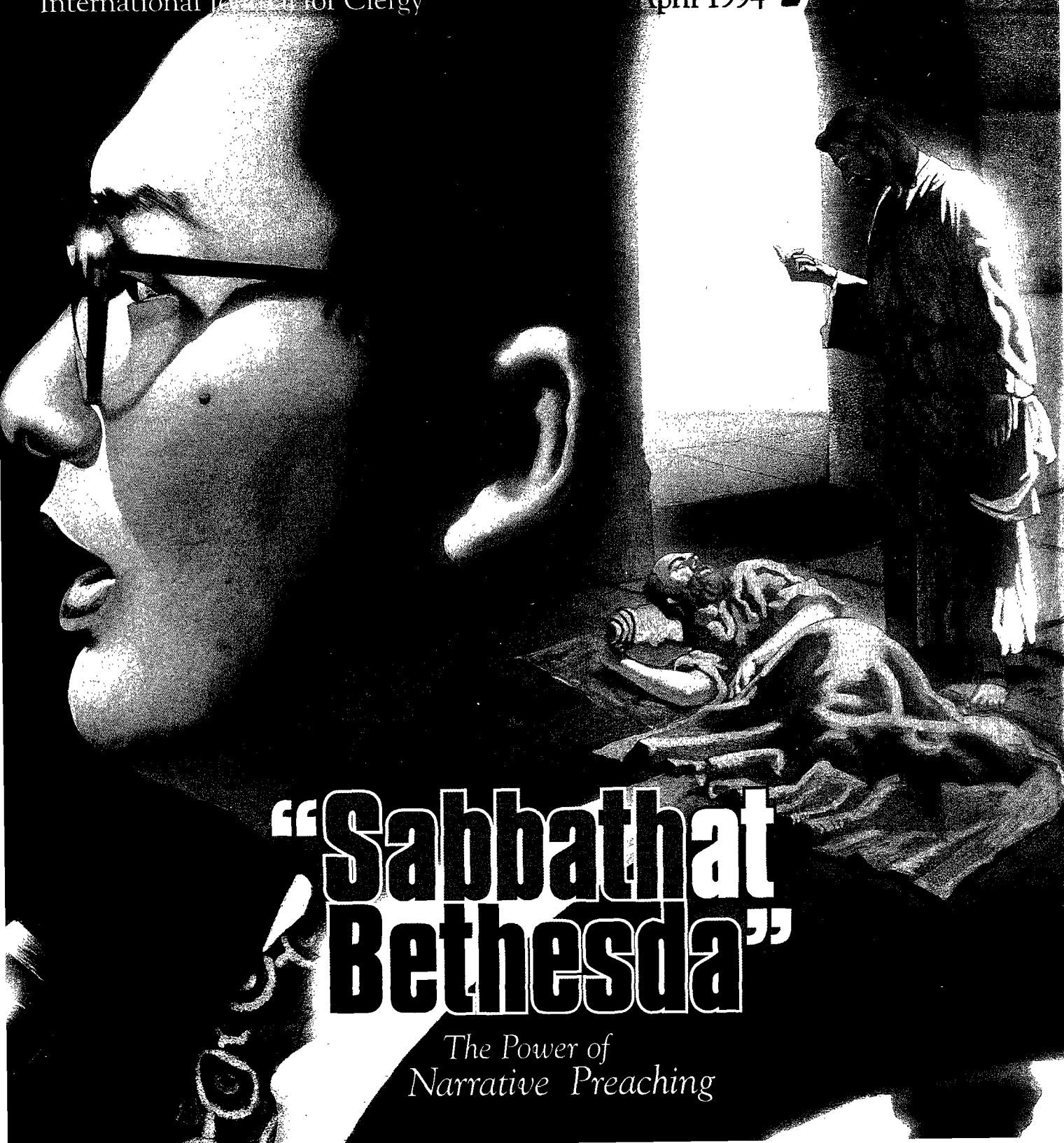


# Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

April 1994



## “Sabbath at Bethesda”

*The Power of  
Narrative Preaching*

## Year of the pastor

While we are thankful that many good pastors are out tending the sheep in the field (December 1993), we cannot possibly ignore the fact that many sheep have wandered away and are lost. Otherwise there would be no need to look them up and have a Homecoming Day especially designed for them.

The reasons for this phenomenon are many, but one stands out above all and is worthy of our attention. In John 10, Jesus told us that He, the Great Shepherd, knows His sheep and sacrifices for them, and they know His voice and follow Him. But too often we the undershepherds do not know or do not care for the sheep, especially the poor, the lonely, and the wounded—those who need pastoral care the most. For this reason tens of thousands of sheep are lost.

Maybe some undershepherds need to reexamine their own role perception. Are they supposed to sit in the office waiting for the sheep to come in for counseling, or should they also go out and search for the lost?

Too many undershepherds pastor selectively for the rich, the powerful, the influential. The visitors, the newly moved, the immigrants, those seemingly unpromising, and those who are not in the "in" circle too often do not get the attention of the pastor. I personally know that precisely because of this attitude of benign neglect, several families have stopped attending church; I have also witnessed several spiritually dead sheep loved back into the church.

It takes a lot of love to love those who are unfriendly, unlovable, different, poor, and uneducated. A great deal of patience is required. The pastor, by the grace of God, must be kind, not easily angered (or disappointed), not rude, always protect, trust, hope, and persevere. He or she can do it only because he/she does it for Jesus.

Jesus urged Peter to "feed My

sheep." Today He urges His undershepherds to do the same.—Samuel C. Young, Silver Spring, Maryland.

■ Mrs. Babcock's tribute "Hooray for Human(e) Pastors!" (December 1993) reminds me of how fortunate I was that I also had been pastored by three ministers she mentioned. As a teenager I was overjoyed by the solicitude Buz Menhardt showed the youth of my church. As a present member at the Spencerville church, I am grateful to Rob Vandeman and his entire family, who contribute joyfully an abundance of talents to the programs of the church. As a coworker with Mike Stevenson, Jr., in the youth division, I attest to his indefatigable efforts to be available for the young people in our church and school.

Because Mrs. Babcock cited two of the pastors at Spencerville, I want to give public acclaim to our third pastor, Dr. Steve Wilsey. He and his wife, Allie, have showered the church with warmth and goodwill by their grace and charm. I always feel I am the most important item on his agenda for the day. He has never forgotten a name or face, and that makes us feel important to him. He calls us on our birthdays to tell us how much he appreciates us. That first year, on my son Jamie's third birthday he left a wonderful message on the answering machine to which my thrilled child listened five times. Jamie will tell you many things he wants to do when he grows up, but being a pastor like Elder Wilsey is the most recurring and consistent. That makes a mother's heart glad.—Becki Joiner Timon, Laurel, Maryland.

## Dynamic present truth

The dynamic nature of present truth, stressed by Drs. George Knight and Woodrow Whidden (October 1993), touches on the basic question of the nature of the church. One point that needs to be

brought out is that the church is the voluntary association of believers to proclaim an ideology (unlike the state as an involuntary association of believers and unbelievers). As such, we need some mechanism for defining doctrines preached and lifestyles tolerated in our ranks. I accept some doctrinal disagreement as part of the process of reaching a more biblically enlightened consensus (e.g., righteousness by faith in 1888, the adoption of Trinitarianism). However, I have concerns about the idea of reducing the faith to "essential Adventism," which can easily degenerate into "believe what you want but don't disrupt the unity of the visible church." The ultimate irony would be the rejection of a doctrinal creed but embracing an institutional creed, which raises questions in connection with the reformation doctrine of the church.—Ron Thomsen, Houston, Texas.

■ George Knight observes: "One suspects that in the process of preserving Adventism's historic content, they might actually kill its living spirit." This comment raises a sharp concern. With respect to the new members of our various congregations, many of whom are converted to Adventism by workers who advocate strong conservative views, a spirit of misunderstanding has developed between such members and the rising and developing youth within the church. The apostasy rate could probably be stemmed if the effort to preserve historic content gave way to the dynamic influence of the Holy Spirit. This, in my estimation, will keep the church, especially with the flood of new converts to this wonderful household of faith, alive, active, and successful in maintaining the Christ-centered thrust of the gospel to this generation.

Thanks for a challenging magazine.—Ebrahim Ishmail, Sedavan, Heidelberg, South Africa.

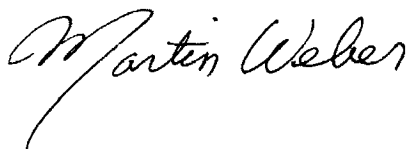
**Sabbath in Bethesda** with Jesus was a glorious experience. Perhaps the next best thing to being there is to hear Dick Duerksen describe what it must have been like to see, hear, touch—even taste and smell—what happened in old Jerusalem 2,000 years ago. Dick is one of the most gifted communicators in the Adventist Church. His article can help you tap into his Spirit-given talent.

**God cannot be mocked** is a gripping testimony of a mother's faith and her family's faithfulness after her husband was imprisoned during the dark decades of the hammer and sickle.

**It's nice to know** that our world president has his priorities with the Word. Robert S. Folkenberg shares his vision for biblical sermons in the first of a three-part serial.

**Always count on Ron Graybill** to brew up a batch of Adventist history that nurtures our knowledge of the way God has led us in the past so we can learn lessons and gain confidence for the future. See "Visions and Revisions, part II."

**Thundering across the Atlantic** comes D. N. Marshall with "The Ministry and Market Forces." Don't miss reading it.



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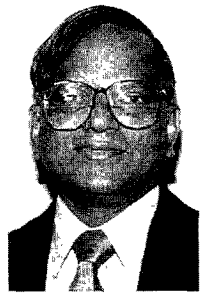
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# The evidence of the grace of God

John M. Fowler

**W**hen he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord" (Acts 11:23, 24)\*

The word "grace" immediately evokes theological images: the way God acts toward us, the way He has chosen to save us, His acts of mercy as well as judgment. But in this remarkable passage about a remarkable church, inspiration records for us a definition of grace that we need to hear again and again, and practice more often.

## The remarkable church

The Christian community at Antioch of Syria was founded by believers who fled there during the persecution that followed the stoning of Stephen (see Acts 11:19). A thriving commercial city, with historic connections to famous names such as Seleucus I, Antiochus IV, and Pompey, and with pride etched in gaining the title "Queen of the East," Antioch provided safety, wealth, and security. But the fleeing believers did not settle down in the security of the third metropolis of the Roman Empire, whose business was money and whose priority was how to make more of it.

The few believers in that city had

a higher commission: to turn that "Queen of the East" into a global center for the good news of Jesus Christ. At first the gospel was preached only to the Jews (see Acts 11:19), but soon the church realized that it was a travesty of the highest order to limit the good news to a few and to restrict the power of the Holy Spirit to any particular frontier. Antioch ranks among the first congregations to envision a church without walls, a global community without confining borders. And so the gospel was preached to the Greeks and to every other ethnic group in that great city. A new creation emerged. No name could describe this new community. It was not Roman, Greek, Jewish, Egyptian, or Phrygian or anything else. A unique community such as this deserved the coining of a new name, albeit a contemptuous one to begin with: "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (verse 11:26).

The news of this—so unbelievable, so startling—shocked the church at Jerusalem. The headquarters decided to send a calm, fair, dependable leader to investigate the Antioch miracle. Could the wall between the Jew and the Gentile really come tumbling down?

## The color-blind pastor

The man the Jerusalem church chose for such a delicate mission was Barnabas, "a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith" (verse 24).

Certainly the Holy Spirit was behind the choice of Barnabas; one can only imagine what calamitous fallout would have hit the Antioch church and the missionary movement on her drawing boards had the choice been, say, one of the "circumcision party" at Jerusalem. Would that person have recognized the creation of a new community of faith in that great metropolis? Or would he have interpreted the breaking down of the barrier between the Jew and the Gentile as a threat to the uniqueness of the law? Would he have rejoiced at the mysterious workings of God's grace in bringing about reconciliation, both vertical as well as horizontal? Or would he have led in a crusade to preserve the historic tradition of the synagogue and protect the carefully detailed and visibly identifiable marks of religion such as circumcision? A church leader, without continual reliance on the empowering of the Holy Spirit, is an awesome risk for the church and an invitation to judgment for the individual.

But Barnabas was "full of the Holy Spirit." As a Levite (Acts 4:36) and an active anticipant for the Messianic kingdom, the natural thing for Barnabas to do would be to suspect the happenings at Antioch and to assert his national cult and racial exclusiveness. Was it conceivable that the great Yahweh would permit the Jew and the Gentile to come together as equal partners in redemp-

*(Continued on page 30)*



# How much diversity can we stand?

J. David Newman

In October 1994 we will be commemorating the 150th anniversary of 1844. Today our church is no longer as simple, specific, and focused as it was back then. As it has grown in size it has also grown in diversity. With diversity have come concerns that our church has lost its focus, its mission, even its identity. What is the Seventh-day Adventist Church today?

*Adventist Today* (Vol. 2, No. 1) recently published four articles each claiming to be the best representation of Adventism. These four articles represent four significant segments within the church today.

## Mainstream Adventism

Kenneth Wood, former editor of the *Adventist Review*, writes under the title "The Mother of Us All: Mainstream Adventism." Wood is troubled by polarization. He says that "true 'mainstreamers' are troubled by polarization within the church, whether it be caused by issues rooted in race, gender, or doctrine. To achieve unity, they seek to minimize differences. Except where principle or landmark doctrines are involved, they try to find common ground on which to stand with fellow church members."

