachers also, are still living in and teaching the first picture. God is waiting for His church to adopt wholeheartedly the emphasis of the second picture. God blessed our church with certain unique doctrines, such as the Sabbath, that add additional depth and color to the majestic picture of Salvation. Like all of the law and the prophets, they point to our constant need of the complete work of Christ as our only entrance to heaven. In the second picture everything is still there: law, works, doctrines, but everything is placed in the right relationship to the cross. We lift up the cross before the world; God lifts us up before the universe. But He can do that only when we put first things first and let the world know that Christ and Him crucified is our passion, our emphasis, our joy, and our focus.

When the world hears the name Seventh-day Adventist, a picture of the cross ought to be the first thing that flashes into their minds. Are we prepared to take that stand? Are we prepared to make that the measure of our programs, doctrines, poli-

cies, and sermons? If not, then God will raise up someone else to do His work. God's will will be accomplished. It is arrogance on our part to believe that God needs us to prove His character. God wants to use us to reveal His character, but if no one accepted salvation that would not prove God a liar or His character defective. God would still be God.

God has called us out of His own good pleasure to reveal Him to a dying world. But He is just as able when we cry "But we are the remnant church" to make the same reply as He did to the Jews when they said "We are Abraham's seed"—"I can use the rocks to carry My message." If He can use inanimate objects to accomplish His will, it is arrogant to boast that God cannot do without us.

Our emphasis on success and the growth of the church seems to reveal how Laodicean we really are. God is going to continue to wait to pour out His Spirit upon us. The remedies are given in Revelation 3: gold, white raiment, eyesalve. Are we ready to make these the burden of our preaching, our writing, our programs, our committees? Baptisms are important, church growth is a given, institutions can play a vital role, finances are an integral part of the work. But these are the "former" things (Matt 23:24), while we have been neglecting the "latter."

Yes, brother president, we are at a critical juncture in the history of our church. I believe that God has called you for a time such as this. Are we willing to address these major issues facing our church: the quality of our church growth and the gospel we are preaching? This gospel that either gives the assurance of salvation or leaves people to wonder if they are good enough to make it to heaven.

We need frank, open discussion on these issues, for they are matters of life and death. I want to know what is right. I do not want to emphasize the wrong gospel. I do not want the curse that Paul said will come upon me if I preach the wrong gospel: "As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!" (Gal. 1:9). Let us preach the right gospel, that God might be glorified.

Yours for revival and reformation.

*J. David Newman*

\* All texts are taken from the New International Version.



## Letters

From page 2

trying to address.

We must be careful not to fight a "spiritual" war with weapons of the flesh.—John S. Krum, Fletcher, North Carolina.

■ Cyril Miller asks the question "What do they do for you?" and asserts "Almost nothing." He must not have researched to find the facts. I can testify that many of my acquaintances and I have been greatly blessed by many of the ministries.

I must also point out two points of perspective. First, we must *not* forget that God is in control of His work. Too often we become fearful when we forget that. In some of the writer's desperate attempts to slash at the self-supporting ministries, I get the feeling that he has forgotten who God is. God does not *need* our tithes (or offerings, for that matter). He owns the universe, and it is at His disposal. He designed the giving of tithes and offerings to benefit the giver.

Second, the implication from Miller's statement is that "the Sabbath and tithing are a test for God's people." This might be taken as a misrepresentation of Scripture. While it is true that tithing shows our honesty/dishonesty toward God, it does not rank with the Sabbath in the final test for the whole world. In combining the two in this context it appears that the writer is putting more weight on tithing than Scripture allows.—Teresa Krum, Fletcher, North Carolina.

■ I was very concerned to note that Elder Miller did not recognize that church leadership is necessarily, because they are human, capable of making mistakes. The writer also failed to make clear that many very worthy activities take place outside the "organized work" (ministries from health van, radio, TV, orphanages etc.), operated by dedicated laypeople who do not accept tithe money and do not get rich, some sacrificing often to the extreme.—Veronica A. Crockett, Ithaca, New York.

■ Kudos to Cyril Miller and Douglas Devnich for their forthright articles dealing with dissident independent ministries within and without the church.

Although speaking out does not win points with some people, yet this is not a time to sit back and worry about what people think of us, but what God will think if we fail to point out the discrepancies.

We do not find the "independent ministries" following the injunction of Ellen White to "press together" or to reach out to our neighbors with the "good news." Where is their spirit of evangelism? Why aren't they renting halls, sending out brochures to the public, advertising on radio and TV, preaching the distinctive messages that bring many of the unchurched into the church?—Arnold and Margaret Scherencel, Canby, Oregon.

