ADVENTIST RAVIEW

Weekly News and Inspiration for Seventh-day Adventists



TO EVERY CULTURE:

Global Strategy_

"Progress Toward a Global Strategy" (Aug. 31) leaves me wondering if we have overlooked the global strategy outlined by Jesus. The challenging goal of organizing one congregation in each population segment of 1 million where we now have no Adventists at all appeals to my keen interest in evangelism, but also smacks of "impossibility" thinking. It certainly falls far short of the goal of finishing God's work on earth in the next few yearswhich is the only goal worthy of a church that believes the entire world will be enlightened in a short period of time through simple methods of God's devising rather than of our own devising.

Should not a truly Adventist global strategy begin with a call for revival and reformation, with our leadership showing the way by a worldwide call to prayer and repentance? As to the Cohutta Springs report, I can hear our Lord saying, "This you should have done, but not left the greater priority undone."

LEO R. VAN DOLSON, SR. Kennebunkport, Maine

I noted with interest the caption beside the picture of the Global Strategy Committee members at work at Cohutta Springs in July. Sixty-six men and three women! Those numbers make even *tokenism* a thing of the past. Are we now in an era of "token tokenism"?

BONNIE BRYAN SMITH Asheville, North Carolina

The Church | Love_

Thank you for providing a forum for the views of church members. When I read columns such as Speaking Out and My Church, I can envision an exciting and vibrant future for the church I love.

I also want to thank you for making Adventist Review such a relevant and inspiring magazine. I knew it was truly relevant when my missionary grandmother and I recently compared notes and found that we

both consider it our favorite periodical. SHANDELLE MARIE HENSON
Graduate Student
Durham, North Carolina

In Defense_

Re: "Military Service" (Letters, Aug. 24).

I wonder how many service personnel have been made to feel unworthy Adventists and how many have left the church because of self-righteous comments by people who obviously know nothing about the

military.

This same holier-than-thou attitude exists toward Seventh-day Adventists who are policemen or highway patrolmen, yet not to those working for defense contractors. Obviously it's all right to work for arms manufacturers so long as one is not wearing a uniform or, in a few cases, carrying a gun. Who is expected to defend our country, our homes, and our families? These same people would be quick to send for the police if need be, and to advocate that the nation take a stand when its freedom or territory is threatened.

Let's not twist the Scriptures to mean other than what they say plainly—"Thou shalt not commit murder." EDNA OLSEN

APO New York

Witnessing on the Job_

"Lifestyle Witnessing" (July 27) brought back memories of when I was the only Adventist among 25 employees. Before I was hired I told them I could not work on the Sabbath. It wasn't long afterward before everyone knew about my Sabbath.

They were a rough bunch, but friendly people. Every other word was a cuss word. Soon I had most of them receiving the *Signs*. One man came to me and said: "Your *Signs of the Times* is as close as I get to church."

Later, *Life and Health* had an article on smoking. They all got the magazine. One of the workers quit smoking after reading the article. His wife also read it and quit too.

When I met her, she said: "So you are the one responsible for my quitting smoking."

Our parties didn't present problems, though they did think I was strange not to have a drink at Christmas. R. DELL SAVRE

Newbury Park, California

Refreshing_

Thank you very much for "On Preserving the Truth" (Aug. 10).

In an age when we hear many voices crying for changes in the church to make it more "relevant" to the world rather than changes in heart and mind to align us with the character of God, it is refreshing to know that there are still those who understand the soul's need of a God "with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

Let's hear more from Tim Crosby!

CAROL MAYES

Chatsworth, California

Our Bountiful God_

It is wonderful what God can do for someone returning to faithfulness in tithe paying ("Showers of Blessing," Aug. 17), but what about the thousands, maybe millions, who have been blessed all their lives without any traumatic experiences?

My tithe paying started in 1922. Ever since we as a family have never missed. We lived through the Great Depression, through World War II. Some years we were employed for only 36 weeks, but never have we experienced hunger because of a shortage of money. God has provided. We had a place to live and food on the table and means to educate our children. God is so good.

J. C. MICHALENKO Hollister, California

Letters should not exceed 250 words and should carry the writer's name, address, and telephone number. All will be edited to meet space and literary requirements, but the author's meaning will not be changed. Views expressed in the letters do not necessarily represent those of the editors or denomination.

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- "'Blanket Coverage," by Gordon Bietz. Our security derives from our faith relationship with Christ.
- "Christ and the Will," by Karel van Oossanen. Choos-
- ing the road of life against all odds.
- "Christ or the World?" by Kit Watts. Jesus does not wait for us to fully understand Him before He calls us.
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YOUR PERMANENT RECORD

t was filed in the principal's office, and the mere thought of it put the fear of God in your heart," says Bob Greene concerning a person's permanent record, in a recent Reader's Digest article.

Greene goes on to remind us of that menacing statement we heard all too frequently when we were in school: "If you do that, it will go on your permanent record." Teachers and principals used the threat with good effect when seeking to keep students from doing foolish things. We imagined that each of us had a folder with our name on it on file in the school office. Inside this file reposed not only our grades but any misdeeds committed through the years. We were led to believe that this record would follow us on to high school, college, and our eventual workplace. We might have imagined that even the FBI would keep a copy.

Whether there was, or still is, such a record, Greene feels that people no longer believe in it. Whereas in times past the "permanent record" threat often kept us from doing wrong, today we laugh at the idea, believing all will be forgiven and forgotten. He notes the strange fascination of the public with books and magazines in which rascals confess their misdeeds, making money off the "permanent record," as it were.

Anything Goes

"As Americans began to realize that there probably never had been a permanent record, they deduced that any kind of behavior was permissible," Greene writes. People would not hold past deeds against you. "We have accepted the notion that no one is keeping track." You couldn't scare a schoolboy or girl today by holding a permanent record over his or her head. "The kid would probably file a suit under the Freedom of Information Act and expect to obtain his permanent record by recess. Either that, or call

While we are accountable before God, that is not the whole story.

it up on his or her computer and delete it."

As adults, we feel a bit sheepish about ever having believed in such a myth. "But who really knows?" asks Greene. "On some distant day when we check out of this earthly world and approach the gates of our new eternal home, our smiles may freeze. We just might be greeted by a heavenly presence sitting there, casually leafing through a dusty, battered volume of our permanent record."

We agree with this writer that fear of the dire consequences of dastardly deeds appears to have greatly diminished in our day. But the reason seems to be not so much the demythologizing of the permanent record in the school office as of the one in the Creator's office. As people become less and less knowledgeable about the teachings of the Bible, and ever more inclined to dismiss them as irrelevant, they feel increasingly comfortable with the notion that any behavior is permissible, since "no one is keeping track."

Not So Farfetched

Greene's idea of encountering our permanent record at the gates of heaven is not far off the mark. While as Adventists we dismiss the picture of arriving one by one at death at Saint Peter's gate, we must take seriously our eventual accountability before God for the way we have lived.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," writes Paul, "that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Solomon tells us that every secret thing will be judged (Eccl. 12:14).

And there is indeed a permanent record: "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12). God's record follows us not only through school and to the workplace, but to our dying day.

But, thank God, that is not the whole story. The same text assures us of the existence of a "book of life," and Malachi speaks of "a book of remembrance . . . for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Mal. 3:16). While God will blot out from the book of life the names of those who finally reject Him (Ex. 32:33), He will blot out from the books of record the sins of those who accept Jesus as their Saviour (Jer. 2:22; Acts 3:19).

So we need not fear that dreaded permanent record after all. The one in the school office may never have existed. The one in heaven will cease to exist when our name comes up in the pre-Advent judgment and Jesus cries, "My blood, Father, My blood."

EUGENE F. DURAND



CHRISTIAN GLADIATORS

emember Jerry Falwell—the ingenious Baptist preacher and televangelist who personifies the new Christian right? Political and religious observers have followed the senior pastor of Thomas Rhoads Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, very closely since he formed the Moral Majority in 1979.

The political action committee lobbied for a variety of conservative family-oriented causes in the 1980s. According to the Religious News Service, the Moral Majority had raised and spent more than \$69 million for education, voter registration, and political lobbying.

For Falwell, 1989 has been a year of retrenchment. Some of his broadcasting colleagues were surprised when he chose not to buy a booth at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention, and observers were even more shocked when he dissolved the Moral Majority this past summer. Religious News Service reports that the Moral Majority possibly paved the way for other conservative lobbying groups like the American Coalition for Traditional Values, Concerned Women for America, and the American Family Coalition.

Now Falwell, who is also chancellor of Liberty University, is putting a new spin on his ministry. On August 30, he announced the appointment of Sam Rutigliano, former coach of the Cleveland Browns football team, as head football coach for Liberty. By appointing Rutigliano, Falwell serves notice to the athletic community that he intends to make Liberty a national Christian power on the gridiron and raise the school's profile.

Founded in 1971 as Liberty Baptist College, the university has advanced through the National Christian College Athletic Association (NCCAA), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Currently the football team has NCAA Division I-AA status, which puts it in a class with Bucknell University, Holy Cross, and the University of Delaware, But Falwell seeks Division I-A status for his football team, which could give the school entrance in the Southern Conference. This would also put the 5,200-student university on a par with the University of Alabama and Michigan State University.

To undergird the thrust, the school increased the annual recruiting budget from \$17,000 to \$100,000, and construction should now be complete on the new 12,000-seat Willard Mays football stadium. Future plans call for the expansion of the stadium to 35,000. Also under construction is a new convocation center that contains a 9,000-seat basketball arena.

Liberty must hurdle several obstacles for the Division I-A status. Among the requirements is that the school average 17,000 fans for one year of a four-year period. Already Liberty has hired a full-time staffer just to push ticket sales.

Falwell told the Washington Post, "There are enough evangelicals out there to give us what the Mormons have given to Brigham Young . . . a world-class [athletic] program."

Unlike Liberty and Brigham Young universities, there are no Adventist colleges and universities building 12,000-seat stadiums or making bids for national rankings. But some church leaders are quite concerned with the athletic activities at some of our colleges and academies.

More than half the Adventist colleges in North America are fielding basketball teams in the NAIA, NC-CAA, or Fellowship of Christian Athletes conferences, and many of the colleges offer financial assistance (scholarships) to some team members. Two Adventist universities hosted the United States Acrobatics Federation's national championships in 1988 and 1989, respectively (see Newsbreak, June 15).

Rick Murray, athletic director at Columbia Union College, reports that the basketball teams have been an essential element in recruiting new male students at CUC, which has experienced an increase in student enrollment. "This is the first time since I've been here that we have more males on campus than females," Murray says.

Also Murray pointed out that most abuses that occur in collegiate athletics occur at the NCAA Division I level, not at Division II or in NAIA. "Nobody's making any money here," he said.

Leaders Concerned

The concern of church leaders was recently reflected when the General Conference Committee discussed guidelines on athletic competition earlier this month during the Annual Council. The guidelines, which were first voted last year in Nairobi, Kenya, and scheduled to come before this year's Annual Council, call for a prohibition on intermural athletics—competitive events between colleges and academies from different regions of the country.

