

N.A.D. ADVENTIST REVIEW

WEEKLY NEWS AND INSPIRATION FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

APRIL 1995

Paraphrases:

Possibilities

&

Perils

The
Clear
WordAN EXPANDED
PARAPHRASE
OF THE BIBLE
TO NURTURE
FAITH
AND
GROWTHThe
MESSAGE

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Ellen White and Unity

I have just read with keen interest the splendid and most timely editorial: "Divided, We Crawl" (Feb. NAD issue). It contains all the elements of a passionate, soul-stirring, prophetic message.

George Brown
Former president, Inter-American
Division

"Divided, We Crawl" suggests we make a law that "no Adventist should quote from the writings of Ellen G. White for 365 days." What a shock that was to me! I have not been an Adventist very long (about five years), but I recognize that she was a prophet of God, and that if we don't take heed of her writings and warnings, we will certainly be, as Mr. Adams says, a church divided. This is exactly what Sister White predicted—that her writings would become of none effect in the last days.

I agree with Adams that we all should study our Bibles as never before, but not laying aside the writings of E. G. White! We should be studying both! Our armor against the evil one is even greater with the knowledge of the messages given to God's end-time prophet, specifically given for His last-day church.

Susan M. Balcerzak
Irmo, South Carolina

Thank you for "Divided, We Crawl." How refreshing to read an article addressing a real concern many of us feel faces our family of Adventists.

Truly one of God's greatest gifts to the church family has been abused, misrepresented, and used as a rod of correction, when in reality it is a love gift to bring the Bible into practical applications.

Jerry Lastine
Indianapolis, Indiana

Without the guidance of the Spirit of Prophecy, even for a year, we'd experience Adventist shipwreck, not bliss. Yes, there will always be those who wrest Scriptures—and Ellen White's writings—to their own destruction. But the fault is not with the message.

And how is Roy Adams' moratorium

"supported"? By none other than the banned source itself—a quotation from the pen of Ellen White.

Ken Miller
Harrah, Oklahoma

Six years ago I participated in a neighborhood Bible study group composed of six different faiths. The one and only rule was that only Bibles could be used, especially when discussing differences of belief. If

"Don't-Miss" Issues

Look for the following important issues during the next few months.

April 27: The key agenda items coming to the General Conference session in Utrecht. Must reading for delegates and everyone interested in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

May 18: Undated special issue on women's ministries worldwide.

June 8: Undated special issue on Global Mission.

Starting June 30: Bulletins of the General Conference session. Daily reports of the actions, speeches, inspiration, and people.

Only in the *Adventist Review*!

you couldn't give a scripture reference (1 Peter 3:15), forget the argument. In this group Mrs. White carried no weight.

The in-depth Bible study this required taught me more than all my Bible courses combined. I not only rediscovered my faith, but came face-to-face with my Lord. Instead of seeing Him through someone else's eyes, I saw Him with my own. It's much better to meet Jesus personally than just to hear about Him from someone else. I challenge you to try it and watch your spiritual life glow as if a new log had been put on your heart-fire.

Angela Rudolf
Redlands, California

Kessler and Courage

I applaud the noble intention expressed in the editorials "Raw Courage" (Jan. 26) and "A New Ball

Game" (Feb. 16)—namely, the reduction of cigarette smoking. However, I strongly caution against political support of David Kessler. For good reason Mr. Gingrich characterizes Kessler as "a bully and a thug."

I would suggest consulting wisdom in your support of blatantly political persons such as Kessler. It is widely understood that Hitler was a vegetarian, and yet I doubt that we would laud him for this peripheral virtue. While I don't wish to imply Kessler is Hitler's equivalent in today's America, there is much to support Gingrich's contention of his being "a bully and a thug."

Richard S. Wilkinson, M.D.
Yakima, Washington

All of us wish to have security, but there are too few who have the courage and profile of David Kessler. We must not only ask ourselves whether we have this raw courage, but be willing to exchange any short-term security for one that is rated AAA and will pay the very highest yields for eternity.

Les Pendleton
Hendersonville, North Carolina

Blown Away

I've followed with intense interest your series on the Middle East (Jan. 12, 19, 26). Your article that refers to Middle East College made no mention of one of its presidents, Dr. Edmond Haddad. Dr. Haddad kept Middle East College alive during some of the worst years of the war. His faithfulness and integrity are worthy of recognition. Had it not been for Dr. Haddad, it is doubtful that Middle East College would have survived.

A. Gordon Zytoskee
Paradise, California

Your article on Egypt blew me away. When I read your introductory paragraph, "I shivered" too! The paragraph should be sent to Seventh-day Adventist writing classes as a model of how to set mood and grasp attention.

Winton H. Beaven
Kettering, Ohio

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"The Tale of the
'Twin'" No matter
how sordid our past,
God can put it behind
us, and give us a story
worth repeating.

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They are perhaps the church's most talented workers. They have ideas, talents, time, and most important, the energy. They are doing something constructive for God's kingdom.

by José Rojas

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Wouldn't it be great if there was a place where people were accepted just the way they are? There might be—if we all work together.

by W. Clarence Schilt

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To some, it's a minefield. To others, it's a desert wasteland. Some find blossoms among the thorns. But there's no question that when we discuss the media, we have to do it with our eyes open.

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The message is always the same. But changing times demand flexible approaches for communicating truth. An interview with the editor of the *Signs of the Times*.

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measure up?

Cover photo by Dennis Crews

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Cool Heads, Warm Hearts

"For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. . . . They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations" (2 Tim. 4:3-5, NIV).

Fasten your seat belt and hold on to your hat—the crazy days have come. Millennial madness is sweeping Planet Earth. And the news is: each year will get worse until we reach A.D. 2000.

Here's a sampling gathered by Peter Carlson:*

■ A postcard shows a flying saucer emitting yellow, red, and purple rays. The text on the back reads: "In 2001 A.D., starships from the Interplanetary Confederation will land on Earth carrying 33,000 Brothers! They're extraterrestrial teachers and scientists who will help us expand our understanding . . ."

■ Another postcard depicts the rapture, with cars crashing on a freeway as their drivers rise into the sky, and a jet slamming into a skyscraper as its pilot is caught up.

■ Maitreya, the king of the last age of Buddhism, will make miraculous appearances, generally at religious conventions.

■ Even the pope is getting into the act. John Paul II's recent 16,000-word letter urged Catholics to spend the next five years repenting for the sins of the past millennium so that in 2000 the church can celebrate "a great jubilee."

The year 2000 exerts a mystic influence over the mind. It's like the feeling you get when you're driving along and you see all the zeros roll up. So as the new millennium is coming up on the cosmic odometer, all sorts of people and prophecies are coming out of the woodwork.

■ The lost continent of Atlantis will rise from the sea.

■ The American West will collapse into the ocean—Phoenix and Denver will

become seaports and the Pacific will lap western Nebraska; or America will split right down the middle in 2000.

■ 1999 will be the year of unappealable verdicts, but 2000 will be the year of pardon and jubilee.

■ Artist Andy Lakey is painting 2000 angels before the year 2000 (in response to a "heavenly" message).

■ America's best-selling novel is *The Celestine Prophecy*, a New Age thriller directed toward the new millennium.

■ There's the Millennium Group, the Millennium Society, the Millennium Institute, the Millennium Symposium, the First Millennial Foundation, the Bimillennial Foundation, the Bimillennial Global Interaction Network, and Third Millennium.

■ And there's the *Millennium Magazine*, the *New Millennium Magazine*, the *New Millennium Quarterly*, and the *Mazda Millennia*.

■ Already millennium is the name of a store, a perfume, a hotel, a PBS series, and even a beer.

"This is perhaps the most anticipated date that has ever been," says Gerald O. Barney. "It's not just a momentary thing like the Fourth of July. It'll bring about real changes in people and institutions."

Barney directed the U.S. government's Global 2000 Report to the President. He has since founded the Millennium Institute.

Familiar Ring

All this has a vaguely familiar ring. Millennial madness isn't something new—Europe went through it a thousand years ago.

Fearing the end of the world by fire or flood, people publicly flagellated themselves, gave away their possessions, flocked to monasteries or the Holy Land. They released prisoners, canceled debts,

stopped repairing buildings, and executed usurers and magicians.

On December 31, 999, thousands packed cathedrals. Mobs filled St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, prostrate as the clock ticked out the year's last seconds.

We can expect wild things in the days just ahead. Expect superstition and irrationality to take the driver's seat, as 2000-year fever drives people to ever greater extremes of craziness and religious hucksters prey on the gullible.

How will Seventh-day Adventists fare during this period?

Already, I'm afraid, some of us have been caught up in the spirit of the decade. Some are searching the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation (always a good thing to do), but are reinterpreting times and symbols in a way that would make Uriah Smith and the pioneers of our movement turn in their graves. Some are falling into the old trap of setting dates—actual or approximate—for the end of the world and the Second Coming.

Paul's advice to Timothy, given in a totally different context, is right on target for these crazy times: "But you, keep your head." In an age of millennial fever, keep cool.

But also—*keep your heart warm!* Keep looking up, daily awaiting for Jesus to return. Don't be sucked in by the world's millennial madness, but also don't grow cold or cynical about the blessed hope.

"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28).

* Peter Carlson, "The Vision Thing," in the *Washington Post Magazine*, Jan. 1, 1995. The material about the new millennium cited in this editorial is drawn from Carlson's article.

WILLIAM G. JOHNSON



My Visit to Pentecost

I hope you won't think I'm being irreverent with what I want to say, but I have just returned from a weekend Pentecost experience, in which I experienced an outpouring of the Holy Spirit anew.

The presidents of our local conferences in North America come together once a year just for prayer, study, planning, and fellowship.

This annual retreat was born nine years ago out of a deep sense of inadequacy many presidents were feeling. Few leaders in this church carry a heavier load than conference presidents, and they sought a time and place where they could share ideas, worship, and be refreshed. Each of the sessions has been held at Pine Springs Ranch, Southeastern California Conference's youth camp set in the mountains east of Loma Linda.

This year 48 of the 58 conference presidents in North America attended, and about a third brought their spouses. The retreat, which is completely voluntary, convenes on Monday evening and finishes at noon Thursday. But back to the Pentecost experience.

I don't know what you think about when you envision a group of church administrators in a three-day meeting, but let me describe it for you from the beginning.

A good share of the first morning is spent in worship. The first session is scheduled to end at 9:00, but following a powerful message by Dwight Nelson, one of two guest speakers, a time of intense, specific, personal prayer begins. What happens skews the morning's schedule. A wrestling with God about one's own spiritual journey takes precedence over routine discussion items.

The presidents have not forgotten their budget problems back home, the churches that need pastors and the pas-

tors that need churches, the policy issues, the challenge at the academy, the needs at the youth camp, the critical letter that needs to be answered, the constituency session that looms on the horizon.

A More Pressing Matter

But just now all of those have been upstaged by a more pressing matter—the primacy of their own personal walk with God.

Late morning the prayer time closes, and there is time enough for talking about church business, but the mood for

*I had a taste of how the
New Testament church
must have felt when it
basked in the cleansing,
empowering presence of
the Holy Spirit.*

the retreat has been set. Wintley Phipps, the other guest, is used mightily to continue the deep work the Spirit is doing. Between sessions and late at night, small groups gather in the meeting room, in the halls, in the sleeping rooms to pray, to entreat God for cleansing, for victory, for courage, for strength.

There is rich camaraderie. There is much laughter. There is the casual banter that goes on among people drawn together by a shared vision and deep mutual respect. But all of this happens against the backdrop of the real reason

they have come here.

May I have the temerity to describe a very personal moment. I have not asked their permission to tell you this; I hope they won't mind. Tuesday morning, following the Bible study hour, there were testimonies and vulnerability and prayers of repentance and candid sharing. Beside my wife, Ruthie, and me sat one of the presidents with his head in his hands. Another took off his glasses and wiped his eyes with the heel of his hand.

