

# Ministry

International Journal for Pastors

February 1994



IN HIS HANDS

## Adventism: essential or historic?

Dr. Whidden's article "Essential Adventism or Historic Adventism?" (October 1993) offers four procedural methods to be utilized when discussing controverted processive issues in Adventist theology. I would like to include another vital element to resolve theological misunderstanding—a sound method of biblical interpretation.

The nature of Christ, perfection, and any other theological topic may be best understood by an analysis of the Bible texts that deal with the subject in question. For example, there are four words in Philippians 2:5-8 that may be studied with the help of *The Englishman's Greek Concordance* and *The Hatach-Redpath Concordance to the Septuagint*. The four English words in the King James Version are "equal," "form," "likeness," and "fashion." An understanding of these as applied to our Lord by the Bible writer will provide a comprehensive, authoritative view of the nature of Christ.

The topic of perfection takes on new meaning by studying the lives of individuals the Scripture actually describes as perfect. Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Job, David, Solomon, and Asa comprise the short list. *Telos* derivatives used in the book of Hebrews provide a mind-expanding, magnificent view of this worthwhile doctrine.

Ellen White offered some simple rules of Bible interpretation in an article in the *Advent Review*, November 25, 1884. These principles, honestly and prayerfully applied to Scripture, would resolve a great deal of uncertainty regarding matters of belief. Everyone "playing by the same rules" would help eliminate the suspicion and rancor that hinders real progress to consensus.—Glenn Hansen, Glendale, California.

■ I heartily endorse Whidden's

attempt to defuse the contentious attitudes of those on any side of any question about which there is still not full agreement. Disrespectful, accusatory, and even abusive statements are made freely by those who hold one view about those who do not hold the same view. No one of any perspective should denigrate one who sees from a different viewpoint. No one should be consigned to perdition who after reasonable discussion still cannot accept the same viewpoint. We need more men and women who, like fireflies, show us the light without turning on the heat.

Additionally I like his summary statement about the nature of Christ. It covers the similarities to and differences from our nature very well. The summary statement on perfection is so comprehensive that I retreat to my perhaps incomplete but somehow comforting belief that I have no perfection apart from Christ and that with Him I have all the perfection there is.

I desperately hope that his article will be accepted as conciliatory and redemptive by all who read it. Christ has a great work that He wants to do through us, and we must not be distracted from it.—Freburn L. James, M.D., Zillah, Washington.

■ The article was interesting but missed the point of true righteousness by faith. The author maintains that Jesus "had to be sinless in nature as well as actions if He is to be both a victorious helper and a fully sinless and effective substitute."

Such statements suggest a shallow understanding of righteousness by faith. It is saying that if Jesus was really like us, having taken upon Himself "flawed equipment," then He couldn't have overcome either! That means one of two things: (1) God is asking His people to do something that He was

unable to accomplish in Christ (if character perfection is possible in this life and in our fallen nature); or (2) that sin in this world is unconquerable (even Christ couldn't accomplish it except by taking "specialized equipment").

But I must ask, how can we have a "substitute" and an "example" except that the One showing us the "way" be "made like unto his brethren"? How can we have a "merciful and faithful high priest" except that He be "in *all* points tempted like as we are"? If He was separated from me by taking the pre-Fall nature (or some "hybrid" nature), then how can He be touched by the "feeling of [my] infirmities"? If His nature was far and above anything I can know in this life, then by just so much is He unable to help me where I am.

The true concept of righteousness by faith shows that Jesus overcame sin in the same manner that He is asking all of us to overcome—by faith in the power of God to deliver us out of the "snare of the fowlers." Christ's total dependence on God's power as He met the tempter shows the whole world that God is able to deliver from sin. That alone brings the assurance and joy of resting in Christ. Someone has already done it! It is possible! Satan's power has been broken because someone like me has done what Satan claimed could never be done. And this "Someone" did it in the very same way He asks me to do it—by faith. That's encouraging to one mired in sin!—Ann Walper, Lancaster, Tennessee.

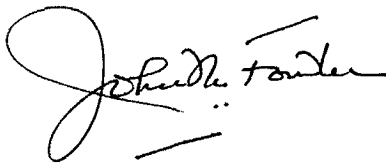
■ The article reminded me of a quote credited, I think, to Melancthon: "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity."—Helen Kelly, Ridgietop, Tennessee.

(Continued on page 26)

**The literary problem in Ellen White** sometimes causes difficulties to some people. But that need not be so. Read Ron Graybill's analysis on the variations in the narration of White's first vision, and his conclusion that the vision, early or late, "resounds with assurance and joy for God's people."

**Assurance ought to be the goal of preaching**, asserts Charles Bradford in the second of a 12-part *Ministry* series on expository preaching. The author of *Preaching to the Times* draws from his half a century of experience to speak on the need to draw the audience to the Lamb that was slain. For only in His hands is there safety and security.

**More on the gospel and its impact** on real life comes through in Helmut Ott's approach to the Valuegenesis study. The epoch-making study points out that many of our youth are troubled over the basis of salvation. The author argues that the solution to the problem is not primarily theological understanding or balance but rooting our proclamation, commitment, and lifestyle in Jesus and Him alone. You would not want to miss this call to revival and reformation which comes only when we restore Jesus to the center. That's where He belongs.



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# Bangalore: affirming the future

John M. Fowler

**T**he convening of the 1993 Annual Council in Bangalore, India, coincided with the centennial celebration of Seventh-day Adventism in that country. Meeting in India for the first time invested the council with added meaning, with implications for the world church in the end-time setting in which it exists, hopes, and functions.

## One family

The Bangalore session affirmed that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is increasingly conscious of its status as a world family. The ingredients of a close-knit family were always there, so that a member from Moscow could sit with a member from Manila, a pastor from California commune with a local elder from Papua New Guinea. That mystique whereby redemptive living and eschatological hoping can be undergirded by one Lord, one faith, and one body has always marked Adventist churches all over the world. Structure and mission no less contributed to the building of this family, so that whether it is a Sabbath school in an African bush or a majestic call to worship in a university church in the United States, or a global outreach in a forgotten village in northern India, a common cord of commitment to Adventist essentials can easily be spotted. Giving, even though burdened with the increasing costs of local operations, has never failed the needs of the mission in less-fortunate areas.

Which other body in the whole world would feel such a responsibil-

ity—financially, spiritually, structurally—so that the hurt of one is felt by all, and collectively they seek a solution in their Lord? Bangalore represented one such collective seeking of the Lord's will to get on with the work He has entrusted to His church.

## 100 years of Adventism

Bangalore also affirmed that the church is ever conscious of its saving mission. This was evident to all the delegates as the Southern Asia Division celebrated a century of Adventism. The history of the church in India is a checkered story of progress. The first official report available gives the figures for 1899: one organized church with 23 members. By 1912, 10 churches with 216 members dotted British India. By 1943, after nearly 50 years of hard work, membership had risen to 7,500. Fifty years later membership exceeded 190,000.

The centennial year in India also saw the establishment of the first conference in the northeastern state of Mizoram. Why Mizoram? That part of the country has an Adventist history of only 43 years. It does not have any great medical or educational institution. It has no star evangelist. Then how did Mizoram become a conference? The answer is stewardship. From the time the first missionaries entered that land in 1949, they were determined to teach that grace is free but costly, and that baptism without discipleship is meaningless. So baptisms came in only after months of teaching, and only after the members

accepted the demands of discipleship, in terms of both living and giving. The strongest laity-led evangelism and nurture in the Southern Asia Division took over the church and set its path to maturity. Mizoram became one field in which auditors were seldom needed, in which politics were at a minimum, and in which the study of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy became the passionate preoccupation of every Adventist home and church. As a result the church in Mizoram experienced not only steady nurture and growth but also the highest percentage of per capita giving, enabling the mission to become a conference.

## The test of stewardship

The Bangalore celebrations did not fail to point out that self-sustaining stewardship is the church in India's severest test, as is evident from its annual per capita giving, including tithe, of Rs112.91 (\$3.66) in 1992. The test is not unique to Southern Asia; other divisions face similar problems. Soaring membership need not necessarily mean increased income. Indeed, the membership and giving patterns between developing and developed countries portray a stark contrast. Whereas developed countries in 1992 represented only 23 percent of world church membership, they were responsible for a little over 80 percent of total world tithe and other contributions. The 1992 per capita giving for the developing countries was around \$36, whereas for the

*(Continued on page 25)*

# Marrying non-Adventists

J. David Newman



**T**he prohibition against an Adventist minister performing the wedding ceremony between an Adventist and a non-Adventist has long been church practice. This tradition has assumed the force of policy even though it has never been officially voted.

For many years the only statement with any kind of "authority" was found in the old *Minister's Manual*: "Ministers should not perform the marriage ceremony of believers with unbelievers, because this is expressly contrary to the teaching of the church" (1977 ed., p. 120). The *Minister's Manual* is a departmental guide, not an official pronouncement of the church. So where does one find the requirements and teachings of the church? Normally in the *Church Manual*, but the *Church Manual* is silent on this subject.

The revised *Minister's Manual* (1992) clearly explains (in 778 words what took 22 words in the previous manual) the dangers that may occur in a mixed marriage. It presents strong biblical and Ellen White evidence for taking this stand.

It is a serious matter with eternal consequences when two people unite their lives in marriage yet begin with fundamental differences in religion.

Since the church has never voted an official position, some felt that a statement ought to be placed in the *Church Manual* as well. A statement was brought to two Annual Councils.

Each time people who were uncomfortable with an absolute statement argued for exceptions, and each time it was referred back for further study. At the 1993 Annual Council in Bangalore a statement was read to the council stating that in light of previous discussion no action be taken to place a statement in the *Church Manual*. The chair added that the counsel given in the *Minister's Manual* was sufficient.

In the discussion that followed,

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**It is a serious matter with eternal consequences when two people unite their lives in marriage yet begin with fundamental differences in religion.**

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one person indicated that the *Minister's Manual* is advisory, not authoritative. That caused a minor sensation. "That could not be the case," said some. "If it is the case," said others, "then we definitely need a statement in the *Church Manual*." One division president argued for a very strong statement that would re-

peat what the *Minister's Manual* said. Another division president said we should not be too hasty. In his division the women members far outnumber the men members. In many cases if a woman wanted to marry she would have to marry a non-Adventist. Should she be denied the privilege of an Adventist minister performing the wedding ceremony because of demographics?

Another division president added that in some countries marriages could be conducted only by ministers or priests. Would we want a Buddhist priest to conduct a marriage service for an Adventist? As a result of this discussion the council selected a committee to recommend a statement for the *Church Manual* (see sidebar; this statement will be acted upon at the 1995 General Conference session).

## Law and compassion

The statement softens the current *Minister's Manual* prescriptive that "Adventist ministers should not perform the marriage ceremony of Adventists with non-Adventists" (p. 246) to a strong recommendation: "the Seventh-day Adventist Church strongly discourages marriage between a Seventh-day Adventist and a non-Seventh-day Adventist, and *strongly urges* Seventh-day Adventist ministers not to perform such weddings (italics supplied)."

(Continued on page 30)

# In His hands

Charles E. Bradford

**Preaching must draw the sinner to the Saviour.**



*Charles E. Bradford is a pastor, an evangelist, a former president of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, and the author of Preaching to the Times.*

**S**ermon preparation requires attention to both macro and micro, the universals and the particulars. Sometimes we need to present the full sweep of salvation's plan, painting with a big brush. At other times we must zero in on the particulars.

Let's use Revelation 5 as a model for building a sermon. It gives us the big picture—the full backdrop. The setting is a celestial stage on which the drama of the ages, the whole plan, is enacted. Verses 1-5 form our text and should be read as clearly as possible as the preacher gets into the message.

## **Preparation**

I use OTTO.<sup>1</sup> The acronym describes a step-by-step procedure to get into the passage.

1. *Observation.* Read the passage again and again, in every version available, and in Greek or Hebrew if you have the facility. As a preacher, ruminate on it, turn it over in your mind, write it out longhand, brainstorm. What words seem significant? Do your word study. Sentence structure may give you a hint. What genre of literature do we have here? The passage conjures up all kinds of imagery. Imagine, imagine. Envision, envision.

One word really catches my attention—"throne." What does it signify? What associations come to mind? Dominion, sovereignty, the rule of God, Satan's challenge to that throne.

2. *Truths.* In a sweeping passage such as Revelation 5 there are certain great truths of the gospel, truths about Jesus Christ that stand out. Make a list. Truths are not just facts, but re-

alities that take their place in the framework of the gospel. God, His authority and power. Jesus, His relationship to the Father, the Godhead. The Holy Spirit "sent forth in all the earth." The ministry of angels. The plan of salvation.

Extracting the list of truths is one of the toughest steps for me in preparing a sermon. It will take some doing to get the hang of it.

3. *Theme.* See what the prophet is trying to say. Look for the essence of his thesis, the central thought. In our passage the theme is salvation, of course. But can we narrow it down? How about the office and ministry—the mission of Christ as Lamb? If so, then dwell for a while on His role as substitute and surety.

4. *Outline.* The sermon is not a literary production. Put down key words and phrases, headings, anything to pull it together, to help the preacher get a handle on the message. We are developing a sermon, not writing an article. This is the Word spoken, and we must keep people in mind at every step and how we can get the Word across to them. "I'd like to talk to you today about . . ." We are thinking about these dear people; they are on our mind and in our heart. We want to share; we want to be helpful; we want to talk to them about Jesus, our best friend. This kind of thinking keeps the preacher in focus and in touch with real people. It saves the sermon from being a lecture, a cold presentation of facts. "When feasting upon God's Word, because of the precious light you gather therefrom, present it to others that they may feast with you. But let your communications be free and heartfelt."<sup>2</sup>

## Preaching

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev. 5:1-5).