While the debate goes on in our ivory towers, it's crystal-clear that the whistle has blown. The train has left the station. The question now is "Where are we headed?" Can we really turn the train around, or merely influence its direction?

CARLOS MEDLEY







Nearly 1,000 people (left) packed the new auditorium to hear Rep. Thomas Foley (center) speak. A Pathfinder color guard (right) was featured in the flag-raising ceremony.

GC Complex Dedicated With a Touch of Class

As hundreds of guests joined the General Conference staff on October 3 to celebrate the grand opening of the Adventist Church's new world headquarters, it didn't take very long for them to get caught up in the moment.

The inauguration service carried the pomp and ceremony of a royal gala. Personalities from around the world crammed the corridors, spilling into the spacious

foyer and contoured entrance of the Silver Spring, Maryland, headquarters. Exotic floral arrangements decked the sunlit atrium as chamber music caressed the atmosphere with classic refrains that added a special touch of class.

In all, nearly 1,000 church members and employees, public officials, and community guests attended the affair. Many of the guests came to Washington to attend the church's Annual Council session.

The festivities began with a flag-raising ceremony highlighted by the presence of Corporal Desmond T. Doss, the only Adventist ever to receive a Congressional Medal of Honor.

A Pathfinder drum and bugle corps from the Allegheny East Conference provided rhythmic electricity to the ceremony, charging the air with excitement. A Pathfinder color guard from the Allegheny East, Chesapeake, and Potomac conferences then raised the United States, Maryland, and Christian flags.

Inside the new auditorium a brass ensemble, accompanied by the new Allen Digital Computer organ, brought a regal tone to the main ceremony. But the featured speaker, Congressman Thomas Foley (D-Washington), speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, added a crowning touch to the program with his warm words of welcome. After a humorous story, the statesman began tracing the neighborly ties between the SDA Church and Congress.

"Since 1903, one of the great good neighbors to Congress has been the Seventh-day Adventist Church," Foley said with an endearing smile. "In all the time since

first occupying a row house near the capital, you've been a great good neighbor. You have done enormously good work in this area and beyond that your influence and works have reached across the world."

"From this building you coordinate the church's commitment to fulfill the biblical call to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and house the homeless," said Foley, applauding the church for its worldwide com-

mitment to health, education, and humanitarian work.

"You have a vast network of hospitals, schools, and churches," he commented. "I was amazed when I was told that the church is located in practically every country of the world.

"The church supports a healthcare system with 152 hospitals, 284 dispensaries, clinics, and medical launches, 95 retirement and nursing homes, and 51 nurses' training centers. In this country the Adventist Health

System with its 11,000 hospital beds makes an enormous contribution to health care.

"In my home state, the hospital in Walla Walla [Walla Walla General Hospital] provides health care for the community," he commented.

"Your worldwide system of schools demonstrates your emphasis to quality education," Foley said. "Personally I can say that I've had the benefit of young Adventist students and staff members. In every case their conduct was impeccable and their work superior.

"The Adventist Development and Relief Agency International has brought help to countless victims of war, famine, and flood," he explained. "Now the organization is currently helping the victims of Hurricane Hugo with emergency supplies, tents, and other essentials.

"The humanitarian, health-care, and educational agencies have made the lives of people better. They've made people's values better."

Foley told the near-capacity crowd of the strong bond of friendship he felt with church leaders and underscored the importance of the new complex.

"I have personally visited your hospital and college in Walla Walla several times and met the Adventist



The GC choir brings a musical blessing.

By Carlos Medley, Adventist Review news editor.

community and hospital leaders. I count many of them as my friends," Foley asserted. "They work tirelessly,

selflessly to help Washingtonians."

"This new building will be a beacon that beams the light around the world," he said. "It promotes the church's deep dedication to preserving the inherent dignity and spirit of every person and will enable people of all races, and especially the least among us, to seek their potential to reflect the image of God."

Foley headlined a broad array of distinguished guests. Joe Watkins, a representative of the White House, brought a congratulatory message from U.S.

President George Bush.

Quoting the president's statement, Watkins said, "'Religious faith draws upon the best of the human spirit. Your members work tirelessly to bring a blessing of education, health care, and food to men and women around the world. This new building is a testimony of your denomination's growth since 1863."

Mary Brown, a representative from the office of Maryland congresswoman Constance A. Morella, in whose district the headquarters resides, read a message that Representative Morrella had entered into the Congres-

sional Record.

Melvin Steinberg, Maryland's lieutenant governor, cheered the audience with his delightful humor. "I've looked at your history," Steinberg said. "You've been here longer than I have. And you've had a greater impact on people of Maryland than I have. If we're going to resolve the problems facing this world, it's the religious community that will provide the answers.

"I'm here today to say thank you for staying in Maryland," he said. "May you thrive and be successful as

you do the work of God."

In addition to the greetings and remarks, 11 people received awards for their contribution to the building project: Neal C. Wilson, General Conference president; G. Ralph Thompson, GC secretary; Donald F. Gilbert, GC treasurer; Lance L. Butler, GC treasurer (retired); Robert E. Osborn, associate GC treasurer; Frank L. Jones, associate treasurer, North American Division; Charles O. Frederick, project coordinator; Michael Breakie, project manager; Melvin Seard, GC plant services director; and secretaries Alberta Lane and Patti Grady.

NORTH AMERICA .

Hadley Crusade Ends With 142 Baptisms. The Real Truth Crusade, held on the campus of Hadley Memorial Hospital in Washington, D.C., ended September 30 with 142 baptisms, reports William C. Scales, crusade evangelist and North American Division ministerial secretary.

On October 1 many new church members took part in a victory banquet at the General Conference headquarters complex. The banquet gave the new members an opportunity to meet many world church leaders who were attending Annual Council meetings. Bible workers are following up with nearly 60 more interests.

New Business Complex Opens at AU. On October 1 government and community leaders joined Andrews University staff and students for the official opening of Chan Shun Hall, the new headquarters for the School of Business.

The special guest for the program was Chan Shun, a Hong Kong businessman for whom the building is named. Shun donated \$1.1 million, the largest private donation in Andrews' history, toward the building. The 27,000-square-foot complex cost \$2.2 million to construct and has a \$600,000 operating endowment, reports Candace Jorgensen, university spokesperson.

WORLD CHURCH.

ADRA-Ghana Helps Flood Victims. When torrential rains in northern Ghana spurred flash floods in early September, the main dam for the city of Tamale was swept away and 200 houses were destroyed, reports Jack Mahon, Africa-Indian Ocean Division communication director. ADRA-Ghana responded with \$10,000 in emergency food and \$5,000 in clothing. ADRA also has agreed to rebuild 50 homes.

Trinidad Nursing Assistants Graduate. The Port of Spain Adventist Hospital in Trinidad recently held its first graduation of nursing assistants, reports Naomi Modeste, Inter-American Division health and temperance director. The hospital received government approval for training nursing assistants just two years ago.

Among those attending the graduation were Trinidad's principal nursing officer and health minister.



CHURCH CALENDAR.

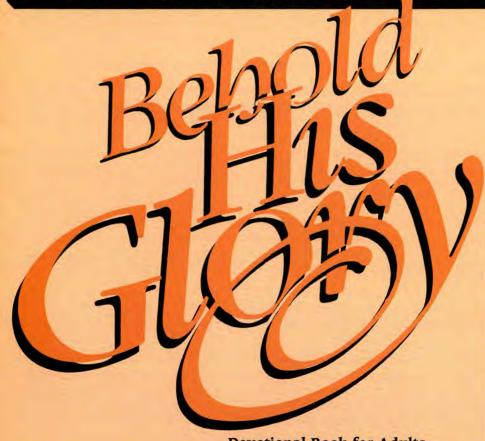
Oct. 21 Spirit of Prophecy Day

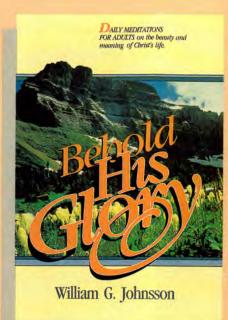
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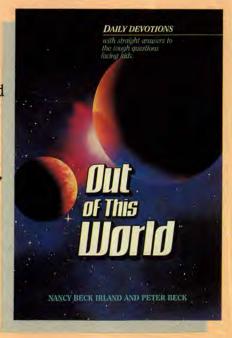
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ow was it possible for the Jewish leaders to fail to recognize Jesus as the Messiah when their own Scriptures contained so many prophecies about Him and about His coming? How could those whose mission it was to announce and prepare the world for the Messiah's coming actually denounce and crucify Him when He came?

Preconceived Opinion

The answer has to do with the misinterpretation of prophecy. They had expected the Messiah to come in glory with flashing sword, driving out the hated Romans. Instead He came as a humble baby in a manger. That was too much for them. Their interpretation of prophecy had become so distorted that they failed to recognize Him.

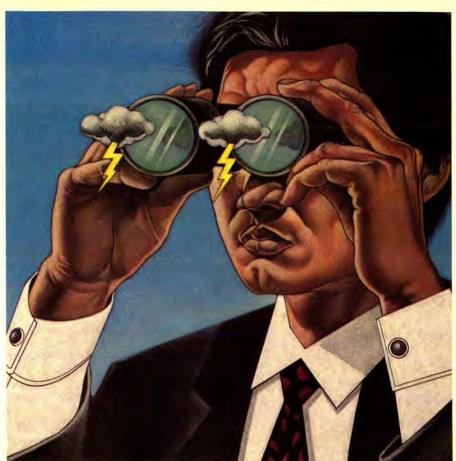
The coming Messiah was the very focus and thrust of Old Testament prophecy (Luke 24:27, 44). And, indeed, they were familiar with important details of the prophecies. They knew, for example, that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, as the prophet said He would (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:3-6). But they steadfastly refused to acknowledge Jesus, even though He fulfilled all the prophetic specifications.

The Jews spurned Jesus as their Messiah because He did not measure up to the image they had created of Him from their prophecies. They had meticulously compiled a "prophetic chart" of a Messiah who would come to set up a temporal kingdom, and Jesus did not fit their model. Accordingly, they rejected His Messianic claims, continuing to worship instead the prophetic image they had set up with their own hands.

How About Us?

As New Testament Christians awaiting the second coming of the Messiah, has our record in interpreting prophecy been any better than those awaiting His first coming? Like them we also have our prophetic charts and time lines of last-day events. But we need to learn from the lessons of history.

The very first recorded interpretation of a prophecy concerning the second coming of Jesus revealed



HANG PA

MIRAGE

WARNINGS ABOUT PROPHETIC SPECULATION

that many of Jesus' disciples believed He would return to earth before their generation had completely passed away. They spread the story that John the Beloved would still be alive at the Second Advent (John 21:22, 23). But they were wrong.

On the basis of Daniel 8:14, nineteenth-century Adventists in New England confidently proclaimed that Christ would return to earth on October 22, 1844. He did not, and tens of thousands became disillusioned, surrendering their faith.