Wood believes that the Adventist Church was "raised up supernaturally," and that its purpose is "to give to a rebellious world God's final loving appeal to repent. Against the background of the cosmic controversy between Christ and Satan, it sees it-

self as the remnant church, which keeps 'the commandments of God,' and has 'the testimony of Jesus Christ'—defined by the revelator as 'the spirit of prophecy.' Its mission is to take the three angels' messages to 'every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.' The basis for this self-perception and mission is found in Revelation 14:6-12; 12:17; 19:10."

## Evangelical Adventism

A second view of Adventism is expressed under the title "Evangelical Adventism: Clinging to the Old Rugged Cross." Three authors combined to write this piece—Michelle Rader, David VanDenburgh, and Larry Christoffel, the latter two being on the pastoral staff of the Loma Linda Campus Hill Church. "Theologically, evangelical Adventists identify the gospel's meaning and practical implications as their chief concern. . . .

"Scripturally, the 'gospel' is the 'good news' that God reconciles (justifies, 'counts righteous,' redeems, forgives, saves) the lost sinner on the basis of the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ when received through faith apart from the works of the law. . . . The inevitable experiential result of this belief is a personal relationship with God, a dedication to an ever-deepening understanding of God's will and character, and a transformation of the heart that produces genuine love and concern for others as well as a passion for personal holiness.

"Evangelical Adventists believe that God raised up the Seventh-day Adventist Church to help prepare the world for Christ's return by preaching this gospel clearly with power. . . . Our distinctive Adventist beliefs must never be allowed to eclipse the gospel or become the focus of our evangelism."

## Progressive Adventism

Another wing of the church is represented by Madelynn Jones-Haldeman (religion professor at La Sierra University). She writes under the rubric "Progressive Adventism: Dragging the Church Forward." Haldeman states that "a progressive Adventist is one who dares to ask questions about everything and who does not need to have all the answers. Some in every generation find the answers of the older generation not only ineffective but outdated."

She believes that "the acceptance of and the egalitarian treatment of a person is more important than any doctrinal teaching."

## Historic Adventism

Ralph Larson, former professor in the then Philippine Adventist Seminary, presents "Historic Adventism: Remembering to Trust and Obey." Historic Adventists feel that the church has departed from certain vital beliefs. These include: people receive weakness from Adam, not guilt; Christ came in the nature of

(Continued on page 26)

# Needed: biblical preaching

Robert S.  
Folkenberg

The General Conference president shares his conviction and concerns in a three-part serial on preaching.



Robert Folkenberg is president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

**W**e need *biblical* preaching. “Preach the Word,” wrote the apostle Paul. “Be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Tim. 4:2).<sup>\*</sup> These words are my hope and prayer for Adventists today. If they would become a reality in our midst, our people everywhere would be energized, nurtured, and motivated to live for Christ and serve Him.

## What is biblical preaching?

Biblical preaching puts the Word at the center, not psychology or current events, not a story or illustration. Sometimes sermon illustrations are so captivating that they are all the people remember. They take away the stories but not what they were supposed to teach!

No, we must make the Bible and *its authority* central to our preaching. From a sermon’s beginning to end, from its preparation to presentation, Scripture must be the focus. Only then should we seek illustrations for our topic. We shouldn’t start with illustrative material and then hunt for a text to give it validity. Such use of Scripture is but a pretense for preaching.

Biblical preaching is rooted and grounded in the Word. It may be expository—that is, it may take a particular passage and let that passage unfold point by point, showing its meaning and application to life. Or it may be topical—that is, built around several texts or passages rather than one, but proceeding from the Word, and focusing the Word on a particular subject. Other sermon forms are possible, such as the narrative approach.

But whatever the type of sermon, the Word shapes the presentation in biblical preaching.

Biblical preaching means that we bow before a Higher Authority. The preacher doesn’t try to show how much he or she knows about a certain topic, doesn’t seek to impress by clever words or entertain by amusing anecdotes. Not the preacher but the Word occupies center stage. Ellen White comments: “Let no minister suppose that he can convert souls by eloquent sermons. . . . Flowery speeches, pleasing tales, or inappropriate anecdotes do not convict the sinner.”<sup>1</sup>

But please don’t misunderstand me. I’m not saying preaching should be dull. I’m not advocating colorless sermons. Biblical preaching can and should be lively, animated, and interesting. It can and should grip both preacher and hearers. The Bible is alive! It deals with life! And biblical preaching will be down-to-earth, practical, relevant. It will show that it takes the Bible seriously and applies it to life in today’s world.

## Why biblical preaching?

We need biblical preaching for three reasons. *First, because the Word, not the world, must shape our values, attitudes, and motives.* We live in a society that bombards us with secular, materialistic philosophy. We cannot avoid this all pervasive fallout, no matter how hard we try. The answer is that we must fortify ourselves through studying God’s Word.

The apostle Peter tells us: “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable,

through the living and enduring word of God" (1 Peter 1:23). The Word brings new life. The Word sustains that life. Protected and nurtured by the Word, we can stand securely amid the perils of the last days.

One of the closing chapters of *The Great Controversy* is entitled "The Scriptures a Safeguard." In it Ellen White writes:

"But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord' in its support."<sup>2</sup>

We need today preaching that not merely encourages Seventh-day Adventists to study the Bible, but is truly biblical itself. Let the preacher model the admonition!

*Second, we need biblical preaching because we are the church, the remnant church.* We aren't just another charitable organization, or a social club for international fellowship, or a mere business corporation with multinational objectives. We are the people of God. Our Chief is in heaven, and we look for His soon return.

The Bible tells us who we are, what God wants us to do, and how He wants us to live. The Bible helps us establish and maintain our identity in a world that sees reality quite differently from the way we do. The Bible keeps us straight, keeps us balanced.

Seventh-day Adventist preaching must build and reinforce the identity of God's people. It can do so only if it comes directly from the Word itself.

*And third, we need biblical preaching because it alone is power.*

In American society late-night television personalities attract large audiences and command huge salaries. Such people of quick mind, nimble

tongue, and excellent timing move their studio audiences and millions of TV viewers to action at their whim.

But the power of our preaching must have a different source. "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. . . . For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:17, 21).

Ellen White explains: "In the sermons from many pulpits of today there is not that divine manifestation which awakens the conscience and brings life to the soul. The hearers cannot say, 'Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?' (Luke 24:32, KJV). There are many who are crying out for the living God, longing for the divine presence. . . . Let the word of God speak to the people."<sup>3</sup>

Biblical preaching leads to changed lives. God works through men and women to bring His messages, but the glory and the power aren't from human resources and skill. The Holy Spirit, who gave birth to the Word in the beginning, comes to nurture the Word as it is brought before the people.

What has been said of prayer holds true for preaching also: much Word, much power. Little Word, little power. No Word, no power.

Biblical preaching leaves the listener with a blessing that can be readily recalled to refresh the soul. When a preacher holds up Scripture before a congregation and applies it to everyday life, the inspiration and instruction of the sermon often lasts for years as individual members encounter the same text in their personal Bible studies and recall the preacher's message.

### **Becoming biblical preachers**

We become biblical preachers only by spending time with the Word until

it shapes and molds us, until its view of God and life becomes our view, until our spirit resonates with its Spirit. There is no other way. There is no shortcut. "The preaching of the Word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit."<sup>4</sup>

Some Seventh-day Adventists claim they sense a lack of solid preaching in some of our congregations. Could the reason be that some preachers do not spend enough personal time with the Word? Might some preach on psychology or sociology or some other "ology" because that is what they know better than God's Word?

When our lives are saturated with the Word, it will be at our right hand for every situation. We won't have a problem to find something to preach about, because the Bible supplies an endless source of possibilities.

A great teacher of homiletics once remarked that all powerful sermons spring from one of two sources: the preacher's own experience, or some need the preacher has observed in the lives of the people. Thus strong preaching is never a theoretical discourse. It rings with experience with which we can identify as the Word addresses the hopes and fears, the struggles and hurts, of God's people.

Once Seventh-day Adventists were known as the people of the Book. I don't hear it said of us much anymore, and I am sorry for that. May each of us determine to reverse the trend! May we determine to make the Scriptures central in our lives and study. And may every Seventh-day Adventist, minister or layperson, who preaches feed the flock with the solid food of the Word. ■

\* Unless otherwise noted, Scripture passages are from the New International Version.

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1970), p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> ———, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 595.

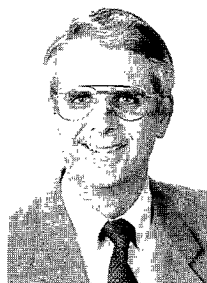
<sup>3</sup> ———, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1941), p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> ———, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 671.

# Visions and revisions, part II: editing the *Testimonies*

Ron Graybill

**“There is no salvation in bad grammar,” argued Willie White, and the resultant editing admirably preserved the integrity of the *Testimonies*.**



Ron Graybill, Ph.D., is professor of history at La Sierra University, La Sierra, California.

Young man, we see no good in a third of these changes,” the General Conference president said gravely.

W. C. White surveyed George Butler’s face, then glanced at S. N. Haskell. Obviously, both men agreed. At age 28, White was 20 years younger than the two church leaders, but he mustered the courage to reply:

“There is no salvation in bad grammar,” he argued. “A thought grammatically expressed is just as good to reach the hard and sinful heart as if badly expressed.”

“That may be so,” Butler responded, “but before your wife makes any more changes in these *Testimonies*, I wish she could go with us into meetings with our critics and see them attack your mother’s writings. They bring forward one edition and then another, show up changes, and try to make a point of them.”

“Some of these changes are simply a change of style,” Haskell chimed in. “Mary and Marian are substituting their more polished style for your mother’s more abrupt and simple style. I, for one, love the old simplicity.”<sup>1</sup>

Early in 1882 it had seemed such a simple task. The *Testimonies* were nearly sold out. Mary Kelsey White, Willie’s wife, and Marian Davis, Mrs. White’s secretary, would make a few corrections, and a new edition would soon be off the press. But it was not that simple. Revising the *Testimonies* touched off a lively debate over the nature of inspiration and how

best to handle Mrs. White’s writings in the face of hostile criticism. Before it was over, the project would have to win approval from the General Conference in session, and the church would declare itself on the doctrine of inspiration.

When James White died in August 1881, Willie White took over as Ellen White’s literary agent, handling arrangements for the publication and republication of her books. *Early Writings* had been one of the first books issued under his supervision. When it came out, G. I. Butler had unwittingly claimed that it included all of Mrs. White’s earliest writings, unaware that some passages from her visions were omitted.<sup>2</sup>

Members of the Church of God (Seventh Day), which had split from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1866, immediately attacked Ellen White for suppressing some of her earlier teachings. The controversy made the newspapers in Battle Creek and in the San Francisco Bay area. To spike the guns of the critics, the church reissued James White’s 1847 pamphlet, *A Word to the “Little Flock,”* containing Mrs. White’s earliest visions in unedited form.

Even before *Early Writings* was off the press, Willie White had commissioned the republication of the *Testimonies for the Church*. He simply assumed that Ellen White’s literary assistants would make grammatical and stylistic corrections before the new edition was set in type. After all, the book needed far less exten-



sive corrections than the handwritten drafts the literary assistants edited every day. Mary White and Marian Davis began the task early in 1882. By late November they were nearly done with the first nine *Testimonies*, all of which would be included in volume 1 of the new third edition.

The *Testimonies* originally appeared as a series of small pamphlets, beginning in 1855. These pamphlets constitute the first edition. By 1864, 10 *Testimony* pamphlets had appeared, but most of the early ones were out of print. At this point Ellen White decided to include substantial portions of these 10 *Testimonies* in *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 4. Omitted were "local and personal matters." Included were "those portions only which are of practical and general interest and importance."<sup>3</sup>

After another 10 numbers of the *Testimonies* appeared between 1865 and 1871, James White responded to calls from church members and republished a complete unexpurgated version of the *Testimonies*. This became the second edition.<sup>4</sup> He acknowledged that since he was restoring the previously omitted passages the books would contain some matters of a "local and personal character, which do not have a direct bearing upon our time."<sup>5</sup>

The type for numbers 1-16 had to be reset from scratch, and James White took the occasion to make a few minor changes in wording, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Beginning with *Testimony* 17, the second edition volumes simply gathered together the original pamphlets. By 1879 six volumes had appeared.

### The third edition

It was the depletion of this second edition in 1882 that led Willie White to order the preparation of the third edition of the *Testimonies*. This third edition was destined to be the most thorough revision of the *Testimonies*. Today's fourth edition, issued in 1948, contains a very few further

grammatical corrections as well as modernized spelling and punctuation.

The work on the third edition went forward slowly but uneventfully throughout 1882. Then, late in December, Willie showed the printer's proofs to George I. Butler and S. N. Haskell and they responded as described in the opening paragraphs of this article. Mary White was shaken by Willie's report of the meeting. She confessed that "the fear that we may make too many changes or in some way change the sense haunts me day and night."<sup>6</sup>

Haskell soon made his own preference clear in a letter to Ellen White: "A verbal reprint of your writings will do more to shut the mouths of

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## The fear that we may make too many changes or in some way change the sense haunts me day and night.