## Introduction

Imagine the setting: paneled room, large mahogany desk, credenza, bookcase, several leather chairs. A serious looking gentleman sits at the desk with some documents in hand. Three other people are in the room, all middle-aged—a man and two women. They seem nervous and anxious. The women finger their handkerchiefs; the man keeps adjusting his tie. They all keep looking at the door. Then as if on cue, they say to each other, voices full of intensity yet subdued, "Where in the world is Bill? He knows the terms of Dad's will. Nobody can open it except Bill. What's keeping him?" You begin to realize that this is a lawyer's office. That document the man behind the desk holds in his hand is a will. It's time to open it, but Dad has made it clear: only the eldest son, Bill, can do that. The strain is getting to them; they can hardly take it. They are all thinking the same thing (what else could they think?): "What if Bill doesn't come?" "If Bill doesn't show up, we wind up with nothing!"

There is another scene—a heavenly one. John has already been ushered in through a door "opened in heaven" (Rev. 4:1). He reports it. This is what the authentic prophet is: a seer, a privileged reporter. From time to time he is admitted to the

cabinet meeting. He sees and hears and reports to us. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Of course, there are limitations. No human being is privy to all that transpires in those councils. But what he is allowed to see and hear is vital information—sufficient to open a window on God's plans and purposes. "He that hath an ear, let him hear" (Rev. 3:22).

## The mysterious book

This is the throne room—central control of the universe. "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals" (Rev. 5:1). A throne, symbol of dominion and sovereignty. This is where the real decisions are made. From that throne the Awesome One rules by

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# Here is the dilemma—the scroll is in the hands of Him who sits upon the throne, the Almighty. Who then ever could qualify? Who could possibly take the book from His hand?

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decree—administrative fiat, if you please. John sees the Awesome One seated on the throne. The prophet is all eyes and ears and anticipation. He senses something decisive is happening. He is right! A cosmic drama of the first magnitude is about to unfold before his eyes. His attention is riveted on the mysterious book that the Almighty holds in His powerful right hand—a "book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals."

In the Roman Empire of John's day a seven-sealed document like this would most likely be a will or a testament, a binding legal instrument, a deed of trust. Ancient books were

really scrolls. In the heavenly setting it is a book of destiny, the most vital document in all of creation. It contains the secret of God, His plan that Paul speaks of as being shrouded in secrecy for ages and generations. The book is written inside and outside, back and front—a divine database. It contains every intelligence necessary to the accomplishment of the plan to redeem us. It is all there. John senses that the opening of this book means salvation. If it remains closed, all is lost. But the book is in the hand of the Awesome One, and it is closed.

**The challenge.** Then a mighty angel, as if he had read John's mind, raises the challenge, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (verse 2). We can see now that the prophet is moved by more than curiosity. Everything is at stake: humanity's future, the future of

the planet, the security of the universe. He expects someone to step forward, but there is nothing, no movement, only a deathly silence. No one volunteers for the assignment. "No man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book neither to look thereon" (verse 3). The prophet weeps bitterly. Uncontrollable sobs contort his body. His tears are for God and humanity. For God because the Creator has suffered unmitigated pain since sin invaded the cosmos. For humanity because it is helpless against the ruthless foe. The situation demands radical intervention

by a strong deliverer, a mediator. Is there anyone who can help us, who can step into the breach?

## Someone has been found

The plan cannot be executed without an agent who has authority and dignity. This agent must represent humanity. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:21). Here is the dilemma—the scroll is in the hands of Him who sits upon the throne, the Almighty. Who then ever could qualify? Who could possibly take the book from His hand? But there is

hope. One of the elders in the heavenly tribunal tells the prophet not to weep, for "behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (verse 5). Jesus is God's ambassador plenipotentiary. All power is in His hands. He shares the universal throne with His Father. But it is in His capacity as a human being—Son of Man—that He takes the book.

It is not necessary for Him to wrest it from the Father's hand. The Father has prepared Him for this assignment. By His appointment the Mediator before the throne is clothed with our humanity. With Him the Father is well pleased. The drama is enacted for our benefit. Heaven is already acquainted with the divine scenario. It is our privilege to be caught up on the scene, to feel the fear and dread and apprehension. Yes, to weep with the prophet until we find Him who purchased our salvation at great cost, through suffering and death and blood poured out. We have learned nothing from the drama until we come to know the cost.

Salvation history is all about a lost estate. We lost the property. An elderly gentleman called me to his bedside. "Please," he said, "help me save my property from my irresponsible children. I know that after my death they will lose everything I have worked so hard to obtain and my widow will be left penniless." It was heartrending, but I could do nothing. Like those children were wont to do, our first parents gave the estate away.

A Las Vegas character came to hear an evangelist. The preacher talked about how Adam fell. It was all so strange and new to him. But when his cronies asked him what the preacher talked about, he put it well in his own colorful, earthy language: "God gave that guy Adam a bundle, and he blew it!" Precisely! Life, dominion over nature, the beautiful garden home, a perfect relationship with his Creator. All was gone—lost. The creation itself was subjected to death

and decay. Darkness like a funeral pall settled down on the planet. Our lostness is one of life's inescapable realities. It is hard fact. Billy Graham once said, "Either man began nowhere and is looking for somewhere to go, or he began somewhere and has lost his way."

Now comes the great question. Who is able to buy it back? Who has the resources to repossess the estate? The answer: "The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (verse 5). In His person He is a perfect unity of power and love. He is the Lion—regal, powerful, commanding respect. He is also the Lamb—God's suffering servant, who gives Himself for the sins of the world. Jesus qualifies on every account.

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## **How incredible is God's secret plan. He sends His Son into the enemy's camp as an apparently helpless babe. But this Child is God in the flesh. He is divinity clothed with humanity.**

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We see it clearly now. The book is primarily about redemption, the divine strategy for the recovery of the lost estate. All that Adam lost is to be regained by our heavenly Kinsman. Very early in Old Testament times the figure of the *goel*, or kinsman-redeemer, emerged. The idea includes avengement as well as salvation. In the book of Ruth it is Boaz, the nearest of kin, who restores the fortune of Elimelech's family. In those days redemption meant to tear away from, to deliver. The *goel* had to be a person of strength and ability in order to restore a lost estate. Under the ancient law the *goel* had rights and responsibility. Whenever an Israelite fell into bondage, the *goel* became responsible for

that Israelite's ransom. So Abraham was compelled to rescue Lot from the five kings who had kidnapped him. It was a point of honor. It took determination and strength to do it.

Jesus, our elder brother, a near of kin (He assumed our humanity), takes up our case as if it were His very own. How incredible is God's secret plan. He sends His Son into the enemy's camp as an apparently helpless babe. But this Child is God in the flesh. He is divinity clothed with humanity. The planet He comes to visit is His creation. He is willing and powerful enough to effect our salvation. He wrests the prey from the grasp of the enemy. "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Col. 2:15, NIV). It is His intention to restore to us our Eden home. His credentials are impeccable. He is equal in dignity, power, and authority to the One who sits on the throne. What is more, He is the life-giver. In every respect, He is worthy!

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (verse 6). It is as the slain Lamb that Jesus becomes executor of His Father's will—perfect in power (seven horns), perfect in wisdom (seven eyes). We must not think of His omnipotence as the power of unlimited force. It is the unconquerable power of love.

It is appropriate that the Father should give special honor and recognition to the Son. In the councils of eternity it was agreed that the second person of the Godhead would come in human form and work out the plan. Earth was given over to Him as His assignment, His special project. It is as if the Deity covenanted that the Son should buy it back, whatever the cost. By taking the book it is clear that He fully accepts His kinsman-redeemer responsibility. Christ does not ascend to the right hand of God and,



as one preacher put it, retire to write His memoirs. He is still active in salvation matters. "He ever liveth to make intercession for" us (Heb. 7:25). The desired outcome is a universe at peace—His people a reconciled community. He has begun the good work, and He will perform it.

It is all still in His hands. It is His work from beginning to end. He did not go slumming when He assumed humanity only to disassociate Himself from His blood kin upon His ascension. He is ours forever. I say again that it is most appropriate that the Father should make Him judge also. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. . . . And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:22-27). The One who holds my destiny is the One who took my flesh, who pitched His tent next to mine. He walked in my moccasins. He experienced the human situation to the fullest extent. He alone can fully judge us. The Father did not put us in the hands of an alien who knows nothing about our struggles. Let preachers and teachers and mothers and fathers and all who have tasted of His salvation, yes, let all the redeemed say so, "Christ is our judge. Our case is in His hands."

Ellen White spoke well when she said, "Because he has tasted the very dregs of human affliction and temptation, and understands the frailties and sins of men; because in our behalf he has victoriously withstood the temptations of Satan, and will deal justly and tenderly with the souls that His own blood has been poured out to save—because of this, the Son of man is appointed to execute judgment."<sup>3</sup>

President Clinton would extend universal health care to every citizen of the United States of America, coverage that can never be voided or taken away. Laudable and ambitious. Opponents to the plan say it is unrealistic. Even some in his own party say, "Too expensive." But he has this dream, and he is sticking to it. There is rough sledding ahead. The whole matter is extremely complex. An impossible dream? We do not know. But this we do know: heaven has offered

the human race a general amnesty. Christ died to extend coverage to every child of Adam. The enemy would like to thwart the plan. In spite of opposition, demonic and human, the desired outcome is assured. Salvation is accomplished. As they say in the business world, it's a done deal. With Him, word and deed are the same.

### **Mission accomplished**

The drama still unfolds. The Lamb still stands in the midst as having been slain. He is the God between. He

takes up His position between God and man, always seeking to bridge the gap, to reconcile the world unto God. He is hard at work in the heavenly sanctuary as our merciful high priest. He never sleeps or slumbers. He intends to close the drama. His mission is not fully achieved until He makes an end of sin. He is not satisfied to merely pardon and give amnesty. Sin, the accursed thing, must be totally eradicated.

Not only does He take the book,  
(Continued on page 29)

## **In His Hands**

(outline)

**Text:** Revelation 5:1-7

**Introduction:** Waiting to open the will—where is Bill?

### **The mysterious book**

Cosmic drama  
The One on the throne  
Seven-sealed scroll  
Book of destiny  
Closed!

### **The challenge**

No takers!  
Weeping prophet  
Lost estate  
Is there anyone to help us?

### **Someone has been found**

Need for a human agent/representative  
Must be equal to God  
On assignment  
Near kinsman, the *goel*  
He has credentials and qualifications  
Jesus is judge  
He is determined to see it through

### **Mission accomplished**

One of us forever  
Always on the case  
He intends to bring closure  
When the last seal is broken  
Prophecy, fulfillment, consummation

### **Universal coverage offered and guaranteed**

Put your life in His hands  
Trust Him now

# Visions and revisions—part 1

**Ron Graybill**

## A textual study of Ellen White's first vision



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**E**arly in 1846 the venturesome Adventist editor of the *Day-Star*, a small Millerite paper in Cincinnati, Ohio, got a letter from an 18-year-old girl in Portland, Maine. In her letter, the young woman told Enoch Jacobs about the vision of heaven she had experienced a year earlier. Although the leadership of the Millerite movement had already declared they wanted nothing to do with visions, Jacobs decided to print the letter. Consequently, Ellen Harmon, later to become Ellen White, appeared in print for the first time.<sup>1</sup>

Now it has been nearly a century and a half since Ellen White's first vision was first printed. During that time the text has appeared in nearly a dozen different versions and printings (see box). Using computer software, we can compare any two versions of the first vision and in a matter of seconds highlight all the deletions, additions, and revisions. The story of these alterations, fascinating in itself, enriches our understanding and appreciation of Ellen White's first vision.<sup>2</sup>

Ellen Harmon's original handwritten letter has been lost, so there is no way of knowing what changes Jacobs may have made in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or style. His typesetter doubtless introduced errors like "Abrahnm" for "Abraham" (line 201).

In spite of a few verbal imperfections, the vision deeply impressed H. S. Gurney, of Fairhaven, Massachusetts.<sup>3</sup> He immediately set off for Portland, Maine, to learn more about this remarkable young woman. Persuaded that her visions were of God, he helped James White republish the

first vision on a large single sheet called a "broadside." Titled "To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad," this second printing of the first vision made only technical revisions.<sup>4</sup> Some spelling and typographical errors were corrected (for instance, "stepped" for "steped" [line 228]; but inevitably others were introduced, such as "Hellelujah" for "Hallelujah"! In the *Day-Star* version, Mrs. White occasionally uses the present tense. Although the practice sometimes got her into grammatical difficulties, it also heightened the sense of drama, making the reader feel as if she is giving on-the-spot descriptions: "I see a strait and narrow path!" "I see two trees" (line 172). Sometimes she ended up mixing the tenses, so "I raised my eyes and see" was changed to "I raised my eyes and saw" (line 34).

White and Gurney also removed personal references to Jacobs, so that Miss Harmon now said, "I declare to you, my brethren and sisters in the Lord . . ." instead of "I declare to you, my brother . . ." (line 24). A few words were also changed. The teenage Ellen had originally written that she saw a "strait and narrow path" (line 34), echoing the Bible's parallelism "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way."<sup>5</sup> But that was changed to "straight and narrow." Crowns "hung" with stars became "heavy" with stars (line 151).