Prior to and during the First World War, Adventists generally believed and taught that Turkey was "the king of the North" of Daniel 11,* that it would be driven out of Europe, that it would set up a capital in Jerusalem, and that it would then be permanently obliterated. This would be followed by the battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ. Instead, the Turks remained in Europe, were driven out of Jerusalem, and continue to exist as a people today, with their own national identity.

Other misinterpretations might be mentioned (of Matthew 24:34 and Luke 21:24, for instance), but the examples given will suffice to make the point. The question is, Have we learned from the mistakes of the past?

Learning From the Past

Presumably most of us are anxious not to repeat the mistakes of the past. For the misinterpretation of prophecy not only calls the credibility of the church into question, but traumatizes those who have staked their belief in the events foretold. But if we do not learn from history, we will be condemned, as George Santayana said, to repeat it.

So what lessons can we learn from the past? I offer three that, I think, can help us avoid another prophetic scandal and, more important, increase our faith.

1. In many prophecies there is a mysterious element that often eludes us. When Jesus said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days" (John 2:19), no one, not even His disciples, knew what He was talking about. Neither was it necessary that they know just then. Again, when He said to Nicodemus, "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up" (John 3:14), His words left the Pharisee mystified. However, it wasn't essential that Nicodemus understand the cryptic message until after it had been fulfilled.

Few prophecies were given to make us wise before the event. Irenaeus put it even stronger when he said that "no prophecy is fully understood until after the fulfillment of it."3

Painfully we were forced to admit the truth of this in regard to Turkey. On December 20, 1917, just 10 days after the Turks were expelled from Jerusalem, contrary to our predictions, this sage advice was printed in the Review and Herald: "The forecasts of the best-informed men have come to naught. It is better for us to await patiently the progress of human history in the unfolding of God's plan, than to run ahead of His providence and make statements which time may demonstrate to have been only idle speculation." 4

Our faith is not to be built upon any human interpretation of prophecy. Rather, it is to be in the Lord of prophecy, who is vindicated when His forecasts are fulfilled in history. Jesus Himself said, "I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe" (John 14:29). The purpose of prophecy is not to make us knowledgeable beforehand, but believers afterward.

It is not necessary to clarify and explain every mysterious symbol and each cryptic and obscure statement found in unfulfilled prophecy, as though our very salvation as individuals or as a church depended on it. It is more important that we commit these prophecies to memory so that when they are fulfilled in history, we will recognize their fulfillment, and thereby our faith will be strengthened.

2. We should be ready to abandon incorrect positions. We may hold personal or denominational views about unfulfilled prophecy, but we must not set them in concrete as did the Jewish leaders of

Jesus' day.

Interestingly, Jesus' disciples also believed much the same as others of their time regarding the coming of Messiah (see Matt. 16:21, 22; Luke 19:11; Acts 1:6). Why, then, did they not join the religious leaders in their rejection of Jesus? Because they did not worship their own opinions and traditions. They were willing to bring their own ideas regarding prophecy into harmony with God's. They were amenable to correction. Like these first disciples, we today should stand ready to accept correc-

We are all free to speculate on prophecy. But our personal or denominational understanding of unfulfilled details of prophecy must remain tentative until verified by fulfillment in history.

And why can't we accept the prophecies just as they read, without adding to them or subtracting from them (see Rev. 22:18, 19)? Would that not be a more mature approach to unfulfilled prophecy than to run ahead of God, and then be forced to back up because we have taken a wrong turn? Let us build plenty of rubber into our understanding of prophecy, for it is possible that one day we may have to bounce away from some of our

traditional concepts of the future to new positions.

3. God's plan is always better. We should remind ourselves that God's way will always be better than our way. Our limited, and sometimes distorted, perceptions of the future can hardly measure up to the reality itself. The future will always excel our finite visions of it, and we'd be less than wise to cling to any worthless images that would keep us from the glorious truth. As Christians we do not have a mandate from Christ to defend our personal or denominational points of view regarding unfulfilled prophecy.

We need to remind ourselves constantly that our faith is not built on the sands of prophetic speculation, but on the solid rock of Christ's life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession for us. Some prophecies are still sealed, with the consequence that their meanings remain indistinct at present. But the cross of Christ has been raised up where all can see it. Unfulfilled prophecy exists only on the borders of our experience in the cloudland of hope, where the future is still hazy. But the basics of salvation are clear, and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the very grounds of our being.

When the prophetic scroll is unrolled by history, it will be time to take a dogmatic stand. Until then it is sufficient that our faith be established on what Christ has already done, and upon His continuing ministry in heaven for us. Those who stand here anchor on a solid foundation that will not be shaken.

Ritchie E. Way is pastor of the Royal Oak Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Zealand.

^{*}Bible texts in this article are from the New In-

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LOMOSEXUALITY; CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

BY CALVIN B. ROCK

am a nonpracticing male homosexual. Like others, I was born with this orientation. I have confided this to my pastor, who states that I may have to be disfellowshipped. It's too bad there is so much hatred and misunderstanding regarding people like me.

The most controversial element of your statement has to do with your assertion "Like others, I was born with this orientation." While babies are sometimes born with biological or gender confusion, homosexual preference usually results from other factors. Most Christian counselors regard the causes of homosexuality as environmental, that is, sociological or psychological, suggesting that such preferences are most often acquired, not inherited.

Based upon scriptural injunctions such as Romans 1:24-32, Seventh-day Adventists regard sexual involvement with persons of the same sex as sin. The church views gender confusion as an aberration amenable to correction surgically, medicinally, or psychologically; and if not, certainly to the control of spiritual force.

In any case, the fact that you do not practice homosexuality, in spite of temptation or orientation, is the important thing. Temptation is *not* sin; yielding *is*. One does not jeopardize salvation through urgings that by the grace of God are resisted. Such a person becomes an overcomer.

Consequently, I cannot imagine an informed pastor or church board recommending dismissal for an individual in your category (see *SDA Church Manual*, 1986 ed., p. 162). We are all full-fledged sinners before conver-

sion, but at conversion we become nonpracticing sinners saved by grace.

Violence against gay men and lesbians has increased at an alarming rate. The recent report of the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce states that in 1988, 70 homosexuals were slain in the United States and violent homophobic incidents of all types totaled 7,248. This represents an increase from 7,008 in 1987, 4,946 in 1986, and 2,042 in 1985. Many attribute this rise in hostility to the perception that AIDS is a disease—or even a curse—brought about because of homosexual activity.

Seventh-day Adventist Christians, of course, decry hatred and mistreatment of any individual. The church, a haven of refuge for the dispossessed, must do more than express disapproval of homosexuality. It must teach and demonstrate the principles of love and rehabilitative support demonstrated in the ministry of Christ.

Because of the sixth commandment, I am against capital punishment. However, I do wish that all killers would be tortured or punished within an inch of their lives. I am sick of the violence in America. Some say that capital punishment is not a deterrent to killing, but at least it eliminates one more murderer. Is it wrong for Christians to feel this way?

Strictly interpreted, the sixth commandment states, "Thou shalt do no murder." The Old Testament contains many references to killings by the Israelites that were sanctioned or even ordered by God. What He did not condone, and what most modern

scholars understand the sixth commandment to condemn, is the taking of life for reasons such as revenge, ritual, or profit.

Capital punishment is clearly condoned in Genesis 9:6, where God commands: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." In Romans 13:4, Paul, referring to the state, says, "But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

It is difficult to argue against capital punishment strictly on scriptural prohibitions. A more persuasive case can be made from society's capacity to apply it fairly. It is not so much the use but the abuse of capital punishment that worries most people.

Eleven prisoners were executed in six states last year, making a total of 104 executions since 1976, when the Supreme Court reinstated capital punishment. Of this 11, six were White males and five were Black.

The real distinction is not simply race, however, but one's political and financial support. Poor abandoned Whites are much more likely to die for their crimes than their more fortunate counterparts.

Other reasons for questioning the practicality and morality of capital punishment are: 1. Judicial error. Postexecution discoveries reveal that no less than 25 people have been mistakenly put to death in this century alone. 2. Prevention value. Evidence indicates that capital punishment does not reduce violence. In fact, many witnesses who might have lived have been killed because of the criminal's fear of identification. 3. The ethics of love and forgiveness. Even though we have no New Testament injunctions against capital punishment, Jesus' move from "an eye for an eye" to a "Father, forgive them" morality suggests efforts of mercy and rehabilitation vis-à-vis strict justice and retaliation.

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valiant hospital patient fights for life after an automobile accident. Nurses and doctors work feverishly to save her life, but can't.

A man just-retired suffers a stroke. His children fly to his side, temporarily leaving full-time jobs and families of their own. Their father does not die. But as days turn into one week, then two, they face hard choices about how to provide the extended care he now

Parents and teachers, pastors and chaplains, social workers, counselors, and health-care profestween her father, her husband, and her children had completely worn

When Jean responded by saying "It sounds like you're exhausted; I hear you saying that . . . ," Carol was amazed at the relief she felt. Someone heard her. Someone understood! Encouraged by sympathetic listening, she decided she could discuss her exhaustion with her family. Together they found ways to work together more effectively.

Passive listening may suggest your desire to understand. But active listening confirms that you are attempting to understand. This encourages a person to keep talking, to

go deeper.

Active listening includes nodding the head, eye contact, and reflecting back what you have heard. Like using a mirror when combing your hair, active listening gives you the opportunity to confirm impressions or to correct mistakes or misinterpretation.

CARING FOR CARE-GIVERS

The person you save from burnout could be yourself.

BY BEULAH STEVENS

sionals. Caring is their life. But who cares for them? Who cares for care-givers?

ick, a veteran church member, confesses, "For years I didn't think I needed to worry about speaking to my brothers and sisters in church. Since they were good Christians, I didn't think they needed my encouragement. Now I realize that's not true."

Maggie asks, "How can I offer anything to professional caregivers? They have all the training.

What can I do?"

At one time or another nearly all of us will be care-givers. The responsibilities can be demanding, even overwhelming. What kind of support do we need? What support can we give others who are in this situation?

knee. Mom bandages it and hugs away the pain. A teenager fails a test or breaks up with his girlfriend. Dad

listens and offers

sympathetic advice. A

child skins her

Care-givers 1. Listen and give feedback.

How to Support Other

Carol's father has Alzheimer's disease. She told her friend Jean she didn't think she could go on much longer. Dividing her attention be-

2. Imagine yourself in the other person's situation.

Because no two experiences are exactly the same, you can never say "I understand exactly how you feel." But you can draw from a common emotional fund. Although a chaplain sitting in the intensivecare waiting room with a panicstricken family may never have lost a 10-year-old child, he has experienced loss. He does not dwell on his losses at this highly emotional time, but because he has known loss, he can better support the family.

Now picture the chaplain going back to his office. He is emotionally drained; he needs to refill his own resources of strength. He is a caregiver in need of care. A colleague senses his depletion-and helps him process his feelings by attentive listening. God designed us to help

one another.

3. Don't tell a person not to feel.

God created us with feelings. Feelings are. To tell doctors or nurses how they should or should not feel as they struggle to save a 10-year-old child would only add to their stress.