I suddenly became aware that most of us in the room were fighting tears, and more than a few were weeping out of their own brokenness and hurt and need. And joy. For out of this anguish would spring healing and strength and courage and hope. I thought I just might hear the wind blow.

Reluctant to Leave

Thursday noon we were reluctant to leave the mountaintop. But the anointing of the Spirit is not for private enjoyment; rather it is for service, for ministry. Ministry takes place back in the valley. The mountaintop is not the place of ministry, it is the place of preparation for ministry. But I had a taste of how the New Testament church must have felt when it basked in the cleansing, empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

So your conference president has returned to you with greater vision, greater strength, greater joy, renewed energy. You'll notice it. None of us is ever the same when we are touched by the strong hand of God. The first Pentecost proved that; so will this one.

DON JACOBSEN

Assistant to the president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.



Left: More than 1,500 people attended the Hands Across the World rally in Kansas City. Right: GC president Robert S. Folkenberg (center) answers questions in a panel discussion at the rally in College Place, Washington.

Extending Our “Hands Across the World”

Hands Across the World.” It’s more than just a slogan. It’s a concept with an instinctive appeal and obvious truth about it—in fact, what the Adventist Church and the gospel commission are all about.

A longstanding tradition associated with our quinquennial General Conference sessions is an offering for visionary and innovative projects that would be impossible without the combined participation of the world church. And with the GC session just a few months away, this is precisely the intent of the Hands Across the World offering to be received April 29 and July 8, 1995, and April 13, 1996.

However, the hoped-for \$15 million offering is far beyond our previous dreams. Of the total to be raised worldwide, North America is expected to raise \$7 million; the office of Global Mission, \$3 million; and the other 10 divisions, \$5 million.

New Congregations

The Hands Across the World project calls for the establishment of 2,000 strategically placed new congregations by the year 2000. Indeed, by maintaining the 1994 growth rate of a new church being formed somewhere in the world every five hours and 40 minutes, we will far surpass this number of new churches in the next five years.



More than 5,000 persons enjoyed the special program at Blue Mountain Academy in Pennsylvania.

But these 2,000 proposed congregations are unique. They are specifically designed to open unentered territories—as is the intent of the Global Mission initiative begun at the 1990 General Conference session.

Enthusiasm for this project is catching on as the offering date approaches. Consider the overflow crowd of 6,000 who attended the rally sponsored by the Columbia Union at Blue Mountain Academy in Pennsylvania on March 4.

With a collection of world church leadership, augmented by North American Division and union officers as well as leading laypersons of the church, those in attendance thrilled to front-line reports and personal stories of the church’s work around the world.

By Gary Patterson, a General Conference field secretary and director of the GC Office of Mission Awareness.

On hand for the occasion were choirs and orchestras from the schools of the Columbia Union performing, both individually and in a massed choir, their powerful and soul-stirring music.

Getting Serious About Mission

Yet these rallies are not primarily fund-raising days. Rather they are opportunities for the church to remember its mission. As world church president Robert S. Folkenberg states: “The message is that this church has not lost sight of its mission-driven vision. That mission begins with every member in the pew. It’s a day that says, ‘As you get serious, the church gets serious. It begins with you and your vision.’ And that is a vision for my neighbor, the community of my congregation, and my conference who must target the places we should be planting churches.”

To date, five rallies have been held in North America—in College Place, Washington; College Heights, Alberta; Hamburg, Pennsylvania; Kansas City, Kansas; and Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Six more are planned in 1995 and 1996. The program presents the story of our growing church work around the world in a fast-paced format of firsthand reports. All this is interspersed with soul-stirring music and personal testimony.

Folkenberg says, “It’s not just one person talking. Look at the program. Every 10 or 15 minutes something else comes up. We’re talking about every corner of the globe—a wide variety of experiences.”

The day’s format starts at the time of a traditional Sabbath school and church service. But from there it takes on a life of its own. The morning session typically showcases several personal testimonies featuring members and world church leaders, as well as a powerful sermon on the mission of the church.

Following a fellowship dinner, the afternoon session brings on a whole new crew with continued great music and front-line reports of God’s providential leading of the church. Although

raising funds is not the primary purpose of the rallies, the opportunity is provided for making a financial commitment to the Hands Across the World offering.

Future Meetings

Fort Worth, Texas	April 22, 1995
Loma Linda, California	May 13, 1995
Ohio	To Be Announced
New York	"
Washington, D.C.	"
Southern Union	"

You may yet be able to participate in future rallies (see box). Watch your union paper and local church bulletin for further details.

NORTH AMERICA

Commission Moves to Improve Church Image. Church administrators, departmental personnel, and educators gathered March 2 and 3 to dialogue on ways to improve the image of the Adventist Church in North America.

The Commission on the Public Image of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was established by the North American Division in the wake of a 1994 survey that showed that public awareness of the church has decreased dramatically—from 65 percent in the 1980s to 53 percent last year.

Commission members submitted numerous recommendations, including the establishment of a national media strategy to raise the public's awareness of the church, and a marketing plan to choose messages about Seventh-day Adventists that should be communicated to create a public identity for the church.

A subcommittee will be appointed by the division to follow up on the recommendations, says Monte Sahlin, administrative assistant to the NAD president and commission secretary.

Oakwood President Named to UNCF Committee Post.

Oakwood College president Benjamin Reeves was elected vice chairperson of the Presidents of Member

Thousands Make Decisions as NET '95 Closes

At least 30,000 people in 700 locations across North America attended the closing session of NET '95. The satellite evangelistic series, featuring *It Is Written's* speaker Mark Finley, ended March 25.

During the final week thousands of people made decisions to join the Adventist Church.

Though it is typical for attendance to decline as the meetings progress, many pastors like Phil Lindo, of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, saw attendance increase. Participants in Lindo's Ravenhurst church increased from 55 at the start to 65 in the final week.

"High technology makes it possible to have more 'high touch' ministry," says North American Division president Alfred C. McClure. "With a satellite evangelist, thousands of pastors can focus on personal work with families and individuals."

Though the meetings ended in March, a follow-up broadcast titled "Welcome to the Family" will be aired April 15. The *Adventist Review* will print an in-depth follow-up story on NET '95 in the first issue of May.

Institutions Committee of the United Negro College Fund on March 9. In this voluntary position Reeves will serve on the UNCF board of directors and will automatically succeed



the current committee chairperson in 1996. UNCF president William H.

Gray says, "Reaves has proved himself to be an effective and persuasive leader within the College Fund through his stewardship of our relocation task force and the board's agenda committee."

New Editor at *Vibrant Life* Magazine. Larry Becker, managing editor of the *Pacific Union Recorder*, is the new

editor of *Vibrant Life* magazine (formerly *Life and Health*), the Review and Herald Publishing Association's journal that promotes a healthy lifestyle.

Becker has worked at the Pacific Union for 11 years.

Before serving at the Pacific Union, he worked as public relations director for an Adventist hospital and college, and as a production assistant with the *It Is Written* television ministry.



Becker replaces Barbara Jackson-Hall, who served as *Vibrant Life* editor for more than four years.

WORLD CHURCH

Belarus Meetings Bring 250 Baptisms. The number of Adventists in Rechintza, Belarus, part of the former Soviet Union, increased by 5,000 percent (from 5 to 255) after an evangelistic series conducted by Moses Ostrovsky, evangelism and Global Mission coordinator of the Belarus Conference.

With 75,000 residents, Rechintza now has an official Adventist company of believers, says B. F. Kachmar, Euro-Asia Division communication director.



Adventist Communication Network Broadcasts

For channel information, call (800) ACN-1119.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| May 3 | First Wednesday , 7:30-8:30 p.m., all time zones. |
| May 20 | Revitalizing Adult Sabbath school A training seminar for Sabbath school teachers. |

CHURCH CALENDAR

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Apr. 8 | Youth Spiritual Commitment Celebration |
| Apr. 8 | Loma Linda University Offering |
| Apr. 15 | Literature Evangelism Rally Day |
| Apr. 22 | Christian Education Day |

Turning Dreams Into Reality

The new Adventist Youth Service Network seeks to kindle a passion for volunteerism among even more young people.

BY JOSÉ VICENTE ROJAS

I'll never forget the words of a young lady, an academy sophomore, who was returning on the school bus from a Maranatha Volunteers project in Mexico.

"I thought this trip would be like the other activities of our church. But it wasn't. This week I laid cement blocks for a church building. I drank the water and got sick. I led song services for the evening meetings. I made great friendships with new people. . . . So this is Christianity. I used to think that Christianity was important in my life—now I know that it IS my life!"

Kindling such passion for Christianity and Christian service is the heart of a new Adventist Youth Service Network taking shape in North America. It wants to help create the same sense of passion for Christ that urged Fernando and Ana Stahl to become missionaries to Peru almost a century ago.

When they arrived in Peru the young Stahls found massive poverty and injustices that confined the populace to a life of limited opportunity. In response, the Stahls pursued a simple dream—to build hundreds of Christian schools in the many communities of the vast Lake Titicaca region. As the schools began operation,

they preached the Word, helping communities and the church's membership to grow strong. Soon the Seventh-day Adventist Church became well known for its contribution to the building of the moral and social fiber of a nation—all because of the strategic faithfulness of two young people who began with a vision.

It is that kind of adventure and mission that is underpinning the beginnings of the new Adventist Youth Service Network in North America. Its mission is to encourage and enable all Adventist youth and young adults to exercise their faith fully through innovative, need-based, relational service to their local and global communities, leading to rela-

Students from Upper Columbia Academy help with the Humane Society's Pet Visitation projects and bring joy into lonely hearts.



tionships and dynamic opportunities to share the gospel.

The Youth Service Network is being created by the North American Division Youth Ministries Department as a cooperative ministry with other denominational entities and service ministries—particularly Adventist Resource Management Services. In many respects AYSN will act like a cooperative youth service corps, bringing together the many current youth service ministries within the Adventist Church in North America.

NAD Youth Ministries Position Statement

The North American Division youth ministries is committed to a broad, effective evangelistic process that will establish our youth and young adults in a grace orientation in which they discover Jesus at the heart of the Adventist message; respond to Jesus in an inclusive, involving community; and reveal Jesus through a life of active service.

Five Major Objectives

The new Youth Service Network is built upon five major objectives:

1. To kindle a passion for volunteerism, inspiring every young Adventist in the NAD to dedicate at least one year of full-time service advancing the kingdom of God both in deed and the shared Word.

Our young people have demonstrated that they are capable of giving 101 percent of their energy to causes they believe in. There is yet an untapped reserve of youthful energy ready to be harnessed for the gospel. We want to challenge our young people to look to service as an expression of life that goes beyond simply participating in programs. Most youth and young adults who have participated in service experiences continue to talk of the intense personal Spiritual benefits of having given

of themselves for others.

The current phenomenon of short-term mission trips confirms the enthusiasm and renewed spiritual commitment of young people who have served. Maranatha Volunteers International has provided valuable leadership along with churches and schools who have achieved incredible results impacting communities both inside and outside North America.

Within North America, urban and other community service ministries report the same results—young people begin to understand Christianity in ways that could not be grasped through mere discussion or debate. Those who serve learn that the spirit of service is to freely give, which produces an environment in which they freely receive through relationships that lead to commitments to the Lord.

2. To enhance access to a wide variety of service outlets that both specifically utilize the unique talents of volunteers and seek to fill unmet community needs.

The Youth Service Network will continue to support the growth of short-term service opportunities because young people find in that quality experience the calling to continue to serve in the future. Talents become known, and the young person comes to sense their value and their ability to make a difference.