James White had met Ellen Harmon during her first speaking tour around Maine in early 1845. In August 1846 the couple were married. The following April, James reprinted the first vision again, including it in his pamphlet "A Word to the 'Little

Flock.’ ”<sup>6</sup> This time James provided Scripture footnotes to the vision in order to demonstrate that these were not the rambling hallucinations of an excited teenager, but a coherent message, thoroughly saturated in Scripture.

#### “A Word to the ‘Little Flock’ ”

The text of “A Word to the ‘Little Flock’ ” was virtually identical to the text of the 1846 broadside. Still, James White corrected a few more spelling errors, added a few apostrophes, changed “wood” to “woods” (line 280), and toned Ellen down just a bit. She had said she could not “begin to describe” the glorious things she saw in heaven (line 316). Now she said simply that she could not “describe” them. This change typified many that were to follow: beyond mere technical corrections, the alterations in the first vision over the years have usually tended to make the language smoother, calmer, and less vigorous. The author’s words aged with the author.

A startling feature of the first vision in “A Word to the ‘Little Flock’ ” is the references to the Apocrypha that James included among the Scripture footnotes. For instance, where Mrs. White wrote: “on the Mount sat a glorious temple, and about it were seven other mountains, on which grew roses and lillies” (lines 293-296), James made reference to 2 Esdras 2:19: “. . . and seven mighty mountains, whereupon there grow roses and lillies, whereby I will fill thy children with joy.”

Many early-nineteenth-century Bibles included the Apocrypha, and early Adventists were especially interested in the apocalyptic passages of 2 Esdras.<sup>7</sup> They recognized that the Apocrypha was not canonical, but Joseph Bates said 2 Esdras “contains very important truths for those that keep God’s law.”<sup>8</sup> Mrs. White said the “wise of these last days” should understand the Apocrypha, but that the Bible is “the standard book,” which “will judge us.”<sup>9</sup>

The use of the Apocrypha faded

quickly. The American Bible Society stopped including it in the Bibles it printed, and by the 1860s Adventists saw these books as having only historical value. Still, the language and imagery of 2 Esdras formed a part of the youthful Ellen Harmon’s repertoire. It is as if the Lord had said to her, “Ellen, I want you to paint a picture of heaven for My people.”

Ellen replied, “But Lord, I have only these few paints.”

“They will do,” the Lord answered. And so the language of 2 Esdras helps paint our picture of heaven.

Nor was 2 Esdras the only extra biblical source on which Ellen drew. In January 1845, just a month after Ellen’s first vision, William Foy’s visions were published in Portland, Maine. Foy rejoiced when he heard Ellen Harmon relate her vision.

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## Beyond mere technical corrections, the alterations in the first vision over the years have usually tended to make the language smoother, calmer, and less vigorous. The author’s words aged with the author.

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“That’s just what I saw,” he exclaimed.

When it came time to describe the saints’ entrance into heaven, Ellen’s description echoed William Foy’s. He had written: “The angel raised his right hand and laid hold upon the gate, and opened it; and . . . it rolled upon its glittering hinges.”<sup>10</sup> In Ellen’s account: “Jesus raised his mighty glorious arm, laid hold of the gate and swung it back on its golden hinges.” In the next printing of the first vision, in 1851, “golden hinges” was changed to “glittering hinges,” just as Foy had earlier described them.

#### The 1851 revision

That 1851 revision is important,

and later became controversial, because of several passages it omits. In July 1851 James White issued an *Extra* of his new paper, *The Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. In it he reprinted the first vision. The deletion destined to become most controversial was the omission of the reference to “all the wicked world which God had rejected” (line 64). Critics claimed the passage was deleted to suppress evidence that early Adventists had believed in the “shut door”: that salvation for sinners had been shut off in 1844 just as in the parable of the ten virgins the door to the marriage supper had been closed to the five foolish virgins. F. D. Nichol has pointed out that James White reiterated the shut-door doctrine elsewhere in the same *Extra*, and Ellen White denied the suppression motive, noting that she still believed in a “shut door” for those who willfully resisted God’s Spirit.<sup>11</sup> The omission of the passage, then, may have been merely a part of the trend in all the revisions, a trend toward softer, smoother, and calmer language.<sup>12</sup>

A much longer passage was also deleted from the 1851 version of the first vision: the entire account of Mrs. White’s tour of the temple in heaven, and her description of the ark of the covenant and its contents (lines 194-233). Why was this passage cut out? Recall that the first vision occurred in December 1844, long before James and Ellen White, on the basis of Bible study, accepted the seventh-day Sabbath. The first vision does not run ahead of the discovery of Bible truth. So when the youthful Sunday keeper, Ellen Harmon, looked into the ark of the covenant, she noticed only the golden pot of manna and Aaron’s rod that budded, blossomed, and bore fruit. Conspicuously absent was any reference to the tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments.

However, after accepting the Sabbath from the Bible, Mrs. White experienced, in April 1847, another vision in which she again looked into the ark of the covenant. This time she

saw the tables of stone with a halo of light around the fourth commandment. Both versions of the ark scene had been included in "A Word to the 'Little Flock'" in 1847, but after 1851 the incomplete view was eliminated.

We do not know who initiated the revisions of Mrs. White's first vision. Most likely James and Ellen worked on them together. The preface to *Early Writings* (1882) assured the reader that verbal changes introduced in that work were "made under the author's own eye, and with her full approval."<sup>13</sup>

At any rate, James and Ellen White made some further changes in 1851 as well. They struck the words "in holy vision" from the first line. Three of the half-dozen Hallelujahs the saints were heard to shout were toned down to the more liturgical Alleluia (lines 191, 310, 332). Ellen's joyous aside, "Well bless the Lord, Bro. Jacobs, it is an extra meeting for those who have the seal of the living God" (lines 310-312), was removed. Her assurance that "if faithful, you soon will know all about it" (line 320) was taken out. Finally, the sentence "We all reclined at the table" was stricken from the description of the great supper (line 338). This is a puzzling, perhaps even inadvertent, omission

since the reference evokes the Last Supper and pointedly recalls Jesus' promise not to drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom.

All the type for these early publications had to be set by hand—character by tedious character. So James White simply took the same type that had been set for the *Review Extra*, clamped it into smaller forms, and used it to publish Ellen White's first book, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White* (1851).<sup>14</sup> Thus the text of the first vision in this work, usually called just *Experience and Views*, is identical to that which appeared in the *Review Extra*.

### *Spiritual Gifts* version

At this point the textual stream in which the first vision had been flowing developed a side channel. In 1860 a unique revision of the first vision appeared in Mrs. White's first extended biography, found in *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 2. In *Spiritual Gifts* an effort to avoid offending nonbelievers seems especially strong. References to distinctive beliefs were revised or eliminated, along with quaint and enthusiastic expressions. One might call it the "taming" of Ellen White.

The light that flashed from Jesus'

upraised arm was changed from "glorious" to merely "bright" (line 52). The Advent "band" became the Advent "people" in the next line. Reference to the 144,000 was eliminated from the phrase the "living saints, 144,000, in number" (line 70). The "Holy Ghost" was now the "Holy Spirit" (line 74). Mention of foot washing and the holy kiss (lines 90-92) were cut out. "Glorious harps" (line 192) became "golden harps."

The *Spiritual Gifts* version of the first vision is also notable because it splits what we have been considering the first vision into two visions. Chapter 6 contains "My First Vision" and Chapter 9 the "Vision of the New Earth," the latter beginning "With Jesus at our head we all descended . . . down to this earth" (line 233). Apparently the vision of the new earth occurred several months after the first vision, although Ellen attached it to the first vision in her letter to Enoch Jacobs.<sup>15</sup>

The "Vision of the New Earth" in *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 2, was also more restrained than the original. "Glorious houses" became "beautiful houses" (line 247). The saints who, at first, were "continually shouting and offering praises to God" (line 260) were no longer "shouting" in *Spiritual Gifts*, but merely "offering praises to God." Even the tall grass, which had waved "proudly" to King Jesus in the original, now simply waved. Where Ellen had originally seen "a glorious temple" on Mount Zion (line 294), now she cautiously suggested that she saw "a building which looked to me like a temple." Each revision seems more cautious, less colorful, than the original.

The division of the first vision into two visions was carried over into the biographical sketch in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 1, when it appeared in 1885. However, at that time Ellen White (or her editors) restored the earlier, more vigorous, wording in most instances.

Even before *Testimonies*, volume 1, appeared, the main textual stem of the first vision reached maturity when *Early Writings* appeared in 1882.<sup>16</sup>

This work drew together Mrs.

## Printings of Ellen White's First Vision

1846—"Letter From Sister Harmon," *The Day-Star* 9 (Jan. 24, 1846): pp. 31, 32.

1846—"To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad," broadside, Apr. 6, 1846.

1847—"A Word to the 'Little Flock,'" pamphlet, May 30, 1847.

1851—"Experience and Views," *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald Extra*, July 21, 1851.

1851—*A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White* (Saratoga Springs, N.Y.: James White, 1851), pp. 9-15.

1860—*Spiritual Gifts* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1860), vol. 2, pp. 30-35, 52-55.

1882—*Early Writings* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1882), pp. 9-15.

1883—"To the Remnant Scattered Abroad," pamphlet, 1883.

1885—*Testimonies for the Church* (Oakland: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1885), vol. 1, pp. 58-61, 67-70.

1906—*Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1906), pp. 13-20.

1945—*Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1945), pp. 13-20.

White's 1851 *Experience and Views* and its 1854 *Supplement* together with *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 1, and a few shorter pieces. At this point the text of the first vision became essentially what Adventist readers find today in *Early Writings*. However, *Early Writings* did not follow the 1851 text slavishly, and some minor changes were later introduced when type for the book was reset in 1906 and again in 1945.

In *Early Writings* the remaining Hallelujah shouts of the saints were changed to the more decorous Alleluia, and a few more "glorious" expressions were removed. Originally, "Jesus would encourage them by raising his glorious right arm, and from his arm came a glorious light which waved over the Advent band, and they shouted Hallelujah!" (lines 50-54). In *Early Writings* the light is neither "glorious" nor "bright"; it is simply a "light."

The appearance of *Early Writings* in 1882 provoked charges of suppression because of the absence of the passages that had been deleted back in 1851. To help quell the criticism, the denomination reissued Mrs. White's portion of "A Word to the 'Little Flock'" in a pamphlet titled "To the Remnant Scattered Abroad." Numerous small corrections were made in the 1847 text, and the Hallelujahs were replaced by Alleluias, but at least the deleted passages were restored to spike the guns of the skeptics.

In 1906 the type for *Early Writings* was reset. Changes consisted mostly of capitalizing pronouns—he, him, and my—when they referred to Deity. In the 1945 resetting of the type for *Early Writings* some punctuation and capitalization was again changed. One word was also changed, probably by a half-asleep linotype operator. Where Ellen had written "the branches of the trees waved to and fro" (line 277) the new printing said the trees' branches "moved" to and fro.

### Looking at the whole

Thus far we have been looking, as it were, at textual "branches." What happens when we step back and look at the whole forest? What conclusions can be drawn from the textual

history of the first vision? Certainly "thought" rather than "dictational" inspiration is confirmed for Ellen White's writings. The exact wording was obviously not sacred to her. Indeed, as she strove to meet the needs of different audiences, even some "thoughts" were removed from the text of the first vision, as in the case of *Spiritual Gifts*. As the enthusiasm of early Adventist worship cooled after the 1840s and 1850s, the spirited shouts of Hallelujah in the *Day-Star* became the more liturgical Alleluia of *Early Writings*. So a different audience called for different words to convey the essential message. The deletion of the passage on the ark of the covenant vividly illustrates the fact that Adventist doctrines are based on the Bible, not on Ellen White's visions. The visions did not reveal basic truths that had not first been grounded in the Bible.

True, readers receive much the same message whether they read the first vision in the *Day-Star* or in *Early Writings*. But the latter dampens some of the drama and vigor of the youthful Ellen Harmon. When one reads the first vision aloud in its original text, one gains fresh appreciation for the inspiration of this teenage girl. The grammatical missteps only add to the rough-and-tumble intensity.

The original text also has a certain poetic integrity. The wicked who fall down, "the wicked world which God had rejected," heighten the apocalyptic imagery, in which everything about the saints is shining, rising, and glorious, and everything about the wicked is falling, darkness, thunder, and earthquake. The inclusion of the original view of the ark, with only the manna and Aaron's rod, adds richness to the great supper scene at the end of the vision. At the supper the fruits noted are the "manna, almonds, figs, pomegranets, [and] grapes" (line 336). The last three were the fruits brought back from the land of Canaan, thus recalling the opening lines of the vision, in which Ellen likens herself to Caleb and Joshua. But the manna and almonds were earlier seen in the ark, since the ark contained a golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod, which

budded, blossomed, and bore almonds.

Early or late, the vision resounds with assurance and joy for God's people. As they march into the city, they feel they have a "perfect right" (line 164). And when the solemn question is asked, "Who shall be able to stand?" Jesus' promise to the pure in heart, that His grace is sufficient for them, brings forth a glorious, full-throated shout of "Hallelujah" from the waiting saints, while the angels strike a note higher and draw still nearer to the earth. ■

<sup>1</sup> The letters that James and Ellen White wrote to the *Day-Star* are available in a US\$2.75 reprint titled *Articles From the Day-Star* from Leaves of Autumn Books, P.O. Box 440, Payson, AZ 85547. The *Day-Star* version of the first vision, with a few imperfections, is also included on the CD-ROM of Ellen White's published writings. The version of the *Day-Star* letter presented in Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Years*, (pp. 56-58), is very close to the original, but not an exact copy in every particular. Copies of this and most of the other versions of the first vision are available on computer disc for \$20 at the address in note 4.