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one class of evil-minded persons than anything else which can be done." By "verbal" Haskell doubtless meant "verbatim." He was used to reading Ellen White's letters in her own handwriting, and he cared little whether the printed versions of her writings conformed exactly to the niceties of grammar found in Goodloe Harper Bell's new grammar textbook.<sup>7</sup>

Mary White and Marian Davis continued intermittent work on the *Testimonies* through 1883, keeping changes to a minimum. After all the editing on the early *Testimonies*, which needed the most attention, had already been completed, they got wind of the criticisms of their work. The first volume was all set in type by October, and Willie White began to prepare for the struggle to win the approval of church leaders. But first he unburdened himself to his wife:

"We may prepare ourselves for a storm when these books come out, for it will come, and you and I will catch it, on the changes but more especially on the omissions on account of needless repetition. Our enemies will make great capital of this, I fear."<sup>8</sup>

Willie confided that he had almost "stopped the presses" several times. Under heavy pressure from Butler, George Amadon, and Uriah Smith, even he admitted that "while the changes add smoothness I should feel better if two thirds of them had not been made." Mary felt that the first volume would take the most criticism and hence they might as well hold to their standards throughout. But Willie's support was weakening: "Now, my dear," he wrote, "if you will do less work on these books, and correct only very bad grammar and punctuation, you will receive the blessing of the whole denomination."

During the ministerial meetings preceding the General Conference session in November 1883, Willie set about to win the church's approval of the new edition of the *Testimonies*. He told the church's leading ministers what changes had been made and why. They appointed a committee of about 30 to look more closely into the issue.

When this committee met the next morning in the Review and Herald chapel, Willie began by reading the preface that J. H. Waggoner had written for the new edition. Then he went through it again, and again, "till they all took it in."<sup>9</sup> The crucial passage in the preface read: "Some grammatical and rhetorical changes also have been made for the sake of strength and clearness. In making these changes great care has been taken to preserve every idea, and in no case have either words or sentences been omitted unless as above indicated, to avoid unnecessary repetition."

A lively discussion followed. Some bitterly opposed any changes. Others accepted the changes in prin-

ciple but dreaded the criticism that would inevitably follow. "Oh!" Willie exclaimed, "how glad I was to have a chance to argue the case to them before they became more prejudiced and fully set against our work."

Early that same afternoon, Ellen White made a few remarks about the revision. Unfortunately, what she said was not recorded. Whatever it was, it didn't discourage the group from voting to examine the changes and see if they in fact conformed to the principles set forth in the preface.

The ministers paired off, some with their wives, and Willie White assigned each team about 50 to 100 pages of the *Testimonies* to examine. Willie was careful to assign the later *Testimonies*, which had required less editing, to the ministers who were most skeptical of the project. Willie himself examined *Testimony 4* and was alarmed to find nearly a dozen

places in which between two and ten words had been deleted. He waited in fear and trembling to hear what the others had found. A five-member Committee of Reference was set up to receive the reports from the pairs of readers.

Meanwhile, Willie had to wait, and Mary had to suffer. She wrote her husband: "I will not attempt to express my feelings of surprise, sorrow, and self-condemnation at the result of your brief investigation."<sup>10</sup> She told him she wished she could bear the blame herself and save Ellen White and Willie anxiety.

The committee appointed to examine the *Testimonies* divided itself into 18 teams and read more than 1,000 pages, comparing them word by word with earlier editions. Amazingly, once the smaller Committee of Reference had collated all the criticisms, they were able to come up

with only 20 places where they could criticize the work of Mrs. White's literary assistants.<sup>11</sup> After closer examination, they backed down on eight of these; several others proved to be typesetters' errors; and in a half dozen other cases they simply wanted deleted words restored.

They did vote that there were "many transpositions that are not necessary, and some that would give occasion for our enemies to think that there was a good deal of fixing to be done," but they cited no examples. In the end, only about a dozen passages were revised on the basis of the committee's suggestions.

The committee's arguments are often more interesting than their specific criticisms. Their first objection was that in *Testimony 1* the words of Mrs. White's angel guide had been altered: "The word 'shouldst' is changed to 'must' in the new edition.

## Inspiration and the 1884 Revision of the *Testimonies*

The 1883 General Conference action on revelation and inspiration, taken in response to the revision of the *Testimonies*, is notable because it arose from practical problems in an inspired text, and did not claim to be based on the teaching of inspired writers, either in Scripture or the Spirit of Prophecy. Mrs. White's remarks concerning the revision were not recorded, but whatever she said, the General Conference session did not choose to cite her as authority for their action.

Some may protest that no Seventh-day Adventist doctrine is based on Ellen White's writings, and that our doctrine of inspiration is based on Scripture. True, the Bible is the only norm for Adventist doctrines. Yet Ellen White certainly influences Adventist understanding of Scripture, and the 1883 statement on inspiration clearly emerged from

practical issues raised by the data of her writings.

It may also be argued that the 1883 action has inoculated the Seventh-day Adventist Church against any tendency to defend its doctrine of revelation/inspiration with claims based on the original autographs of inspired writers. Clearly, the original autographs themselves were not perfect in this case. Similarly, the 1883 action has ruled out excessive emphasis on the specific words of inspired writings or any form of verbal-dictational inspiration.

### Inerrancy?

But it also must be noted that the 1883 action does not resolve the question of whether inspired writings are inerrant and "absolutely trustworthy" in all matters on which they happen to touch. The modern debate in the church over whether inspired writings are an infallible revelation of God's will or, in addition, an infal-

lible revelation on every detail of history and science was simply not at issue in 1883.

Finally, the 1883 action did not resolve what we might call the "washing machine" issue. In *Testimony 14*, originally issued in 1868, Mrs. White told of a visit she and her husband made to Enosburg, Vermont, during which their host "exhibited his Combined Washer and Wringer before the company." The Whites, she declared in the *Testimony*, "could but look with favor upon it." The 1883 committee had recommended that this passage be "suppressed, as it is in the bound volume [of the second edition, 1871]." The issue, simply put, is how to distinguish between matters of "general interest and importance," and matters of a merely "local and personal" nature.

When Mrs. White reprinted selections from the first 10 *Testimonies* in *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4, she omitted "local and personal matters" and in-

. . . Being in the words of the angel it ought not to be changed.” This criticism was proved fallacious when it was discovered that the pair of readers responsible for evaluating *Testimony 1* had been using the second edition (1871) to compare with the new edition. In the original first edition pamphlet (1855), the angel had used the word “must,” and Mary and Marian had simply returned to the first edition’s reading. After all, Mrs. White was not quoting the exact words of her angel guide; she was merely reconstructing the gist of the angel’s remarks. In the end the editors decided to use “shouldst” after all, probably because there were more copies of the second edition in circulation, hence preserving its reading would raise fewer questions.

Similarly, the 1883 critics complained: “The sentence, ‘The manner of the person has not suited him,’ is

changed in the new to ‘the manner *or* the person has not suited him.’ The sense is altered. See new edition, page 228.”<sup>12</sup> Once again, the difficulty arose because the critics were using the second rather than the first edition for comparison. Nevertheless, J. N. Loughborough defended the criticism, claiming he could recall that the exact reading of the first edition was the same as the second. Later, however, the committee voted: “The new edition reads, ‘The manner or the person has not suited him.’ This is correct according to the 1st edition, Elder J.N.L.’s memory notwithstanding. So says W.C.W.”

#### A position on inspiration

Before all these conclusions were reached, the whole question of revising the *Testimonies* was put to a vote of the General Conference session on November 20, 1883. Just hours

before the vote, White still expected the revisions to be condemned.<sup>13</sup> Instead, the resolution passed, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church staked out an important position on inspiration:

“Whereas, Many of these testimonies were written under the most unfavorable circumstances, the writer being too heavily pressed with anxiety and labor to devote critical thought to the grammatical perfection of the writings, and they were printed in such haste as to allow these imperfections to pass uncorrected; and—

“Whereas, We believe the light given by God to His servants is by the enlightenment of the mind, thus imparting the thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed; therefore—

“Resolved, That in the republica-

cluded “those portions only” that were of “practical and general interest and importance.” James White restored most of the omitted passages in the second edition, but noted that the books would contain some matters of a “local and personal character, which do not have a direct bearing upon our time.” Apparently a recommendation for a certain brand of washing machine was so obviously mundane that even James White decided to leave it out of the second edition.

#### The washing machine story

In 1883, under pressure from church leaders to change as little as possible, Mrs. White’s literary assistants restored the “Combined Washer and Wringer.” But when these same church leaders encountered the passage while reading the page proofs of the book, they decided it was best omitted after all. But it was too late: the passage remained and stands today as part of the *Testimonies for the Church* (vol. 1, p. 665).

The washing machine issue—how to distinguish between “local and per-

sonal matters” and matters of “general interest and importance”—has never been resolved by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is an issue that needs to be addressed now in view of the impending publication of all of Mrs. White’s personal letters, diaries, and journals on subsequent versions of the compact disc that currently contains only her published writings.

The division cannot be made simply on the basis of whether Mrs. White published the material in her lifetime, for clearly she designated some passages in the first 10 *Testimonies* as being merely “local and personal” when she chose to omit them from *Spiritual Gifts*. But later she allowed their republication in the second and third editions of the *Testimonies*. Thus the *Testimonies* themselves contain, as James White said, some matters which “do not have a direct bearing upon our time.”

One suggestion would be to treat them as we might treat the apostle Paul’s request for his scrolls and winter coat (2 Tim. 4:13): information

that did not require special revelation, but that suited Inspiration’s purpose by being included in Scripture.

Another analogy would be the archaeological texts and artifacts that shed light on Scripture. Not themselves inspired, it has suited God’s purpose that they be preserved for the light they shed on Scripture and the lives of the writers of Scripture.

The story of the 1884 revision of the *Testimonies* leaves Seventh-day Adventists today with two worthwhile tasks, one historical, the other theological. The historical task is to provide annotations for the *Testimonies*. The theological task is to provide ways of distinguishing between “local and personal” matters on the one hand and matters that continue to have “a direct bearing upon our time,” on the other. But even as those tasks are contemplated, the story of the 1884 revision should give every church member renewed confidence in the integrity of the text of the *Testimonies*.

tion of these volumes such verbal changes be made as to remove the above-named imperfections, as far as possible, without in any measure changing the thought.”<sup>14</sup>

A committee of five was appointed to ensure that the revisions conformed to these principles. The 1883 General Conference ended happily for Willie White. Not only did church leaders approve the revision of the *Testimonies*, they further reassured Willie by voting to ordain him to the gospel ministry.

Chastened by the ordeal through which they had passed, Willie White and Mrs. White’s literary assistants were determined that before the books were released, their editorial work would be above reproach. Mary White and proofreader Eliza Burnham sat down with copies of the first and second editions and marked every change between them; then they compared all these changes with the ones that had been made in preparation for the third edition, again marking every variant. These were then placed before J. H. Waggoner, one of the editors at the Pacific Press, who critically examined every change and either accepted or condemned it. This “herculean task,” as Willie White put it, consumed nearly two years.<sup>15</sup> It was not until December of 1885 that the publication of the new edition was quietly announced with a discreet ad in the *Review and Herald*.<sup>16</sup>

### **The revisions in today’s perspective**

But how would the revisions made in the *Testimonies* stand up today? Would modern readers agree with the church leaders of 1883 if they took a close look at the actual changes? Did Mary White and Marian Davis really edit Mrs. White’s writings too heavily? Or was their anxiety merely the result of church leaders’ fear of criticism? What sorts of changes did they actually make? To answer these questions, I placed the text of the “before” and “after” ver-

sions of the first seven *Testimonies* on computer, then used software that compares the two versions and produces a composite text with all the changes marked.

While it is true that Mrs. White’s literary assistants made literally thousands of alterations, the majority of them involved incidental matters such as punctuation and capitalization. Commas were canceled, added, or changed to semicolons. Pronouns for Deity were capitalized, while the “Enemy” was reduced to lowercase.<sup>17</sup> Hyphens were usually removed from compound words so that words like “eye-salve” became “eyesalve” and “anti-slavery” became “antislavery.” Arabic numbers replaced Roman nu-

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## **Would modern readers agree with the church leaders of 1883 if they took a close look at the actual changes?**

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merals in Scripture references.

Relatively few changes involved actual grammatical errors. The original *Testimonies* had occasionally linked plural subjects with singular verbs, and Mrs. White had occasionally lost track of the simple subject in some of her longer sentences. Thus she had originally written “little things . . . concerns you,” which needed to be changed, of course, to “little things . . . concern you.”<sup>18</sup> Superlatives were sometimes changed to comparative—“greatest” to “greater.”<sup>19</sup> In a number of cases, misplaced prepositional phrases had to be moved: For example: “I saw in New York the brethren can arise” was changed to “The brethren can rise in New York.”<sup>20</sup> “Jesus has purchased for us redemption” was altered to “Jesus has purchased redemption for us.”<sup>21</sup>

The vast majority of wording

changes did not involve grammatical errors at all. The changes merely sharpened the meaning or smoothed the style. Quaint or colloquial words were replaced. Mothers were to “teach” their children rather than “learn” them.<sup>22</sup> The tense of verbs was often changed from past to present. “God was displeased” became “God is displeased.”<sup>23</sup> “I saw that it was God’s plan” became “I saw that it is God’s plan.”<sup>24</sup> The original past tenses in these sentences referred not to God’s displeasure or plan, but arose from the fact that Mrs. White was describing a vision that had taken place in the past.

Mrs. White’s frequent use of elliptical expressions was eliminated by inserting “that” or “which.” Thus “He knows if they do not overcome” became “He knows that if they do not overcome.”<sup>25</sup> Sentences were tightened to eliminate wordiness. For example, Mrs. White originally wrote that “these earthly treasures are blessings when a right use is made of them.” The end of the sentence was shortened to “when rightly used.”<sup>26</sup> When Mrs. White reconstructed the words of her angel guide in the first edition of the *Testimonies*, the angel often used the King James Version’s “thee” and “thou.” Most of these expressions were modernized in 1883.