We will also work to increase the number and types of volunteer opportunities available in North America. The needs of urban, suburban, and rural communities provide the call for youth evangelism in our division. As youth and young adults continue to participate in specific response activities for real needs in our territory, they will then experience North America as part of the mission field.

North America is ripe for mission service. Students will have the opportunity to serve as student missionaries to Miami or Kansas City with the same

intensity as serving as student missionaries to Singapore or Korea.

As service becomes a more long-term commitment, both the people in the community and the young person benefit. People respond with openness to the compassion of the servant, and the servant responds by sharing the gospel message.

Innovative service projects are becoming more commonplace—sponsored by churches, schools, and conferences. At Upper Columbia Academy in Washington, for example, students have been involved in the Greater Spokane area for some time, serving in more than 30 different service projects. The program, called Project Hope (Helping Other People Every Day), enlists stu-

Clown ministries open up special opportunities for youth to share God's love.



Adventist young people help maintain the Salvation Army's SAFE Center, which provides crisis help for families.



In the context of service, Adventist young people can share God's Word with greater authority around the world.

dents in projects ranging from street meals for the needy, to cleaning and painting at a women's crisis center, to whatever needs upkeep along the highways. This program has created goodwill in the community regarding Adventists and has opened the possibility for students to share their faith verbally as well as physically.

Many of our colleges and academies are structuring service into their curriculums, creating more specific experiences for students. As the momentum toward service grows through increased opportunities, students readily respond as volunteers.

3. To provide the leadership necessary to enable the human resources to assist church, school, and community in accomplishing their service goals.

Experience has shown that the more a church or school

can serve its immediate community, the greater the number of people that will be involved in the long term. At times a church or school needs the help of more people to accomplish its service goals.

AYS Network will provide support by connecting volunteers to the service project through a specific magazine that will list the various projects and needs. Service organizations and church entities will list their available calls for positions both inside and outside North America. The publication will highlight the variety of opportunities, enhancing the ability to connect people effectively.

What makes this evangelism so meaningful is that no two places are alike. Cities and towns have unique needs that vary so greatly that service will always be a fresh experience for young people.

Young people in society historically have attracted attention on the streets of our cities by the way they do evil. This Christian approach will turn this trend around and have our young people command attention on the streets by the way they serve in the name of Christ.

4. To establish training and motivational structures within church, school, and media that will challenge all Adventist youth and young adults to choose to involve themselves in a lifestyle of service and equip these people to share the gospel with those they serve.

I once heard it said that people develop methods, but God develops people, because people are God's method. Training is the vital component of all ministry. Never has the need for the training of young people for ministry been greater than today. Training will be the important element that gives young people preparation for their work, but more significantly, an understanding of what they are experiencing.

People need to become acquainted with the location, customs, language, and other cultural realities of a service location. When leaders take the time to reflect with students before, during, and after a mission trip, the impact of the experience is enhanced, giving the student a wider perspective of life.

The same is true of longer-term student mission experience. The network

will structure training for volunteers for the optimum benefit of both the receiver and the giver of service.

The impact of these relationships involves a growing number of adults who share in the triumphs of this ministry. When authentic service takes place, people come together. I remember experiencing the relief efforts after the Los Angeles earthquake in 1994. There was no young or old, Black or White, no single language. People rallied for a common cause and made a massive difference. Adults and youth of all ethnicities and languages within our church can continue to build a bond of cooperative ministry for the cause of Christ.

The training of young people to give Bible studies will enlist a growing number of people whose testimonies need to be heard. No one can reach a young person as another young person can. Our youth need to learn skills that equip them to minister to their peers with their Christian experience. The same peer influence that draws young people away from Christ can be empowered by the Holy Spirit to draw young people to Him.

5. To unite the diverse body of youth volunteer projects in the NAD through a common identity while acknowledging the uniqueness of sending organizations and service groups, strengthening the sense of oneness among all youth laborers.

The strength of the Adventist Youth Service Network will be that each sending organization will be supported through our common direction. The goal will be to increase significantly the number of people connected to service opportunities. No supportive ministry, conference, church, or school will lose their unique identity; rather, they will connect to a network that will help enhance it.

Great benefits are in store for our youth and young adults. Our young people can develop the identity of a Seventh-day Adventist Christian who is making a tangible difference in the lives of others. Rather than succumb to traditional criticism and condemnation, our youth can demonstrate that they too are ministers of the gospel, capable of doing the unimaginable for the cause of Christ.

The greatest beneficiaries of all can be the communities that surround us, as well as those around the world. They can experience a compassionate ministry from our church that will bring an increased clarity to the preaching of God's Word.

As in the ministry of Jesus, may our hands demonstrate the love of God by the way we serve people in their needs. This will authorize our mouths to speak of the distinctive truths that transform lives for the great community to come in heaven.

For more information on how you, your church, or school can become involved in service, call (301) 680-6434, and the AYS Network will send you a packet.



José Vicente Rojas has been a pastor and public evangelist in various church districts. He is currently the youth ministries director of the North American Division.

Calling All Alumni

We will be happy to keep you informed and connected to the body of servants across the division. If you have served as a student missionary or Taskforce volunteer in the past 30 years, please fill in the following form and send it to us.

We are establishing an "alumni association" to keep past volunteers informed of the progress of their contribution. We also believe that people who have served in the past tend to be more likely to serve again if given the opportunity. And we believe that this will strengthen the importance and identity of every youth and young adult volunteer.

Name: _____

(include maiden name at time of service)

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Current occupation: _____

Where you served: _____

Date of service: _____

School attending when you served: _____

Please send this form to:
Adventist Youth Service Network
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Bible Paraphrases— Their Possibilities and Perils

Many Seventh-day Adventists are reading The Message or The Clear Word. Each book has value in its place, but can be misused. The following critiques help put these works, as well as all Bible paraphrases, in perspective.

A Summary Critique: *The Message*

BY JOHN R. KOHLENBERGER III

As of 1992 the Bible had been translated into 329 languages, the New Testament into an additional 758 tongues. In English alone, there are more than 60 Bible versions and New Testament translations in print—not counting thousands of different formats and bindings. Yet new versions continue to appear every year, the latest being Eugene Peterson's *The Message* (NavPress), which already has sold more than 110,000 copies. Its wide distribution and extravagant endorsements identify it as a version to reckon with, and to examine carefully.

Approaches to Bible Translation

Before commenting on the specifics of *The Message*, it would be helpful to survey various approaches to the style and substance of Bible translations as seen in the best-selling modern versions. More detailed discussion and critiques of English versions are available in *So Many Versions?* by Sakae Kubo and Walter F. Specht (Zondervan, 1983) and *The English Bible From KJV to NIV*, by Jack P. Lewis (Baker, 1991).

As to style, some feel a Bible should be translated word for word, as is attempted in the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB). Others believe no accuracy is lost in a less rigid, more idiomatic translation such as the *New International Version* (NIV). (The *King James Version* [KJV], and *New Revised Standard Version* [NRSV] stand somewhere between the NASB and NIV.) Still others think translation remains faithful in a free and idiomatic rendering such as *Today's English Version* (TEV) or J. B. Phillips' *New Testament in Modern English*. *The Message* definitely falls in this latter category, but is freer and more expansive than either Phillips or the TEV.

Word-for-word translation is a practical impossibility. This is because no two languages use words and grammar in exactly the same way. Even the simple sentence "God is love" from 1 John 4:16, identical in most English versions, is not a word-for-word rendering: the

Greek reads, "The God love is." That may be good Greek, but it is not good English. Recognizing this reality, the NRSV translators followed the maxim "As literal as possible, as free as necessary." The working maxim of *The Message* appears to be "As free as possible; literal only when necessary."

As to substance, most of the best-selling Bibles use a traditional, ecclesiastical vocabulary in addition to generic English terms. Some simple-English versions, such as the *International Children's Bible* (ICB), use traditional words like "blasphemy," "gospel," and "tabernacle," but have a dictionary to introduce readers to these technical and theological words. Other basic translations attempt to avoid words that are not in everyday English, using footnotes to explain concepts like "righteousness" and "repentance," as in the case with the *Contemporary English Version* (CEV). Still other versions build their explanations and interpretations into the text itself, as do *The Living Bible* (TLB) and *The Message*. This latter approach is popularly called "paraphrase," although the expansive comments of these versions often go way beyond the requirements of simple restatement.

Of course, all translation involves interpretation. Even when translating word for word, one must decide what a word means in a specific context. The English word "trunk," for example, can be the front end of an elephant, the back

end of a car, the bottom of a tree, the middle of a person, or the entirety of a suitcase. Recognizing that words can have a wide range of meaning, translators must take great care not to overload a word or passage, especially with theological interpretation. The most critical word choice in the NIV is the rendering of the Greek word *sarx* as "sinful nature" (25 times, including Romans 7:5, 18, 25), a rendering incompatible with several denominational perspectives. Many wish the NIV had stuck with the traditional and theologically neutral "flesh," and offered "sinful nature" in the footnotes instead of the other way around.

Interpretation often adds to the text. The KJV renders John 1:17, "For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." By inserting the word "but," which is not in the Greek, the translators force the reader to see a contrast between law and grace and between Moses and Jesus, whereas John may have intended to show a continuity. Nowhere is this assumed contrast more evident than in the expansive paraphrase of the TLB, "For Moses gave us *only* the Law *with its rigid demands and merciless justice*, while Jesus Christ brought us loving forgiveness as well." The italicized words come not from the Greek but from the theology of the paraphraser, Kenneth N. Taylor.

The major problem with this kind of paraphrase, which also characterizes *The Message*, is that the reader does not know where the text ends and the commentary begins. The TLB does note in its preface, "There are dangers in paraphrases . . . a possibility that the translator, however honest, may be giving the English reader something that the original writer did not mean to say." No such cautions are offered in the introduction to or advertisements for *The Message*. Nor in the work itself is it ever called a paraphrase. Rather, the translator's ability in Greek is lauded as "a second mother tongue" and his translation applauded as "accurate" and "authentic" to the degree that one widely used commendation states, "If the New Testament were written today, this is what it would sound like."

Specific Characteristics of *The Message*

• **Translation Style.** As already noted, *The Message* is a very free rendering of the Greek. The text has chapter numbers, but no verses. This is not explained, but verse numbers are probably omitted to make the text look more like normal English literature, and because the translation often combines and transposes verses in a way that would be difficult or impossible to represent (as in 1 Cor. 11:1-16, pp. 354, 355).

Sometimes the translation is straightforward in its simplicity. Nothing is added to the genealogies of Matthew and Luke. The institution of the Lord's Supper in Luke 22:17-20 is clear and concise. Narrative texts in the Gospels



and Acts tend to be conservatively rendered.

Some paraphrastic renderings help to clarify words and grammar in a way many would agree reflects well the intention of the original. Take, for example, the classic John 3:16 (KJV): "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." *The Message* reads (p. 190): "This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need to be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life." While some scholars would prefer "This is *the way*

God loved the world," or might ask for a stronger result statement than "whole and lasting life," this is a good paraphrase in contemporary English.

Peterson himself characterizes the language of *The Message* as "current and fresh and understandable in the same language in which we do our shopping, talk with our friends, worry about world affairs, and teach our children their table manners" (p. 7). But it is often self-consciously literary and idiosyncratic. For example, after explaining the significance of the verb "fulfill" in the introduction to Matthew's Gospel (p. 8), Peterson chooses not to use "fulfill" to translate the word's first occurrence in Matthew 1:22 (p. 10). Instead, he renders the text, "This would bring the prophet's embryonic sermon to full term." Such is hardly "the language of the street." Many traditional and theological words, such as "repent(ance)" and "righteous(ness)," are avoided, while similar words like "baptize," "blasphemy," and "covenant" are retained. In the place of some traditional terms are the author's own coined vocabulary, often hyphenated composite expressions such as "God-Expression," "God-news," "God-pointing," "good-hearts," "Life-Light," and "Priest-Friend." I am not certain that such expressions are any more contemporary or require less explanation than the traditional vocabulary they replace.