Expressing our perceptions of how people should or should not feel will not change people's feelings—but it may complicate situations. When a person is crying and we say "Don't cry" or "Everything will be all right" when everything is not all right, our words add a layer of confusion at just the time when someone is trying to work through a difficult situation or identify his own resources.

What do you do with feelings? Feelings are handled most effectively by providing ourselves times for honest expression and evaluation. Care-givers need to know that their feelings are accepted without judgment, with "oughts" and "shoulds" laid aside.¹

4. Don't make excuses for the care-giver.

Carleen confessed to Janet in the teachers' room after school, "I lost my temper today during art class. I feel so bad."

Janet was tempted to respond by offering excuses for Carleen. Janet knew from experience how easily this could happen. But she also knew that Carleen could best be helped by empathetic listening. If

Janet made excuses, especially early in the conversation, Carleen might stop talking about the problem but keep struggling with her feelings. Instead, Janet replied, "It sounds as though you've had a bad day."

Accepting someone's feelings and hearing him out does not mean you condone his actions. You are trying to understand. Care-givers need that.

5. Don't take over the problem.

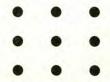
As a chaplain I have to be cautious that I do not take over another person's challenge. Rescuing often causes resentment.

While Galatians 6 admonishes us to bear one another's burdens, it also says that each must bear his own load. We are most caring when we help individuals express, examine, and deal with their own problems. This has the potential for being successful and satisfying for both the helpers and the helped.

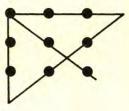
6. Use your ingenuity to identify alternatives.

We are often at our best when we look for answers beyond the obvious. Whether helping those in need or reaching out to an overstressed care-giver, we need to tap into our creativity. God made people to be creative.

I don't know who originated the following nine-dot puzzle, but it graphically demonstrates that creativity may mean going outside obvious parameters. How can you connect all nine dots with four straight lines without taking your pencil off the paper?



To do so, you must go *outside* the nine-dot square. The same principle applies in real-life problem-solving.



7. Pray.

Prayer heightens our sensitivity to others' needs and allows God to use us as His channel. To care means to enter into communion with another. To pray means to enter into communion with God. When these are brought together, much is accomplished.

Caring for Yourself as a Care-giver

When you reach out to others, you yourself become a care-giver. You need attention too.

All of us do best when we have the support of others. But we can do things for ourselves, too.

■ Apply the suggestions listed above to yourself.

■ Take care of your personal needs. Don't skimp on your own mental, spiritual, or physical health. Eat and sleep; play and rest; seek God in solitude and in the company of believers.

■ Listen to yourself. Yes, there are many ways you can do this. You

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR ENCOURAGERS

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).*

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" (1 Thess. 5:11).

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Heb. 3:13).

"Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement) . . ." (Acts 4:36).

*Bible texts in this sidebar are from the New International Version.

may write in a journal. You may dialogue back and forth with yourself like characters in a script. This helps you reflect on your own state-

ments, and clarify them.

Self-talk is extremely powerful. If you constantly think of yourself as a victim, your self-talk may reinforce that role; you will stay a victim. But if you press on and search for alternatives, surprising possibilities may open for you. (Maybe this is why we find biblical admonition to think on positive things.)2

■ Be honest about your feelings. Don't scold yourself. Recognize your feelings just as they are. Ask God to help you make healthy choices as you respond to your feel-

ings.

■ Visualize things as you would like them to be. I encourage you to minimize time spent on excuses. Making excuses and assigning blame is usually counterproductive. Focus on what will make your situation better and the steps needed to bring that about. "As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he." 3

■ Take action where you have domain. When God made us in His image, He gave us the ability to think and to do.4 As we exercise that ability we will find increased en-

ergy.

Be realistic about your limits. Even you, a care-giver of caregivers, cannot take on everything that needs to be done. Be careful not to assume responsibilities that God has not assigned to you. Recognize which problems rightly belong to other people.

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- I think this may be related to Jesus' teaching in
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CHILDREN'S CORNER.

LAD AND HIS LUNCH

BY ALYCE PICKETT

h, Mama, I have to tell you what happened today!" young Johnny bubbled with voice full of excitement.

"I want to hear it—all of it," his mother answered. "Start at the beginning. What did Jesus say? What did He do? Oh, I wish I could have been there."

"Yeah, I wish that you could have been there too, Mama," the lad replied. Then he began telling her of his day with Jesus and the crowd beside the sea.

"I've never seen so many people-thousands of them! They were sitting on the grass while Jesus spoke. He used plain words, too, Mama, so that even the children could understand. I knew all the time He was the Messiah.'

"How could you be sure?" his

mother questioned.

"I could see love in His face and hear it in His kind voice. When you see Him you'll know what I mean. It was really a happy time when He began healing people. Blind people were seeing again-you should have seen their faces! Dumb people were talking and singing; cripples were running around; sick folk got up from their mats feeling fine! It was great!

"How many were healed?" Mother asked.

"Oh, lots. I don't know how many, but wait till I tell you what happened next," he smiled.

"All right, I'm waiting."

"Well, I hadn't eaten the lunch you gave me. Because so much was happening, I hadn't thought about being hungry! But Andrew, one of Jesus' men, had seen my lunch. He came and asked if I would let the Master have it. I was beginning to feel hungry by that time, but as soon as I heard that Jesus wanted it, I gladly gave it to Andrew to take to Him."

"That was nice," Mother agreed. "I have plenty of food here for you."

"No, no," Johnny said. "I'm not hungry. Nobody there went away hungry, because Jesus fed everybody. He prayed over my lunch, then began breaking the loaves and fishes. He kept breaking and handing the food to His men, and they passed it out to all the people there. Lots of food was left after everybody finished eating. Can you believe it?"

"Yes, I believe it," Mother exclaimed. "Jesus used your little lunch for a miracle! What a blessing for the hungry people to be fed!"

"What a blessing for me, too," Johnny said, "to help Jesus today. I'm going to help Him every way I can as long as I live."



WHY GOD DOESN'T ANSWER PRAYER

BY BRENT H. VAN ARSDELL

was a good Pathfinder. At age 10 I kept a song in my heart, I was courteous and obedient, and I walked softly in the sanctuary. I learned a lot about being a Christian in Pathfinders, and I learned a lot in other places, too. In Sabbath school, as well as from my parents, I learned that God answers prayer. He wouldn't answer prayers for selfish stuff like a new minibike or new swim fins, but as long as you asked for something good—not just for money or some thing—He'd answer your prayers all right.

It was all there in the Bible, or at least I had read it in Uncle Arthur's books. When prophets prayed for something, it would come about. Elijah the prophet prayed and even brought a dead boy back to life, and he could do simple stuff, too! Why, one time he prayed that it wouldn't rain, and it didn't rain for three years! I put a lot of stock in this

prayer business.

Believing was a big part of it too. You had to have faith, which was just a funny word for saying that you had to really believe that "God was gonna do what you prayed for."

In the Cow Pasture

I was a good Pathfinder. I could put up a pup tent in 10 minutes, if all the parts were there, and I could even tie a double bowline. The Pathfinders planned a weekend camp out in a cow pasture on the other side of town. That was the good part. But the weatherman said it was going to rain. That was the bad part.

God controls the weather, so I prayed that it wouldn't rain on our campout. But it bugged me some that maybe the farmers' crops

needed rain, and that *they* might be praying for rain while *I* was praying for no rain. So I prayed that it just wouldn't rain on our cow pasture.

The Pathfinder leader, in spite of the weather report, was determined to go ahead with the campout. After all, the weatherman had been wrong before, and besides, it didn't look like rain. So we camped in the cow pasture. I set up my tent in less than 10 minutes, and I prayed and believed that it wouldn't rain.

But the weatherman wasn't wrong this time. The wind blew like a hurricane. It blew our tents down, and the rain filled them up. Then I thought of another Bible story—Noah—and I felt like a dinosaur treading water.

Does God answer the prayer of faith?

On December 21, 1988, Pan Am Flight 103 was blown up with more than 250 people on board. There were no survivors. Were there Christians on board? Yes. Did they pray for a safe flight? Probably. I do when I fly. Were their prayers answered?

In the book of Job we find Job offering sacrifices for his children (Job 1:5). But in verse 19 a windstorm blew down the house where they were feasting, killing them all. The windstorm and the rain fall on both the just and the unjust. Nor do the evils that happen to us always bring some greater good in the future.

Should we still pray? Of course we should, but we should remember that the promise of Matthew 7:7, "Ask, and it shall be given you," follows the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6, which tells us what to ask for. We should ask for our daily

bread, for forgiveness, and not to be led into temptation.

But should we not still pray for what we really want? Don't you tell your closest friend your hopes and dreams?

God describes Himself as a lover, and He wants to hear from us as much as any young man ever wanted to get a letter from a special girl or to hear the phone ring. But His promises are for salvation, and strength for the day—even when it

Two priests lived in a monastery on a mountain and they each bought a pine tree for planting, one on each side of the mountain. The first priest planted his tree, then prayed, "Lord, send the rain. This tree needs rain to be a green pine tree"-and it rained. The next day he prayed, "Lord, send the sun. It needs the sun to be a growing pine tree"-and the sun shone. And the next day he prayed, "Lord, send the cold. It needs the cold to be a strong pine tree." The cold came, and the pine tree froze to death. He went to his friend and asked, "How's your pine tree?"

"Well, it's doing fine."

"But did you pray for it?"

"Yes, I did."

"Well, what did you pray for?"
His friend replied, "Every day I
prayed, 'Lord, give it what it
needs.'"

I'll Still Believe

That is my prayer too.

Oh, yes, I still pray that God will keep me safe and well. And I pray for my family, also. But even if God doesn't answer all my prayers regarding my hopes and dreams, like He didn't answer Job's prayers for his children, I'll still believe. Because even though the great controversy sometimes seems like a cosmic game of dice, I've read the end of the book, and I know who's going to win!

Brent H. Van Arsdell works for the Risk Management Services of the General Conference.

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Mission and Culture

hat we traditionally call the "finishing of the work" remains a continuing concern in the Adventist Church. In the past 18 years or so, several major church initiatives have been directed toward this goal.



In the 1970s, for example, the North American Division initiated a series of what might be termed *mission drives*. There was "Mission '72," "Mission '73"—on up to "Mission '76." The "1000 Days of Reaping" program followed, involving the world field, in the run up to the 1985 General Conference session. "Harvest 90," the drive for the present quinquennium, is now in full swing, with a world baptism report, as of June 30, totaling some 1.7 million.

Impressive as this may appear, there is a sense that it is a mere drop in the bucket when seen against the background of the vast numbers of unreached people in the world, numbering in the billions.

It is this sense that has driven church leaders to pursue the concept of a "global strategy" for the finishing of the work. A committee has been appointed, and this past July convened one of its most important meetings so far, at the Cohutta Springs Adventist Center in Georgia. Perhaps the most critical issue facing it—and the church—is how to carry the one gospel to "all nations" in a world with a heightened sense of national identity and culture. How do we divest Christianity of its perceived alienness and foreignness? How do we remove it, so to

speak, from its Western pot and allow it to take root in native soil around the world?