■ Three things there are that sadden me greatly—yea, four.

That *some* independent ministries indulge in knee-jerk diatribes against the church and its leaders.

That a church leader would indulge in a knee-jerk diatribe against independent ministries.

That the editors of *Ministry* would reprint such an article for the express purpose of having ministers share these "facts" with church members.

That the rift between the church and independent ministries will now be broadened and deepened, and the likelihood of reconciliation diminished dramatically.—James Coffin, Altamonte Springs, Florida.

■ Somehow leadership must understand that the more you attack independent ministries and condemn their existence, the more you help their cause. Verbal attacks of this kind—denunciations, condemnations, accusations, contempt, anger, threats, and the use of force—only lend credibility to their claims that the Spirit of God has departed from the leadership of the church, because these are Satan's weapons. Neither side has room to throw stones at the other.

It is not hard evidence, ecclesiastical law, or denunciation of the independents that will bring the tithe dollars back into the church. It is evidence that the Spirit of God is controlling the lives of our leaders. So long as men in positions of leadership and trust continue to use the strong arm of secular and church law to enforce dogma, attacking and casting out all who, from conscience, cannot comply with their decrees and commands, laity

will have every reason to question whether God's Spirit is controlling the lives of its leaders.

"The Lord wants His people to follow other methods than that of condemning wrong, even though the condemnation be just. He wants us to do something more than hurl at our adversaries charges that only drive them further from the truth. The work which Christ came to do in our world was not to erect barriers and constantly thrust upon people the fact that they were wrong" (*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 14). "No one was ever reclaimed by reproach" (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 166). "Criticizing, denouncing, passing judgment on others [by whichever side] is not an evidence of the grace of Christ in the heart. It does not produce unity" (*Selected Messages*, Book 2, p. 79).—Ken Wilbur, Auburn, Washington.

■ My remarks applied only to those organizations that solicit and accept tithe. My comments do not apply to ASI organizations or other groups that clearly support the church and do not solicit or accept tithe.—Cyril Miller, president, Southwestern Union Conference, Burleson, Texas.

### Global Mission, my mission

Your editorial "Global Mission, My Mission" (April 1992) stimulated me to new efforts to place Jesus Christ and His cross at the center of my preaching, and to work harder to proclaim Him to the world.

Your editorial was very courageous. We tend to deny the existence of problems within the church, even when those problems rise up and confront us. We reward those who tell stories of success and victory; we censure those who speak (in the tradition of the great biblical prophets) of what is wrong and needs to be changed.

Edwin Friedman, in his *Generation to Generation*, in which he applies family systems theory to the congregation, suggests that whenever the "pastor" preaches a sermon that clearly states what he believes to be true, the less differentiated members of the "family" will respond by saying "You shouldn't say that!" amid pronounced manifestations of anxiety. The better differentiated members will say "That's very interesting, and I respect your opinion," without anxiety, even though they may have a different opinion of their own. It will be

interesting to see what reactions you get to your editorial.—David VanDenburgh, senior pastor, Campus Hill Church, Loma Linda, California.

■ I heartily support your plea to separate the cross and the plan of salvation from the 27 “fundamentals.” Let’s see it voted at Utrecht.

A vote at Utrecht, though, will only open the door to change; it will never change what has become part of the culture of our church. The cross will not flash through people’s minds when they hear the name Seventh-day Adventist until the cross flashes through Seventh-day Adventist minds whenever they think and talk.

Part of our tradition that reinforces the misperception, both for us and for others, has to do with baptism itself. In Adventist parlance, when we ask when a person was baptized, what we really are asking is when that person became a Seventh-day Adventist. Over the past 18 months I have been asking members two questions: (1) What is the *formal* process by which a person becomes a Christian? (2) What is the *formal* process by which a person becomes a Seventh-day Adventist? No individual from the many groups I have queried has answered correctly, or with confidence, on their first try. Our language reflects our confusion. It’s one more reason “outsiders” don’t see the cross.—Ole C. Olesen, pastor, Vallejo Drive church, Glendale, California

■ I am uneasy about your article. True, we need to uplift the cross, and we can do this in the context of our full message, with more veracity than others. But we are not going to attract members to our church by trying to outdo Baptists and Methodists in uplifting the cross! We will attract them by a persuasive, Christ-centered presentation of our distinctive doctrines.

Granted, the early church centered on the cross. The cross was then present truth. Today while continuing to preach the cross we must also make prominent present truth that God has committed to us.