<sup>2</sup> Comparisons for this article were made using *CompareRite: The Instant Redliner* software from Jurisoft, 763 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139.

<sup>3</sup> H. S. Gurney, a blacksmith, was one of Joseph Bates's associates, having served as the latter's "singing evangelist."

<sup>4</sup> A facsimile reprint of this broadside, together with a facsimile and transcription of a letter written on it by Otis Nichols to William Miller, may be obtained from the author, Ron Graybill, Department of History, La Sierra University, 4700 Pierce Street, Riverside, CA 92515, for US\$4. In his letter Nichols tried to persuade William Miller that Ellen Harmon was a true prophet.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 7:14.

<sup>6</sup> A reprint of "A Word to the Little Flock" is available through Adventist Book Centers.

<sup>7</sup> See Ron Graybill, "Under the Triple Eagle: Early Adventist Use of the Apocrypha," *Adventist Heritage* 12 (Winter 1987): 25-32.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Bates, *A Seal of the Living God* (New Bedford, Mass.: Benjamin Lindsey, 1849), p. 66.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen G. White, "To the Little Flock," manuscript 4, Jan. 26, 1850. This is an account of a vision given Mrs. White on January 11, 1850, but not recorded until January 28. See also Arthur L. White, "Ellen G. White and the Apocrypha" (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, released 1985). (This paper was written much earlier than 1985.)

<sup>10</sup> Delbert W. Baker, *The Unknown Prophet* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1987), pp. 92, 95.

<sup>11</sup> Francis D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1951), pp. 280, 589, 590.

(Continued on page 28)

# Ellen G. White and tithe

**Alberto Ronald  
Timm**

## **An analysis of four controversial statements**



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**A**lthough the Seventh-day Adventist tithing system was in place by the end of the nineteenth century,<sup>1</sup> controversies have arisen recently about its practical application. Members who lose confidence in the church organization sometimes divert tithe to independent groups. They justify this by citing a few quotations from Ellen White describing her personal tithing practices.

Many of those criticisms are adequately addressed in "The History and Use of the Tithe,"<sup>2</sup> from the Ellen G. White Estate, Arthur L. White's *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years*,<sup>3</sup> in Roger W. Coon's "Tithe: Ellen G. White Counsel and Practice."<sup>4</sup> It seems, however, that there is room for a direct analysis of four particular Ellen White statements.<sup>5</sup>

### **Humble places of worship**

The first comes from 1897. The churches of Oakland, California, and Battle Creek, Michigan, were facing serious problems meeting their "quite heavy" expenses.<sup>6</sup> Since some congregations had been using tithe to cover operating expenses,<sup>7</sup> members of these two churches wrote to Ellen White in Australia asking about the propriety of diverting some tithe to solve their situation. On March 14, 1897, Ellen White replied:

"From that which has been shown me, the tithe is not to be withdrawn

from the treasury. Every penny of this money is the Lord's own sacred treasure, to be appropriated for a special use.

"There was a time when there was very little missionary work done, and the tithe was accumulating. In some instances the tithe was used for similar purposes as is now proposed. When the Lord's people felt aroused to do missionary work in home and foreign missions, and to send missionaries to all parts of the world, those handling sacred interests should have had clear, sanctified discernment to understand how the means should be appropriated. . . .

"The light which the Lord has given me on this subject is that the means in the treasury for the support of the ministers in the different fields is not to be used for any other purpose."<sup>8</sup>

But on the next day she added: "*There are exceptional cases, where poverty is so deep that in order to secure the humblest place of worship, it may be necessary to appropriate the tithes.* But that place is not Battle Creek or Oakland."<sup>9</sup>

The first statement shows clearly that although tithe had been used previously for local church expenses, such a use should cease because of great missionary challenges,<sup>10</sup> and also increasing light regarding tithe. But the second statement speaks of "exceptional cases" to the rule, involving very poor places of worship.

A careful analysis suggests that

Ellen White is referring to a genuine missionary situation in which the church building is described as the "humblest place of worship." The issue is not the construction, renovation, improvement, or maintenance of a church in an established area (which in the same context she strongly disapproves),<sup>11</sup> but the danger of losing the "place of worship" itself, thus impairing the church's mission in that poverty-stricken place.

### Helping needy workers

A second relevant Ellen White comment regarding tithe is an undated oral statement she made to her son W. C. White:

"The Lord has shown me that the experience which your father [James White] and I have passed through in poverty and deprivation, in the early days of our work, has given to me a keen appreciation and sympathy for others who are passing through similar experiences of want and suffering. *And where I see workers in this cause that have been true and loyal to the work, who are left to suffer, it is my duty to speak in their behalf. If this does not move the brethren to help them, then I must help them, even if I am obliged to use a portion of my tithe in doing so.*"<sup>12</sup>

Although the specific date of this statement is not known, W. C. White explains that "these experiences relate mostly to the years we [he and his mother] were in Europe [1885-1887] and Australia [1891-1900], and to the years 1900 to 1906, in behalf of the work in the Southern states."<sup>13</sup> If we analyze the reality of Adventist work in Europe,<sup>14</sup> Australia,<sup>15</sup> and the Southern states<sup>16</sup> during these respective periods, we see that each of these places was at that time a missionary field without adequate financial provision. Members in established fields were not sufficiently concerned in helping the missions.

At the 1901 General Conference session, Ellen White confronted the issue: "I told the Lord that when I came to Battle Creek this time, I would

ask you why you have withheld means from the work in Australia."<sup>17</sup> Only with the reorganization of the General Conference in 1901 came "a formula" for better support of missions.<sup>18</sup> Since sometimes the organization itself did not provide adequate means for its missionaries, Ellen White felt she had a special duty regarding workers who, while "true and loyal to the work," "are left to suffer." Whenever she met workers in such circumstances, she first tried to solve the problem by speaking "in their behalf" to local administrators. If this did "not move the brethren to help them," then she considered it her own duty to help them, even if that meant using a portion of her own tithe.

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**Ellen White felt she had a special duty regarding workers who, while "true and loyal to the work," "are left to suffer."**

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W. C. White, commenting on Ellen White's statement made to him (quoted above), makes a clear distinction between her normal and sporadic procedures. He explains that while "a full tithe" was "paid on her salary, to [the] church or conference treasurer," occasional appropriations from the tithe of "the increase from her books" went to meet the needs of those suffering workers. W. C. White argues that while his mother could make such special uses of tithe through the "special enlightenment" she received from the Lord as part of her prophetic authority, neither "church members" nor "ministers" are authorized to do likewise.<sup>19</sup>

It is significant that she began her statement with the expression "the Lord has shown me." To Ron Graybill,

such an expression means "that what was written was written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God."<sup>20</sup> So, by declaring that the Lord had shown her to make such special uses of her tithe, Ellen White is evidently stressing her singular prophetic authority to act in such a way.

Clearly, therefore, Ellen White recognizes in this second statement (1) that she made some special uses of her own tithe, (2) that such uses were only in relation to problems neglected by the organization, and (3) that she did it on the basis of her prophetic insight.

### Supporting the neglected South

A more detailed statement on special use of tithe is found in a letter Ellen White wrote on January 22, 1905, to G. F. Watson, president of the Colorado Conference. While reproving Watson's critical attitude against sending tithe to support the work in the South, she said:

"It has been presented to me for years that my tithe was to be appropriated by myself to aid the white and colored ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient properly to support their families. When my attention was called to aged ministers, white or black, it was my special duty to investigate into

their necessities and supply their needs. This was to be my special work, and I have done this in a number of cases. No man should give notoriety to the fact that in special cases the tithe is used in that way.

"In regard to the colored work in the South, that field has been and is still being robbed [in 1905] of the means that should come to the workers in that field. If there have been cases where our sisters have appropriated their tithe to the support of the ministers working for the colored people in the South, let every man, if he is wise, hold his peace.

"*I have myself appropriated my tithe to the most needy cases brought to my notice. I have been instructed to do this; and as the money is not withheld from the Lord's treasury, it is not*

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## Ellen White received and applied tithe only in special cases.

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a matter that should be commented upon, for it will necessitate my making known these matters, which I do not desire to do, because it is not best.

"Some cases have been kept before me for years, and *I have supplied their needs from the tithe, as God has instructed me to do. And if any person shall say to me, Sister White, will you appropriate my tithe where you know it is most needed, I shall say, Yes, I will*; and I have done so. I commend those sisters who have placed their tithe where it is most needed to help do a work that is being left undone, and if this matter is given publicity, it will create a knowledge which would better be left as it is. I do not care to give publicity to this work which the Lord has appointed me to do, and others to do.

"I send this matter to you so that you shall not make a mistake. Circumstances alter cases. I would not advise that anyone should make a practice of gathering up tithe money. But *for years there have now and then been persons who have lost confidence in the appropriation of the tithe who have placed their tithe in my hands*, and said that if I did not take it they would themselves appropriate it to the families of the most needy ministers they could find. *I have taken the money, given a receipt for it, and told them how it was appropriated.*"<sup>21</sup>

The reorganization of Adventist church structure in 1901, with some revisions in 1903,<sup>22</sup> opened new frontiers to the growth of missions in a worldwide dimension. However, the Southern field still remained "the most needy and the most discouraging field

in the world."<sup>23</sup> Additionally, not until 1910 did the church offer systematic sustenance "for the support of sick and aged laborers, and the widows and children of deceased laborers."<sup>24</sup>

In such a context, Ellen White explains that "for years" the Lord had placed upon her shoulders the "special duty" of investigating the needs of "the white and colored ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient properly to support their families." "Aged ministers, white or black," merited particular attention. And again she appeals to her prophetic authority by declaring that God "instructed" her to supply "their needs from the tithe."

Although there is a close relationship between the contents of the letter to Watson and the previous oral statement to W. C. White, this goes far beyond the previous statement. She explains that not only (1) did she appropriate her own tithe to the most needy cases but also (2) she had accepted tithe from others to be distributed at her discretion, and also (3) that in some cases members, instead of paying tithe in their own conferences, had sent it to ministers evangelizing the needy Southern field. She saw no reason to reprove them because the Southern "field has been and is still being robbed of the means that should come to the workers in that field."

The use of such expressions as "it has been presented to me for years," "my attention was called," "I have been instructed to do this," "some cases have been kept before me for years," and "as God has instructed me to do" seems to confirm Ellen White's singular prophetic authority, as in her oral statement to W. C. White on the same subject. But the phrase "this work which the Lord has appointed me to do, and others to do" is not as clear as the previous ones. The question naturally arises: Did the Lord reveal to these "others" the duty of helping poor workers in the same way He did to Ellen White?

In answering that question we must remember, first, that Ellen White mentioned "commend[ing] those sisters" who applied their tithe in such a

way. Though we have no basis to assume that all private tithe sent to the South came from Ellen White's direct advice, she obviously preferred to accept such tithe, give a receipt, and send it where she felt it was more needed rather than allowing individuals to apply it according to their personal judgment. While Ellen White said she personally accepted tithe from members who wanted "to help do a work that [was] left undone," she also warned against the practice "of gathering up tithe money." Since she received and applied tithe only in special cases and always in harmony with instructions received directly from God, it could not be considered as withholding tithe "from the Lord's treasury." But she also recognized that, although she was doing a "special work," some members would certainly misunderstand. So she added at the same time that it was "not a matter that should be commented upon" and "no man should give notoriety to" it, because "if this matter is given publicity, it [would] create a knowledge which would better be left as it is."

Then, finally, one of Ellen White's major dreams became reality through the establishment of the sustenance plan that became effective in 1911.<sup>25</sup> As a result, on March 7 of that year she wrote to E. R. Palmer, secretary of the Sustenance Fund Committee:<sup>26</sup>

"In the past I have many times spoken of our duty to sustain the needy ones among the Lord's laborer's [*sic*] who, because of age, or on account of weakness caused by exposure or hard labor in the Lord's work, can not longer bear the burdens they have once borne. . . . My brethren, it is right that sure plans be laid for the support of our aged workers, or the younger workers who are suffering because of overwork. It is right that a fund should be created to make comfortable these faithful soldiers who still long to put brain, bone, and muscle into the work of giving the last note of warning to the world."<sup>27</sup>

It can be assumed that once inadequate financial circumstances were remedied, Ellen White discontinued her special usage of tithe.



## Paying ministers' wives

A fourth instance in which Ellen White speaks about a special use of tithe is found in a letter to G. A. Irwin, I. H. Evans, U. Smith, and A. T. Jones on April 21, 1898, in which she discusses the matter of some ministers' wives who worked full-time without pay.<sup>28</sup> This was not a new issue. On March 22, 1898, while addressing the situation of women as workers in the cause of God, she explained that she had received "light upon this subject" even before she went to Australia in 1891:

"Some matters have been presented to me in regard to the laborers who are seeking to do all in their power to win souls to Jesus Christ. . . . The ministers are paid for their work, and this is well. And if the Lord gives the wife, as well as the husband, the burden of labor, and if she devotes her time and her strength to visiting from family to family, opening the Scriptures to them, although the hands of ordination have not been laid upon her, she is accomplishing a work that is in the line of ministry. Should her labors be counted as nought, and her husband's salary be no more than that of the servant of God whose wife does not give herself to the work, but remains at home to care for her family?