Gottfried Oosterwal, who earned doctorates in anthropology and comparative religions and theology at the University of Utrecht, Holland, and who has spent many years in the overseas work of the church, grappled with this question in a devotional presented to the committee. His remarks constitute this week's AR Seminar.





Shedding the Gospel's Western Package

BY GOTTERIED OOSTERWAL

"Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up by revelation; and I laid before them (but privately before those who were of repute) the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain. But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. But because of false brethren secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage—to them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. . .

"(For he who worked through Peter for the mission to the circumcised worked through me also for the Gentiles), and when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circum-

cised. . . . " (Gal. 2:1-10).*

In his Epistle to the Galatians the apostle Paul deals with a most destructive conflict among the believers in that province—and in other parts of Asia. The issue was whether the converts from a non-Jewish background were bound to express their faith in terms of Jewish culture—the culture that had given the original church its particular identity and authenticity, and through whose customs and traditions the gospel was first formulated. Or, on the other hand, whether the freedom to which the gospel calls us (Gal. 5:13) and which we experience in Christ Jesus allows, even demands, that we experience the good news and express our response to our Lord in terms of our own culture and values and traditions.

The apostle Paul unequivocally opted for the second alternative. It was the very heart of his global strategy for a finished work.

As he writes in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23—a passage that remains forever the charter for an effective global mission strategy—"for though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those under the law I became as one under the law . . . that I

may win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law . . . that I might win those outside the law . . . I have become all things to all men [Roman, Greek, Jew, bondman, free, European, African, Asian], that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel."

Sister White, commenting on this biblical charter for any effective mission strategy, writes: "The apostle [Paul] varied his manner of labor, shaping his message [not just his methods, but his message] to the circumstances under which he was placed." And then she adds: "We also must learn to adapt our labors to the conditions of the people—to meet men where they are." "Many efforts which have been made at great expense to present the truth—have been in a large measure unsuccessful, because the very kind of labor that is required has not been done." "

That puts the issue which so sharply divided the churches in Galatia, Syria, Cilicia, and Antioch clearly before us as the most urgent and the most relevant issue in all planning for a global strategy in mission.

From Crisis to Council

Paul's position was not shared by many other leaders in the early church. In fact, most of the apostles and elders-including Peter, John, and James-rejected it. And so did practically the whole church in Jerusalem, headquarters of the growing Christian movement. They were convinced that the global mission of the church could be accomplished only by presenting the one message "once delivered to the saints" in the same form and in the same manner as they had received it. And they insisted, for the sake of unity and the church's authenticity, that the life of faith should be lived and expressed in the same way, everywhere. It was on this issue that Paul confronted Peter publicly: "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?" (Gal. 2:14).

This conflict led to much debate and bitter dissension among the believers, and threatened to split the whole church. Those who have tried to reduce it to a quarrel over the issues of circumcision and the keeping of the Mosaic dietary laws thereby destroy its relevance for our time. Much more was at stake here. Paul put it this way to the Galatians: Those who demand of you that

When living and working among the Greeks, Paul couched his message in the terms, metaphors, and patterns of thinking prevalent in Greek culture.

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you express your faith in terms of Jewish ethnic and cultural traditions are perverting the gospel (Gal. 1:6, 7). And I don't care, he says, whether this message comes to you from the leaders in God's church, "from those who were reputed to be something"—or even from an angel from heaven. It is a false gospel (Gal. 2:6; 1:8).

Besides perverting the gospel and robbing you of your freedom in Christ, Paul went on, these "false brethren," these "hypocrites"—he certainly did not mince words—are robbing God's mission of its dynamic power and making it ineffective, even to the point where the Lord cannot return in our lifetime.

No wonder that the apostle Paul appeared so uncompromising on this issue. After all, at stake was the essence of the gospel and the very nature of mission. He would rather risk bitter dissension and division in the church than to give in on this matter, even one iota.

Paul and Barnabas did the right thing: they requested a meeting of the brethren, where delegates from the major mission churches could discuss the issue with the Jerusalem leaders. This was God's way of solving problems in the church.

At the council, Peter told of his own spiritual struggle on the matter, and how God through a special vision had changed his mind. This honest confession on the part of a pillar in the church prepared the delegates to listen with greater openness to the accounts given by Paul and Barnabas about the ways God was drawing thousands of people from different cultures to Himself, and how these converts were responding to the gospel in their own cultural ways.

It was then that James, the brother of the Lord, and chairman of the council, spoke up, formulating what clearly was the consensus, under the Spirit, among the delegates present. Said James: "It is my judgment" that we should not demand of the believers from those other cultures that they follow our Jewish customs and traditions, not even those national traditions and customs that God Himself once gave to Abraham and Moses, such as circumcision and dietary laws. For many of those things that we consider holy and good and a sign of the church's identity and authenticity appear, in the setting of a different culture, merely as a "yoke upon the neck" of the believers. What we do demand of you, converts from other cultures, said James, is that you give up those elements of your culture that are clearly inconsistent with the principles of the gospel and the high standards of Christian morality. "The mind of the apostles regarding this matter," Sister White writes, "was as the mind of the Spirit of God." 4

Entrenched Bigotry

Should not this have ended all discussion and

division in the church, thereby opening the way for an unprecedented advance in mission for a finished work in all the world? It did not, and what a tragedy! Paul tells the believers in Galatia what happened after the Jerusalem meeting. Instead of coming to an end, the conflict, bitterness, and division spread throughout the churches of Syria, Cilicia, and Galatia. As a result, the work of God was not finished.

Nearly 2,000 years have passed, and we are still in this vale of tears. The Lord still has not come, and there are at least 10 times as many people in the world today who have never even heard the gospel of Jesus Christ as in Paul's day. "It was not the will of God," Sister White writes, "that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed." ⁵

What went wrong way back then? Two things, and they should be a lesson to us as we are about to embark on a new and dynamic global outreach for a finished work.

The first, in the words of Sister White, is that "there was a faction of ambitious and self-confident brethren who disagreed with [the council's decision]. These men assumed to engage in the work on their own responsibility." "From the first," she says, "the church has had such obstacles to meet and ever will have till the close of time." ⁶ How I wish we could prove our prophet wrong on this point. Must the dissension and conflict over this issue really be with us "till the close of time"?

It is important to note here that among this dissenting faction were many prominent apostles and elders and other leading brethren. "Even the disciples," Mrs. White writes, "were not all prepared to accept willingly the decision of the council." Some of them dissented openly; others went along in public, but stuck to their dissenting opinion in private.

Neither was it just bigotry and unbridled prejudice that led to this ongoing dissension. At stake for them were the identity of the church and the authenticity of its message. The converts from those other cultures greatly outnumbered those from the Jewish community. The latter were afraid that *unless* their cultural ways and expressions that had put a stamp on the early church would be made a requirement for all the believers, everywhere, the church would lose its original identity. The issue fully repeats itself in our time!

The second reason that the dissension did not end with the decision of the Jerusalem Council, as the apostle Paul's account of his conflict with Peter and the brethren who "came from James" (Gal. 2:11-14, KJV) clearly illustrates, centered on the sheer force of ingrained habit and prejudice. It is one thing for a church council to agree on an issue in principle, but it is something totally different when it comes to its actual application and implementation in real, practical life.

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message in the
same manner
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received it.

They were con-

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global mission

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James, the president of the early church and chairman of the Jerusalem Council, certainly agreed with the principle that he himself, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, had helped to formulate. But still he remained a stickler for Jewish customs and national traditions. He may not have sent those brethren from his church in Jerusalem to Antioch later, or even authorized their mission. But those "certain men" who stirred up dissension in Antioch following the Jerusalem Council were clearly identified by Paul as associates of James. The brother of the Lord agreed on the principle. But in regard to its practical application, and especially on the issue as to how far one should go, the dissension remained, and even sharpened.

James, Peter, and many other disciples accused Paul of laxity and liberalism and of ultimately destroying the very identity of the church:

"When they saw the Christian church departing from the ceremonies and traditions of Judaism, and perceived that the peculiar sacredness with which the Jewish customs had been invested would soon be lost sight of in the light of the new faith, many grew indignant with Paul as the one who had, in a large measure, caused this change. ... They regarded Paul with disfavor because they thought that his principles in regard to the obligations of the Jewish law were lax." ⁹

This meant that with many of the apostles and leaders of the church, the principle agreed upon at the Jerusalem Council remained a dead letter. As a result, Mrs. White writes, "the church was threatened with division" ¹⁰ and the work of restoring the kingdom of God in that generation remained unfinished.

Important Lessons

There are a number of lessons to be learned from this disarmingly honest account the New Testament gives of the conflict over the core principle of the church's global strategy in mission.

- 1. All of us, leaders and members alike, no matter how dedicated to the cause of God we may be, are captives of our own cultures and of certain unrecognized prejudices. The conflict was not between "good guys" and "bad guys," as in a cheap Hollywood movie. The conflict was one of prejudice and ethnocentrism within good and dedicated men of God. Says Sister White, "Even the best of men, if left to themselves, will err in judgment." "May God give every man," she continues, "a realization of his helplessness, his inability to steer his own vessel straight and safe into the harbor." 12
- 2. The second lesson might best be articulated in the words of Mrs. White: "The history of this departure from right principles stands as a solemn warning to men in positions of trust in the cause of God, that they may not fail in integrity, but firmly adhere to principle. The greater the

responsibilities placed upon the human agent, and the larger his opportunities to dictate and control, the more harm he is sure to do if he does not carefully follow the way of the Lord and labor in harmony with the decisions arrived at by the general body of believers in united council." ¹³

3. The final lesson—in the words of Mrs. White again—is that "the church must never be brought under the control of human power. The traditions and maxims of men must not take the place of revealed truth. The advance of the gospel message must not be hindered by the prejudices and [cultural] preferences of men, whatever might be their position in the church." ¹⁴

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that we, the members of this committee, dare to state unequivocally, unitedly, and whole-heartedly, that we want to abide by the principle so clearly enunciated by the Jerusalem Council, and make it the basis of all our planning for a global strategy in mission for a finished work.

The whole history of mission and all research on the growth of the church attest to the fact that effectiveness in mission depends upon the church's ability to present the message in terms of people's own culture. Successful mission insists that people may experience and express their faith in forms and patterns most familiar to their own cultural ways and values and traditions. People need a church in which they feel at home!

This also means that no tradition or custom or expression of faith from one culture should dominate the faith of those in other cultures. The relationship between the churches from different cultures—from Africa and Asia and Europe—should be one of equality and mutuality, each assisting the other, respecting the other, supporting the other, serving the other, and, if needs be, correcting one another.

The affirmation of this principle as the core of all strategic planning for mission on a global scale is urgently needed. The real barriers to a rapid advance in mission are not religious or doctrinal, but social and cultural.

Repeating Past Mistakes

Once the church recognized and accepted its mission as universal in scope and objective, it inevitably came to grips with the question What should be the form of the message and the nature of our work as we cross from one culture into another—that is, from America to Europe (and later to Africa and Asia)? The missionaries and the leaders of the church (in the United States) were convinced—as were James and Peter and John in their time—that since the form of the message and the ways of experiencing and communicating it were God-given and divinely approved, the same forms and methods of labor should also be used by, and demanded of, con-

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verts from other cultures.