• **Expansive Paraphrase.** *The Message* regularly adds significantly to the text. Joseph is characterized as a "righteous" or "just" man in most English versions of Matthew 1:19. *The Message* has him "chagrined but noble" (p. 10), half of which is presumed by the translator rather than stated in the text. In Luke 3:7 (p. 122), the crowds are said to be coming for baptism "because it was the popular thing to do" (compare Matt. 3:7, p. 13). "You are the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13, NRSV) becomes "Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth" (p. 16). Paul's simple question in Acts 19:2, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (NIV) is expanded to "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Did you take

God into your mind only, or did you also embrace him with your heart? Did he get inside you?" (p. 280). Again, readers have no clue when the text ends and the commentary begins.

• **Anachronisms and Transcultural Renderings.** *The Message* sometimes retains terminology that reflects ancient biblical culture, while at other times it uses words that reflect modern culture. The prodigal son wears "sandals" (Luke 15:22, p. 159), but Peter wears "shoes" (Acts 12:8, p. 263). Jesus reads the "scroll" of Isaiah (Luke 4:17, p. 125), but Paul reads "books" (2 Tim. 4:13, p. 450). Upon seeing "loan sharks" and people selling cattle in the Temple, Jesus exclaims, "Stop turning my Father's house into a shopping mall!" (John 2:16, p. 188). The parable of the mustard seed becomes the parable of the "pine nut" (Luke 13:19, p. 154), but faith needs to be the size of a "poppy seed" (Luke 17:6, p. 162). A servant must wait to eat until his master finishes his "coffee" (verse 8, p. 162). In Luke 20:46 (p. 171) Jesus warns against "religion scholars" who wear "academic gowns" and "sit at the head table at every church function"—renderings that cross both cultural and religious lines.

• **Interpretive Patterns.** It is the translator's duty to resist the temptation to overload the text with theological interpretation or to make vague what is concrete in the text. *The Original New Testament*, translated by Jewish scholar Hugh Schonfield, has extreme examples of such tendencies. He obscures the concept of the virgin birth by referring to Mary as a "maiden" in Luke 1:27 and as "unwed" in verse 34, and he totally omits it from Matthew by failing to translate Matthew 1:22, 23!

Thankfully, *The Message* is not so extreme. Peterson enjoys an impeccable reputation as an orthodox evangelical. He believes he has not imposed himself upon the text. In an interview with *Publisher's Weekly* (Feb. 14, 1994, pp. 49, 50) Peterson says "the work wasn't really mine. . . . I felt as if I was a servant to the text for two years, and I was compelled to obey." It should be noted, however, that not all of his paraphrase

follows the mainstream of biblical interpretation.

Some texts exclude or demand specific theological orientation. "Grow up" for the traditional "Be perfect" in Matthew 5:48 (p. 19) excludes the holiness/perfectionist perspective. Acts 22:16 is translated in such a way as would please baptismal regenerationists (p. 289), but not so in 1 Peter 3:21 (pp. 491, 492). The subhead "Prayer Language" for 1 Corinthians 14 and the consistent reference to praying in "a private 'prayer language'" throughout the chapter reflects modern charismatic theology and practice. The office(s) of bishop/elder/overseer are usually generalized to "leader," as in 1 Timothy 3:1, 2; 5:17, 19 (pp. 441, 443), and Titus 1:5, 6 (p. 451); deacon is often rendered "servant" as in 1 Timothy 3:8 (p. 441). These renderings would not fit all perspectives

*Texts traditionally
understood as con-
demning homosexual
conduct are generalized
to "sex abuse."*

on church government. The Arminian understanding of loss of salvation could not easily be seen in James 5:19, 20 (p. 485) or 1 John 5:16 (p. 508).

The Greek word *kurios* is usually rendered "Lord" in English versions; it reflects both the proper name of God *Yahweh* (LORD) and the positional title *Adonay* (Lord) from the Old Testament. Some biblical scholars avoid "Lord" as a male-oriented, sexist term. *The Message* rarely uses "Lord," preferring to call Jesus "the Master" (John 20:20) and to translate Old Testament references to *Yahweh* as "God" (Matt. 3:3, p. 13; but note Matt. 4:7, 10, p. 14). This limits the interpretation of passages that might refer to Jesus as both *Yahweh* and *Adonay*—as God and as Sovereign—such as Romans 10:9-13 (p. 323; com-

pare Joel 2:32) and Philippians 2:11 (p. 414; compare Isa. 45:18-25).

The Message also fails to consistently handle role relations between men and women. Some passages that address husband-wife role relations use the word "submit," such as Ephesians 5:22-24 (p. 409) and Colossians 3:18 (p. 426) (although they seem to qualify submission to certain situations). Other texts have been rendered in such a way that the traditional, hierarchical interpretation is no longer possible, especially 1 Peter 3:1-7 (p. 490), where women are simply admonished to "be good wives." The first paragraph on page 355 (1 Corinthians 11) begins, "Don't, by the way, read too much into the differences here between men and women," a statement that has no clear textual base. These may be defensible interpretations, but they disallow other understandings.

Texts traditionally understood as condemning homosexual conduct—1 Corinthians 6:9 (p. 345) and 1 Timothy 1:10 (p. 439)—are generalized to "sex abuse" (see *Christian Research Journal*, Winter 1993, pp. 8-15). Romans 1:27, rendered "Sexually confused, they abused and defiled one another, women with women, men with men—all lust, no love" (p. 305), leaves room for the allowance of loving homosexual relationships.

Measuring The Message

So how are we to view *The Message*? It is an expansive paraphrase that is not so labeled, as is *The Living Bible*. Beset with inconsistencies, its idiom is not always "street language"; its terminology is often idiosyncratic to its author. Compared by noted literary figures to the groundbreaking translation of J. B. Phillips, I believe *The Message* often lacks Phillips' creativity and conciseness.

In the introduction Eugene Peterson compares his pastoral ministry to his work as a translator: "I stood at the border between two languages, biblical Greek and everyday English, acting as a translator, providing the right phrases, getting the right words so that the men and women to whom I was pastor could find their way around and get along in this world" (p. 7). Much of *The Message* reads like a sermon: text plus

interpretation and application. Unlike a sermon, however, the reader does not know where the text ends and the sermon begins.

Because of its interpretive and idiosyncratic nature, *The Message* should not be used for study. If read for enlightenment or entertainment, the reader should follow the advice of Augustine, as quoted in the original preface to the KJV: "Variety of translations is profitable for finding out the sense of the Scriptures." Acts 17:11 commends the Bereans for evaluating Paul's teaching with the Old Testament Scriptures. In the same spirit, *The Message* needs to be evaluated against more consistent and traditional translations, especially when its renderings evoke a response such as "I didn't know the Bible said that!" or "Now I understand what it means."

In sum: while the phrase "the Message" is Eugene Peterson's translation of "the Gospel," not everything in *The Message* should be treated as gospel.

John R. Kohlenberger III is the author or coeditor of 25 biblical reference books, including Words About the Word: A Guide to Choosing and Using Your Bible (Zondervan). All About Bibles (Oxford University Press), The NIV Exhaustive Concordance and The Greek New Testament: UBS4 With NRSV and NIV (Zondervan).

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For Devotional Use Only: *The Clear Word*

BY WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

When *The Clear Word*, a Bible paraphrase prepared by Dr. Jack Blanco, appeared last year, it evoked

both applause and dismay. The book sold like hotcakes, but some Adventists voiced concerns that the Adventist Church had fallen into the trap of making its own Bible—like the Jehovah's Witnesses.



Blanco chairs the Religion Department of Southern College in Collegedale, Tennessee. Those familiar with him recognize him as a sincere, devoted Christian who seeks to bring his faith into everyday life and to encourage students to come into a closer relationship with Christ.

The Clear Word began as a private devotional project about 10 years ago. Starting with the Gospel of Mark, Blanco tried to put the thought of each verse in the language of today. He attempted to have Jesus speak as if He were present among us now.

After he had completed the New Testament, close relatives wanted a copy. Other people saw it and also asked for one, which led to Blanco's printing 5,000 copies. These were soon gone, and Blanco began to paraphrase the Old Testament.

Last year the Review and Herald printed both Testaments as *The Clear Word Bible*. Before long the first edition of 20,000 sold out and the work was back on the press.

Why did Adventists snap up Blanco's work? Probably because it is easy to read and has a strong devotional flavor. Some perhaps bought it because they

regard it as "safe," since it was prepared by a Seventh-day Adventist and published by an SDA press.

But *The Clear Word Bible* also provoked a strong negative reaction. Some Adventists expressed alarm that it played into the hands of Adventists' critics, who would use it against the church and charge Adventists with being a cult.

What Are the Facts?

First, *The Clear Word* goes beyond paraphrase. Blanco injects his own interpretations into the text: sometimes he adds, sometimes he deletes, sometimes he supplies comments based on the writings of Ellen White, sometimes he brings in ideas from other passages of the Bible, sometimes he simply slants the text to make it say what he wants it to say.

The Clear Word is a combination of paraphrase plus commentary. In no sense can it be considered an accurate translation of Scripture per se.

Consider a verse critical to Seventh-day Adventists, Daniel 8:14. The King James Version reads: "And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." In *The Clear Word*, however, we get not a sentence but a paragraph: "He said to him, 'After two thousand, three hundred prophetic days (or two thousand, three hundred years), God will step in, proclaim the truth about Himself and restore the ministry of the Sanctuary in heaven to its rightful place. This is when the judgment will begin, of which the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary was a type.'"

It was unfortunate that the first edition of Blanco's work was released as *The Clear Word Bible*. This book is not a Bible, but a devotional commentary on the Bible. The second edition remedies the error by deleting the word "Bible" and adding "interpretive paraphrase," which is accurate.

Second, *The Clear Word* is fine if used as the author intended. Much potential harm can be avoided if readers of *The Clear Word* would stick to Blanco's instruction in the opening paragraph of his preface to the work: "This is not a new translation but a paraphrase of the Scriptures. It is not intended for


in-depth study or for public reading in churches. Those who are better qualified have given readers of the Holy Scriptures excellent translations for such purposes and undoubtedly will continue to do so as additional manuscripts come to light."

Some Adventists, however, are using *The Clear Word* to teach Sabbath school classes. Some read from it for the Scripture passage in the worship service. And, it has been reported to us, some ministers have even employed it for their preaching.

Such uses have the potential to bring much misunderstanding and harm (see the sidebar "I Am Concerned"). They make *The Clear Word* indeed an Adventist Bible—something Dr. Blanco says would hurt him deeply.

The only practice that could be worse would be to use *The Clear Word* for Bible studies with people interested in the Adventist message. Then Adventists would have fallen into the pit of the Jehovah's Witnesses with their *New World Bible* or the Latter-day Saints with their reliance on the *Book of Mormon*.

Already we have a difficult enough task to educate the public that we are *not* "the people who won't take blood transfusions," nor are we "the people with a wonderful choir in Salt Lake City." We are a people of the Bible and the Bible only—have been, and I hope always will be. Let's not do anything to weaken that stance that comes down to us from the pioneers.

I support every endeavor to encourage Bible study and appreciate the spirit behind Blanco's efforts. But when we read *The Clear Word*, let's be sure to restrict it to private devotions—as Jack Blanco intended. 



William G. Johnsson is editor of the *Adventist Review*.

"I Am Concerned"

BY SAKAE KUBO

Adventist scholar Dr. Sakae Kubo has made a lifelong study of Bible translations. With Dr. Walter F. Specht he authored the important book So Many Versions? (Zondervan, 1983). He wrote us expressing concern over how Adventists may regard and use The Clear Word.