"I was instructed that there are matters that need to be considered. Injustice has been done to women who labor just as devotedly as their husbands, and who are recognized by God as being as necessary to the work of ministry as their husbands. The method of paying men laborers and not their wives is a plan not after the Lord's order. Injustice is thus done. A mistake is made. The Lord does not favor this plan. This arrangement, if carried out in our conferences, is liable to discourage our sisters from qualifying themselves for the work they should engage in."<sup>29</sup>

One month later (April 21, 1898), while addressing the same problem, she went a step further by mentioning some specific names:

"There are ministers' wives, Sisters Starr, Haskell, Wilson, and Robinson, who have been devoted, earnest, whole-souled workers, giv-

ing Bible readings and praying with families, helping along by personal efforts just as successfully as their husbands. These women give their whole time, and are told that they receive nothing for their labors because their husbands receive wages. I tell them to go forward and all such decisions will be revised. The Word says, 'The labourer is worthy of his hire' (Luke 10:7). When any such decision as this is made, *I will in the name of the Lord, protest. I will feel it my duty to create a fund from my tithe money to pay these women who are accomplishing just as essential work as the ministers are doing*, and this tithe I will reserve for work in the same line as that of the ministers, hunting for souls, fishing for souls."<sup>30</sup>

In analyzing these statements, remember that Ellen White is writing specifically about ministers' wives who had "the burden of labor," devoting all their time and their strength to "giving Bible readings and praying with families" and "educating" new believers. Although those women incurred personal expenses in devoting themselves full-time to ministry, they remained unpaid. Ellen White regarded this as a "mistake," an "injustice," "the Lord does not favor." Because "the labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7), and those who "preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14), she considered it her "duty to create a fund" from her tithe "to pay these women."<sup>31</sup> Perhaps to rectify the situation, in 1900 the General Conference Committee established a "Committee on Woman's Work." Mrs. S. N. Haskell was one of its members.<sup>32</sup>

The question remaining now is whether those statements of Ellen White about paying wages to ministers' wives refer only to the particular instances mentioned here, or if they also provide a pattern to solve unjust cases today.<sup>33</sup> One might find some kind of endorsement of a special use of tithe in solving situations of dire financial injustice regarding those who work "in the line of ministry." But the problem is defining what is a real situation of injustice.

## Nowhere does Ellen White advocate financial pressure to force a change in denominational policy.

### Summary

By analyzing the four main statements of Ellen White about special use of tithe, we see that each one deals with a specific financial problem. While the first allows tithe use to avoid losing "the humblest place of worship" in a missionary context, it does not endorse the use of tithe for construction, renovation, improvement, or maintenance of a church in an established area (which, in the same context, Ellen White strongly disapproves). The other three statements deal with the unique financial burdens of suffering workers neglected by the organization and of some ministers' wives who worked as Bible instructors without pay. Whereas in the first three statements either the place of worship or the workers are seen in a clear missionary setting, the fourth does not necessarily refer to such circumstances.

All those four special uses of tithe show a perfect parallelism between the existence of a financial problem and a financial solution to it. Nowhere does Ellen White advocate financial pressure to force a change in denominational policy.

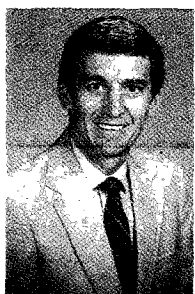
Although those statements provide some principles to a correct distribution of tithe, they should not be stressed beyond their original intent. While approving other people sending their tithe to extremely needy fields in some special situations, Ellen White didn't recommend this as a regular practice. On the contrary, she wrote in 1907:

(Continued on page 29)

# Another look at Valuegenesis

Helmut Ott

## Evaluating what's happening with our youth



*Helmut Ott, Ed.D., is an ordained minister who chairs the Department of Modern Languages at Southern College in College-dale, Tennessee.*

The North American Division recently released an official report, *Risk and Promise*,<sup>1</sup> interpreting the results of the Valuegenesis study.<sup>2</sup> As the title suggests, the study found much good in what the Adventist Church is doing for the religious instruction of its youth in North America, but it also found significant trouble spots. Because of space limitations, I will address in this article only one of these problem areas.

Perhaps the most disturbing of all revelations in the study is that many of our youth have no assurance of salvation. This does not mean they have no interest in religious matters since, according to the report, "most Adventist youth desire a deeper and more certain relationship with God." The good news is that the young people are open to God; the bad news is that they don't have a satisfying relationship with Him. The resulting uncertainty about their standing with God is so deep that "the thought of Christ's return brings fear to the majority of Adventist youth, rather than eager anticipation."<sup>3</sup>

Such a revelation would cause great concern to any religious denomination, but it is particularly troublesome to the Adventist Church. We believe that our basic mission is to proclaim the "everlasting gospel" to prepare a people for the soon coming of Christ. We should enjoy great anticipation about meeting the One who died in our place to grant us eternal life. Unfortunately, the Valuegenesis study reveals that many

Adventists, youth and older members alike, fail to experience such excitement. Instead, because of their uncertainty about salvation they are afraid of the Second Advent! Clearly, such a scenario calls for honest heart-searching and a close look at both the content and the methods we employ in religious education, both at home and at school.

### Rooted in fear

To begin, we need to establish more precisely the cause of our young people's lack of assurance, the source of their fear. I have yet to find someone who is afraid either of the Second Coming itself—as the extraordinary and majestic event Scripture portrays it to be—or of the prospect of having to meet Jesus in person. Our insecurity and distress stem from a faulty understanding of events *before* the Second Coming, namely, the end of probation and the time of trouble.

From my observation, the major cause of consternation is not that the world in its last days will suffer unprecedented turmoil, or that the remnant church will face hostility, privation, and persecution. What really troubles our young people is the theological and spiritual aspect of the final crisis. Specifically, their anxiety is rooted in the notion that, while at the present time their eternal destiny is based upon the imputation by faith of Christ's saving merits, after probation closes, it will depend on the righteousness they developed in their personal lives.

Young people may find it difficult

to articulate their apprehension, and they seldom succeed in explaining the specific theological roots of their dread. But as they describe their unease about final events, it becomes clear that they feel they are not good enough to be saved. They fear that unless they reach perfection of character and learn to live without sinning before probation ends, they will lose salvation during the time of trouble.

These observations fit right in with what the authors of *Risk and Promise* say quite emphatically: "Valuegenesis data strongly warns that a works orientation is eroding the faith our youth have in Jesus." The authors define "works orientation" as "a belief that salvation is given to us because we are good or have done good works," and rightly point out that it "subtly erodes our confidence in Christ. It shifts the emphasis to what we do or do not do. In such an orientation, belief in God's promises of salvation becomes a minor consideration. Rules and regulations become the major emphasis. Religion becomes self-centered rather than Christ-centered."<sup>4</sup>

In contrast, notice their definition of the opposite side of the theological spectrum: "A *grace orientation* is a belief that salvation is given to us only because of the goodness of Jesus, His atoning death, and the perfect life He lived on earth. It focuses completely on God's goodness in offering us this gift, which we can never earn by ourselves, and on the wonderful promises of God."<sup>5</sup>

According to the Valuegenesis study, the majority of Adventist youth in North America have a works rather than a grace orientation. "Eighty-three percent believe that 'To be saved, I have to live by God's rules.' Fifty-eight percent of Adventist youth believe that they can earn salvation through personal effort. . . . Sixty-two percent believe that 'the way to be accepted by God is to try to live a good life.'"<sup>6</sup> I believe that this confusion about salvation constitutes the main factor in the lack of confidence that causes Adventist young people to fear the second coming of Jesus.

### Gospel assurance

When we take God at His word and accept His gift of redemption as revealed in Scripture, we know we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. Through our faith relationship with Jesus we are reconciled with God and adopted as His children, rejoicing as heirs of eternal life. As long as we remain united to Jesus we know that, in Him, all the gospel promises belong to us. But when we make our performance—character development and behavior modification—part of the basis of salvation, then we can never be sure about our standing with God.

Some Adventists are concerned that if we shift the emphasis from the law, rules, and standards, to faith, grace, and assurance in Christ, many

## The only safety from both extremes of antinomianism and perfectionism is to remain centered on Jesus Christ.

more young people—and older ones for that matter—will become careless about sin. This is an ancient argument raised by some intensely religious people when they heard the apostle Paul preaching the gospel. His emphasis on faith in Jesus Christ troubled them because the law, not the Saviour, was at the center of their theological construct. Being good and doing right, rather than living in right relationship with the One who died to reconcile the world to God, was the heart of their religion. These religious moralists, well-meaning though they may have been, had become so dependent on the law as a deterrent from misbehavior that they were unable to understand how people can live shunning evil and practicing good without being constantly reminded of the dreadful consequences of disobedience.

Such confusion is understandable.

After all, the shift from keeping the law out of fear, guilt, or the desire for reward, to living as true disciples of Jesus Christ is not an easy transition. *In reality, a true faith relationship with the Saviour never leads to carelessness about sin.* On the contrary, only those who live daily in the light of the cross are capable of rendering true obedience to God and genuine service to fellow human beings. I believe that making the Saviour central—to our theology, our teaching and preaching, and to our religious experience—is the only way to solve any sin problem in our personal lives and in the church.

### Achieving true balance

Some suggest that in order to avoid extremes, we must place as much emphasis on the law, obedience, and "victory over sin" as we place upon Jesus Christ. While recognizing Jesus as the solution to the problem of perfectionism, the proponents of this idea obviously fail to see Him as the solution to antinomianism. They also fail to realize that it is impossible to correct one extreme by pulling in the opposite direction. Two wrongs never make a right, even when mixed in equal proportions. The only safety from both extremes of antinomianism and perfectionism is to remain centered on Jesus Christ.

According to Scripture, God did not provide a variety of remedies for sin—the gospel to save us from one type and the law to help us overcome another. Instead, He provided Jesus Christ as the only solution for all sin. Jesus, the world's Redeemer, came to "save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).<sup>\*</sup> In our official statements of faith this fact is clearly recognized. Unfortunately, Valuegenesis indicates that it has yet to become a dynamic reality in our lives and a normative principle in our ongoing theological dialogue.

We must clearly understand that theological balance is never achieved by positioning ourselves halfway between legalism and lawlessness. After all, the gospel is not a "balanced"

## Theological balance is never achieved by positioning ourselves halfway between legalism and lawlessness.

compromise between two incompatible ideologies. Instead, it is the radical proclamation that "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). Scripture tells us that God "gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (verse 18). "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:11, 12).

Obviously, God has provided just one way of salvation, and only those who avail themselves of this way are accepted into fellowship with Him. There are no exceptions to the gospel. He who has the Son has eternal life; he who does not have the Son does not have eternal life. We are saved by grace through faith in the Saviour's merits, or we are not saved at all. Thus, "balance" results when our Redeemer is the true dynamic center of everything, when the focus is fixed on one's faith relationship with Jesus Christ, and all else is placed at the periphery, where it belongs.

### Proper motivation

It seems that many of us are so accustomed to using the law, the investigative judgment, the end of probation, guilt, fear, and the hope of belonging to an exclusive group in

heaven as prime motivation that we are unable to understand that true obedience is possible only when it is born in and nourished by faith in Jesus.

Of course, the artificial motivators just mentioned can produce temporary external results, but they cannot foster genuine obedience. Fear does indeed keep many from committing sinful acts. The desire for reward even moves some to perform good deeds. But only a personal faith relationship with the Saviour can motivate and enable one to render obedience to God out of gratitude and love, the only motive that makes obedience acceptable.

So if the proclamation of Jesus Christ and the salvation He provides does not solve the problem of legalism as well as the problem of lawlessness, then nothing else will do it. As is the case with all other aberrations, love for sin can be displaced only by love for Jesus. Hence, if lifting up the Saviour so that He may draw all sinners to Himself—legalists and libertines alike—does not change one's behavior, then a greater emphasis on the law and on what some people call "victorious living" is most definitely destined to fail.

Revival and reformation do not come by preaching "revival and reformation"; nor does victorious living come by preaching "victorious living." And certainly, character perfection does not come by preaching "character perfection." The only way to achieve these and other worthy objectives in our youth or the rest of the Adventist membership is to restore Jesus to the center, where He belongs. Only as Christ becomes first and foremost, the subject above all subjects, the true reality of which we partake by faith, will we see spiritual life returning to lifeless souls. Then we will bear fruit to the glory of God.■

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

<sup>1</sup> *Risk and Promise: A Report of the Project Affirmation Taskforce* (Silver Spring, Md.: North American Division Board of Higher Education and Board of Education, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Roger L. Dudley, *Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance* (Riverside, Calif.: La Sierra Univ. Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Project Affirmation, *Valuegenesis: A Project Affirmation Study of the Influence of Family, School, and Church on the Formation of Faith*, unpublished data analysis (available at the North American Division Office of Education, Silver Spring, Maryland), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

## Russian Scholarships

Nine seminary students who participated in the Moscow Evangelistic Campaign and Field School received scholarships for outstanding academic and evangelistic accomplishments. Pictured with them is Robert J. Spangler, former editor of *Ministry*, who served as general coordinator for the crusade and who personally raised the funds for the scholarships. Each of the honored students helped significantly in establishing eight new churches through the Moscow crusade.



Left to right—Robert J. Spangler, Michael Ezhelya, Alexander Polohov, Vasili Murga, Vyacheslav Korchuk, Terje Vilhur, Michael Matviychuk, Violetta Paraschuk, Arman Zakaryan, and Rudolf Rau.



# How leaders can encourage pastors

James A. Cress

**L**ong-term benefits from 1993's Year of the Pastor largely depend upon whether church leaders intentionally increase their encouragement of pastors. Try the following suggestions:

**Pray for pastors.** Praying will change your view of pastors. When we pray for someone, often it's our attitude toward that individual that is changed. Ask God to help you view pastors as He sees them—both in the reality of what they are and in the assurance of what they can become by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Pray with pastors.** You will change their view of administrators. Pastors seldom hear their name lifted in prayer by anyone other than their spouse or family. Take opportunity to pray with pastors.