However, as in the days of Paul and Barnabas, our missionary pioneers soon encountered grave difficulties over this issue, and serious conflicts developed between a number of European believers and American workers over methods of labor and ways of formulating the message.

When American missionaries pitched a tent for public evangelism, for example, European believers would object, feeling that tent-evangelism, though a part of the culture of frontier America, had no place in the (often) medieval cities of Europe. There the tent was mainly associated with the circus, attracting children and drunks. Also, many Europeans were firmly convinced that instead of spending time and money on public efforts, much more time should be given to home visitation and personal evangelism.

Serious conflicts arose also over other issues as well—for example, on the question of writing and publishing the message. J. N. Andrews accused his European coworkers at the press of sabotaging his work. "They don't even know their own language," he wrote back home. For this reason, the document that reports this conflict with the same disarming honesty as the New Testament continues: "It will doubtless be the case that the work of preparing the truth in foreign tongues will ever be quite largely one of translation from the English." ¹⁵

To resolve the conflict, a missionary conference—actually, a series of conferences—was called in Basle, Switzerland, in 1885. Delegates from the various churches met with the American leaders of the church. Sister White was invited to give guidance. And guidance she gave indeed—both oral and written.

"When the mission fields in this new country were opened before me," she wrote, "I was shown that some things in every branch of the mission needed a different mold." ¹⁶ "I have been shown that souls here in Europe have been turned away from the truth because of a lack of tact and skill in presenting it." ¹⁷

On the issue of public evangelism versus home visitation, she said: "The work of the minister is not simply to preach, but it is to visit families at their homes, to pray with them, and to open to them the Scripture. He who conducts the work outside the pulpit in a proper manner will accomplish tenfold more than he who confines his labor to the desk." ¹⁸ (The whole history of evangelism and church growth in Europe proves that.) Wondering out loud how these millions of people in Europe can be reached with the third angel's message, Sister White stated, "It must be largely accomplished by persevering individual effort, by visiting the people at their homes." ¹⁹

Said Mrs. White again: "The third angel's message is not a narrow message. It is worldwide. . . . The history of God's work in the past shows

that some have an understanding of one thing, others of another. It is His plan that there should be a counseling together." ²⁰ And she continues in the same vein with regard to such issues as education (follow the European rather than the American model), church life and standards (do not prescribe what people should wear or not wear), and a number of other aspects of work and organization. In a letter to a leader, she observed: "Too many of the methods and habits and fashions have been transported from America..., and the result is not favorable." ²¹ Earlier she had related: "Had different plans of labor [in foreign lands] been adopted tenfold, yes, twentyfold more might have been accomplished." ²²

The Principle Applied

A shining example of this is the Adventist Church in Romania. From the very beginning it has been rooted in the Romanian cultural soil, following the principle outlined in the New Testament and the counsels of Sister White. With more than 60,000 believers and a consistent and rapid growth, in spite of severe hardships and persecutions, it challenges many other churches on the continent of Europe, where the SDA Church has remained to a large extent a "foreign sect."

Another example may be cited from the Pathfinder work in the Netherlands. As long as it had to copy that from the U.S.A., it did not succeed. Against much opposition, the then youth leader, Karel van Oossanen (later president of the union, and now secretary of the Trans-European Division), sought and received permission to have the Pathfinder work absorbed into the flourishing Dutch Boy Scout movement, while maintaining all the characteristics of an SDA Pathfinder organization.

The result was astounding. More than 80 percent of our youth stayed in the church, compared with less than 40 percent before. And the plan not only kept our own youth in the church, but also attracted many other young people not of our church.

A look at the world church confirms over and over again that wherever we allow people to hear and respond to the message in terms of their own culture, the church grows and its mission advances. Wherever we demand of them that they adopt our (Western) cultural ways as part of their conversion, the mission is weak, with very little growth.

I want to make clear that no criticism is intended of those men and women who in faith have responded to God's call to serve Him in foreign missions. Their dedication, their faith, their wholehearted commitment, and their self-sacrifice stand as models of what we all ought to be!

But Ellen G. White's tough, uncompromising stand on the relation of mission to culture, much

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of it directed to J. N. Andrews, our first foreign missionary, should give us all reason for pause. At stake was the principle that makes for a rapid advance in mission and the finishing of God's work in this generation!

A Sobering Tragedy

We notice that after Acts 15, no further mention is made in Scripture of the church in Jerusalem, of its elders and leaders and prophets. That church ceased to be a factor in the growth and missionary expansion of the church. It is Antioch (where the followers of Christ were first called "Christians") that took center stage in the forward advance of the church. The leadership shifted to Ephesus and other city churches in Asia and Europe. These churches became the models of the world church, no longer Jerusalem-which is not even listed among the seven churches of Revelation.

That was a tragedy-for two reasons: First, because the equality and mutuality between the churches, emphasized at the Jerusalem Council, had become empty words. The churches from the non-Jewish, Western cultures became dominant in every sense of that word, but especially in the development of Christian thought.

Second, as a result of the foregoing, the church became a captive of Western thought, Western values, without the much-needed correction that Jewish thought and tradition had to offer. Heresies developed. The seventh-day Sabbath was given up and replaced with a heathen day, Sunday. Christians soon lost sight of the law, and its importance for Christian life and nurture. The dichotomy of Greek thinking led to such unbiblical concepts as the dualism between an immortal soul and a mortal body, between an exalted clergy and the ordinary laity, between church and society, religion and the world. All this could have been avoided if monistic Hebrew thinking and Jewish traditions had remained a factor in shaping the development of Christianity.

The implication for today should be clear. Even though Adventist believers in the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America constitute the vast majority of our membership, there will ever be the need for the continuous nurture from the thinking, values, and traditions of the church in America, the living faith of the American pioneers, as well as the stimulation from the current American Adventist thinking and behavior.

It was God's will that He should reveal Himself to men and women of the culture of the midnineteenth-century American frontier. Not because they were better than others, or more worthy of receiving God's special revelation for these last days. But God did see, in the specific values of the American frontier culture and in the manifest destiny of that nation, basic elements needed for the rise, growth, and continuous nurture of the great Adventist movement in all the world.

In this respect, one might think of the powerful action-orientedness of the American culture, its future-orientedness, its focus on the role and responsibility of the individual, its spirit of volunteerism. These and many other values have made the Adventist Church the most widespread, single Protestant missionary movement in the world today. It would be detrimental, if not fatal, to the continuous growth of the church if the world church, in an exaggerated spirit of diversity, would lose sight of the special revelation embodied in the life and work and tradition of the church in the United States of America. If this sounds ethnocentric, so be it. The lessons to be learned from the consequences of the conflicts after the Jerusalem Council are too important to be ignored. They must not be repeated.

Thus Scripture, with disarming honesty, has preserved the accounts of those conflicts: to instruct and confront us, to correct, prepare, and equip us for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). And that good work is nothing else but to prepare the whole world for the soon return of Christ and the restoration of His kingdom.

Our strength is in the name of the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth, whose faithfulness and mercy last forever, and who does not forsake the works of His own hands. It is He who began this work of mission in response to the demonic intrusion of sin into this world. He paid the price for it in the death of His own Son, Jesus Christ. He also will finish it. May it happen soon-in our lifetime still.

*Unless otherwise noted, Bible texts in this article are from the Revised Standard Version.

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Dr. Oosterwal is director of the Institute of World Mission at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

If this sounds ethnocentric, so be it.

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On Friday night, 27 people accepted Christ as their personal Saviour.

Congress Draws Youth From Four Continents

Spain hosts gathering of 5,000.

n international youth congress in Barcelona, Spain, July 25-29, attracted 3,750 young people from

The program stressed evangelism, while various topics developed the theme "With Christ in the

World." Preaching, lectures, a concert, and international evenings were much appreciated, as were a minimarathon and a large swimming pool.

On Friday afternoon a tree-planting ceremony was held in a nearby park. An iron plate with a message from Adventist young people and the congress logo was placed at

the site.

wrote their names on decision cards given in response to the preaching of Carlos Puyol, president of the Spanish Union. During the final meeting on Saturday night, Jesus Zabala, director of the Religious Department of the Spanish government, delivered a speech in which he said he had been much impressed by the Adventist youth.



Congress director John Graz shares an experience with Israel Leito.

30 countries. Delegations came from Europe, Africa, French Polynesia, and, for the first time, from the Soviet Union. About 4,000 attended the various meetings, and 5,200 were present on Sabbath morning.

Before the opening, 800 posters were placed on both sides of the main avenues of Barcelona and a press conference was held. Don Enric Puij, general director of youth for the state of Catalonia, welcomed the participants; and Edwin Ludescher, president of Euro-Africa Division, delivered the opening message.

By John Graz, communication director, Euro-Africa Division.

On Friday evening, 27 young adults were baptized. Two of them. who had been converted in jail, received special permission to be baptized during the congress. More than 40 policemen, sent to look after them, sat on the first rows. One of the prisoners had the joy of embracing his mother on the platform.



peal by Israel Leito, of the General

Conference Department of Church

Ministries, 100 youth made the de-

cision to be baptized and came to

the platform. The moving cere-

mony was reported on local and

Sabbath morning, hundreds

national TV news.

During the ap- More than 5,000 people attended Sabbath morning services.

African Sabbath Schools Seek Training, Materials

Three unions in the Eastern Africa Division hosted Sabbath school seminars during July. The first took place in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, where 82 delegates—representing 484 churches with 111,368 members—consisted of church ministries directors, pastors, and Sabbath school officers and teachers.

Eugene Fransch, Zambesi Union director of church ministries; Solomon Wolde-Endreas, division church ministries director; and I presented a Sabbath school leadership training course. Exposure to new and even traditional materials revealed that Sabbath school supplies are the primary need in this field.

In Lusaka, the Zambia Union Sabbath school seminar attracted primarily church ministries directors and associates, and shared time with lay activities ministries sessions conducted by Pastor Wolde-Endreas. P. Mwansa and F. Chimoga, union church ministries director and associate, led the discussion of local Sabbath school needs.

Supplies Needed

Great anxiety exists concerning Sabbath school lessons because of the difficulty in obtaining them. The English lessons usually arrive late. Ordered from the Review and Herald and the Southern Publishing Association of South Africa, the translated copies, printed by local newspaper presses, are seldom available before the quarter begins. Members do not have any adult lessons for this present quarter. However, a press has been donated to the Zambia Union, the new manager has arrived, and soon Sabbath school lessons will be printed by their own press.

By Gilbert J. Bertochini, associate director, Church Ministries Department, General Conference. Sabbath school leaders appealed for supplies. They would like the churches in America to send them outdated devices and felt aids. Foreign exchange makes it very difficult for them to purchase the many supplies they need.

Forty people attended the East African Union Sabbath school seminar, as delegates from the largest union mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The meetings were held on the campus of the University of Eastern Africa.