As one who has studied Bible versions, I am concerned about how our membership regard and use Blanco's *Clear Word*. Behind my remarks is a history of Bibles of this sort that have a terrible bias.

The Jehovah's Witnesses' *New World Translation* is an obvious example—the divinity of Christ is removed and His createdness is brought out along with other tendential characteristics.

Taylor's *Living Bible* is generally considered a good paraphrase by conservative Christians, but there is an obvious bias toward instantly going to heaven after death.



Conservatives usually favor a more literal translation than a paraphrase. Therefore, a good number prefer the *New American Standard Bible*. The King James Version translators were so careful about additions that they even italicized the addition of the verb "is" where it is clearly understood. Adventists, who emphasize the Bible, should, of all people, be concerned about Bible translations that carefully and accurately translate the Bible.

There is a spectrum of translation philosophy from the woodenly literal (such as Wycliffe's first translation), literal but clear, dynamic equivalence, and paraphrase. Though translation in some passages unavoidably has to be an interpretation, ambiguous passages should be left ambiguous and let the reader determine how they are to be interpreted. Even a paraphrase, though freer, is intended only to translate the original, though obviously more danger of interpretation rather than mere translation is present.

However, Blanco's paraphrase has subtracted, added, and interpreted freely without footnotes or italics. Frequently the interpretation is Adventistic, sometimes even a private interpretation of the paraphraser. I dread to find this version being reviewed by one of the scholarly journals. . . .

As far as I am concerned, any addition to the text is unnecessary, even if it is correct and helpful. Such additional matter should be included in the footnotes. But additions that are private interpretations should definitely not be included; in fact, they should be studiously eliminated.

I have several pages of texts in which unnecessary additions are made, some of them quite innocuous but some of them very disturbing. [Kubo then listed four pages of examples: Matthew 10:28 has cannot kill the "soul." Blanco has "your spirit or your loyalty to me." Compare this with Revelation 6:9, where the original has "souls," but Blanco translates as "human bones"!] These Adventistic interpretations of the text cannot be claimed to have come out of the original text, but imported into the text.

The very obvious and serious danger is that our own people will be confused as to what the Bible really says. Interpretation has been so mixed in with the text that our people will think that the interpretation is part of the Word of God.

A Place to Belong

If you no longer attend church . . .



BY W. CLARENCE SCHILT

If you no longer attend an Adventist church, I can't believe you're actually reading this. After all, the *Adventist Review* is not exactly top-priority reading for former members.

I'm going to guess who you are. You're probably 50 or younger, and you grew up in a Seventh-day Adventist home. I've never seen statistics on the percentage of former members who came into the church through their childhood home, but I have a hunch that the number is high.

And if you did, the Adventist way of life was no choice of your own. You had it handed to you without consultation.

And some of you are converts who for one reason or another became disillusioned after baptism. Even though you are no longer active members, at one time you cared enough to be involved.

You Are Spiritual

According to public opinion polls, it's a safe assumption that you consider yourself a *spiritual* person (most people do). At the same time, you might not

consider yourself a *religious* person. That is, you likely believe in a divine power, even though you don't include church attendance in your life.

Spiritual values, you would say, are quite important to you. You might have a personal relationship with God, though not in a church setting. I hear you saying that churches and denominations have too narrow a vision of God. You may feel that organized religion stifles spiritual growth. This last point is very painful to us as a church. The thing we wish we were best at is what we too frequently seem to fall shortest on.

We talk about the good news and the bad news. *Gospel* means "good news," but some aspects of it might be considered bad news.

Let's face it, the Adventist Church has not worked as diligently as it should have at meeting personal needs. We have done some important work with the prophetic and doctrinal aspects of the Bible. We have worked hard on behaviors, supposing that healthy relationships were automatic by-products of proper behavior and thinking. We

assumed that intellectual acceptance of ideas would mean healthy people.

We were mistaken. Both our presuppositions and our approach were faulty. Even when we wised up two or three decades ago and began to emphasize relationships, we talked mainly of our relationship with Christ. We didn't do much with the person-to-person implications of Christianity. We still haven't done very much. So as members we often are still left alone and lonely on our spiritual journey. My friends who have left or are thinking about leaving mention loneliness as often as any other reason.

There's Good News Too

Each one of us has our own horror stories of being treated badly within the church. But there is also good news.

No person is an island. Each of us needs a community of people in which we are encouraged, nurtured, challenged, and held accountable. A community whose values center on spiritual matters provides one of the best places for nurture and growth. No person can achieve spiritual maturity—become truly whole—in isolation. God designed us to interact with each other.

Again and again, those who leave tell me that even though they are no longer involved in church life, one of the best places to find friends with whom they feel comfortable (particularly when looking for compatible dating partners) is among those who take church life seriously.

We all need to learn how to deal with the brokenness each of us knows in one way or another. Author Becky Pippert tells of a friend who revealed that what impressed her about Becky's life was that when she failed she wasn't afraid to admit it, and she knew where to take her failure. As a result of seeing this, Becky's friend became a Christian.

Even secular psychologists emphasize the need for forgiveness in order for healing and growth to occur. Rarely does a person find this apart from a community that offers forgiveness and new beginnings.

I can hear you protesting that this is just what the church does *not* offer. I know all the speeches about judgmentalism, rigidity, and so forth. However, I

have not known one congregation (and I've been in many during my 28 years of pastoring) that has not had some wonderful healing people in it.

The church provides a good place to get involved in serving others. True, you can find service groups in lots of other places. However, in other settings it is much harder to find people who have sorted out the ultimate reasons for their service. When the big reasons are not clear, the experience of serving is frequently limited and fraught with confusion, and finally fades away.

I have been part of a church community that developed a shelter for homeless families with children. One of our primary goals was to offer spiritual values. We wanted to help others with more than their material needs. We were committed to enriching the quality of their personal, relational life. That would happen, we believed, only as they were introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This was not imposed on them; it was offered only to those who wanted to listen. The opportunity to include this kind of help outside the church is very rare.

We need you. We need to learn from you. We need to hear from you. We need to understand why you dropped out and what it would take for you to give it another try. We need you to help us keep from making the same mistakes that caused you to leave us. We need you to help us bring change from within the church.

A Pious Question

Now, this is probably the most pious part of this article. You may be tempted to quit reading, but stay with me. I want you to ask yourself this question: "Did I leave the church because I was unable to help and serve others?"

You may wonder what this has to do with the issue. We live in a very "me-oriented" society. In fact, staying with or leaving the church community often has to do with how well it serves our personal needs. But this soon becomes self-defeating. Happiness does not come from seeking it; rather, it is a by-product of working for the happiness of others. This is part of what Jesus meant when He said, "Whoever loses his life for me

will find it" (Matt. 16:25, NIV).

A past issue of the *Adventist Review* contained letters from "missing" members. At the risk of sounding judgmental, I noted that most of the reasons given for leaving the church were self-centered rather than others-centered.

As I appeal to you to reconsider and give the church another try, I would offer this challenge: think about returning with a commitment to enrich the life of others more than focusing on what you get from the church for yourself. I wonder if you might not then find a completely different experience the second time around.

Created for Community

The Bible is clear about the need to be part of a visible body of believers. To join Jesus is to become part of His body, with all the interdependence this image depicts. To become a Christian and then live in isolation and independence presents a theological and practical contradiction. In spite of what your experience may have been, the body of Christ is called to provide relationships.

Some leave the church because they cannot find anyone to fulfill their wants. On the other hand, some refuse to receive from others—they think it's spiritually immature to need other people. But God created us to serve *and* to

let others serve us. We need *both*, and that's best experienced in a church.

So the "good news" we have looked at encompasses three areas:

□ *Quality of life* is enriched in a community of believers. Learning to relate to each other in enriching ways is deepened when we do it under the Lordship of Jesus.

□ *Spiritual growth* is best personalized and internalized through association with others who, in a loving, supportive atmosphere, study the Word of God and help each other live it out.

□ *Witness and service* can best be carried out in a community of people that shares similar values, goals, and rationale for serving.

For all its faults I still believe the church is the best place to find belonging. I also believe it's the best place to become the kind of people that can help others find belonging. When you leave us, we are incomplete. We need you. You are still our family. ☞



W. Clarence Schilt is senior pastor of the Calimesa Seventh-day Adventist Church in California.

Time of Change

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Mind Over Media

Is anything that moves bad? Are there criteria for choosing what we view?

BY LOREN DICKINSON

Americans enjoy no sport as much as they do media bashing. We do a great deal of it, and we're good at it.

We attack the visual media for producing infantile TV programs, mindless films, stupid commercials, and abhorrent videos. Even some religious programs, with their excessive appeals to emotion and money, hit us as insulting.

How can we consider ourselves qualified to be media bashers when by our own accounts we don't watch much TV? "Oh, we watch the news once a day and *60 Minutes* on Sunday night, but that's about all," we say.

We subscribe to cable, we add, because it carries educational channels. "They carry a host of great programs," we assert. No argument from most of us.

In fact, my wife, Carolyn, and I live in a rural area and do indeed subscribe to cable. To be sure, it does host an array of great programs. But I confess that worthy as much of it is, the availability of educational shows and PBS* hardly makes the rest of our viewing more antiseptic. Nor does consuming PBS do much to warrant an otherwise messy menu of TV fare. For that mat-

ter, careful viewers use discretion even over PBS programming.

Better Than Bashing

Is there a better way? Can we keep our visual media and still consume them? We can. Let's look first at some background data about TV behaviors and consumption. Then let me offer some easy answers to a troublesome problem.

Fact 1. In the average American home that owns a TV, and about 98 percent of all homes do,¹ the set is on nearly seven hours a day. That figure has been constant for years. But please note: the set is on, only on. Who's watching what with what effect is another matter.

Fact 2. Viewers of those nearly seven hours spend more than an hour watching commercials, frequently the target of our ridicule and bashing. But commercials often appear better produced and more informative than the programs in which they're placed. And, crucially, commercials pay the bill to bring us TV.

Fact 3. Program producers peg the

intellectual level of most programming at the upper grade school level.

Why there? Because that niche represents the lowest common denominator that producers and scriptwriters insist reaches the largest numbers. This is *broadcasting*, we must remember. In most daily fare TV simply cannot and will not discriminate among its millions of viewers. Neither will most videos or films.

Fact 4. Any medium appealing to an array of the senses holds stunning potential for power and impact. The potential, of course, runs both ways. There is potential for viewers to sense reality and achieve understanding. And there is also potential for having false experiences and misunderstanding multisensory messages.

Fact 5. Often TV and film characters are perceived by viewers as types and categories—not individuals.

For example, fathers are dumb, teachers wear glasses, portly people are lazy, African-Americans excel in sports, and Asians are brainy. Custodians, cab drivers, and food servers are viewed as servants; they exist only to deliver the unglamorous. In reality we frequently patronize, demean, and snub them.

Fact 6. Some studies have found that "many people are so overwhelmed by the volume of news and information" that they withdraw and become passive.² Theorists call this "narcotized dysfunction," a condition in which viewers feel informed about issues and problems but are apparently immobilized when it comes to doing something about them.

Fact 7. The experience of viewing TV/film/video itself generates an effect virtually irrespective of the content.

The *medium* is a compelling message because the action and drama on the screen inherently attract. In film theaters, for instance, the scenes appear far bigger than reality. Cameras and microphones take an audience to experiences that *they alone can provide*.

The Billy Graham crusade team, for example, discovered how compelling a big screen is. Nearly 2 percent more



H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS

people come forward to make a spiritual inquiry when they view Graham on the big screen in a nearby amphitheater than when they see him live in the stadium.³

Three Perspectives

Having said that, what do we do about consuming the media? Are there *Adventist Review* readers serious enough about their TV/video/movie consumption to consider an action plan?

Well, the brief perspectives and criteria that follow may do that. For decades I've offered many of them to inquiring college students, some of whom have taken them seriously.