In the preface of the third edition J. H. Waggoner mentioned the fact that the original initials of individuals were replaced by the generic designations such as “Brother A” and “Brother B.”<sup>27</sup> He might also have noted that some specific place names were also eliminated in the third edition, as when Mauston and Marquette, Wisconsin, were replaced by blank lines.<sup>28</sup> He pointed out that while the first edition had made frequent use of the expression “I saw,” some of these were deleted in the new edition, since they constituted no part of what was actually seen.

Sometimes the original *Testimonies* had simply used the wrong word. “Straightened,” in a context meaning restricted or narrow, had to be

changed to "straitened."<sup>29</sup> Sometimes better words were chosen so that "love . . . has been gone" became "love . . . has disappeared,"<sup>30</sup> "go with the tent" became "accompany the tent,"<sup>31</sup> "matters of the church" became "business of the church,"<sup>32</sup> and "your testimony will dry up" was rendered "your testimony will become powerless."<sup>33</sup>

Finally, some sentences were split, others were combined, pronouns were substituted for nouns, and adverbs were moved to new positions. Passive constructions were changed to active, and scores of sentences were reconstructed to remove awkward or confusing passages.

Haskell's claim that Ellen White's original style was more simple will not stand up to close examination. Grammatically and rhetorically, the work of Mary White and Marian Davis improved the *Testimonies for the Church*, making them simpler to read and clearer in meaning at every turn.

### The sense of the *Testimonies*

But what about the "sense" of the *Testimonies*? Mary and Marian succeeded admirably in preserving the "sense" of the *Testimonies* if "sense" is a synonym for the "meaning" of the sentences. One is hard-pressed to find any revision that actually changes the basic import of the spiritual counsel.

But "sense" can also mean the feeling one gets for Ellen White as a person and a writer, and for the identity and experience of the first readers of the *Testimonies*. Understanding these factors can often be crucial to a proper application of the *Testimonies*. One's sense of Ellen White as a prophet, person, and writer can also influence one's willingness to order one's life by her counsels. Yet this sense of time, place, and person is sometimes obscured by the smooth, polished cadences of the revised *Testimonies*.

To modern readers, "Brother A" and "Brother B" are obscure, unknown figures. But the original readers of the *Testimonies* could see their actual initials. They knew that R.F.C.

stood for R. F. Cottrell, and they could relate the counsel to everything else they knew about him. They had read reports in the *Review* about the difficulties in Mauston and Marquette, Wisconsin, and they could relate that knowledge to the counsel found in the *Testimonies*.

As early as 1882, when Mary White was just starting her work of editing the *Testimonies*, she suggested to her husband that some explanatory notes would be helpful. Today, more than ever, the *Testimonies* could profit by annotation designed to help modern readers understand them as the writer and first readers did. The White Estate favors such a project but lacks funds to carry it out.

Still, today's reader can thank Mary Kelsey White and Marian Davis for a job well done, because the basic spiritual message of the *Testimonies*, and hence the "sense" that matters most, shines through much more clearly in today's edition of the *Testimonies* than in the first edition. ■

<sup>1</sup> Dialogue recreated from W. C. White's report of the meeting in his letter to Mary Kelsey White, Dec. 31, 1882. From originals found in the E. G. White Estate's Silver Spring, Maryland, office.

<sup>2</sup> G. I. Butler, "A Book Long Desired," *Review and Herald*, Dec. 26, 1882, p. 792.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts: Important Facts of Faith, Laws of Health, and Testimonies* 1-10, (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1864), vol. 4, p. ii. The pages containing the *Testimony* material are numbered separately and sometimes designated *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4b.

<sup>4</sup> The selections that appeared earlier in *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4, were not considered an "edition."

<sup>5</sup> James White, in preface, to Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, Nos. 1-11 [2nd ed.] (Battle Creek, Michigan: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1871), p. 3. The publishing history of the *Testimonies* is most fully related in Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: Messenger to the Remnant* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1969), pp. 62-67.

<sup>6</sup> Mary K. White to W. C. White, Jan. 7, 1882 [sic, actually 1883].

<sup>7</sup> Goodloe Harper Bell, *Natural Method in English* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Students' Pub. Comm., 1881).

<sup>8</sup> W. C. White to M. K. White, Oct. 25, 1883.

<sup>9</sup> W. C. White to M. K. White, Nov. 10, 1883.

<sup>10</sup> Mary K. White to W. C. White, Nov. 19, 1883.

<sup>11</sup> "Report of Committee on Examination of the Testimonies," E. G. White Estate Document File 194a.

<sup>12</sup> Italics supplied.

<sup>13</sup> W. C. White to Mary K. White, Nov. 20, 1883.

<sup>14</sup> "General Conference Proceedings," *Review and Herald*, Nov. 27, 1883, p. 741.

<sup>15</sup> Willie White to Brother Olsen, July 11, 1885.

<sup>16</sup> See "Testimonies for the Church," *Review and Herald*, Dec. 8, 1885, p. 767.

<sup>17</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 1, p. 2, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 10, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 114. James White had made this change in the second edition.

<sup>18</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 5, p. 26, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 140, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 204. The modern edition of the *Testimonies* is the 4th edition but unless stated otherwise, in this article the examples cited were all made for the 3rd edition and carried over to the 4th.

<sup>19</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 4, p. 20, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 90, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 170.

<sup>20</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 4, p. 15, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 84, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 165.

<sup>21</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 5, p. 19, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 132 and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 199.

<sup>22</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 4, p. 5, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 72, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 157. James White had also made this change in the second edition.

<sup>23</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 5, p. 20, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 133, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 199.

<sup>24</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 4, p. 23, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 94, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 172.

<sup>25</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 3, p. 2, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 49, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 142.

<sup>26</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 3, p. 1, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 49, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 141.

<sup>27</sup> James White had often replaced the original initials with blanks in second edition.

<sup>28</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 6, p. 34, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 180 and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 232.

<sup>29</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 6, p. 24, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 169, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 224. Also compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 7, p. 13, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 221, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 261.

<sup>30</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 4, p. 13, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 82, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 164.

<sup>31</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 3, p. 9, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 58, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 148.

<sup>32</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 6, p. 4, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 149, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 211.

<sup>33</sup> Compare *Testimony for the Church*, No. 6, p. 11, with 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 157, and 3rd and 4th eds., vol. 1, p. 216.

# Sabbath in Bethesda

**Dick Duerksen**

**Narrative preaching brings God close by, showing how He actively meets our needs.**



*Dick Duerksen, Ph. D., is the communication director of the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Columbia, Maryland.*

*He walked like a man on a mission, carefully placing each foot between the sleeping bodies as He moved toward the center porch.*

*He was tall, taller than anyone else around the sheep gate. Certainly taller than the bent and broken ones stacked like sleeping children on the stone porches.*

*His face spoke determination and pity. Pity for the dying who waited for a tardy angel of healing. Determination to fill Sabbath with new hope.*

*He stopped above the Old One, a man broken so long that no one could remember when he had been brought to hope beside the pool.*

*He knelt, sandals and knees pressing deep into the dust, hands reaching out to touch the arm of the Old One. Like the Creator waking Adam from the dust of Eden.*

Narrative preaching activates the senses of listeners, effectively using stories to bring Scripture to life. I call it "Making room for two in my sandals," because when I do it right I will be breathing the air of Palestine and walking in the dust of Galilee. If I deliver the narrative as if I have "been there," the listeners will join me in the story, walking with me in my sandals.

The story of Christ healing the man at the Pool of Bethesda, for instance, speaks to several major issues. These include "How God responds to illness," "The role of faith in restoration," and "Enjoying Sabbath as God's day of celebration and renewal." Each of these issues can be

handled effectively by telling the Bethesda story through first- or third-person narrative. And there are few limits to your storytelling possibilities. I have told this story in the words of the healed man, with the emotions of a disciple who followed Jesus to the pool, from within the hatred of an angry Pharisee, and as an interested but fearful observer.

The purpose of this article is to describe a process of planning and preparation that any preacher can use successfully to mine the stories of Scripture. With those treasures in hand it is much easier to preach using a narrative style, much easier to bring Christianity to life for the people, much easier to show how God makes sense. Right now I follow eight steps in preparing a narrative sermon.

**1. Seek a personal guide for your study.**

You cannot study alone. If you open the Scriptures without asking the Holy Spirit to guide you into God's truth, Satan will take over and lead you into whatever ugliness and confusion he chooses to create in your mind. So begin by stopping. In that quiet moment ask the Holy Spirit to lead your study, to keep your imagination sanctified, and to maintain your focus on the needs of your listeners and the greatness of God.

**2. Listen as Bible passages beg to be told.**

Every chapter of the Bible has at least one story begging to be told. Some have 20. As you read, those stories will grab you by the heart and

shout, "Look here! I speak directly to a major battle your members are fighting. Preach me!"

During my "sermon-study" I use three to five versions of Scripture, usually NIV, KJV, NASB, the Jerusalem Bible, and *The Message*.<sup>\*</sup> You will probably want to add Greek, Hebrew, and miscellaneous computer study aids. Exploit the power of varied translations, noticing the concepts highlighted by each version. Take pages of notes.

The study process is much like panning for gold in a swift mountain stream. I fill my pan with rich sand, add water, and then begin the slow process of discovering the gold. Many ideas rise to the surface as potential preaching subjects. But, as in gold panning, the Water of Life washes most of those away, leaving only the valuable nuggets nestled in my notebook. The largest nugget glows so brightly that I immediately know it will be a future sermon topic. It is "begging to be preached."

One evening I was reading Malachi 4 and considering the healing power promised from a last-day "Elijah message." I've always been troubled with an Elijah Message that sounds like Mount Carmel's fiery explosion. The sermon that came begging that night was the story of transforming grace that God gently blew to Elijah on Mount Horeb.

A few weeks later the life of Manasseh called to me from 2 Kings 21. The result was a narrative sermon on righteousness by faith as shown in God's loving treatment of bad King Manasseh. Then there are the arrow-making stories that came begging out of Isaiah 49:2. And dozens more.

My favorite sermon about the healing at Bethesda came begging during a small group study on Jewish Sabbath regulations. The result focuses on Sabbath laws and Sabbath grace.

### 3. Put your feet up and imagine your way into the story.

This is my favorite part of sermon preparation. It's a time of peaceful

relaxation, a time when the dust of Palestine's roads collects between my toes, when Mediterranean storms blow through my hair, and when Joab's cry of triumph reverberates in my ears. It's a time when God and I walk through His stories together, when He makes room for me in His sandals. It's a time for asking dozens of questions, each of which opens up another corner of the story and reveals some new morsel of information that will help me communicate good news to the listeners.

There are several keys to making this time Christ-centered and productive.

a. *Beware of empty imagination.* If you let your empty mind run on

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## Every story includes smell, sight, sound, taste, and touch. The "life" of the sermon comes from what you discover as you carefully walk through the story.

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imagined roads in Canaan, you will be tripped up by Beelzebub, Molech, or Baal. The only safety is to ask the Spirit to sanctify your imagination and guide you on an accurate and spiritually safe story trail.

b. *Exploit the five senses.* This is the major "secret key" to developing successfully a narrative sermon. Every story includes smell, sight, sound, taste, and touch. The "life" of the sermon comes from what you discover as you carefully walk through the story, sampling everything picked up by each of the senses.

For illustration, join me where Christ is kneeling beside the Old One on the center porch.

*Smells:* The pool of healing is just inside Jerusalem's sheep gate where Israel's best animals are bathed, trimmed, shorn, and prepared for sac-

rifice. An overwhelming odor of wet wool permeates the porticoes, its pungency countered by the sharp smells of unwashed human bodies and of the diseases that keep ill ones at the water's edge. Punctuating these odors are the myriad smells of vegetables, meats, and bread frying, baking, and boiling over small fires around the pool.

Beside us a young mother peels a precious citrus fruit for her diseased child. For a moment the fruit's fragrance overwhelms all other odors, then a breath of wind moves the air and returns the wet wool and breakfast.

*Framing all of these scents is the crisp freshness of morning, a Sabbath morning in Jerusalem.*

*Sights:* The water is brown, like thick black coffee with a pint of cream. An orange sun paints shifting tiger stripes on the stone columns that rise above the gray dirt of the porches.

The Pool of Bethesda is rectangular with wide porches on each side and a fifth one running across the middle. Each porch is littered with sick people: young, aged, older, and oldest. Some, like the Old One, seem alone on their mats, others are the center of attention for a knot of family and friends.

The clothing of the Old One no longer reveals the bright colors and patterns of his hometown. He has become a resident of the pool, adopting its nondescript browns and grays as his own.

*Other sights flood my eyes. A centurion sitting professionally on his horse just inside the gate, the unwashed sheep that arrived late yesterday, a comforting glow from the breakfast fires. And faces. Faces washed and filthy. Faces clear and wrinkled. Faces hopeful and hopeless. Faces wondering at the eager determination filling the face of the Christ. Faces expectant on Sabbath.*

*Sounds:* Remember, this discovery process is the "secret key" to building a "living" sermon. And sounds are crucial to the story. Take

two minutes and list at least 14 sounds you hear as you stand beside the Pool of Bethesda. Be silent. Focus your ears to the tiny clinks, grunts, scrapings, and mutterings of morning in a hospital ward and sheep pen.

Your sounds should include sheep, hooves of Roman horses, wind, water, breakfast, and the sound of Christ's voice.