**Respect pastors.** Pastors are on call 24 hours a day in a high-stress job. Often they attempt great things with limited resources. Many pastors lack basic tools, much less conveniences such as computers or copiers. Respect how much your pastors actually accomplish.

**Motivate pastors.** Personal example motivates. If you want pastors to be soul winners, do soul winning yourself. If you want pastors to be more spiritual, emphasize your own personal devotions. If you want pastors to manage their churches well, manage conference finances in a responsible manner. Also, motivate by high but reasonable expectations. Set objectives that are attainable but that stretch your pastors to increase their effectiveness and then encourage them in the process of reaching!

**Value pastors.** Pastors are the front-line leaders in spiritual warfare. God's kingdom will advance only to the extent that pastors lead and train their members. Pastors are the key to spirituality in the churches of your conference, to financial income for conference budgets, and to soul winning for conference objectives. Value their role in producing results that your vision demands.

**Include pastors.** Bring pastors into the decision-making process. Establish pastoral advisory committees that enlist their participation in the decisions that impact their lives. Also, include pastors in your circle of fellowship. Avoid associating with just your fellow officers and leaders. Seek opportunities to socialize with pastors.

**Include pastoral families.** One shortsighted leader declared that pastoral families would not be invited to pastoral retreat because the conference could not afford the cost. Unfortunately, you are paying the cost one way or another. When families experience insufficient retreat time together, the costs come in increased medical bills and in broken relationships. Plan conference finances to include pastoral families at retreats and plan schedules to allow time for social interaction for pastoral families.

**Stabilize pastors.** Economic realities mean that many pastoral homes are financially unstable. Often pastoral families are one paycheck away from disaster. Resist pay parity schemes that widen different scales that do not include pastors. Seek opportunities to reduce inequity. Con-

sider the impact of transfers when the family must move and spouses must lose jobs or seniority.

**Feed pastors.** Plan pastoral retreat agendas to be high on spiritual food and low on promotion. Summarize promotional materials on documents and make short presentations—the result will be better accomplishment than if you spent long hours promoting various causes.

**Build pastors.** Take joy in mentoring pastors to increase their effectiveness. Your own capabilities will be multiplied in the lives of those you train. Share resources and provide opportunities for skill-building continuing education. Let pastors choose areas in which they wish to develop their own talents.

**Reward pastors.** When you find a pastor doing something well, express your appreciation verbally and in writing. Look first to your own pastoral team when large churches or departmental jobs need personnel. Help them believe that you are most interested in your own pastoral team.

**Listen to pastors.** Invite their input. Discuss ideas with them—especially plans that will impact their lives or their congregations. Survey your pastors and provide for anonymous responses on sensitive topics to make sure you are hearing accurately.

**Evaluate pastors.** When evaluation occurs in a nonthreatening way, it encourages pastors by helping them realize the good things they are accomplishing and their potential for development. Next month we'll discuss a simple, nonthreatening evaluative tool you can use. ■

## Cast the Net on the Right Side . . . Seventh-day Adventists Face the "Isms."

*Richard Lehmann, Jack Mahon, Borge Schantz, eds., European Institute of World Mission, Newbold College, England, 175 pages, US\$7.50, paper. Reviewed by Hugh I. Dunton, director, Ellen G. White Seventh-day Adventist Research Centre of Europe located at Newbold College.*

This collection of essays by an international spread of writers originated at a 1991 symposium of Seventh-day Adventist missiologists, administrators, and pastors at Freudenstad, Germany. The symposium surveys 14 key issues vital to missiology and evangelism.

Adventism, itself an "ism" in the view of some other Christians, faces multifaceted challenges in a pluralistic society. "Practical help in soul winning is our sole justification for the present publication," state the editors.

Russell Staples reminds us that Adventism in Europe has to be seen in the larger context of "American evangelical missions in Europe." For years personnel, methodology, and money came largely from America. Borge Schantz points out that the predominance of Western thought patterns, dependence on material possessions, and sometimes cultural arrogance have often misrepresented the gospel as foreign show biz.

Jean Zurcher shows that existentialism, though no longer fashionable, lives on, and "many people are existentialists without knowing it." But he also believes that Christian existentialism, beginning with Kierkegaard, does have something valuable to contribute.

According to Andrea Luxton, Adventists have responded cautiously to feminism. Her paper shows how the church could handle the issue in a sensitive, balanced way. She says we have hardly been proactive.

Rolf Pohler writes on religious pluralism and Georges Steveny on the New Age movement. Steveny rejects the New Age movement for its ultimate syncretism, offering a home for even unwary Christians who do not accept the exclusive nature of Christ's claims. Belief in the immortality of the soul, Steveny further points out, is central to New Age belief.

Michael Pearson attempts to define secularism, and finds it no easy task to handle such a protean phenomenon. Pearson identifies ideologies, revolutions, and material prosperity that impinge on the church. The "quest for guaranteed security" (the United Nations ideal), Pearson

revival" of the charismatic movement. Is this renewal a genuine moving of the Holy Spirit? Or is it the false revival predicted by Ellen White? Or is it some of both?

Szigeti Jenő and Borge Schantz discuss the issues of a changing world. The collapse of Communism presents Eastern European Christians with a variety of challenges. Churches played a prominent part in overthrowing Marxism. But on the negative side, professing a particular religion has become linked with violent patriotism as Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Muslim members battle each other.

The authors note that many strange "isms" have moved east to fill the spiritual vacuum, and Adventist evangelism needs cultural sensitivity, not Western imperialism.

Adventists will welcome Jean-Michel Martin's strongly Bible-based approach to family values. He sees the family as a threatened institution in a secularized world.

Orville Woolford, an immigrant to England, tells of the excitement and pain of being a member of an ethnic minority,

but one that has had a significant influence on Adventism not only in Britain, but in France, the Netherlands, and other old imperial powers.

While Woolford's ethnic group has been somewhat absorbed into their adopted homeland's Christian community, the Muslims have not. Borge Schantz looks at the Muslims in Europe—monotheists determined to remain culturally intact despite the corrosive effects of secularism and the ineffective attempts of Christian evangelism.

This study, one of a projected series entitled "Crucial Issues for Witnessing to Western Peoples," will be important to anyone involved in a multicultural society and evangelism. Most of the articles carry good, bibliographical information.

## How can the church communicate the gospel to people who do not think they need it?

notes, may (and this reviewer believes so) have its ecclesiastical counterpart in ecumenism. B. B. Beach addresses ecumenism, wherein we must deal with the exclusivity of the "remnant" yet search for things in common.

Gottfried Oosterwal points out that "urbanism is a special way of life." The city symbolizes secularism to Adventists and remains an object of distrust by them since the days of their pioneers. So how do Adventists reconcile their insistence on leaving the cities with incarnational ministry? According to Oosterwal, as rural populations worldwide shrink, Adventists must adapt or fail in their evangelizing mission.

Winfried Noack seeks to probe the phenomenon of the "worldwide

**Present Truth in the Real World:  
The Adventist Struggle to Keep and  
Share Faith in a Secular Society**

*Jon Paulien, Pacific Press Publishing Assn., Boise, Idaho, 1993, 253 pages, US\$10.95, Cdn\$14.80, paper. Reviewed by Caleb Rosado, professor of sociology, Humboldt State University, Arcata, California.*

The perennial question that has always challenged the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is: How can the church communicate the gospel to people who do not think they need it, much less respond to its demands? Hundreds of books have been written attempting to answer this question. Most of them take the Christian perspective. Few seek to comprehend the viewpoint of the secular person.

Most Adventists, with their unique worldview, do not understand or feel comfortable with the secular mind-set that negates the influence of the supernatural. We live in a world that has moved from an agrarian society in which religion explained human existence, through an industrial society with a mechanized view of God, to our current information society of science and reason. Our information age has relegated religion to the realm of private experience. All of this results from secularization—the process whereby the supernatural declines in significance as giving meaning to life. How do Christians, Adventists in particular, meet the challenge of communicating with the secular mind? I know of one previous book addressing this question: *Meeting the Secular Mind: Some Adventist Perspectives*, edited by Humberto M. Rasi and Fritz Guy and published by Andrews University Press in 1985.

Jon Paulien's is the second book to address the issue from an Adventist perspective. My first reaction to the book was the same as I had toward *Meeting the Secular Mind*: What do people who have spent their entire professional careers in an Adventist context know about secularism? Both books remind me of people who have never had children writing books on how to raise them. This is the book's

weakest point.

Yet Paulien writes exceptionally well—frank, open, insightful, and full of fresh ideas. The author, an associate professor of New Testament interpretation at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, and an experienced pastor, knows the literature on the subject. He presents a strong case

for a new approach in communicating the gospel, gently rebuking the church for its neglect.

The book consists of three parts: the "Challenge of a Secular World," "Keeping Faith in a Secular World," and "Sharing Faith in a Secular World." In addition there are two appendices: the first on determining a person's spiritual preparedness, and the second offering suggestions to

... rekindle the flame

# Preaching to the Secular Mind

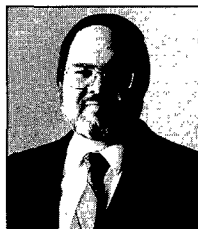


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## Secularization does not end religion, but transforms it.

administrators on how to manage the church in a secular world. The book ends with a brief annotated bibliography.

Part one explores the idea that people's worldviews affect how they interpret life and God. He introduces the "incarnational principle" based on 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, where the Christian becomes "all things to all people" in order "by all means to save some." Most Adventists have not grasped the implications of this principle: what it means to be secular in order to reach the secular. To say this also raises questions about em-

bracing other groups in order to reach them.

Describing the prototypical secular person, Paulien discusses three influences that give rise to a secular lifestyle: (1) scientific reasoning, (2) religious pluralism with no dominant religion, and (3) privatization of religion.

Part two, dealing with how to keep faith in a secular world, is the strongest. Paulien suggests that ministry to the secular person is not for everyone. He notes two models of ministry: the fortress model or hit-and-run approach, and the salt model or infiltration type.

In part three the author describes how to share one's faith in a secular society. Beginning with an understanding of the felt needs of secular people, he explains how Christians can identify these needs. He shows how ministry can happen on a one to one basis, through the church, and through a relevant worship style.

While Paulien gives us one of the

best and freshest approaches to evangelism I have read in years, some problems exist. Paulien has written a powerful book, and I don't want my comments to detract from its importance; rather they should be taken as complement to it.

Paulien's work makes a strong case for why sociological insights need to be incorporated in ministerial training. As a biblical scholar, dabbling in sociology, the author makes some comments that need further study. He fails to show secularization as a self-limiting process, and that spiritual decline often gives rise to revival and cult formation. Scientific reasoning has its limitations. Thus human beings, once enamored with science, now realize its bankruptcy—that in a runaway technology able to destroy us, science does not have answers. Only religions that involve the supernatural can address life's great questions—Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? For this reason concern with

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the spiritual dimensions of life is increasing. This important fact must be grasped for effective ministry to the secular person.

Contrary to Paulien's belief that secularization destroys faith, in reality it encourages religious experimentation. Secularization does not end religion, but transforms it. When society gets too secular and lacks a sense of meaning, people turn to innovative forms of religion to find that meaning. This explains why "celebration churches" now crop up in American Adventism but not in other places where religion remains dynamic. Many North American churches have become lifeless with no sense of mission. Each week they enact a ritual meaningless to many.

In those areas of the world in which traditional faith has become weak and secularism strong, cult groups have increased.

America has always been a spiritual supermarket with no dominant group. This religious competition is healthy because it forces organizations to move away from complacency. On the negative side it means that no one church can reach everyone in society. This dilemma raises the question of relativity, which Paulien wrongly defines as a lack of moral absolutes. Relativity means that the values and moral absolutes of one culture should not be used to judge those of another culture. This problem has restricted the church's work, because missionary programs often impose Western values on other nations and cultures under the guise of the gospel.

The New Age movement attracts people because it supplies a self-help, do-it-yourself religion consistent with the instant information society we live in. My work in secular universities has shown me that students prefer to find meaning for their lives in self-help spirituality rather than in organized religion.

In view of a changing society, our methods of ministry must also change. Paulien incorrectly says God gave two models of ministry; but God gave only *one*. God never gave a fortress model—a reactive, hit-and-

run technique people developed to avoid other people. The proactive salt model of incarnational ministry remains God's *only* way. The salt method alone will work with secular persons both in and out of the church.

As I read this book, I felt that Paulien described not just non-Christians, but Adventists out of touch with their church. For this reason we must promote his book among pastors who want to reclaim former members. Paulien provides the type of creative application so desperately needed for an effective and relevant mission in the twenty-first century.

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## Bangalore: affirming the future

*From page 4*

developed world it was \$513.

Southern Asia Division's centennial provided an opportunity to reflect on stories such figures tell. After 100 years, why have we not yet built a self-sustaining church in India? The question is not necessarily one of increased income, but of better stewardship in both giving and administering. In the developing countries, where most of our members live, perhaps it's time to ask some difficult questions: Does self-support mean financing an infrastructure and an organization too burdensome for the constituency and too alien to be supported? Should not administrative and pastoral style and function stay within the context of the widow's mite, if that mite is all the income that can be generated within a field? Are baptismal and membership records maintained well enough to reflect reality so that per capita giving may also reflect the true status of stewardship? What should define our stewardship: structure or mission, bureaucracy or nurture, elitism or servanthood?