First, where you view the media is no way to decide whether to see it. Whether movies are viewed in an ornate theater downtown, a plush theater in the mall, or the warm cocoon of your own family room makes little difference; there's nothing particularly antiseptic or germ-infested about the location.

Second, consider the power of what I've come to call the "diminishing threshold" theory.

Simply put, the theory says that the stunning powers of visual media tempt us to relax our sensibilities to what's worthy of our attention. In this theory we face our TV experiences, for example, with laudable standards. We construct these standards—over time or, in some instances, dramatically—when we become convinced that media, with its array of virtues and vices, must be consumed very carefully.

So we set for ourselves some minimal positions concerning matters such as violence or language. These aren't positions we submit to hard copy; often we understand them only intuitively.

Then, says the diminishing threshold theory, our minimal standards, or thresholds, of what we find appropriate begin to blur or fade, gradually and perhaps imperceptively. Media content that was formerly unacceptable may become much less objectionable and therefore much more acceptable.

The result? Good choices fade into marginal choices. Marginal choices fade into poor choices. Eventually one may become an indiscriminate media consumer. Many Americans are. The young, the old, the saintly, and the sin-

ner. No one's immune.

This whole process may sound to you like the familiar domino theory. Those who hold this theory would say that decisions to watch media lead to a necessary and inevitable progression of deteriorating choices.

That's not the case. There simply is no *necessary connection* between one step or decision and the next one, with at least one disclaimer.

Most of us understand that making one good decision offers us the confidence to make another one. Conversely, a marginal decision may generate the momentum that finds us making other marginal decisions.

Content Counts

The third perspective holds that what's absolutely crucial in making

*What's crucial in
choosing what media to
view is the content,
not the location.*

media choices pivots on the value of the media content, not where we see it, with whom we see it, nor how much we pay to see it.

Content can be judged by some very simple criteria. When we decide to apply them, they become powerfully influential in making thoughtful media selections.

- Does it aid in understanding worthwhile notions?
- Does it put the richest thoughts into the purest language?
- Does it significantly accent the message over the medium, effects, and actors?
- Does it draw on substandard behav-

iors and language to make its point?

- Does it give evidence of being produced thoughtfully, tastefully, and with some finesse?
- Does it help perpetuate or even advance the spiritual values you hold, once held, or would wish to hold?
- Does it offer experiences you could freely recommend to maturing Christians, including the young?
- Does it foster greater kindness toward and appreciation for others and their views?
- Does it maintain a balance between emotional and intellectual appeals?

These criteria can amount to an action plan for anyone serious about media consumption. The criteria are not synonymous with the mythical picking and choosing so many of us say we do.

Let me close by reaffirming: The visual media are too compelling to leave choices to the whim of the viewing moment or to the pressures often supplied by peers, family members, or media hypesters.

Media bashing, it seems to me, no longer will do. Good choices will. It's time to make thoughtful choices and leave media bashing to those who have ample reason to know what they're talking about.

* A TV broadcast network carrying a large amount of educational programming.

¹ John Vivian, *The Media of Mass Communication*, 2nd ed. (Needham Heights, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1993).

² *Ibid.*

³ Loren Dickinson, "The Billy Graham Crusades: A Study of Crusade Organization" (unpublished dissertation, 1968).



Loren Dickinson is professor of communication at Walla Walla College, in College Place, Washington.

A Vibrant Ministry

Many newcomers to America find a faith to live, in addition to a place to live.

BY JOHN GAVIN

The post-cold war world continues to be characterized by brutal ethnic and political conflicts and by increasing economic desperation. These forces (and others) cause people to leave their homes, communities, and countries, and look for religious, social, and economic freedom in countries other than the one where they were born.¹ Economic migration is expected to increase in the coming five years, while the number of refugees and displaced people will remain the same or also increase.

At present there are 22 million refugees in the world and an estimated 24 million internally displaced people—figures that are higher than in 1993 (which were higher than 1992).² Based on analysis of present and future trends, we expect that humanitarian assistance to victims of ongoing conflicts will become more difficult as Western governments turn inward and as international agencies experience increased ethical as well as logistical difficulties in providing assistance.

Here in the United States the end of the cold war has meant increasing pressure to reduce refugee admissions despite the fact that the number of refugees and displaced people is increasing globally. In 1993 the ceiling for refugee admissions into the U.S. was 132,000; in 1994 the figure was 122,000; in 1995 the figure is 110,000.

As difficult immigration issues are

debated in Congress, classrooms, TV programs, newspapers, restaurants, and living rooms—Seventh-day Adventists are responding compassionately. Hundreds of local Seventh-day Adventist churches are involved in ministry to refugees, a particular target group for Global Mission.

The Many Faces of Compassion

Ministry to refugees has many facets. One of the key aspects is refugee sponsorship. Sponsoring a refugee family is a serious commitment that begins well before a family arrives in the United States. Key church contact people and members of the refugees' family, who are already here in the United States, meet with a case manager to plan how best to meet the needs of those who will be arriving soon.

Then meeting them at the airport, caring for initial housing, providing transportation to medical appointments and job interviews—along with ensuring that food, clothing, housewares, and other items are available—are important responsibilities assumed by those who agree to sponsor a family or individual.

Adventist Refugee Ministries is a program of Adventist Community Services. It works in cooperation with more than a dozen other denominations who resettle refugees under a contract from the State Department and negotiated by Church World Service. This arrangement provides access to local

offices that provide case management services and legal services that are critical for effective ministry to refugees.

Beyond refugee resettlement, Seventh-day Adventists minister to immigrants and refugees through church-operated clothing closets, food pantries, tutoring programs, English classes, and citizenship classes.

As much as this quiet ministry means to newcomers, it is a valuable experience for local churches and those members actively involved in refugee ministries as well. The Vietnamese Adventist church in Portland, Oregon, sponsors dozens of families each year—including many who are not identified with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Pastor Sau Duong reports that the church's ministry to immigrants has galvanized and strengthened the church in its commitment to community and global outreach.

Similarly, the Ephesus and Pilgrim Spanish churches in Miami, Florida, have found ministry to newcomers meaningful. Others include the Denver First church; the Sunnyside church in Portland, Oregon; the First SDA Church in Knoxville, Tennessee; the Anoka, Minnesota, church; and many others.

"Refugee ministries is an important local church ministry," states Monte Sahlin, assistant to the president of the North American Division. "It is well established that newcomers are very open to new ideas about religion and fellowship in a new congregation. Particularly, where a congregation first demonstrates its compassion in very real and tangible ways."

¹ Essay by Elizabeth Ferris, "Global Migration Trends," in *Background Documents: IRPCOM's Strategic Plan, 1995-2000* (New York: CWS, 1994).

² U.S. Committee for Refugees, *World Survey Report 1994* (Washington: U.S. Committee for Refugees, 1994); also, UNHCR, *State of the World's Refugees* (Geneva: UNHCR, 1994), and UNHCR's public information fact sheets.



John Gavin is the assistant director for Adventist Community Services North America and coordinator of Adventist Refugee Ministries.

The Church— Local and Universal



Robert Anderson

The pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist movement were wary of organization. Many of them had been disfellowshipped from membership in the popular churches, and they were concerned that any organization would take Seventh-day Adventists down the same road that had led to the downfall of other churches.

Of course, organization was inevitable if the young movement was to avoid fracturing. The credentialing of clergy, the ownership of property, the developing of such institutions as the Review and Herald Publishing Association—all demanded that Seventh-day Adventists organize. With James White leading the way, we adopted a name (1860), incorporated the publishing house (1861), and formed the first conference of churches (Michigan, 1861) and then the General Conference (1863).

The Lord has blessed and multiplied the church beyond the wildest dreams of the pioneers. From a total membership of only about 3,000 in several states of the United States in 1863, we have grown to more than 8 million in more than 200 countries. Thousands of schools, hospitals, clinics, and publishing houses circle the globe, and the everlasting gospel reaches ever forward with increased thrust into new areas. Looking back on those early struggles to organize the church, no one today could doubt that God was in the planning.

Nevertheless, I am glad that those pioneers like George Storrs wanted to safeguard Seventh-day Adventists from falling into a rut—from becoming simply a machine that exists to perpetuate itself. They wanted us to stay a *movement*, and so do I. I want us always to be

open to God's Spirit so that we can stay on the cutting edge of truth and can explore new and better ways of carrying out our mission.

I am also glad that the spirit of George Storrs is alive and well today! Some people have the idea that the General Conference has unlimited power and that the General Conference president can snap his fingers and make anything happen that he wants. I suggest that anyone with such conceptions ought to sit in on a major business session of the church, such as an Annual Council. They will soon discover that all talk of the General Conference being a hierarchy or the General Conference president functioning like a pope is wholly imaginary! Adventists today fiercely resist any such tendency, just as they have from the earliest times, and I am glad for that.

Entrusted With a Mission

The Lord has many agencies to carry out His will on earth. Seventh-day Adventists do not claim to be the only avenue through which the Holy Spirit is working today, but we do believe that to us God has entrusted a special task—to proclaim the everlasting gospel in all the world in this judgment hour just prior to Jesus' return. The assignment is immense and impossible from a human perspective, but with God all things are possible (Matt. 19:26). To be chosen for such a commission is both humbling and exhilarating.

A major reason for the church, therefore, is to organize believers for service. Seventh-day Adventists have developed over the years a particular structure for the church. This structure has served us well.

We believe God has helped us to form it. Although it isn't explicitly spelled out in the Bible, the basic elements of our church organization rest on scriptural principles. Further, we were blessed by having a prophetic voice to guide us through the counsels and ministry of Ellen G. White, whose counsels were, and still are, critical to our identity and mission.

Seventh-day Adventists relate to the church in terms of four levels—the individual, the local congregation, the conference of churches, and the union conference. Let's look at each in turn.

Individual believers make up the church. We must each come to Jesus one by one, each confess our sins in repentance and receive His gift of forgiveness and a new birth. Our parents cannot accept on our behalf—God has only children, no grandchildren. As a public sign of our decision we undergo baptism by immersion (this is why Adventists do not practice infant baptism).

We come to Jesus individually, but we do not remain individuals as before. As His children we become members of His family, and we acquire a new *corporate* identity in addition to our individual identity. It's like getting married, or being adopted into a new family. We have a new name as well as our old name—the family name, which is His name.

We Are the Church

Sometimes I hear Adventists say "The *church* does this" or "The *church* does that," as though the church is a matter of "we" and "they." Such thinking simply isn't biblical. If we are Christ's, we are already part of His body—we are the church. In this sense, *I* am the church. *You* are the church. The

church is bigger than any one individual; nevertheless, we are the church.

This means that every believer has a part to play. Every believer has a voice. Every believer can make a difference. Every believer has a task to carry out. God expects His church, *you* and *me*, to fulfill His gospel commission. There is no such thing as a nonwitnessing Christian. Each of us is vital to accomplishing the mission of the church.

My dear brother or sister, you may think you are a nobody. Don't think of yourself as "*just* a layperson." *You* are special to God, and you are special to me. You are part of the body of Christ—a wonderfully privileged position—and in the body all members are equal before God.

Local congregations come into existence as individual believers group together for worship, fellowship, and service. Of necessity, local churches involve a restricted geographical area. At the very beginning of Christianity the followers of Jesus gathered together in Jerusalem to form the first congregation. As Christianity began to spread, new congregations sprang up, just as Jesus had commissioned, "in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NIV).

Local congregations play an important role in God's plan. They exist *both* to nurture individual growth and to multiply the witness of individual believers. It's interesting to note that from the New Testament perspective the word "church," when used in a local setting, always refers to congregations, never to a building. There were no church buildings as such in the early church (the Romans didn't permit Christians to construct them), and Christians met for worship in the homes of believers (see, for example, Rom. 16:4, 5). That's good for us to remember—as useful as a church building may be, the people are much more important!