**Taste:** What happens to your taste buds as you stand beside the pool? Can you taste the bread that the crippled mother is frying for her two emaciated children? Does your mouth water as the centurion bites into a crisp red apple? And how about the clear sweet water the toothless merchant is pouring into the beggar boy's clay jar?

**Touch:** When I looked up, Jesus' hand was lying softly on the Old One's wrinkled skin, caressing the frail shoulder as if remembering Adam's mighty hulk in Eden. Then His hand moved to the rotting blankets the Old

## Three Language Rules

- Don't be too flowery. Overblown verbiage may sound good somewhere, but not in sermons that are trying to communicate eternal ideas. Make sure all the pictures are ones others can see without squinting.
- Don't use any one adjective more than three times, and never on the same page.
- Use no words with more than three syllables

*One used to protect his flesh from the dirt of the porch. "Get up"—The Creator's voice was laced with insistent energy—"take your bedroll, start walking" (John 5:8, Message).*

*c. Identify the emotions of the participants. Relive the emotions of ev-*

eryone involved in the story. Consider the ill ones, the watching Pharisees, the shepherds, the cooks, and the centurion. How did each feel at the beginning, during, and at the end of the story? Were some of the sick ones angry that Christ had selected the Old One? Was there a clamor for Christ's services as the Old One began to run through the porches? What were the first thoughts of the Pharisees when the Old One ran into their tightly starched attitudes? On Sabbath!

Are there words that describe the emotions of the Old One?

*d. Write the thesis sentence of your sermon.* To describe the sights and sounds is essential in narrative preaching, but the real "life" of that preaching is in the way it speaks directly to personal needs. A narrative sermon uses words, emotions, and ideas that touch the hurts, hopes, and frustrations people feel each day. It uses great ancient narratives to demonstrate how God touches us today. Quality narrative preaching brings God close.



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A carefully crafted thesis statement is crucial to quality narrative preaching. If the thesis statement includes multiple ideas and only hazily deals with real needs, your sermon will be hazy, wandering, and dead. If, on the other hand, it focuses on a single concept and shows how that aspect of God's character solves a challenge being faced by your listeners, you have the foundation for a quality sermon.

Narrative preachers do not come to the Word looking for stories to match their thesis statements, they come asking for God to speak to needs.

#### 4. Research the historical questions.

The deeper my study, the more historical and factual questions show up—for which I have no answers. That truth sends me into books, maps, magazines, and videos to search for information that will help tell the story honestly.

For the Bethesda story my list of historical research questions included:

- What made the water in the pool “move”?

- Was anyone really healed by being first into the pool?
- What traffic came through the Sheep Gate each day?
- What changes were there in “pool life” on the Sabbath?
- Where did the sick get their meals while lying by the pool?
- What might merchants have been selling around the pool?
- What did the pool look like and is it still there today?
- What did the Old One and his bedroll look like?
- What Sabbath laws did Jesus break in this story?
- Was the response of the Pharisees legal and appropriate?
- What offerings might the man have taken with him to the Temple?

Sometimes the answers come from phone calls to scholar friends. But most of the time they show up in Bible atlases, Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, maps of the Middle East, books on customs and practices in Bible times, magazines on archaeology, and any other sources I can find. Although I own a few of these, my

best resources are in the public library and my local Christian bookstore.

#### 5. Follow the paths of other storytellers.

Yes, it is still worthwhile to read what Spurgeon and Peale wrote about the Pool of Bethesda. But it is also valuable to read Max Lucado, Calvin Miller, June Strong, Eugene Peterson, Gary Smalley, Rebecca Pippert, and any other author who has dealt with the same story. God has given these writers marvelous insights into the contemporary practicality of Scripture. Take advantage of their gifts.

And don't miss the artists. There are many books of biblical art, ancient and new, on library and bookstore shelves. Look at them, buy a couple, and share the dreams of the artists and illustrators.

Each thesis statement connects with at least three other Bible stories and a dozen modern tales. So I read what I call “disconnected authors.” These are people who have written on some aspect of the problem I'm dealing with in this sermon. Usually my

## Sample Picture Words From Bethesda

**Sound**—His raspy breathing came like a light wind between dry leaves. His voice, like a whispered sigh from the other end of a long tunnel.

**Sight**—His skin had taken on the color of yellowed parchment, and his once-brown eyes were now faded into empty gray. Sores, the kind that come from lying forever on one spot, oozed onto his stringy blankets.

**Smell**—The decay of his clothes and the rottenness of his sores blended into the pungent fragrance of certain death.

**Touch**—To the hand of Jesus, the Old One's skin felt like crumpled parchment wrapped tightly across protruding bones. To the Old One, the hand of Jesus felt like the long-forgotten softness of an adoring parent.

**Taste**—“All hunger fled and my tongue grew instantly dry as I imagined making a meal of whatever was in the oily leather pouch near the Old One's hand.”

*Then, notice how the images change as the Old One dances with joy.*

**Sound**—His voice, strong and high, sang out “hosannas” in a tempo that made everyone want to run and dance beside him.

**Sight**—His skin was gleaming with youthful life. His eyes had changed from empty gray to deep pools of vibrant wisdom.

**Smell**—The scent of spikenard, the perfume of the King, seemed to billow about him, overwhelming all other odors of the pool.

**Touch**—Several reached out to touch him and then shouted to their friends, “His skin is like that of a youth! There is life in his bones!”

**Taste**—“The dryness of fear and revulsion were replaced by a sweet peach in my mouth. Even my taste buds seemed to dance with his joy.”

list includes Madeleine L'Engle, Charles Swindoll, Phillip Keller, and Calvin, and Hobbes. Sometimes I even glean ideas from movies and television programs. Although their vantage point is usually different, their story lines and solutions are often insightful.

#### 6. Weave the narrative.

At this point I have a vast quantity of information and a short time to speak. My challenge is to word the tale in compelling language that hooks the listeners' interest and then connects their own lives with the story.

*"Yes, the Old One has done something you have decided is wrong. He has broken your understanding of the law. But the law is not about your rules, it is about God's love. It is not about carrying beds, but about bringing healing. The Sabbath law is not as much about behavior as it is about relationships and celebrations of freedom and victory and peace. About reveling in our God-filled, love-soaked universe. The Sabbath*

*is not a time for tearing down but for building up, for fellowshipping with the Creator who is 'head over heels in love with you.'"*<sup>1</sup>

Often the freshest phrasings in my narrative come from great Christian thinkers who have written the musings of their personal devotions. Those words join ideas and phrases from my own study, each fitting comfortably into a thorough outline for the story. So the Spirit and I cull away the "less relevant," until only three or four major ideas illustrate and support the thesis statement. These I weave into the story at appropriate locations, taking care to keep the plot flowing toward a memorable conclusion.

#### 7. Picture your story.

Now it's time to write. To help fill in the blank spaces in the outline, I use a thesaurus, a dictionary, and a place to write "purple picture passages." Since I compose on a computer, all of these are on my hard drive. If you aren't using a word processor, be sure you have a large

working space.

Since the introduction and conclusion are crucial, I write them first, carefully choosing each word to carry the important ideas directly into each listener's heart. The introduction must be compelling, must draw listeners directly into the story, must open the picture clearly, and must also state the thesis of the narrative.

The conclusion is much more than a summary. It is a challenge, a powerful impetus for change, and an encouragement that new solutions will fit old problems. It is also the most important three to 10 sentences of the narrative sermon.

Narrative sermons must be filled with "picture words" (see box) that bring the smells of Bethesda wafting into the sanctuary, that make people feel terror under the haughty questioning of the chief Pharisee. "Picture words," carefully selected descriptive adjectives, bring life into every corner of the story. They also give a real-life feel to the sermon, a feeling that will keep the kids and the aged

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listening with equal interest. "Picture words" do not belong in every sentence, but I use them liberally throughout the narrative to keep it alive.

### 8. Check the sermon against the videos.

I have now completed my manuscript, a narrative sermon that God and I have prepared together for a specific group of listeners. I am almost ready to preach. But there is one more very valuable step in the preparation process.

I am a Seventh-day Adventist minister. That means I believe Ellen White was privileged to live so close to God that He and she had many personal conversations. In those conversations God gave her pictorial insights into Scripture, insights that she has written to challenge my thinking. Before I preach the sermon, I read what Ellen White wrote about the story and discover what this passage taught her about God's character. Invariably, her insights add something that brings God even closer.

I use this resource last for two reasons. First, because if I used her at the beginning, the thoroughness of her words would limit my imagination and creativity by preanswering many of the questions my study will raise. Second, because I need a trustworthy check on my own creativity. Her beautifully written commentaries on Bible stories<sup>2</sup> provide that and more.

We found the Old One in the Temple, on the marble court reserved for those who come with simple sacrifices. In one hand he held a small bowl of meal, in the other he carried two pigeons in a reed cage. Offerings of forgiveness and thanks. His eyes were on the tiles, his head bowed in adoration and thanksgiving.

Jesus stepped into his pathway. The Old One stopped and looked up, up into the accepting eyes of His healer. His bowl clattered to the marble, spilling the offering. The cage dropped also, freeing the sacrificial birds, who escaped with a thunder of wings.

Before the Young One could speak,

Christ caught his shoulder, looked deep into his soul, and spoke. "Be careful. Don't allow anything to keep you from celebrating God's love. Those who separate from Him are worse off than you ever were."

There were smiles then. Two smiles. And Sabbath, once again, was a day of joyous celebration. ■

\* Texts credited to *Message* are from *The Message*. Copyright 1993. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

<sup>1</sup> Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel: Good News for the Bedraggled, Beat-up, and Burnt-out* (Portland, Oreg.: Multnomah Press, 1990), p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> See Ellen G. White, *Conflict of the Ages Series*, a five-volume commentary on God's relationship with His children from Creation to the new earth. Published by the Pacific Press Publishing Association, Boise, Idaho.

## Sabbath at Bethesda's Pool

### Sermon Outline

#### Thesis statement

God determinedly counteracts the emptiness of our habits by showing Sabbath to be a day of celebration and praise, a time for reveling in His presence and healing.

#### Introduction

Christ meets the Old One at the pool

- describe Christ
- describe pool and its environment
- describe the ill ones and the Old One among them

#### Scene 1—Christ befriends the Old One

- describe the meeting with Christ
- describe the conversation and the Old One's frustration
- describe the Old One's need for friends

#### Scene 2—Christ offers healing to the Old One.

- describe Christ's command
- describe the Old One's response
- describe the reaction of others around the pool
- describe the joy of saving grace

#### Scene 3—The Pharisees accuse the Healed One of breaking the Sabbath

- describe the pool area
- describe the slowly marching Pharisees
- describe the laws the Old One was breaking
- describe their self-righteous response to his actions
- follow the conversation on Sabbath laws and Sabbath grace

#### Conclusion

Christ meets the Young One in the Temple Court

- describe Christ waiting in the Temple for the healed one to arrive
- describe the Old One as he arrives
- describe Christ's meeting with the Old One
- describe the conversation
- describe the attitude of the Old One made young by Christ

# The ministry and the market forces

**D. N. Marshall**

**True gospel ministry will not succumb to market forces of either theology or constituency.**



*D. N. Marshall, Ph. D., is the editor of Focus and Family Life, published in England.*

**T**he king was dead. His death may have preoccupied Isaiah more than he cared to admit. What did the future hold for Judah?

Isaiah entered the Temple. Perhaps he expected to see the throne set up for the coronation of Uzziah's son. But instead of the throne of David, the prophet saw the throne of heaven. Not the king of Judah sat there, but the King of glory sat upon it.

The sight was awesome. The throne extended into the heavens like a New York skyscraper. And the sanctuary was filled with just "the train of his robe" (Isa. 6:1).\*

Isaiah would never be the same again.

## **The prophetic authority**

The true prophets of the Old Testament had at least one thing in common. Before they gave out God's message, they did *not* ask how many people agreed with them, how the heavyweights viewed them, what the constituency thought of them, or how the giving out of God's message would affect their chances of a move to a more prestigious parish or chances of a promotion within the hierarchy. They felt no divided responsibility. They sought no safety from ridicule.

They spoke with an authority that involved no self-doubt, and countenanced no contradiction.

They spoke to the world the message of God even though they might have no human ally—one man against the world.

The office of the church pastor today is dissimilar from that of the Old Testament prophet in at least one way. We cannot assume that a "Thus saith the Lord" has conferred on us as individuals a sort of personal infallibility. Indeed, many of our problems as individuals and as churches are caused by such false assumptions. But the office of the pastor and the prophet are similar in that our proclamation to the church and to the world has a prophetic edge. We lose that edge if we give in to theological market forces. We need to detach ourselves from all kinds of intimidation. We need to pray for confidence to proclaim the gospel of God without ducking and diving, trimming and tailoring to every theological pressure group that would seek to intimidate.

## **Strength to stand**

From whence comes this strength to stand up against theological market forces? From whence comes the strength to run forward (as opposed to sit on the fence) and preach the gospel devoid of works-righteousness phrases so often put in as adverbial clauses to please the intimidators?

Isaiah's experience provides three

helpful pointers:

*First, we shall stand up for the gospel when we have a personal experience of God's sovereign majesty.* The impact of that encounter with the God of glory on His throne was burnt on Isaiah's mind for the rest of his life.

Prophets saw both earthly rulers and heavenly angels dwarfed by the power and glory of a sovereign God. That stiffened their backbone against the most inimical intimidator. They rebuked autocratic kings to their faces. It was a case of "fear Him, ye saints, and you will then have nothing else to fear."<sup>1</sup>

The ultimate employer of pastors is the One to whom they are ultimately responsible: the One with nail-pierced hands and feet, and a spear-riven side. To Him is the pastors' first allegiance, before all other allegiances.