A. J. Kutondo, union church ministries director, and B. M. Ruguri, associate director, have shared the responsibility for Adventist Youth, family life, lay activities, Sabbath school, and stewardship ministries for six conferences and fields, with

more than 1,052 churches and 256,147 members.

Following the seminar, Solomon Wolde-Endreas and I met with Kutondo and Ruguri to formulate plans for meeting the needs of the 300,000 Sabbath school members in Kenya and Uganda. We agreed that the East African Union Mission will order one complete set of lessons and program helps from cradle roll to adult for each conference and field. The union will duplicate the adult Sabbath school program helps, and will order 200 Sabbath school manuals from the Review and Herald at a reduced price. It will poll the conferences and fields for orders for Picture Rolls, and order these from the Africa Herald Publishing House, along with a supply of memory verse cards.

It is hoped that these new procedures will enable this field to have the materials needed to make Sabbath school the soul-winning and holding medium it ought to be.

It runs people's lives. Sometimes it even runs governments. But what power runs it?

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Ohio Hospital Promotes Adventist Mission

Uses prayer, literature, Bible studies to witness

ncreasingly, people wonder if Adventist hospitals are fulfilling a mission for the church. Their concerns appear legitimate, as pressure is brought to bear upon our healthcare institutions to comply with government regulations and costeffectiveness. This in turn places pressure upon what we have considered part of our mission: taking time with patients, keeping the Sabbath free from nonessential activities, and keeping to the basics of preventive health and intervention in order to avoid the high cost of modern technology associated with crisis intervention.

Have these trends taken away our opportunity for mission? As director of pastoral services at Kettering Medical Center (KMC), I have found that mission is not only possible but is happening.

Beginning With Prayer

Every Wednesday morning I meet with a group of physicians for prayer. The doctors pray for their patients and share their concerns for spiritual as well as physical healing. Our mission is enhanced when patients realize that their doctor prays for them.

In what we call the circle of love, before each patient goes to heart surgery the nurses on the coronary intensive-care unit hold hands around the bed and pray for that person. This experience makes a

ings begin with prayer and devotions in which all decisions are held up before God for guidance.

lasting impression on hearts. The hundreds of daily staff meet-

Adventist witness often begins

with literature distribution. In the past 12 months Kettering and Sycamore hospitals have distributed 191,600 pieces of literature to patients, families, and friends, pointing to our hope in Jesus Christ. But we are not satisfied with distributing literature like the leaves of autumn and leaving the development of interest to chance. The hospitals have hired a full-time minister who works for the Ohio Conference, with most of his salary coming from KMC and its supporting physicians. This person follows up Bible study interests referred to him by physicians, chaplains, and literature requests.

Mission Makes a Difference

The churches surrounding the medical institution are growing in membership. This growth has a direct relationship to the presence of Kettering Medical Center, whose mission is to be the right arm of the gospel, reaching out into the community and breaking down prejudice, creating an atmosphere of receptivity to the Adventist message.

The hospital not only makes a direct impact upon our patients but also creates an environment in which church growth becomes more likely. To be sure that it is on target, KMC has developed a mission statement in a brochure that anyone may have by writing Kettering Medical Center, Department of Communications, 3535 Southern Boulevard, Kettering, Ohio 45429. In it is stated the center's mission in terms of its Judeo-Christian dimension, Seventh-day Adventist dimension, Kettering dimension, business dimension, and community service dimension. Each of our more than 3,000 employees is requested to implement

this mission within his or her job description.

So not only is mission possible in an Adventist hospital, it is happening. I received a letter from a young couple who lost their daughter Leslie at birth:

"People need people and friends need friends, and we all need love, for a full life depends not on vast riches or great acclaim, not on success or on worldly fame, but just in knowing that someone cares and holds us close in his thoughts and

"Thank you so much for your prayers and kind words. Mike and I appreciate all you've done, and you will never know how much you have touched us and our hearts. We know we have found a new friend. I promise to keep in touch, and one day Leslie will give you a kiss of her own. Thank you again."

Peru School **Gets National Accreditation**

The Universidad Union Incaica (UUI), a Seventh-day Adventist university in Peru, recently became the first full-fledged authorized university operated by the church in South America. UUI received national recognition and accreditation as a freestanding university from the government's council on higher education. Under the decree the school can initiate degree courses without government approval, says Victor Griffiths, a General Conference associate education director.

Because of its standing in Peru, the university has signed an agreement with the Adventist college in Bolivia that allows high schooltrained elementary teachers to study for their Bachelor of Arts degrees in education in Bolivia or Peru once their prerequisite training is completed.

By Dick Tibbits, director of pastoral services, Kettering Medical Center, Kettering, Ohio.

Church Leaders Dialogue With SDA Public Servants

South Pacific hosts meetings for 54 government members.

A new relationship between church leaders and Seventh-day Adventists who work in island governments has developed as a result of seminars held recently in three Pacific Island nations. A total of 54 Adventist politicians and public servants attended the sessions.

Apart from valuable information and instruction given to seminar attendees, the relationships and understanding established with members who hold important responsibilities in government proved a significant development for the

By Raymond Coombe, director for Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, South Pacific Division. church. For many years the church had given an impression in the mission field that politics and business were undesirable fields for Adventists. Today a new breed of committed Seventh-day Adventists holds many senior positions in government departments and serves among the leading politicians in some countries.

For example, in Papua New Guinea up to 20 members of the national parliament claim Adventist connections, and at least half that number remain faithful church members. Seventeen of the 28 members in the Eastern Highlands Provincial Assembly are Seventh-day Adventists, led by an

Adventist premier, Mr. Walter Nombe. The premier for Enga Province, Mr. Ned Laina, is also an Adventist.

In the Solomon Islands, a high concentration of Adventists in the population has also placed church members in public office. Eleven of 33 seats in the Western Provincial Assembly are held by Seventh-day Adventists, who are also well represented in Malaita Province, with a small number of ministers in the national government. The Central Pacific has few Adventist politicians, but a large number hold senior positions in various departments of public service.

To meet the needs of these members in government, the division first held a series of seminars in 1986, which were repeated in 1989. Seminars have now been held in Port Moresby (June 16-19); at Pacific Adventist College (June 23-26), at the Malaria Research Center; and in Suva, Fiji (July 7-10), at the Grand Pacific Hotel.

Mwami Hospital Opens Eye-Care Center

Tye care at Mwami Adventist Hospital in Zambia began at the birth of the institution in 1927. Its founder, Dr. E. G. Marcus, on his way to Mwami from the United States, passed through Vienna, Austria, where he took a course in eye surgery. At Mwami he performed some cataract surgeries under very humble conditions.

As the years went by, a need for eye work in this area persisted. Under the sponsorship of the Christoffel Blinden Mission of West Germany, some nurses and clinical officers were sent to Mwami Hospital for a course in primary eye care.

Beginning in 1985, with the support of the Blinden Mission in primary eye care, the Operation Eyesight Universal of Canada's support of the ophthalmologist, and renovation of the old leprosy hospital that has been underused because of fewer and fewer cases of leprosy, we have seen a quantum leap in the number of eye diseases treated.

On May 29, representatives from the Republic of Zambia, Operation Eyesight Universal, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church met at Mwami Adventist Hospital, where this 36-bed eye unit was officially opened by the provincial political secretary, the Honorable Mr. Munthali.

In his speech, Mr. Munthali spoke of the thousands who have been cured from blindness through cataract surgery and the many who have been prevented from going blind through other medical and surgical means. He mentioned those who can now read newsprint and carry out their duties because of the eye glasses that are assembled at Mwami. He said that the government appreciates the important contribution the church is making to the nation and requested that our services be extended to other parts of

the country, such as Luapula province, where eye disease is common.

In his devotional Lassew Raelly, executive director of the Zambia Union, compared the work of giving sight to the blind to the work Jesus came to do. We are to give not only physical sight but spiritual sight as well, he declared.

Harold Cowie, assistant director for overseas development for Operation Eyesight Universal, commented on the good work Dr. Boateng Wiafe, the ophthalmologist, is doing and pledged continued support. Mr. Cowie was accompanied by Dr. Randolph Witfield, Jr., ophthalmic consultant for the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, responsible for Africa.

By Boateng Waife, an ophthalmologist at Mwami Hospital in Chipata, Zambia.

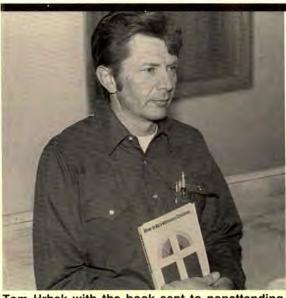
The three-day seminars met over a weekend, commencing on Friday evening and concluding with a formal dinner on Monday evening. Dr. Harley Stanton, the division assistant health director, and Dr. Neville Matthews, General Conference associate director for Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, made major presentations. Matthews is also the church's liaison officer with the United Nations. Dr. Stanton spoke about major health issues in Pacific Island countries, the value of the Adventist lifestyle, and stress management.

Representatives of the division and union administrations attended each seminar, giving opportunity for church leaders to meet and talk with members. Adventist politicians and public servants now feel accepted by church leaders as members who can participate in the mission of the church. They proved eager to cooperate with the church and use their particular talents and abilities in the accomplishment of its task.

As another result of these programs, SDA members in top positions better understand the biblical

principles of a Christian's responsibility to God and government, and have established a relationship with church leaders that can lead to mutual cooperation. An example of this: Adventist politicians in Papua New Guinea planned a government reception for General Conference president Neal Wilson when he visited Papua New Guinea in August.

Adventist politicians face many difficult situations in the developing countries of the South Pacific, and need the prayers of God's people.



Tom Hrbek with the book sent to nonattending members.

Book Goes to Wrong Person at Right Time

Kansas-Nebraska churches, according to weekly attendance records, averaged about 50 percent of actual membership in attendance—the average percentage of most North American churches. Stimulated by these startling atten-

dance figures, and with the 1987 Christmas season fast approaching, conference leaders decided to invite these missing members back into church fellowship.

In December 1987, the Kansas-Nebraska office staff hand-addressed and mailed more than 2,500 books, Reasons for the Season, along with a personal invitation to come "home" from then conference president Gordon L. Retzer to all inactive members.

Tom Hrbek, who lived in Sidney, Nebraska,

was not a Seventh-day Adventist when two books arrived at his home addressed to his brother- and sisterin-law, both of whom had moved to different states without leaving forwarding addresses.

Hrbek, 41, a self-employed carpenter, was experiencing a difficult time in his life. His marriage of 20 years appeared about to end. With the holidays nearing, he couldn't see much joy in that Christmas season.

Receiving Reasons for the Season changed all that.

"The book couldn't have arrived at a better time. I laid it on the table

for a couple days, and then felt compelled to open it and take a look at it," Hrbek remembers. "I enjoyed it immensely."

Nrbek was no stranger to Adventist beliefs; his wife had attended the Sidney SDA Church, and their three children had gone to church school. But he would attend perhaps only once or twice a year, primarily to see the children in church programs.