The Bible also teaches us another vital truth about the local church—the local church doesn't exist for itself. Just as no believer stands alone but is part of the body of Christ, so no congregation stands alone but is part of the church universal. In fact, it's the church universal that gives the local church its identity. If there were no body of Christ, the

group of Christians that gather together in any place would be just another club or human association.

Notice how Paul addresses the congregation at Corinth: "To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2, NIV). It's the *church of God* first of all—not just a social gathering. And it's the church of God that is *in Corinth*, a local part of a universal body.

We Seventh-day Adventists need to remember that we aren't congregation-*alists* in organization, as are many denominations today. While we value the local church, we must always understand the local church as part of—and deriving its identity, authority, and

*You are special
to God. You have
a part to play.*

responsibility from—something much larger: the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist movement.

Consequently, to these two dimensions of the church that we find explicit in the New Testament Seventh-day Adventists have added conferences of churches and union conferences.

Conferences consist of the churches in a state, province, or region. They are purely administrative units designed to facilitate and coordinate the activities of local churches and whose mission includes activities leading to establishing new congregations in order to ensure full mission accomplishment within its administrative territory. Worship, fellowship, and service take place at the local level.

During a congregation's development, acting on behalf of the church universal, the broader fellowship of churches (conference) accepts the new congregation into the sisterhood of churches, confers on it the privilege of

carrying the name "Seventh-day Adventist" and the responsibility of carrying out its soul-winning and soul-keeping mission. When the members in a conference vote to accept a new congregation into the church universal, that congregation agrees to function in harmony with the directives spelled out in the *Church Manual* by the worldwide membership. You see, using the name "Seventh-day Adventist" is not a right inherent to the congregation, but rather a privilege that can be granted only by the broader membership.

Union conferences in turn coordinate the activities of conferences. Like them, they are wholly administrative, facilitating the soul-winning work of conferences and other interconference activities (such as operating a college that serves a wider constituency) on a larger geographic basis.

Union conferences form the building blocks of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. Members from a union territory elect their executive committee and the union leaders. It is the union committee that selects the delegates to represent that region at each General Conference session.

Some readers will be wondering where the divisions of the world church and the General Conference itself come in. They do not represent another level of the church, because they are the sum of the unions, and all the unions together make up the General Conference. Divisions are "divisions" of the General Conference implementing the decisions made by the General Conference session and its executive committee.

Truly the Lord has blessed us in giving us such organization for our movement. Christians in other denominations envy our smooth-functioning, worldwide structure. Praise God for the church!

Coming in May—Authority and Responsibility in the Church.

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

Global Mission



Progress



baptisms, which included the pastor of the second largest church in Akieni plus his son, his brother-in-law and other important members of his church. Additional campaigns are planned in Tshisanga, Libreville, Port Gentil, and Franceville.

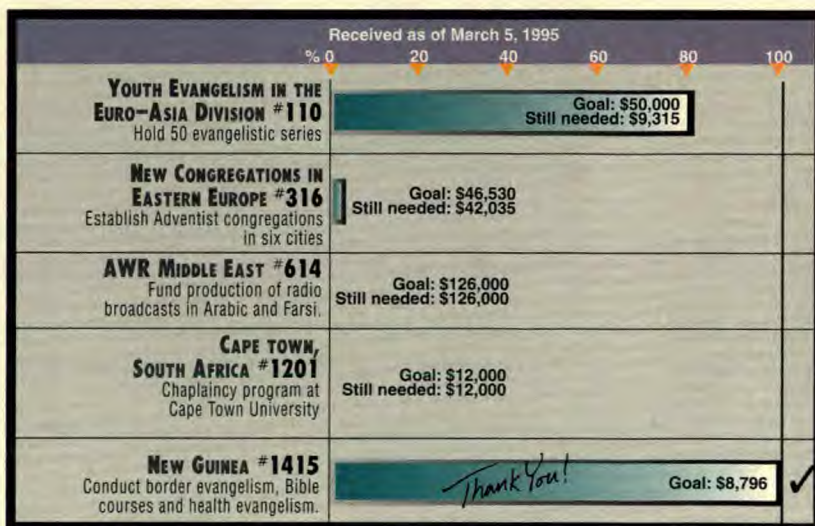
General Conference President Robert Folkenberg visited Akieni, Gabon, last year. He was the first Adventist pastor to preach in the city. Since his visit, Global Mission funds have assisted the local people in evangelism in this unentered area. The first evangelistic campaign brought 52

Challenge

A program to target non-Adventist youth on the campus of Cape Town University is being developed and implemented by the Southern Africa Union. They plan to start a new congregation near the campus to serve these youth. \$12,000 is needed to support this plan. **Project #1201**



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Preliminary Camp Meeting Schedule for 1995

Atlantic Union Conference

Greater New York	
Chinese	July 27-31
English/French	August 4-11
Portuguese	May 26-29
Spanish	August 13-19
United Convocation	August 12
New York	June 23-July 1
Northern New England	July 14-22
Southern New England	June 16-24

SDA Church in Canada

Alberta	July 7-15
British Columbia	July 21-29
Manitoba-Saskatchewan	June 30-July 8
Maritime	July 28-August 5
Newfoundland	July 24-29
Ontario	July 20-22
Quebec	July 25-29

Columbia Union Conference

Allegheny East	August 3-6
Allegheny West	Cancelled
Chesapeake	June 15-18
Mountain View	June 16-24
New Jersey English	June 9-10
New Jersey Spanish	June 16-17
Ohio	June 11-17
Pennsylvania	June 16-24
Potomac	June 20-24

Lake Union Conference

Central Illinois	October 14
Illinois Hispanic	September 1-4
Indiana	June 4-10
Indiana Hispanic	June 9-10
Lake Region	June 17 and 24
Michigan—Cedar Lake	June 23-24
Michigan—Holly	June 16-18
Michigan—UP	August 18-20
Northern Illinois	June 10
Southern Illinois	September 9
Wisconsin	June 16-24

Mid-America Union Conference

Central States	June 9-18
Dakota	June 9-17
Iowa-Missouri	May 30-June 3
Kansas-Nebraska	June 2-10
Minnesota	June 9-17
Rocky Mountain	
Eastern Slope	June 16-21
Western Slope	May 30-June 3
Wyoming	July 18-22

North Pacific Union Conference

Alaska—Palmer Camp	August 1-5
Alaska—Prince of Wales	August 17-19
Alaska—Vank Island	June 9-10
Idaho	June 6-10
Montana	June 14-17
Oregon	July 26-29
Upper Columbia	June 14-17
Washington	July 27-August 5

Pacific Union Conference

Arizona	June 9-17
Nevada-Utah	
Las Vegas Convocation	May 19-20
Springville	June 12-17
Intertribal	July 20-23
South Lake Tahoe	July 31-August 5
Northern California	July 20-29
Southeastern California	June 15-17
Black Ministries	July 28-August 5
Southern California	May 26-27; July 13-16; Sept. 1-2

Southern Union Conference

Carolina	May 28-June 3
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Florida	May 26-June 3
Georgia-Cumberland	May 24-27
Gulf States	May 19-27
Kentucky-Tennessee	May 26-June 3
South Atlantic	June 8-17
South Central	June 9-17
Southeastern	June 8-17

Southwestern Union Conference

Arkansas-Louisiana	
Baton Rouge	October 27-28
Gentry, Arkansas	June 1-4
Little Rock	March 31-April 1
New Orleans	May 12-13

Shreveport	September 29-30
Oklahoma	July 21-29
Southwest Region	June 9-18
Texas	
Houston	May 12-13
Jefferson Academy	April 28-29
Keene	June 1-4
Korean	May 26-27
San Antonio	March 31-April 1
Spanish	June 7-10
Valley Grande Academy	March 4-5
Texico	June 7-10
Texico Northern	July 7-8



Adventist Contact

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Although they both attended the same SDA college at the same time, John and Daleana ("Danowski") Corbin never met and married until they joined *Adventist Contact*. John says, "This is a marriage made in heaven."

We also introduced John's grandfather, Peter Corbin, to his wife, Bessie. Peter was 84, and Bessie was 79.

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Time of Discovery

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ADRA's Global Village—Utrecht

BY TAMARA BOEHMKE

From June 29 through July 9, 1995, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), along with its European partners, will present Global Village at the General Conference session in Utrecht. The international exhibit will be set up in Irene Hall No. 1.

Global Village is more than just a display. It's a three-dimensional, life-size re-creation of how the majority of people in developing countries live. The dwellings have been designed and constructed by Hollywood set designers in order for visitors to fully experience village life. For example, visitors will be able to walk through an African mud and dung hut, touch it, sit in it, and smell it. This is not a "Disneyland" type of playground, but a thoughtful and dignified way of presenting a different way of living.

Adventists from around the world visiting GC session will have the oppor-

tunity to visit the village. In addition to the African hut, some of the habitats included will be a refugee camp, a refugee boat, a South American *favela*, and a bamboo house similar to the type used in Southeast Asia.

"ADRA's Global Village in Utrecht will bring Adventists from around the world—as well as the local community—a little closer to understanding people," says Casey Bahr, ADRA development education director.

Guides will provide visitors with tours through the village and answer questions about the specific habitats. Besides real people giving "real-life" answers to questions from visitors, printed materials will be available on both the village and ADRA's development activities around the world. General

Conference session attendees are encouraged to attend.

According to the United States

Agency for International Development (USAID), ADRA's Global Village accomplishes everything that USAID stands for. The agency has been using the village as an example in their development education presentations.

A Good Idea Getting Better

In October of 1992 ADRA sponsored Global Village on the campus of La Sierra University in Riverside, California. More than 20,000 school-children and local community members saw a whole new world.

Before the summer exhibit, two dozen



Individuals from around the world will be able to visit this African hut in Utrecht, just as these students did when it was part of the exhibit in Riverside, California.

La Sierra University students studied about life in developing countries. These students didn't just occupy the habitats, they lived as the people from those villages would live—sleeping on rough wood floors, on mats, or on the ground. They ate as the portrayed people would eat—often one meal a day, consisting of water, rice, beans, or bread.

Once the exhibit began, the college students *were* the villagers, the refugees, and the homeless as they led groups of elementary school students through the exhibit, reenacting village life on a typical day.

After the 90-minute tour, students went to a debriefing station where they discussed what they had seen. During this session emphasis was placed on the





Young adult "guides" will introduce exhibit participants to life in developing countries at ADRA's Global Village at Utrecht this summer.

relationship between disaster response and sustainable development, and on the importance of humanitarian organizations responding to human need.

Finally, visitors were able to pack a small box of clothing and toiletries destined for Somalia. Here students and community visitors were given the opportunity to personally participate in a development activity. So moving was the experience that many students took off the sweaters, jackets, and sweatshirts

they were wearing and put them in boxes for children halfway around the world.

For the past 11 years ADRA has been working together with the Adventist Church worldwide to confront poverty, hunger, and hopelessness in the developing world. During that time more than a million children have been vaccinated; infant mortality has decreased; thousands of nomads have received clean water; women in small enterprise development projects have brought their families out



This hut, typical of the kind found in Southeast Asia, was featured in the Global Village exhibit at La Sierra University.

"The world is our global village, and we will always live here. When there are hungry or needy children in our world, we are the ones who have to find them and feed them. When there are acts of injustice or racism, we are the ones who must stand against them. Where there are lives wasted through poverty, we are the people who have the resources to do something to change things.

"Making a difference in the global village starts with understanding the global village. The more we know about people (and the more people know about us), the more likely we are to work together to make our world a better place. The more we understand about our human family, the less likely we are to go to war over land or oil, or to build weapons that could destroy each other.

"When you understand the world around you more completely, you understand yourself better as well. Your own life is made richer and stronger and better when you learn about the world community and the human families that will always live here and have never lived anywhere else.