Unless they know this, pastors become craven and cave in to theological market pressures. The winds of doctrine blowing at a particular moment will sweep them along. This danger is especially strong in a pluralistic church with many independent ministries.

Unless they know this, pastors will overreact to so-called feedback whether it takes the form of a church door head-banger or a Monday morning letter writer. Pastors need to know that this is not, in any event, representative feedback. Overreaction to feedback from the fringe makes us reactionaries. Pastors should act, not react.

*Second, we shall stand up for the gospel when we have personally experienced God's sovereign grace.* "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5).

The cry that came spontaneously from Isaiah's lips was not "Wow!" but "Woe!" The vision of the great and gracious God did not blow his mind—it embarrassed his conscience. When pastors come into close quarters with God they do not experience a psychedelic ecstasy.

Instead they feel too unworthy; they realize their failure to bring the worthiness (righteousness) of Christ to the souls in their charge.

Isaiah was teetering on the raw edge of terror. But he acknowledged his unworthiness. And pardon came from the place where God's anger against sin is revealed: the altar of sacrifice. The atoning coal was applied to his lips, the focus of his moral shame.

*Third, we shall commit our lives to unambiguous preaching and unstinted service to God when we have experienced the power of the gospel.*

His sins atoned for, Isaiah could no longer be overwhelmed by feelings of personal inadequacy or weak-

preaching "a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all" (Gal. 1:6, 7), regardless of the fears we may have for our positions, God calls us as individuals to make both a commitment and a testimony, sometimes even to make fools of ourselves in the eyes of the world and those who appoint/elect us.

Only on the very distant horizon of time was Isaiah given a glimpse of a tiny glimmer of hope in the scattered residue of Judah's dismembered population: "But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land" (Isa. 6:13). Some would turn again, accept the gospel of God's grace, and at last be part of the numberless multitude on the sea of glass (see Rev. 7:9; 4:6).<sup>2</sup>

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## The ultimate employer of pastors is the One to whom they are ultimately responsible.

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ness. He knew that he owed God everything he was, had, and could ever hope to be. From then on his talents, time, and testimony were dedicated for the proclamation of God's word. And once the commitment was made, the prophet was not to concern himself with how hard the task or how unyielding the raw material was (verses 9, 10). Of course, we cannot blame Isaiah for asking how long his mission, seemingly hard and hopeless, would be (verse 11). God replied that only events in the long-term future would vindicate the prophet and his message (see vs. 11-13). But Isaiah's determination to "go and tell this people" was undiminished (cf. vs. 8, 9).

Regardless of the market pressures of our constituency, regardless of the "false brothers" (Gal. 2:4)

### God calls us to serve

God calls us to serve the Word without any inhibiting fear. Our willingness to do this will be in direct proportion to our personal experience of God's sovereign majesty and of God's atoning grace.

God calls us to stand up and speak up for His message as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel did. He calls for the sort of greatness we see in Peter when he told the Sanhedrin, "We must obey God, not you" (see Acts 5:29). Supremely, He calls us for the kind of individual commitment and unambiguous testimony displayed by the Master Himself before Pilate when, betrayed, isolated, He said, "For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth" (John 18:37). ■

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\* Unless otherwise noted, Scripture passages in this article are from the New International Version.

<sup>1</sup> Nahum Tate (1652-1715), "Through All the Changing Scenes of Life."

<sup>2</sup> The parallel between Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4 and 5 is obvious.

# God cannot be mocked

**Michael Kulakov**

## Lessons from the fall of European Communism



Michael Kulakov is president of the Zaoski Theological Seminary in Russia.

**A**s a Russian Christian I have learned to love and appreciate America for its spiritual heritage. The more I study the history of the United States, the more I find identity with its first settlers who escaped persecution and built a country based upon freedom. Beyond satisfying their own yearning for personal and spiritual opportunities, they wanted to proclaim the gospel freely.

The more I probe history, the more convinced I am that democracy exists only where the biblical principle of individual dignity is maintained. The respect for the individual as a sacred, unique being is not rooted in the French Revolution, Marxism, or any other political ideology. Nations loyal to such biblical principles—and to the Author of those principles—will enjoy prosperity and divine protection.

As a child in the Soviet Union before the days of perestroika, I had to attend an atheistic school. Morning by morning after my mother awakened me and got me breakfast, she opened her Bible and read me Galatians 6:7: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (NKJV). Knowing I would encounter ridicule, disrespect, and isolation, she encouraged me by saying, “Since God cannot be mocked, Michael, His cause will triumph in your life and in our country.”

### Attacking Christianity

At times it seemed as if the opposite were true, as if the devil were triumphing and God and His cause were being mocked—even in America. *Christianity Today* recently reported that more than 800 Ameri-

can church leaders demanded an end to what they consider an anti-Christian bigotry in the nation’s major media. Their statement called for the entertainment industry to “stop its unbalanced portrayal of characters depicted as Christians in its movies and television programs. This anti-Christian bias in movies and programs is not acceptable to us, just as it is not acceptable to all fair-minded Americans. . . . Rarely on programs or movies cast in a modern day setting are Christians shown in a neutral, much less a positive manner.”<sup>1</sup> Statements were sent to NBC, CBS, ABC, and Fox Television, as well as to Columbia Pictures, MCA/Universal, MGM/UA Communications, Paramount Entertainment, Warner Brothers, Twentieth Century Fox, Lorimar, and Walt Disney studios. Lew Wasserman, chairman of the board of MCA/Universal, responded by citing the company’s right to free speech: “We do not, and we cannot with any sense of conscience, censor our filmmakers.”<sup>2</sup>

Well, the Lord does not censor them either. Nevertheless, time will tell that He will not be mocked.

To Christians in Russia and the other former Soviet republics, it seemed as if the opposite was true during the seven decades of Communist rule. Destruction of churches followed immediately after the 1917 revolution and intensified after Lenin’s death. Almost every religious structure was demolished, disfigured, or turned into a warehouse or museum. Antireligious campaigns swept the country, with millions cast into prison camps. During Stalin’s purges of the 1930s, more than 7 million

people were massacred by their own government in a time of peace. Our historians now publicly acknowledge that 20 million citizens died under Stalin. That's beyond an additional 20 million who perished in World War II.

My father as a young Seventh-day Adventist minister was imprisoned for a year with a man who received a 15-year sentence because he said something construed to be antigovernment. Overwhelmed with despair at being separated from his wife and children, he banged his head against the concrete walls of the cell. My father tried to comfort him with the hope and peace of Christian faith.

### **Matriarch leaders through the darkness**

The church itself had no human hope during Stalin's reign. Christians met secretly. When discovered, they were harassed, imprisoned, and even beheaded. Churches had no organized leadership, no literature, no communication with the outside world. In hundreds of congregations, women whose husbands were in prison became pastors and leaders without any formal ministerial training. For decades they were God's anointed leaders, modeling and fostering fidelity to God whatever the cost. They brought the Bible to life without benefit of visual aids and other teaching tools. I recall those dear mothers with respect and admiration. Their courage, vision, and faith will inspire Russian Christians for many future generations.

During the years of darkness, great fires at custom check points consumed millions of Bibles and other Christian books brought to the border by believers from around the world. Although Bibles were burned to ashes, the fire in the hearts of Soviet believers could not be quenched.

Humiliation and intimidation of Christian children happened on a massive scale. Parents were threatened with the loss of their little ones if they persisted in teaching them about God. Many families were torn apart. I report this not to arouse animosity toward those hundreds of thousands who persecuted their neighbors

and fellow citizens. Rather, I want to portray the bankruptcy, bewilderment, and agony of emptiness to which whole nations are driven when God is abandoned.

### **Reaping what we have sown**

"Don't be deceived—God cannot be mocked," my mother taught me. "We reap whatever we sow." Even in my youth I could see the truth of this at work in the Soviet Union, although for seven decades, millions and millions denied it. Finally reality came. Our society now stands before God empty-handed, desperate, and bitter toward the false gods and corrupt leaders of the past who brought the country to ruin. We are starving for repentance, forgiveness, God's Word, and the warmth of His love.

God will not be mocked; throughout the universe this principle reflects as in a mirror the mind of its Creator. What some call "laws of nature" are, from the biblical point of view, the will of God. "Caprice and instability are the marks of finite and fallen creatures; we may not dare to suppose that these traits can mark the procedure of the infinite and all-holy Creator. In our blind conceit, we may suppose that there is a way of escape for us from the stern regularity of His moral judgement, that we may sin and not be punished, that we may violate moral laws and escape moral deterioration, but herein we deceive ourselves."<sup>3</sup>

### **Good news for all**

Thank God, there is good news for us in Russia and the other former Soviet republics. It also is good news for Americans and for every human being under the sun. The universe reveals a mightier law at work than God's law of cause and effect; the apostle Paul calls it the law of Christ. Through the miracle of God's love and redemption, we who have sown sin and failure may reap instead the reward of what Christ has sown. God does not desire that any human being or nation reap the consequences of foolish or arrogant deeds. In love He warns us, seeking to save us from our sin. And He will not permit the forces

of evil to prevail forever.

In my country, institutes of scientific atheism in huge marbled buildings lay abandoned, empty now. Nobody wants to study scientific atheism anymore. The Russian parliament voted that all atheistic societies, plus the faculties and departments of atheism in all national universities, be taken off the national budget.

At a recent international book fair in Moscow, many Western publishing houses featured popular displays of the best Christian literature. One American group, however, displayed atheistic material. I noticed that the least number of people approached that booth. Two or three who did went with a complaint: "Please, don't get offended—but don't bring this rubbish here. You don't know what it leads to. We Russians know very well."

Few in my country buy atheistic books anymore. Almost all the people, from factory workers to university professors, want to own a Bible. People of the former U.S.S.R. grasp every opportunity for spiritual and intellectual development.

In the fall of 1990 I went to the Siberian city of Novosibirsk on invitation from several universities to lecture on the Bible and the history of Protestant Christianity. Wherever I went, hundreds of students and faculty gathered to listen to the gospel story and the meaning of Christian faith. Everywhere in my country I have found great spiritual hunger and an eagerness to accept Christianity.

How the situation has changed in the former Soviet Union! During the seventies, my atheistic schoolmates mocked and humiliated me. Fellow students threatened to spit in my face in their hatred toward Christianity. Now faith in Christ is welcomed as the only hope for the moral restoration of the nation. Recent world events eloquently proclaim that all false gods, forced values, and human theories of salvation will ultimately collapse. Gospel truth will prevail. God cannot be mocked. ■

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Christianity Today*, Apr. 29, 1991, p. 40.

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

<sup>3</sup> *Speaker's Bible*, on Galatians, p. 91.



# THIS YEAR IN JERUSALEM

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August 31 - September 14, 1994

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- The **JERUSALEM** of Jesus' day and the places that evoke His life, death, and resurrection.
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- The **SHRINE OF THE BOOK**.
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### New associate joins Ministerial Association

What a privilege it is to introduce Joel Sarli, who was elected in January to serve as associate secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association.

Following the retirement of Carlos



Aeschlimann, we began an exhaustive search for the best individual to meet the needs of our ministerial association staff and to provide excellent resources, training, and interaction with the world field. Now I am particularly pleased to announce that Elder Sarli has accepted the invitation of the world church to serve in this new assignment.

Elder Sarli comes with a rich background in pastoral, evangelistic, and departmental ministry. He began his ministry in the South American Division where he served both in pastoral and evangelistic work (he was one of the original Brazilian Voice of Prophecy Quartet singers) as well as ministerial association work on the conference, union, and division levels. Later he served as a teacher of ministerial students, both as head of the theology

department and then as dean of the seminary.

In recent years he has worked in North American pastoral and television ministries, first in Toronto where he assisted in the excellent Portuguese telecast of Henry Feyerabend, and then in New York. Most recently he pastored the Portuguese Brazilian Church in Washington, D.C.

Elder Sarli holds a doctorate from Andrews University with emphasis in church growth and is recognized as one who can solve problems and facilitate growth. He preaches and teaches in English, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Elder Sarli's wife, Margarida, has served as a Bible instructor and is active in personal evangelism. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated team joining our ministerial association staff.—James A. Cress

### Aeschlimanns honored at retirement

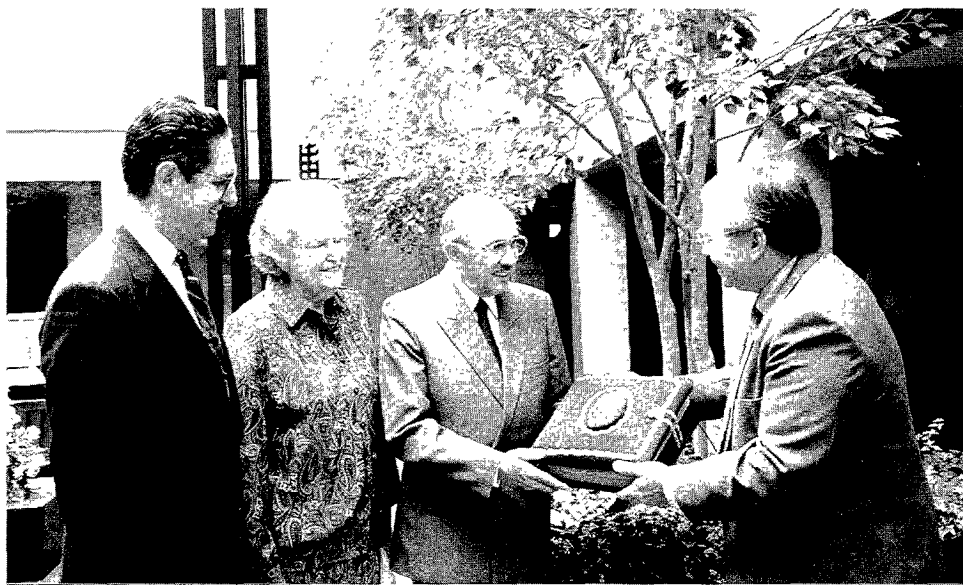
Carlos Aeschlimann and his wife, Lorena, were honored for 40 years of ministry on the occasion of his retirement as an associate secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association. Elder Aeschlimann's ministry can be characterized in one word—evangelism.