Stewardship was a major concern of the Annual Council. The delegates expressed confidence that growth and

self-reliance are possible, voting a 13-page document on stewardship, self-reliance, and sacrifice. The document called for leaders to seize "the initiative in this commitment and lead their constituencies by the example of their own lifestyles and administrative decisions into a covenant relationship with God." Members will then "respond in positive affirmation." The document also calls for vigilant administration of church funds and a speedy move by entities hitherto dependent on higher organizations toward self-reliance.

### Missions

Bangalore also was a pointer in missiology. Delegates rejoiced that the city stadium was filled with nearly 10,000 Adventists. It was a wonderful sight. Most came from distant regions, some traveling for more than a week by foot, bus, and train. They represented 190,000 Adventists in the country—a remarkable number in the centennial year. But in a population of more than 900 million, the Adventist presence of one for every 4,730 is cause for concern. The challenge can be seen in another way as well. In 1992 the church added 11,076 to its membership—one of the highest achievements ever. But during the same year, the population of the division rose by 23,078,000. Each year another Australia and New Zealand are added to the challenge of evangelism in Southern Asia.

And yet the command of Matthew 24:14 and the prediction of Revelation 14:6-12 do include the masses of the unreached everywhere. Global Mission emphasis has captured that need like nothing else in recent times. Vast areas of hitherto-unentered areas in northern India now have an Adventist presence. In the most recent years the global mission venture has helped establish more than 65 congregations.

Bangalore is thus an affirmation of hope: in one Lord, one family, one mission, and one task. The agenda may be staggering, but the power is there. The Spirit awaits to use those who come to Him to conclude the proclamation. ■

## Letters

From page 2

### Adventists and change

Your October issue was superb. I just couldn't put it down. I thought the ideas presented there were honest, careful, thoughtful, and unifying.

For much too long Adventism has nurtured the individual factions within its ranks independent of the whole. We have publications for the elderly, the youth, the pastors, the new converts, the Blacks, the Right and the Left, with the obvious tendency being increased isolation in our thinking.

It was refreshing to read something courageous enough to look at some of the tough issues straight in

the face, in order to hammer out some of the differences. Keep up the good work! And remember, no matter how far the flock may have been scattered, we still have one hope, one faith, one birth. And one Lord. If Christ is lifted up, He will certainly draw all of us to Himself, and closer to each other.—Zyfyrd Bertan Schubert, Bloomington, California.

■ Thank you for George Knight's article "Adventists and Change" (October 1993). For years I have felt we needed to clarify the issue of Ellen White's growth in understanding of certain theological matters. Everyone who is interested in Ellen White studies stands indebted to Dr. Knight for his crystal-clear, thoroughly documented, definitive presentation.—Robert W. Olson, Calimesa, California.

### God's universal remnant

Santo Calarco's "God's Universal Remnant" (August 1993) is a landmark contribution to Adventist theological writing. Calarco's analysis of remnant theology in the Old Testament, the Gospels, the Pauline Letters, and the Apocalypse is precise, accurate, and penetrating.

The article is corrective in its explication of the remnant teaching of Revelation, especially of Revelation 12:17, where the word *loipos* (translated as "remnant" in the KJV) really means "the rest of," as given in most modern translations. That is its consistent meaning throughout the book of Revelation, as clearly evident in other passages. For example, in 20:5 the same word, *loipos*, is used: "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Here the *loipos*, "the rest of the dead," is by far the largest part of the entire group of humans; they are not a minority, a little remnant. Here the first resurrection is the smallest group; the "rest of" is the great majority.

The use of *loipos*, as found in



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12:17, occurs also in 19:20, 21, where the beast and the false prophet were cast into the lake of fire "and the rest were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse" (RSV). In this passage "the rest of" refers to all of the wicked except the beast and the false prophet. It refers to the great mass of the lost; in no way can the word refer to a tiny remnant. It is the common way of saying in Greek "the rest of."

The expression denotes nothing at all of size or number. It simply means "the rest of," and might be any percentage of the whole. This use of *loipos* occurs often in the New Testament. Other examples include Revelation 2:24; 9:20; 11:13; Matthew 22:6; 27:49, etc.

Most certainly Revelation 12:17 refers to God's remnant servants, but it says nothing about how many there are. Pastor Calarco is right when he says, "In summary, the New Testament not only allows for

a remnant theology but explicitly expounds one. However, remnancy defined in a narrow and exclusive framework is not only untenable but condemned in the Bible."—Richard Hammill, Loma Linda, California.

■ I am in total agreement with the basic tenet of the article—the remnant is universal and not exclusively parochial. However, I find myself ill at ease with the basic assumptions and method of biblical interpretation within the article.

There are a number of basic assumptions raised in the article that I feel are in need of explanation or clarification. These are: (1) that in biblical eschatology *judgment* and *remnant* are correlatives; (2) Jesus and John the Baptist saw themselves as calling forth a remnant; (3) the church equals the remnant; (4) remnant vocabulary consists of terms such as *little flock*, *lost*, *the poor*, *little ones*, *few*. Surely it is much more than this!

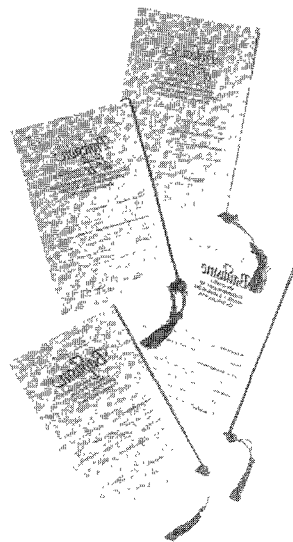
All the terms quoted see the "remnant" in small or lesser ways. However, there are many biblical places in which the saved, Israel, and remnant itself are seen not as the smaller or lesser part but the larger and in numbers immeasurable.

It is also apparent that the usage of the term *remnant* has been applied as a title or label. In our modern Western society we use names without knowing or understanding their meaning, which I feel is wrong when dealing with scriptural names and terms. As Adventists we often use the term in the context of eschatology, and in reference to ourselves (the parochial usage). However, when we use it we understand neither its meaning nor its full biblical application.

A good place to start is to have an agreed definition of *remnant* resulting from the meanings of the Hebrew *shear*, and the Greek *loipos/leimma*. Second, we should look to see how they are used within their biblical setting.

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An example of the second process could be looking at the eight uses of *loipos* in Revelation. Out of these eight we find that three refer to a righteous remnant (2:24; 11:13; 12:17), three to the wicked (9:20; 19:21; 20:5), one to angels (8:13), and one to "things" (3:2).

Of the three referring to a righteous remnant, only one (12:17) can be claimed to be referring to the *eschaton*. Judging from the odds (seven to one), it is little wonder that we Seventh-day Adventists are criticized for our remnant theology and the stress made upon it.

Another thing I have gleaned from a brief look at the settings of both *shear* and *loipos* is that the "remnant" are not so much called out (that's *ekklesia*—the church), but remain in place (i.e., stay in the kingdom). It is a small point, but one that also would change several of the assumptions that have been made in the article.—Russell Bryan, Aberdeen, United Kingdom.

### Adventists and social identity

J. A. Blaine's letter (August 1993) requires a response.

My concerns, however, are somewhat broader, and pertain to Seventh-day Adventists in South Africa. Our ministry in this country has been particularly stifled because of our apolitical stance that has been attained by our uninformed definition of politics. White Adventists have generally shunned anything that looked like Black political involvement, while they continue to benefit from the South African system by virtue of their skin color, living in a veritable heaven while promising a blissful hereafter to their Black fellow pilgrims. The other racial groups in the Adventist Church have been uncomfortably silent, and have been conspicuously unable to contribute or respond to the changing sociopolitical scene. We remain submissive, and do not get involved with the suffering that surrounds us, except, of course, our often too transparently conscious-soothing efforts to run church-sponsored

stop-smoking clinics, Meals on Wheels endeavors, and the like. Our smug missions reporting during Sabbath school is a crystal-clear giveaway to our true motivation. In spite of all that, we are still known only for the small percentage in our midst who refrain from eating flesh foods and for our "observing of Sunday on a Saturday."

The ministry of Jesus Christ demands a two-pronged type of involvement in society, i.e., the winning of souls (which must be preceded by the yielding of our own souls to the salvific merits of our Saviour) and the practicing of social justice.

The ministry of the prophets is replete with examples of calling God's children to religious loyalty and to social justice. The Elijah message, for example, was a wholistic one of challenging God's people to choose between Yahweh and Baal (1 Kings 18), and of confronting the ruler, King Ahab, with the murder of Naboth for the selfish purpose of confiscating his property (1 Kings 21). Jesus' ministry and teaching evinces this same wholistic intent. However, the work of the prophets, the apostles, and the saints through the ages proves that the intent of the coming of God's kingdom is not only to provide soul salvation in the "not yet" (this being the most important aspect of our work), but also to facilitate physical healing, feeding, and social justice for all in the "already."

The facilitation of social justice in the "already" goes beyond the providing of Meals on Wheels to agitating for fair distribution of economic resources among all peoples, to the point where hunger is completely eradicated. As Adventists we have to advance beyond the "binding up [of] people's wounds like the good Samaritan to the task of ridding the Jericho road of brigands" (John Stott, *The Contemporary Christian—An Urgent Plea for Double Listening*, [1992], p. 350).

The months ahead, up to April

1994, when a new government will be voted into power by a people who will, for the first time in the history of the country, have the right to exercise their franchise, promises to be a testing time for Adventists in South Africa. Not only is the secular world along with other Christians asking us to "stand up," but our young people are questioning whether we have interpreted our calling correctly.

I believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Africa still has the prospect of salvaging an image of relevance, care, love, and true Christianity. We can emerge from our insulated existence and serve a languishing society with the true gospel, the gospel as preached and lived by Jesus Christ and all His true prophets, apostles, and saints.—V. A. Clapper, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, Venda, South Africa.

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## Visions and revisions—part 1

From page 13

<sup>12</sup> The first vision's reference to the "wicked world which God had rejected" was most likely interpreted by early Adventists as confirming the "shut door," even though it did not explicitly do so. At any rate, deleting the passage left the vision unequivocally in harmony with the church's growing understanding of salvation, since it was in 1851 and 1852 that the more extreme version of the "shut-door" doctrine was abandoned.

<sup>13</sup> Ellen G. White, *Early Writings of Mrs. White*, second edition (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald, 1882), p. iv. This is really the first edition under the title *Early Writings*. The editors in 1882 considered the first edition to be *Experience and Views* (1851), and the first publication of the other materials found in *Early Writings*.

<sup>14</sup> To examine the exact text of the first vision as it appeared in the *Review Extra* and *Experience and Views*, readers need to contact the E. G. White Estate or an E. G. White Research Center.

<sup>15</sup> Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Years* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), p. 88.

<sup>16</sup> To examine the text of the first vision as it appeared in the 1882 and 1906 printings of *Early Writings*, readers will need to contact the E. G. White Estate or an E. G. White Research Center.

## In His hands

From page 9

but He breaks the seals one after another, until the last seal is broken. When the seventh seal is removed, a deep hush comes over the throne room, indeed, over all creation. Now there will be full disclosure. The great book will be thrown open. The drama is over. In heaven's scheme of things there is prophecy, fulfillment, and consummation. There comes a day when all prophecies will cease. Jesus declared: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:18). That is consummation.

Salvation history is not a continuing soap opera repeating itself forever. There can be no eternal coexistence between good and evil. The slain Lamb is Lord of time and history, Lord of the spheres. His arms are not short that He cannot save. His reach and His grasp are equal. He is strong enough to take hold of the throne and at the same time encircle the globe. Mission accomplished: He delivers the lost paradise back to the Father who commissioned Him. That is consummation.

The supreme victory of Christ, the slain Lamb, is the ultimate goal of history. No wonder that all heaven joins in songs of praise and adoration to "him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 5:13).

Yes, God the Father has put all things in the strong hands of His Son. He has turned all things over to Him. Now here is the great question: Have you turned your life over to Him? Have you put your life, your all, in His hands? You can trust Him. Jesus is worthy. ■

<sup>1</sup> For fuller treatment of OTTO, see my book *Preaching to the Times* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1975).

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> ———, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 210.

## Ellen G. White and tithe

From page 17

"Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, not to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord's work. . . . Let the work no longer be hedged up because the tithe has been diverted into various channels other than the one to which the Lord has said it should go. Provision is to be made for these other lines of work. They are to be sustained, but not from the tithe. God has not changed; the tithe is still to be used for the support of the ministry."<sup>34</sup> ■

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bert B. Haloviak and F. Donald Yost, "A Report on the Use of Tithe in the Seventh-day Adventist Church" (Washington, D.C.: Office of Archives and Statistics of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1976), pp. 19-22; Brian E. Strayer, "Adventist Tithepaying—The Untold Story," *Spectrum*, October 1986, pp. 46-48.

<sup>2</sup> See "The History and Use of the Tithe," Ellen G. White Estate shelf document, [1990].

<sup>3</sup> See Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmhaven Years* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1981), pp. 389-397.

<sup>4</sup> Roger W. Coon, "Tithe: Ellen G. White Counsel and Practice," in Supplement to the *Adventist Review*, November 7, 1991.

<sup>5</sup> It will be assumed throughout this article that where Ellen White discusses her use of tithe, she is generally referring to the first 10 percent of her earnings.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Washington, D.C.: E. G. White Estate, 1981), vol. 1, p. 182.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers* (Battle Creek, Mich.: 197), vol. 10, pp. 16-18.