"I was against my wife attending church and fought her every step of the way. I guess I was afraid of religion, and thought if I avoided attending, it couldn't affect me," he explains.

After reading the book, Hrbek contacted Sidney pastor Bobby Potter and began Bible studies. He was baptized a few months later.

"I'm grateful for what has happened since receiving the book. I now feel at peace for the first time in 41 years. I hope to share what I have learned with others," Hrbek declares.

Kansas-Nebraska Conference personnel hand-addressing envelopes may not have known about Tom Hrbek, but God knew where he lived.

By John Treolo, communication director, Kansas-Nebraska Conference.

Spokane Tries New Media Approach

A North American Division plan to use the media to acquaint the public with the Seventh-day Adventist Church began this month in Spokane, Washington. Churches within the Spokane market have made preparations to respond to public interest generated by media messages that began airing in mid-September.

Television spots and other messages will target middle-class Americans who are likely to show interest in a church described as "the family of believers who are there when you need them." The campaign, known as Project Open Door, will characterize Seventh-day Adventists as friendly and concerned about the physical and spiritual needs of others.

Market tests held throughout North America have shown that the vast majority of people have little interest in a church that claims to have better doctrines or whose members live longer, healthier lives. The greater felt need, according to attitude surveys, is for a church that operates as a sincere, caring fellowship of believers. The target audience showed indiffer-

ence and even adverse reactions to a church known for bigness and vast financial holdings.

The surveys indicated that once people trust the Christian motivation of church members, they may rapidly adopt the beliefs of their new Christian family.

Testimonials of Help

The primary media messages are now being produced by the Adventist Media Center in Thousand Oaks, California. Scripting has been under way since April, and a number of script proposals have been presented to focus groups. The ad format judged best by these groups, made up of a representative sample of the target audience, consists of testimonials by persons who have been helped by Seventh-day Adventists.

Responses from focus group members indicated that, in their view, no church operates as a family of believers available to help middle-class America in time of need. While initially skeptical that any church, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church, could actually live up to the promise of the ad messages, they

agreed that these messages stimulated their interest in finding out more about the church.

As the messages go on the air, Spokane area churches will enhance their outreach and helping ministries, with emphasis on establishing cordial ties with visitors and friends at Sabbath services.

Testing procedures will help discover whether this characterization is appropriate for the church, whether it has an impact on its intended audience, whether it leads to greater church attendance, and whether it affects public awareness of and attitude toward the church.

The initial ads will run this fall and will be followed up by a second series of messages after Christmas. The test will culminate with evangelistic meetings next March.

Pastors in the Upper Columbia Conference have expressed an interest in continuing this media campaign beyond the North American Division test time. The test is underwritten by the Adventist Media Center, the Upper Columbia Conference, and the North American Division.

BULLETIN BOARD.

To New Posts

Regular Missionary Service

Robert Wayne Brock, returning to serve as vice president for finance, Hongkong Adventist Hospital, Hong Kong, Deborah Gay (Pohle) Brock, and three children left August 13.

Raymond Ignacio Cantu, Jr., returning to serve as teacher/assistant business manager, Maxwell Adventist Academy, Nairobi, Kenya, Carol (Hartie) Cantu, and one child left August 8.

Lowell Calvin Cooper, returning to serve as departmental director, Southern Asia Division, Poona, India, and one son left July 31. Rae Lee (Figuhr) Cooper left to join her family August 14.

Gordon Rea Doss, returning to serve as principal, Lake View Seminary and Training Centre, Mlangeni, Ntcheu, Malawi, Cheryl Diane (Brown) Doss, and two children left August 1.

Lloyd Marvin Dull, returning to serve as science teacher, Maxwell Adventist Academy, Nairobi, Kenya, Dixie Mae (Wertz) Dull, and one child left

Wayne Stephen Dysinger, to serve as physician, Guam Seventh-day Adventist Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, and June Evelyn (Neil) Dysinger, of Altamonte Springs, Florida, left July 17. John Paul Ferguson, returning to serve as director, Radiology Department, Hongkong Adventist Hospital, Hong Kong, Margo Elaine (Kahkonen) Ferguson, and three children left August 21.

Jacob Jake Fortney, to serve as industrial arts teacher, Adventist University of Central Africa, Gisenyi, Rwanda, and Joan Clarissa (Anderson) Fortney, of College Heights, Alberta, Canada, left Iuly 30.

Frederick Ray Fuller, to serve as Bible teacher/ pastor, Far Eastern Academy, Singapore, Rose Marie (Shafer) Fuller, and three children, of Portland, Tennessee, left July 26.

David Charles Grellmann, returning to serve as physician, Masanga Leprosy Hospital, Magburaka, Sierra Leone, West Africa, Carrie Lynn (Saint Clair) Grellmann, and one child left August 9.

Clyde Leon Henderson, to serve as principal, Guam Adventist Academy, Talofofo, Guam, Donna Kaye (Stonger) Henderson, and one child, of Woodinville, Washington, left July 20.

King-Yi Eugene Hsu, returning to serve as president, South China Island Union Mission, Hong Kong, Alice Oi-lian (Phang) Hsu, and one child left August 9.

John Shan Chung Hsuen, returning to serve as physician/pediatrician, Hongkong Adventist Hospital, Hong Kong, Michiko (Kasuga) Hsuen, and one child left August 6.

Ralph Herbert Jones, returning to serve as academic dean, Southeast Asia Union College, Singapore, and Viola Marie (Kendall) Jones left August

Stephen Alexander Koshel, to serve as physician's assistant, Guam Seventh-day Adventist Clinic, Tamuning, Guam, Linda Ray (Griffith) Koshel, and two children, of Gainsville, Florida, left July 16.

Joseph Dean Kravig, to serve as music teacher, Far Eastern Academy, Singapore, Loretta June (Turner) Kravig, and three children, of Walla Walla, Washington, left August 2.

William Bruce Lane, to serve as principal, Marshall Islands Mission Academy, Majuro, Marshall Islands, Adrianne Shirley (Caron) Lane, and one son, of Lawai, Hawaii, left August 6.

Mike Mile Lekic, returning to serve as principal, Franco-Haitian Adventist Institute Junior Academy, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Nada (Svircev) Lekic, and two children left August 4.

Roland Lloyd McKenzie, returning to serve as principal, University of Eastern Africa, Eldoret, Kenya, Lilia Bertina (Austin) McKenzie, and one child left August 16.

MINARETS FOR GOD

It had been 27 years! My wife and I had returned to the land of minarets. As the plane landed at the Cairo International Airport many nostalgic thoughts flooded our minds, but even more than that, we thought of the challenges that lay ahead.

We arrived during Ramadan, the annual month of fasting and prayer for the Muslim. Once again we heard the call to prayer that begins with this eternal truth: "God is the greatest."

Five times a day the cry of the muezzin echoes from minaret to minaret as he places his hands on his ears and lifts his head toward heaven. The call is heard in every home, every shop, every village and city. And every Muslim stops whatever he is doing to pray.

As we drove from the airport into the city of Cairo with its dancing lights and teeming millions, we were impressed by the fact that at that moment most of the population of this huge city was praying.

What can we do, I mused, to better share Jesus in Egypt? Are there minarets to climb? Or is God calling us to become living minarets from which He can proclaim "Christ in you the hope of glory"? 1

Ellen White challenges us with similar words: "The righteousness of God is absolute. This righteousness characterizes all His works, all His laws. As God is, so must His people be. The life of Christ is to be revealed in the lives of His followers. In all His public and private acts, in every word and deed, practical godliness was seen, and this godliness is to be seen in the lives

God is eager to send His power surging through our daily lives.

of His disciples." 2

We have yet to fully use this method of proclaiming the good news with all the power of a latter rain experience. In some nations people do hear the story of Jesus from living minarets. Thousands respond to the examples of Christcentered living. When they see Christianity in action they respond. They then listen to a Christian's words.

Adventists first began sharing their faith in Egypt during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. But the majority of Egypt's population have not seen a living minaret for God, nor have they heard the everlasting gospel proclaimed.

God is waiting. He is waiting for our hearts to be receptive to His power so that He can send it surging through our lives. If each of us would become a minaret for God, then in every community and in every nation the world would hear the gospel ringing out: "Jesus saves!" The message would echo and reecho through every valley, across every mountaintop, into the jungle villages, and right into our concrete cities.

The Holy Spirit is able, willing, and longing to make you and me a minaret for God. By our lives and our words the message will sound, "Behold, I come quickly." And in response will come voices from every kingdom, nation, and people praying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

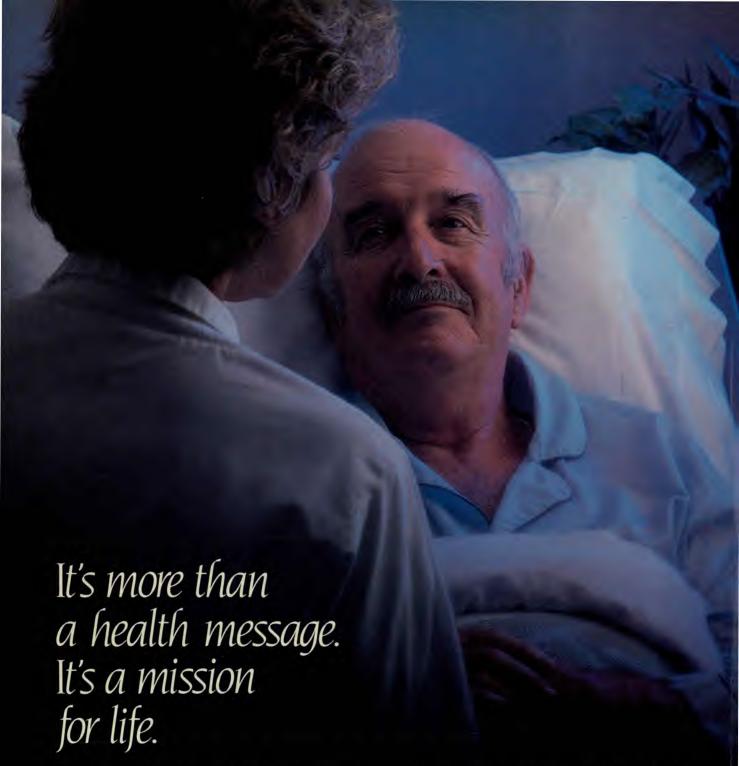
REFERENCES

- 1 Col. 1:27.
- ² Selected Messages, book 1, p. 198.
- 3 Rev. 22:7

4 Verse 20.

A. Gordon Zytkoskee was acting president of the Egypt Field of Seventh-day Adventists when he wrote this article.

BY A. GORDON ZYTKOSKEE



Late one night a patient was lying awake worrying about his surgery which was scheduled early the next morning. One of our nurses came in to his room to check on him and saw that he was troubled.

The patient said, "The nurse asked me what was wrong, so I told her about my fears. She said, "When I'm anxious, I turn to God for help." She unfolded God's love to me and I accepted Jesus that night."

"I came here to have my body fixed. But she helped restore my spirit, too."

At Florida Hospital our mission goes beyond physical healing. We have a mission for life... eternal life.