First in South America, then in Inter America and finally for nearly a decade at the General Conference headquarters, Elder Aeschlimann's influence fostered and nurtured motivation for and productivity in soulwinning.

Elder Aeschlimann was an evangelistic pioneer in Mexico when persecution threatened any who publicly preached the gospel. In the General Conference Ministerial Association he was world coordinator for Harvest '90. He and Lorena are pictured receiving from General Confer-

ence ministerial secretary, James A. Cress, a commemorative book memorializing the impact their ministry has had on numerous church leaders. Even our General Conference presi-

dent, Robert Folkenberg, had trained under Elder Aeschlimann. Also pictured (left) is Leo Ranzolin, general vice president who serves as liaison to the ministerial association.



## School of evangelism yields baptisms

Two hundred eight people were baptized October 2, 1993, following a crusade and school of evangelism conducted in the eastern Indian city of Vijayawada.

John M. Fowler, *Ministry* associate editor, and Herbert Kiesler, associate director of the Biblical Research Institute conducted the program. Prior to the crusade, 15 pastors from the South Andhra Section of Central India Union held city-wide cottage meetings, Bible-marking classes, and personal studies preparing people for the evangelism harvest. While Fowler cared for the preaching sessions leading to decisions, Kiesler conducted a training seminar for pastors in biblical preaching. Daily attendance averaged 1,300.



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## How much diversity can we stand?

From page 5

Adam after the Fall; righteousness by faith, rather than salvation in sin; the sanctuary teaching; belief in the Spirit of Prophecy.

Historic Adventists believe that if the church does not reform in the above areas, a "large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, [will] abandon their position, and join the ranks of the opposition."

Bj. Christensen, president of Southern California Conference, sums up these four viewpoints under the title "Dialogue or Ballots?" He says "It is time for us to minimize the differences elucidated by these four views. It is high time to focus on what we can learn from each other, carefully listening, prayerfully considering views that differ from our current positions. The synergism of such dialogue allows for diversity and addresses changes of position slowly and thoughtfully. It also avoids the static views which have become the battle cry of some."

Where do you stand, pastor? There is no denying that there are four, and probably more, positions in the Adventist Church today. Should we embrace all four positions? How much room is there for pluralism? When do differences become so big that they destroy rather than build? Who decides what the emphasis should be?

In preparing for our special October issue we want to print your responses to the question "What is the primary mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today?" Please keep your response to a maximum of 250 words. We will pay \$25 for each one we print. Send to October Special, *Ministry*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. by July 1.

# WACO: THE INSIDE STORY

In the Wake of Waco  
Why Were Adventists Among the Victims?



Cari Hoyt Haus and Madlyn Lewis Hamblin

Why were Adventists among the victims? Why did people raised on the teachings of the Bible follow a self-proclaimed messiah? Was there something in their Adventist background that made them vulnerable to Koresh's teachings? Did our church fail in its early relationship with Koresh? How do we keep a sense of the end-time from turning into fear and paranoia? Cari Hoyt Haus and Madlyn Lewis Hamblin present fascinating information about why this disaster happened and how we can avoid similar catastrophes. Paper, 224 pages. US\$9.95, Cdn\$13.45.



To order, call your local Adventist Book Center toll-free at **1-800-765-6955**.

Note: Canadian prices do not include GST and may vary according to currency fluctuation.



# Lessons from a tragedy

James A. Cress

**E**arthquake! If the word sounds ominous, the experience is even more so. At 4:31 a.m., January 17, Sharon and I were nearly thrown off our hotel bed. During the next few seconds of horror we simultaneously held each other, groped for a light, tried to assimilate what was happening and prayed aloud for deliverance. At times like that, 35 seconds can feel like a lifetime.

We have always believed earthquakes are a sign of Jesus' coming, but this one seemed like the end of the world itself. Surviving the '94 Los Angeles earthquake will remain in our memories long after the "city of angels" is reconstructed.

In those first moments after the tremors quieted, we rejoiced to be alive and unharmed even as we struggled to replace items that had fallen to the floor and to bring about order out of the chaos surrounding us. Our natural conclusion was to assume that everyone else was as secure as ourselves. Even television stations initially reported that damage was relatively insignificant as they projected their own experience onto the whole. Despite ongoing significant after-shocks, the early conclusion was that most of Los Angeles had escaped and little lasting damage had occurred.

Only the dawn and the subsequent discoveries of dead bodies and various tragedies brought the real horror to reality—a devastating earthquake had taken another major toll on this metropolitan area that has suffered only recently riots, fires, floods, and landslides, adding to the usual problems of crime and destruction rampant in today's urban society.

Having survived this quake, we

have learned some lessons.

**The first view is usually inaccurate.** Our assumption that all had escaped harm was natural as we projected our own experience onto the whole milieu. Our error, of course, was to reduce the total tragedy to our own experience. Because we had no more than emotional trauma, it was easy to believe that others were just as secure. In retrospect, we realize that we repeat such false assumptions in various circumstances when we measure others only by ourselves and our own limited experience.

There have been earthquakes far more deadly in which thousands have perished. But because this is the worst we have personally survived, it was easy to associate more trauma to this than to any other tragedy. Perhaps that is what the quipster meant who said, "the only exercise some people get is jumping to conclusions."

With the arrival of full information, our analysis changed. Our conclusions formed in fantasy were changed by the reality that others had suffered significant loss and that at least 60 lives ended at the very moment we had been praying for ours to be spared.

**Things change.** No matter what security we provide for ourselves, no matter what caution we might personally exhibit, forces beyond our control can swiftly alter the best plans. The past few years have demonstrated globally how quickly governments and social structures turn unstable or even vanish. How correct is the observation that earth's final movements will be rapid!

**Priorities change.** If I were asked to calmly analyze what I might take from my home if I were forced to leave,

what I might select would be far different than if I were given only moments to flee a home that was collapsing about me. I will long remember the anguished mother who said all she really wanted from her destroyed home were photographs of her children and mementoes of her marriage.

**Emergencies bring out the best (and worst) in people.** Los Angeles abounds with thousands of individuals who saw a need and did something about it. Naturally, government and organized relief agencies, including Adventist Disaster Relief, moved quickly to bring aid. But help also came from individuals. From those who opened their homes to shelter others to those who rescued disoriented pets, the city's trauma was met by the quiet heroics of ordinary people who understood that they could not change the world, but recognized that they could make a difference one person at a time.

Not everyone was helpful. Hundreds took advantage of the tragedy, gouged prices of basic supplies, or looted the remains of businesses and homes. We still live in a world of sin and, until Jesus restores all things, other crises will reveal those who care only for themselves. Innocents will still suffer and the littlest victims will still suffer the most. That is the tragic reality of sin.

**Others face greater disasters than me.** Despite returning home to savage cold and a day in the emergency hospital from falling on ice, I still am blessed compared with those who lost everything. My challenges are minor compared to theirs. My privilege is to recognize their need and to employ my resources to bring beneficial change, one person at a time!

## Revolution in the Church

Russell Burrill, *Hart Research Center, Fallbrook, California* (619-723-8082), 1993, 125 pages, US\$7.95, paper. Reviewed by James E. Thoreson, pastor, Orangevale Seventh-day Adventist Church, Orangevale, California.

Day after day many Adventist pastors pray for change in their churches. They pray for the Holy Spirit to invigorate and move their members to active evangelism. But pastoral hearts become sad as their well-prepared sermons fall on bored, deaf ears. They wonder if change will ever occur.

Such pastors know a revolution is under way in some parts of North America and certainly in the world field, but not in their churches. What they may not recognize is that the revolution is about changing the way we "do" church. Russell Burrill has written a powerful treatise on the biblical understanding of the church and the laity, and the task that ministers need to perform in equipping gifted members for ministry.

Burrill examines ministry in light of early Adventist models formed from New Testament descriptions. In these models ministry becomes one of the gifts of the Spirit rather than "the gift." This paradigm-shifting book returns us to a time when ministers worked alongside members with the Holy Spirit as leader. *Revolution in the Church* is not a philosophical suggestion—it sets the groundwork for a change in the way clergy and laity view ministry.

After clarifying the biblical understanding of a Spirit-led church, Burrill gives us steps to help churches establish Spirit-gifted training of pastor and members.

Some pastors already use *Revolution in the Church* as a study guide for Sabbath morning leadership classes, sermon helps, and church officer training. This book is a must for pastors and congregations frustrated by spiritual gift seminars that result in educated but still complacent members.

**The Three Angels and the Crescent: A Reader**  
*Jonquil Hole and Borge*

Schantz, eds., *Seventh-day Adventist Global Centre for Islamic Studies, Newbold College, Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 5AN, England, 1993, 303 pages, £5.59, paper. Reviewed by Woodrow W. Whidden, associate professor of religion, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.*

*The Three Angels and The Crescent* consists of papers presented at the Symposium for Seventh-day Adventist Islamicists conducted at Newbold College in 1992. Sponsored by the General Conference and organized by the Global Centre for Islamic Studies, the gathering was an important first for the denomination.

A brief background of the history of Adventist efforts in Islamic evangelism might prove helpful. Five years ago the Global Centre was founded to explore Islamic issues from a missiological perspective. The purpose of the centre is to foster a greater awareness of the most neglected field in Christian evangelistic work. The centre's director, Dr. Borge Schantz, a college teacher and academic missiologist, has experienced Islam firsthand as a missionary.

The papers cover a variety of topics by Adventist missiologists Bruce Bauer, Jon Dybdahl, and others. The subjects come under four sections:

1. "Regional Studies" surveys Islamic developments in North America, India, and West Africa.

2. "Social Issues" confronts women's rights, religious liberty, and the ways that Islamic beliefs affect agricultural development programs. This section addresses ADRA's possible role in building bridges to Islam.

3. "Theological Issues" talks about "Ellen White and Muhammad," "Dreams

and Muslim Missions," and "Sacrificial System—A Viable Approach."

4. The final section, "Evangelistic Outreach," explores modes of such outreach to Muslims.

There is a bibliography of basic books on Islam, and there are abstracts of three other papers presented at the symposium.

While the world church moves forward to reverse its neglect, this volume signals a new resolve to make evangelizing the Islamic world a vital part of our Global Strategy.

As in any collection of papers, the *Reader* too has an unevenness of quality; yet each article is helpful and informative. My response to this book falls into three categories: *dismay* at the enormity of the task and the church's failure in Islamic evangelism; *frustration* in the context of the cultural grip Islam has on its people and their lack of religious liberty; and *hope* in God, who has ways to bring about a breakthrough.

Mitchell Tyner explores the religious liberty issue. I find it daunting that Muslim beliefs on religious liberty forestall any possibility of conversion from that faith, and that most Islamic societies rigidly apply their views with force.

The chapters on evangelism give us an inkling of how to proceed. But the reader senses a profound need of prayer and reflection in this delicate process.

Those with a basic understanding of Islam can dive right into this book, but it would have been helpful had the editors provided an introductory overview of Islam for the uninitiated. Those pastors concerned about the barrier Islam has erected against the preaching of the gospel to all the world should consult a good survey text before tackling this work.

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**Christians must provide quality scripturally based alternatives in the media and arts if the Christian message is to be effective.**

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*The following two books look at different aspects of the media and religion controversy: (1) the problem and (2) what we should have done to avoid it as well as what we can do now. Both are reviewed by Merle J. Whitney, pastor, Lakeside Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lakeside, California.*

### Remote Controlled: How TV Affects You and Your Family,

Joe L. Wheeler, *Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1993, 191 pages, US\$9.95, Cdn\$13.45, paper.*

Joe Wheeler, professor of English and chair of the English/Communication Department at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland, has done us a service in writing this substantial yet accessible book. A good writer, he also demonstrates excellent research ability. I like the personal tone of the book as the author expresses his feelings, adding to the interest and credibility of the material.

Facts and figures complement stories of life-changing experiences. Pastors will find sermon illustrations and even outlines for preaching. Boldface sidebars with quotes from other authors give further resources.

Though valuable to preachers, this book talks to families. Wheeler contends that television has become the primary teacher of values, standards, and practice in our society. For many children parents, school, and church are secondary and ineffective in forming values. The author presents ample evidence showing the secular, often blasphemous nature of much of the media.

Wheeler then asks who controls your life—God or the media? He gives us a careful, challenging analysis of the effect of inadequately controlled television on creativity, marriage, education, time usage, and productivity.

The author helps us understand Western society with its violence and deteriorating educational system. Wheeler understands communication and refrains from writing a diatribe against television. He is too logical to be on a soapbox. The author's balance is evidenced in the book's second section, "What We Can Do About It," where he offers meaningful resource material adaptable for seminars and study groups.

Wheeler closes with a plea for control of the media in our families. He calls us to let our Creator and Saviour govern our lives and our time that we may experience the spiritual growth He intended.