It is incorrect to say that our doctrines are a frame and the gospel is the picture. Every doctrine is an indispensable part of the picture! The Atonement itself is a doctrine! The elimination of *any* of our distinctive doctrines diminishes and distorts the gospel so that the picture is

incomplete.

The 27 doctrines, though an imperfect statement of our faith, are well expressed and necessary. May we be spared any major revision of this statement of our message along the lines you hint at.

—Lewis O. Anderson, Dodge Center, Minnesota.

■ I found your article very thought provoking. I agree that the doctrines of the church have often been presented in a wrong light. However, I believe our doctrines are not just a “frame” of the gospel picture, but an integral part of the picture. They are not the “setting,” but facets of the gem itself.—M. J. Franklin, M.D., Two Harbors, Minnesota.

■ You were right when you pointed out the pressure for numbers. After a recent workers’ meeting a colleague said, “They treat us like we are a bunch of Electrolux salespersons.” In another conference the close working relationship among ministers was destroyed by an administration that began to push numbers. The attitude conveyed to the ministers was that they have failed in the ministry if they don’t baptize a minimum of 30 people a year.

The churches I currently serve have grown spiritually in the past three and a half years. The preaching of the gospel has borne fruit in the lives of members. They have come closer to Jesus. They are more involved in reaching out to the community. They manifest a more loving concern for each other. There is healing over things that happened in the past that divided member from member. For all these blessings I give God the glory. He has been at work and blessed the efforts we have made.

Keep up the emphasis on Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This is the heart of the eternal gospel. And it is an eternal struggle to keep Christ the center of all we teach.—Norman A. Yeager, Grand Prairie, Texas.

■ While I believe that all the 27 fundamentals support our Christian experience, it is sometimes hard to convey those points to others without coming across as legalistic. I have found that those who seem to experience the most joy in finding Christ are usually the same ones who have the least difficulty accepting our lifestyle.

As for pressure to produce baptisms, I

understand that one officer from outside a certain conference told the pastors that they should each have 100 baptisms a year or move over and let someone else take their place. An evangelist personally told me that any good minister should have 100 baptisms a year. (I never have.)—Laurie DeWitt, Elkhart, Texas.

### Evangelism and the ecumenical movement

“Evangelism and the Ecumenical Movement,” by Bert Beach (April 1992), was long overdue. In this day of militant political correctness, evangelism as commanded by Jesus and practiced by the New Testament church will never be sanctioned by those who set the standards of the world above the standards of the Word.

But as Christians we cannot discard the New Testament testimony as no longer valid. We must accept the fact that the Christian demand for evangelism will not be popular, because it insists that there is only one means of salvation and we are obligated to inform others that they are walking in darkness until they accept Jesus Christ, the Light of the world and the divinely appointed remedy for sin. There is clearly an overriding principle that obligates men and women to reach out in love to offer hope to those without hope and even to offer saving truth to those who are futilely relying on a false hope. This does not justify a judgmental or coercive attitude. Nor does it include the right to promulgate strictly cultural norms along with (biblical) moral norms and principles.—Edwin Reynolds, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

### Helping South Africa

In harmony with the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, the Adventist Church there is undergoing its own restructuring and reunification. The annual week of sacrifice offering overflow on November 7 gives Seventh-day Adventist churches around the world opportunity to participate in that healing process. As *Ministry’s* own contribution, in May of 1992 editor David Newman will conduct a gospel crusade in the city of Durban.

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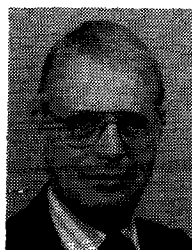
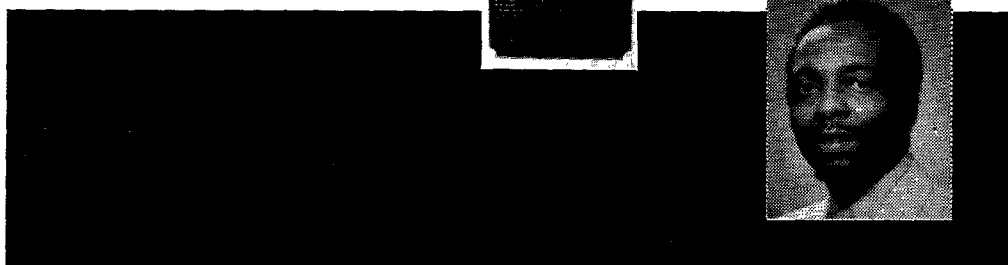
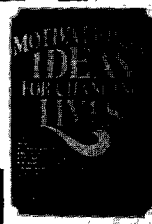


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