<sup>9</sup> ———, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 1897. (Italics supplied.)

<sup>10</sup> The main studies on the development of Seventh-day Adventist missionary thought are P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1977); and Borge Schantz, "The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Missionary Thought: Contemporary Appraisal" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1983).

<sup>11</sup> See E. G. White, *Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers*, vol. 10, pp. 16-18.

<sup>12</sup> Ellen G. White in Arthur L. White, p. 393. (Italics supplied.)

<sup>13</sup> W. C. White, in Arthur L. White, p. 393.

<sup>14</sup> See D. A. Delafield, *Ellen G. White in Europe: 1885-1887* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1975); Pierre Winandy, ed., *Ellen G. White and Europe* (Newbold College, England: Ellen G. White Research Centre, 1987).

<sup>15</sup> See Milton F. Krause, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia: 1885-1900" (M.A. thesis, University of Sydney, 1968).

<sup>16</sup> See Ronald D. Graybill, *Mission to Black America: The True Story of James Edson White and the Riverboat Morning Star* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1971), pp. 52-61; Louis B. Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow: The Story of American Seventh-day Adventists With an African Heritage* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1984), pp. 85-95.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen G. White, "In the Regions Beyond," *General Conference Bulletin*, 1901, p. 84.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1962), vol. 3, p. 44.

<sup>19</sup> W. C. White, "Regarding the Use of the Tithe."

<sup>20</sup> Ron Graybill, "The 'I saw' Parallels in Ellen White's Writings," *Adventist Review*, July 29, 1982.

<sup>21</sup> Ellen G. White, in Arthur L. White, pp. 395, 396. (Italics supplied.)

<sup>22</sup> See Barry David Oliver, *SDA Organizational Structure: Past, Present and Future* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1989), pp. 162-204.

<sup>23</sup> Ellen G. White, in Arthur L. White, pp. 394, 395.

<sup>24</sup> See W. A. Spicer, "General Conference Committee Council," *Review and Herald*, Dec. 22, 1910, pp. 13, 15; A. G. Daniells, "The Sustentation Fund," pp. 14, 15; A. G. Daniells, *The Sustentation Fund* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists [1910]).

<sup>25</sup> See Spicer, "General Conference Committee Council," p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> Daniells, *The Sustentation Fund*, p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> Ellen G. White *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, Md.: E. G. White Estate, 1990-1993), vol. 3, p. 272.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 12, pp. 160, 161.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 323.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 12, pp. 160, 161. (Italics supplied.)

<sup>31</sup> In another place she writes: "God is a God of justice, and if the ministers receive a salary for their work, their wives, who devote themselves just as disinterestedly to the work, should be paid in addition to the wages their husbands receive, even though they may not ask for this" (Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915], p. 453).

<sup>32</sup> See "Proceedings of the General Conference Committee," *General Conference Bulletin*, 1900, p. 123.

<sup>33</sup> Ellen White is not advocating here any position for or against women's ordination. Her concern was the financial injustice to ministers' wives who worked full-time without remuneration.

<sup>34</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, pp. 247-250.

## Marrying non-Adventists

From page 5

It is much easier to write an absolute statement. Everyone knows the boundaries. A practice is either right or wrong. Unfortunately, absolute statements often encourage finding ways to fulfill the letter of the law while violating its spirit. Examples include: pushing people to be baptized before they are ready so they may have an Adventist wedding; refusing to marry someone who may have left the church years ago but never had their name removed from the church rolls.

The Bangalore statement clearly delineates the ideal and makes it clear that church members should not expect their pastor to marry a couple when they come from different religious backgrounds. At the same time it allows for cultural adaptations.

This statement, for the first time, emphasizes the importance of premarital counseling. Ministers should not marry any couple with whom they have not counseled or who have not had some other minister counsel with them. Ministers should not perform the marriage ceremony if they feel that the couple are incompatible. The minister may refuse to marry two Adventist young people because after counseling them he or she believes that God cannot bless that marriage. Just because two people are Adventists does not mean they are ready for marriage.

Differences in religious belief should be only one of the criteria we use when deciding when it is appropriate to marry a couple. We have a solemn obligation to lift high the standards of God's Word. What a responsibility rests upon us. Ministers should never perform any wedding that they believe is violating the principles of God's kingdom. Let us continue to teach the principles so important for a happy marriage. ■

## Proposed Church Manual Statement

"The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing wherever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fear of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities' (*The Adventist Home*, p. 18).

"Worship of God, Sabbathkeeping, recreation, association, use of financial resources, and training of children are responsible components of happy family relationships. Because differences in these areas can often lead to a deterioration of these relationships, to discouragement, and even to a complete loss of Christian experience, an adequate preparation for marriage should include premarital pastoral counseling in these areas.

" "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). The happiness and prosperity of the marriage relation depends upon the unity of the parties; but between the believer and the unbeliever there is a radical difference of tastes, inclinations, and purposes. They are serving two masters, between whom there can be no concord. However pure and correct one's principles may be, the influence of an unbelieving companion will have a tendency to lead away from God' (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 174).

"The Spirit of Prophecy consistently counsels against marriage between 'the believer and the unbeliever' and further cautions against uniting with fellow Christians who have 'not accepted the truth for this time' (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 364). Marriages are more likely to endure, and family life to fulfill the divine plan, if husband and wife are united and are bound together by common spiritual values and lifestyles. For these reasons, the Seventh-day Adventist Church strongly discourages marriage between a Seventh-day Adventist and a non-Seventh-day Adventist, and strongly urges Seventh-day Adventist ministers not to perform such weddings.

"The church recognizes that it is the prerogative of the individual to make the final decision relative to the choice of a marriage partner. However, it is the hope of the church that, if the member chooses a marriage partner who is not a member of the church, the couple will realize and appreciate that the Seventh-day Adventist pastor, who has covenanted to uphold the principles outlined above, should not be expected to perform such a marriage. If an individual does enter into such a marriage, the church is to demonstrate love and concern with the purpose of encouraging the couple toward complete unity in Christ."

## Called Together

How would you like to have a lay couple in your congregation trained to do premarital counseling? You may wish to check into the program Called Together, recommended by H. Norman Wright to lessen the pastor's counseling load. An eight-part 160-page workbook/manual is the basis of the couple-to-couple counseling sessions in this program. For information write: Called Together, 1924 West Main St., Ephrata, PA 17522; or call 717-738-3751.

## Adventist Pioneer Library

The Adventist Pioneer Library is comprised of laypeople who circulate articles, books, and other materials written by and about Seventh-day Adventist pioneers. Write: Adventist Pioneer Library Committee, P.O. Box 1844, Loma Linda, CA 92354; or call (909) 796-4181. Fax (909) 824-1361.—Richard J. Cooper, Redlands, California.

## Filing system

If you don't have a filing system for those magazine articles, try this:

1. Mark every article you've read (and decided not to file) with an X by the article's title. These articles will be thrown out.

2. For articles to file: a. Write the date in upper right corner of articles. This will often prove valuable in future references to the article.

b. Write the subject (one word, if possible) in the upper left corner. This word becomes the topical heading under which you will file the article. c. If the article is more than one page, use staples and save unnecessary frustration caused by missing pages.

3. Underline key words in the article, and write those words in the margins for easier reference.—Dick Grenell, Barrett, Minnesota.

## Children of all ages

In place of the usual bulletin item "children's sermon" or "children's story," one church uses a more inclusive term: "a time for the child in all of us." This is in keeping with Jesus' condition for entering the kingdom. "Unless you become as a little child . . ."—T. C. Whitehouse, Auburndale, Massachusetts.

## Communique to the pastor

Sometimes the pastor is the last to know about special needs and prayer requests in the congregation. To eliminate this, we began a "Communique to the Pastor."

Each Sunday morning the Sunday school department secretary places a "Communique to the Pastor" sheet in the Sunday school rolls. There is a place for the class to write the class name and date. The sheet contains instructions: "The following names of persons in our class need special prayer or have voiced a need." There is

room to write the name and request. At the bottom of the sheet it says, "Please place this back in your Sunday school class roll folder."

These prayer requests are assembled and given to the pastor to use during the pastoral prayer each Sunday morning. The requests are also typed and made available to the congregation for specific prayer.—Betty Robertson, Bethany, Oklahoma.

## Sermon notes

Some preachers hold several pages of notes and keep shuffling them until the time runs out. Others have a jumbled collection of papers, cards, and magazine cuttings. In the process of preaching, they often misplace the vital item needed, while occasionally a page of notes floats off the pulpit or falls out of the Bible.

The best solution to this distracting problem is to fold a sheet of paper in half and trim it down to the size of your Bible's pages. Then open your Bible to the chapter from which you will preach. Slide a thin elastic band over the pages until it rests in the center of the Bible. Finally, place your folded sheet of notes under the elastic until it comes into the center fold. Thus your notes become an integral part of your Bible, firmly held

into its pages. You have four sides of sermon notes that can't be misplaced or fall out while preaching. As a result, you are liberated from being fastened behind the pulpit!—Brian Pilmoor, Surrey, England.

## Reuniting parents and children

A national computer database called RE-UNITE links children searching for their biological families and families looking for adopted children. Both parties must desire participation before RE-UNITE will match them; the service respects the privacy of those who decline re-established contact. For information call (303) 927-2400 or write RE-UNITE, Box 7945, Aspen, Colorado 81612.

## \$25 for your ideas

Please send us a suggestion about how pastors can make their ministry more effective or less stressful. If we publish it, we will send you \$25. If your idea promotes a product or service you are selling, we'll be glad to consider it for publication but won't pay you \$25! Send ideas to *Ministry*, Shop Talk Editor, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904. U.S. citizens, please include Social Security number.

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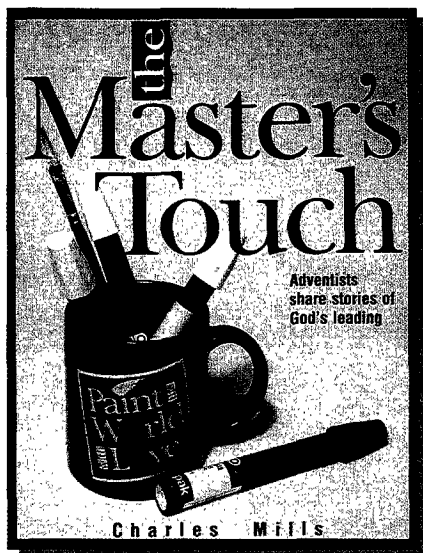


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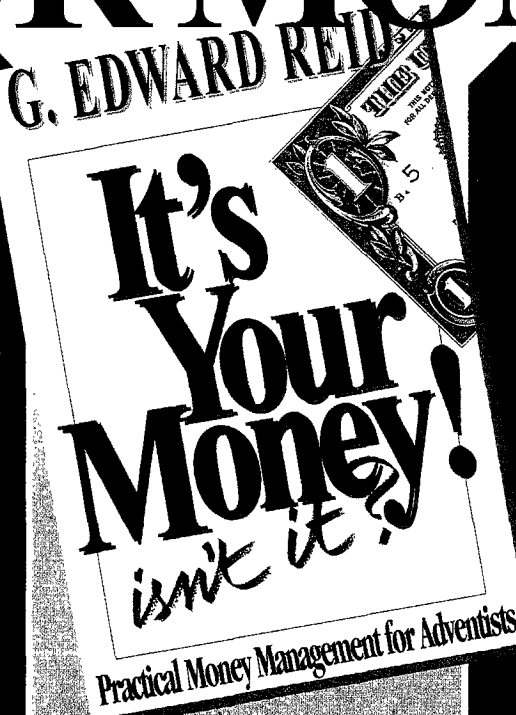
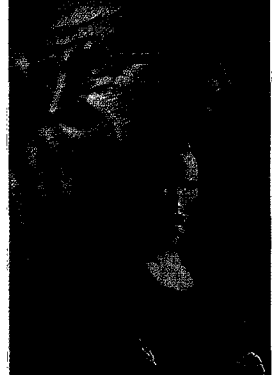


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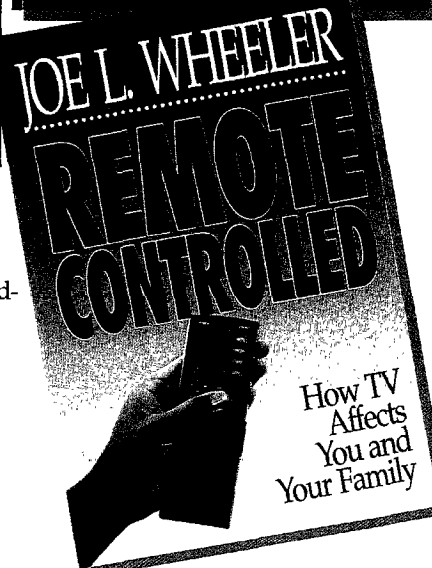
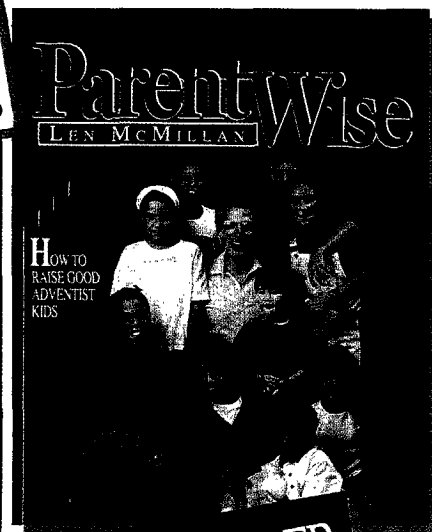
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