### Roaring Lambs,

Bob Briner, *Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids (1-800-727-1309), 1993, 224 pages, US\$15.99, Cdn\$21.50, hardcover.*

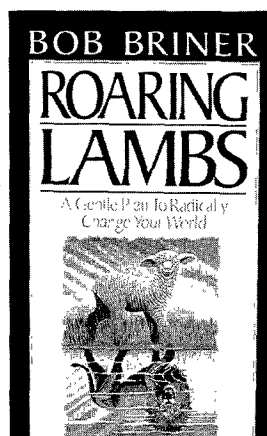
Bob Briner, president of ProServ Television, has been professionally involved in the media for years. He speaks with insider authority, yet with Christian dedication and determination in his challenge to religion.

The paradoxical title, *Roaring Lambs*, is subtitled *A Gentle Plan to Radically Change Your World*. Briner contends that Christians need to speak up in the work world, in politics, and in culture for the values they feel important. They must fulfill Christ's command to be salt. Salt does not preserve flavor without penetrating food. "To be the kind of salt Christ spoke about is to be on the cutting edge, in the fray, at the forefront of battle," states Briner.

Being a roaring lamb "is about everyday people doing everyday jobs with a very special goal—that of effectively representing Christ in all areas of society. Our churches should exist for this."

Briner states that "the culture-shaping professions are especially salt-free." He says, for the most part, Christians have abandoned movies, television, literature, visual arts, and academe to the secular world. He does give a few illustrations of Christians who have made a difference in secular circles in these areas. He suggests ways Christians could and should make an impact in the arts. Briner notes how revolution (or reformation) often starts with the arts and why dictatorial regimes have always wanted to destroy writers and artists—they influence the masses.

The concluding chapter defines the tone and purpose of the book. It motivates while presenting practical advice Briner calls "Action Steps." For ex-



ample, write letters to networks, supporting decent programming.

*Roaring Lambs* can inspire and activate you and your church. Briner has done an excellent piece of work in following his own advice: "Certainly there's much in this world that is alarming, but I believe there's a better way to do something about it than simply preach against it. The best way to stop the spread of evil is to replace it with something good." Christians must provide quality scripturally based alternatives in the media and arts if the Christian message is to be effective.

### Peculiar Speech: Preaching to the Baptized

William H. Willimon, *William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids (1-800-253-7521 in the U.S. and Canada), 1992, 124 pages, US\$10.99, paper. Reviewed by James Ellithorpe, pastor, Seventh-day Adventist church, Providence, Rhode Island.*

When the senior pastor of Duke University Chapel talks about preaching, pastors should take note. Not only is William Willimon one of the best preachers today, but his penetrating insights in this volume reinforce his place in pulpit ministry.

This book is worth reading and re-reading in a quiet room with no distractions. Willimon provides three sermons that alone are worth the price of the book.

The author takes the reader through the theological stages of preaching within the context of baptism, repentance, and proclamation to pagans (all of us), and within society. He can be confounding at times, but rescues himself with illustrations and superior homilies.

Willimon's sense of urgency, justice, power, and presence seeps through the pages of this book. One can envision him, like a prophet of old, trumpeting justice, mercy, and salvation to the outcasts of society—the widow, the orphan, and the poor.

Pastors wishing to add depth to their preaching ministry will gain much from this book. Those who take time to digest it will acquire a new perspective and impetus in their pulpit ministry.

## The evidence of the grace of God

From page 4

tion, worship, fellowship, and service? The Holy Spirit had already prepared Barnabas to recognize that

the movements of God are not necessarily parallel to the purposes and the priorities of mortals. Did not Barnabas witness the great happenings at Pentecost, sell his possessions, and bring "the money and put it at the apostles' feet" (verse 37)? Did he not also recognize the workings of the Spirit in the conversion of Saul and risk his reputation by pleading with the church executive com-

mittee in Jerusalem to set aside their suspicions and reservations and fully accept the call of Saul? Barnabas believed that the Holy Spirit could do the impossible: Saul could become Paul.

### The impossible possibility

And Barnabas also saw what the Holy Spirit had done in Antioch. The impossible had become possible. A Jew could accept Christ. A Gentile could accept Christ. Both could claim to follow Christ. But could a Jew and a Gentile come together, shake hands with each other, share a common meal, worship one Lord, fellowship in the presence of one Spirit? Could the wall really come down? Antioch showed it could. And Barnabas gave credit to whom credit was due. It was not the work of the Jew. It was not the persistence of the Gentile. It was not the combined goodness of both. No. It was the "evidence of the grace of God" (Acts 11:23).

God's grace that initiated the cross and redeems us from the guilt and the power of sin as individuals is the same grace that enables us as human beings to accept one another and live together in peaceful harmony. Where there is a frontier between person and person, between people and people, the power of the gospel of grace has not taken effect. That's the simple lesson from Antioch.

Can such an experience of togetherness and victory over human divisiveness face the possibility of reversal? The answer, unfortunately, is yes. In our salvation experience, we know there is no such thing as once saved, always saved. Likewise in creating a fellowship without frontiers, there's the possibility of reversal. Even Barnabas fell victim to that, and for a moment hugged the grace-denying evil of "hypocrisy" (Gal. 2:13). There is a crucial difference between defining grace theologically and witnessing its powerful evidence experientially. ■

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\* All Scripture passages are from the New International Version.

## Easy reading

Occasionally church members tell me that they have difficulty focusing on following along with the sermon due to the reflection from their glasses. I have discovered a product called "Reflection Free." With 99.5 percent light transmission it offers maximum reduction of reflections. It also cuts down on road reflection while driving on a rainy night. It makes lenses easier to clean and more scratch resistant. It is available from most optometrists.—Bill Peterson, Sylacauga, Alabama.

## Bible memorization walk

During the worship announcement time, I invite members to join me in the park at 2:30 that afternoon and bring along a small Bible. There we walk together and memorize Scripture as we go. The first Sabbath about 20 showed up to begin memorizing the book of 2 John. After walking a while, we gathered in small groups to recite to one another. Later Sabbaths we met in other locations of natural beauty. One woman who memorized 1 John as well as 2 John recited it from the pulpit in church. Another woman memorized Galatians and repeated it during Sabbath school.—Robert McPherson, Lake Elmo, Minnesota.

## Tips to ease tension

1. Adjust your attitude. How you react is determined by how you perceive a particular stress. You can see stress

and discomfort as sources of challenge and excitement.

2. Contemplate something positive. Take a mental vacation. Unravel stress with pleasant thoughts and relax.

3. Calm down by counting to 10. Look away. Get up and leave. In your office or car you might be able to cry or even yell.

4. Physiologically, you can, massage stressed muscles, press on your temples, drop your jaw and roll it left to right, take deep breaths, relax all over, take a hot soak, move around, and/or listen to relaxing music.—Don Tohline, Jonesboro, Louisiana.

## Cutting short a manuscript sermon

Suppose the church program is running late, forcing you to cut your sermon accordingly. How can manuscript preachers accomplish this without sacrificing unity and coherence? Too often they are unable to cut, which leaves congregations not always happy with overtime sermons.

One possible remedy is to prepare an outline of sufficient detail to superimpose over the various manuscript sections. This allows the preacher to quickly summarize some sections and give more detail in other sections (some may prefer a color code for the outline). This way a shortened manuscript sermon can retain clarity and conviction.—Lewis Blackwell, Mandeville, Jamaica.

## Undershepherd visitation

Because the pastor alone cannot visit every member frequently, I recommend the following undershepherd plan:

Your territory could be divided into zones. The zones could further be divided into units, which could also be subdivided into families (see sample chart below).

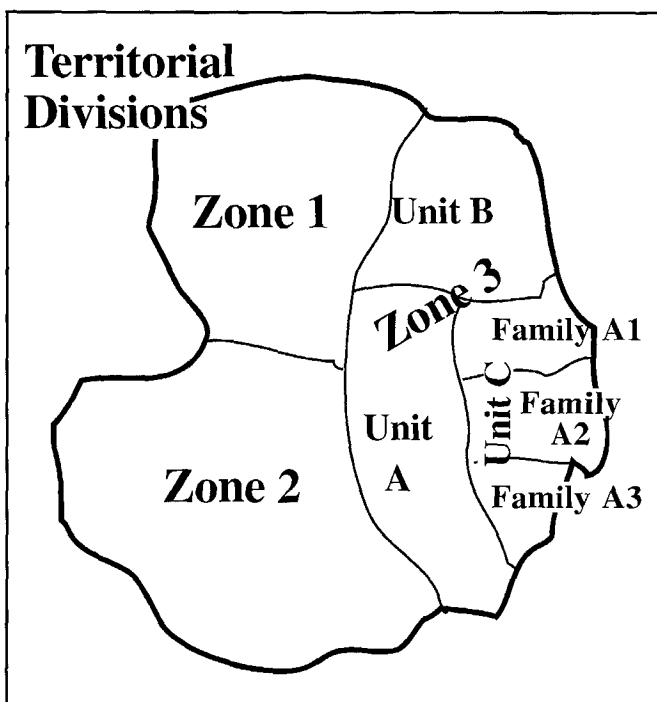
Elders and deacons/deaconesses are assigned to, put in charge of, each zone, unit, and family. They should visit each home under their care at least once a quarter, going two by two.

During the visits, experiences are shared and problems are discussed, followed by prayer. Serious needs are reported promptly to the

pastor, who through this undershepherd plan has more time to serve the most critical needs of the members.—Isaac Sarfo, Kumasi, Ghana.

## \$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.

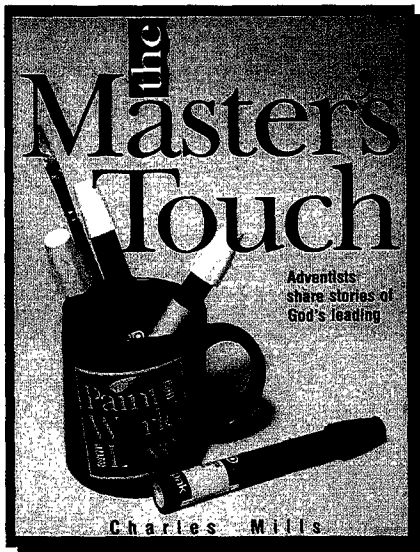


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# Talking About YOUR MONEY

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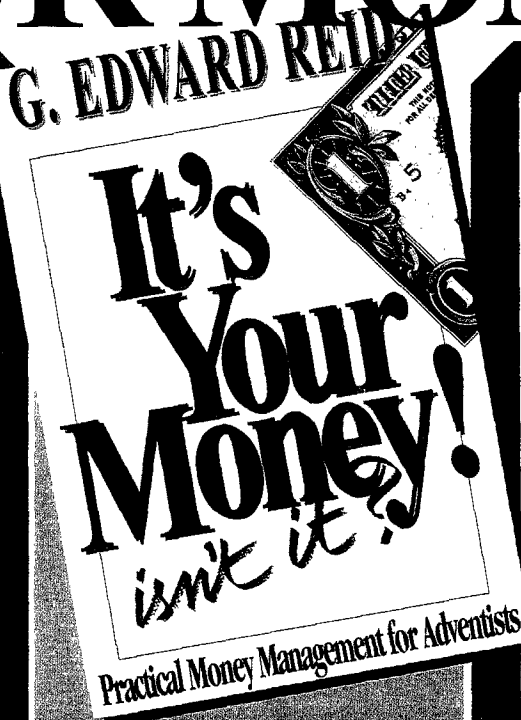


## Fatal Beauty

Dr. John Hamilton compromised his religion to satisfy a beautiful, controlling wife. Since high school he has loved her—more than their children, more than happiness, more than God Himself. Now, 40 years later, caught in the grip of family crises, he realizes he has made a terrible mistake. *Doctor, Doctor*, by Helen Godfrey Pyke. Paperback, 124 pages. US\$7.95, Cdn\$10.75

## DOCTOR, DOCTOR

HELEN GODFREY PYKE



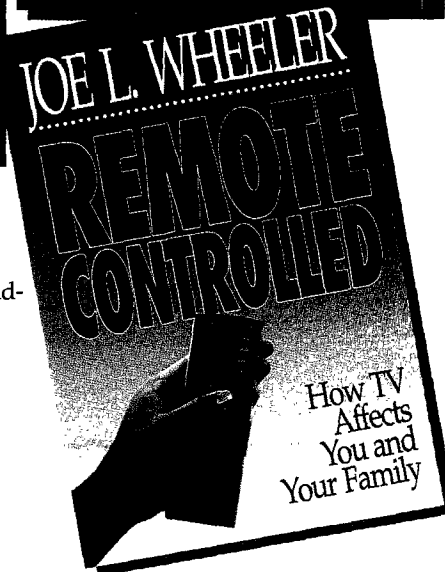
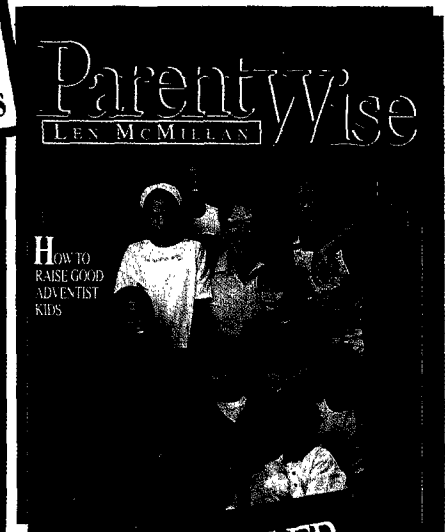
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