"There is just one world for all of us to share, and the more we share of it, the more we understand it and learn to care for each other."—Ray Tetz, ADRA vice president for communication, for *Guide* magazine, 1992.

of poverty; and hundreds of children have been given a chance to go to school.

For many Adventists and non-Adventists alike, Utrecht will be an opportunity for them to see how small our own global village really is. ☞



Tamara Boehmke is director of public affairs for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.



Marvin Moore

The Changing Signs

New editor Marvin Moore is attempting to boost its prophetic voice and soul-winning potential.

BY MYRON WIDMER

When a new editor takes the helm of any magazine, readers can expect change. And that's true with the recent appointment of Marvin Moore as editor of the church's oldest and largest outreach magazine, *Signs of the Times*.

What will be different? What can readers expect? These questions define the heart of this interview with editor Marvin Moore.

What is the greatest challenge now facing *Signs*?

A. We have an immediate challenge and a more basic challenge, and the two are related. The immediate challenge is to increase our subscriptions. All Adventist magazines have been losing subscribers for the past 10 to 15 years, including *Signs*. From a high of around 400,000 when *Signs* and *These Times* merged a number of years ago, we are down now to around 200,000.

Could any challenge be "more basic" than that?

Yes, to see that the magazine actually fulfills its mission.

Which is?

Myron Widmer is an associate editor of the Adventist Review.

Soul winning! I think all former editors have viewed the magazine as a soul-winning tool for the Adventist Church. However, I don't sense that the magazine is perceived that way by the church members at large, at least not to the extent that it should be. Thus they are not taking full advantage of the magazine's potential for soul winning.

Can you change that?

We can try, and we will try. Already we have established a *Signs* evangelism team to develop new strategies for using *Signs* in the field. The team is now consulting with qualified people to devise methods that would use the magazine to actually bring people to the point of baptism. We are already in the process of developing some pilot projects that I hope can be available for general implementation by the end of this year.

At the start you said that the two challenges—subscriptions and mission—are related.

Indeed they are. I believe subscriptions will go up as members regain a vision for the magazine's evangelistic potential.

And how will members be able to

catch that vision? From the pages of the magazine?

I certainly hope so. Already we have begun to refocus the content. *Signs* has always included doctrinal articles in every issue. However, I have wished for many years that there could be a greater emphasis on prophecy and on Christ's second coming and how to prepare for it. Now that I have a chance, I am beginning to implement these dreams.

You spoke of a "greater emphasis" on prophecy. Somehow I thought that prophecy and the prophetic voice was what *Signs* already was supposed to be about.

You're right, but in recent decades the magazine has taken more of a general approach to religion and not highlighted prophecies that much.

But if surveys are correct, at least half the people in the United States expect the end of the world in the not-too-distant future. This gives us a real opportunity to get people's attention. I'm not interested in being sensational for the sake of being sensational. But the Old and New Testaments are full of prophecies that are rich in spiritual lessons.

Certainly this emphasis won't eliminate other distinct Adventist beliefs.

No, it won't, for we plan to present all 27 fundamental beliefs every two years. And at least twice a year we will cover salvation, the Sabbath, the state of the dead, the Second Coming, the great controversy, and the judgment.

Now, do you think non-Adventists will actually read the doctrinal articles in *Signs*?

Yes, if we handle them right. I believe that every one of our doctrines speaks to one or more basic human needs. And we will search for ways to present the topics so that they respond to those needs in an attractive way.

Along with prophecies, will you include articles on current events—in light of biblical prophecies?

We'd like to, and we're trying harder to do so. But with our long preparation time for articles and artwork, and the need to be in the mail five to six weeks before the publication date, we have a difficult time commenting on current news. We have, however, reserved a small space in each issue for news that we can insert at the last minute without artwork. So we're trying.

I've heard of the *Signswatch* newsletter but never seen it. What's it for?

Much of what Adventists believe about Bible prophecy and its fulfillment has been shaped by the insights offered by Ellen White. Commenting on these issues in *Signs* would not make much sense to non-Adventists and in some cases might be offensive. But Adventists want to know about current events in the light of the church's understanding of Bible prophecy, so I have started *Signswatch* for that purpose. It will be an eight-page quarterly newsletter.

Who can get *Signswatch*?

Anyone who (1) sponsors six subscriptions to *Signs of the Times* (through an Adventist Book Center or the Pacific Press* and the sponsor's

Signs of the Times Marks Historic Milestone

In 1873, during a vacation in the Rocky Mountains, James White conceived the idea of launching a new outreach-oriented journal. Encouraged by his wife, Ellen, he issued the first weekly issue of *The Signs of the Times* on June 4, 1874. (The *the* was later dropped from the title.)

White set forth the mission of the new magazine in an editorial note that appeared in the second issue. *The Signs of the Times*, he wrote, was "to be not only an expositor of the prophecies, a report of the signs of our times, but also a family, religious, and general newspaper for the household."

A few weeks later, in the July 23 issue, he expanded on his vision for the new journal: "Through *The Signs of the Times* we wish to erect thousands of pulpits . . . where we can appeal to the people . . . upon the exhaustless themes . . . necessary to a fitness to receive the dear Saviour at His second advent."

For more than 120 years now, *Signs* has carried out White's vision of erecting "thousands of pulpits" in the homes of its readers—pulpits that

preach the unique truths of an end-time remnant.

Signs of the Times remains the flagship publication of the Pacific Press Publishing Association. And as it enters the last half of this century's final decade, it does so with a new editor at the helm. Marvin Moore, the tenth editor of *Signs*, is a seasoned pastor and prolific author.

Over the past 120 years countless thousands have been baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a direct result of discovering Bible truth in the pages of the *Signs of the Times*. As a "pulpit" in thousands of homes, it continues to be one of the most effective evangelistic tools available to the church.

But Moore sees the *Signs*' mission as including more than creating baptisms. "*Signs of the Times* may be the only spiritual magazine that some people have in their homes," he says. "And I want it to be a blessing in the lives of people even if they never become Seventh-day Adventists."

By Robert E. Kyte, president of Pacific Press Publishing Association.



name is included); (2) donates \$100 a year to *Signs* world evangelism through the Pacific Press; or (3) subscribes to the newsletter at \$20 per year (through the Pacific Press).

So what has been the overall response to all your changes?

Very positive. A few people have

expressed reservations, but that is inevitable when a publication moves in a new direction. But I think we are moving in the right direction for the good of our church's prophetic voice and its soul-winning mission.

* Pacific Press Publishing Association, P.O. Box 7000, Boise, ID 83707.

News From the GC Session Delivered to Your Home



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560-01-0



Izabal's Guard

BY JEANETTE RICE HOYT

Have you ever heard of the country of Iraq? Get a map of the world or a globe and find Iraq. Also, find India. When I was a little girl I moved from India to Iraq. See how far away they are from each other?

In Iraq lived a lady named Izabal. Izabal had grown up in a large house built by her father. The house had two floors and many rooms built around a courtyard. When she was a little girl, Izabal planted a kumquat seed in the middle of the courtyard. And through the years the kumquat grew into a tree that filled the courtyard and rose over the house. Izabal still lived in the same house after she married. One day her young husband died, and she was left

with three little girls to raise. Izabal believed in prayer. She prayed in the morning, at noon, and at night. One evening after Izabal read a story to her girls, as usual they knelt in prayer. She asked God to send His angel to keep guard over them while they slept.

That night two men hid behind the garden wall. They planned to rob Izabal's house. When the lights went out in the house, one man began to climb the wall, but then he looked up. Do you know what he saw? There was a man on the roof taller than the kumquat tree. The tall man looked like the color of lightning, and in his belt he had a sword that shone in the dark. The frightened robber came down fast. Then the second

man climbed the garden wall, but he too saw the tall man standing on the roof of Izabal's house and became afraid. Neither one dared to go near the house.

The next morning Izabal heard a loud knocking on her door. When she opened the door, there stood the two men. They confessed to Izabal that they had planned to rob her and told how they had climbed the garden wall and seen a tall guard on the roof. They had come to ask her about this amazing-looking guard and to tell her that they were sorry.

Izabal knew that the guard the men had seen was an angel. She told the men that she and her girls had asked God to send an angel to protect them. And God had sent an angel who looked just like a guard to scare the robbers away. I know this story well. My grandma told it to me when I was a little girl in Iraq. You see, Izabal is my grandma, and one of those little girls was my mother.

When we are afraid, we can ask God to protect us. He will send His angel to guard us from trouble.

To Someone Special

Once in a while something as commonplace as a letter to the editor of a small city newspaper will stand out as boldly as a headline. That happened recently in my community. Situated among comments about city deficits and stop signs, the letter began:

"To Someone Special:

"It's been a long time since I've been singled out from a group of people. The red streak on the front top of my mobile home makes it really stand out as one of a kind."

Already I was interested in this letter. Gangs, racial agitators, and graffiti artists were beginning literally to make their mark in our small city, our green foothill valley, which a few years ago boasted not so much as a traffic light. Now any apartment building, doctor's office, or place of business was a possible canvas for gang symbols reminiscent of the infamous swastika of the Nazis.

The vandalism was largely traceable to local teens roaming our streets with hats on backward, romanticizing being *bad*. As for them, they were headed the wrong way. As for us, we weren't happy with our situation.

Law-enforcement representatives conferred. Members of the sheriff's student advisory council at the high school were called in. But citizens continued to wince at belligerent defacement of property. I read on.

"I can remember back to the teenagers of my life, and none of us were perfect either. . . .

"I believe you should try out for baseball. Our church needs a few more good players on their team. If you are interested, come and see me. You know where I live."

The Just and the Unjust

It had been a week of rain—falling on the just and the unjust, greening my lawn and that of my unbelieving neighbor, settling the dust in our driveways and washing our roofs the same.

"Be ye therefore perfect" (Matt. 5:48), Jesus had said after an illustration about rain. In seventeenth-century poetry, John Banister Tabb elaborated on that illustration in his "Winter Rain":



For the graffiti on

his mobile home,

one man

responded with

an unusual

message.

"Rain on the roof and rain
On the burial-place of grain;
To one a voice in vain;
To one o'er hill and plain
The pledge of life again.

"Rain on the sterile sea
That hath no need of thee,
Nor keeps thy memory—
'Tis thou that teachest me
The range of charity."

Finding my scissors, I clipped the newspaper letter to keep.

The other day our daughter Su phoned bearing a message of a different sort.

"I saw the strangest man outside the student center today!" she exclaimed. "He had on shorts and a tank top with 'Redeemed' in red letters, and he carried a banner on a big tall pole."

As Su described the visitor, from his strident voice to the cross and flames on his paper banner, I could imagine the cluster of students about him and the lively verbal exchanges between them and this person of mission.

"You're a fool!" the man in the tank top shouted at one student. "Fools like you crucified Jesus!" He proceeded to speculate on that young man's destiny.

No doubt some listeners cast amused glances at one another. Still others turned away, disgusted. Perhaps we would have felt like doing the same. But do we remember that representing God's character—being "therefore perfect"—is a matter of all-inclusive love?

To Someone Special: Our church needs a few more good players on their team. . . .

I scan again my newspaper clipping and suspect the letter writer has covered well the topic of grace.



Ann Burke is a poet and freelance writer living in Yucaipa, California.

BY ANN BURKE

Your Part in the War Behind All Wars

A breakthrough publishing event by *It Is Written* Speaker/Director Mark A. Finley,
Beyond Orion's Gates is the first full-message book to be released in years.

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Evangelicals and Catholics Together: A Winning Alliance?

Hidden Mischief in the Contract with America

The Real Contract with America

Evangelicals and Catholics Together: A Winning Alliance?

By Clifford Goldstein

Few events have confirmed our end-time scenario more than the continuing rapprochement between Catholics and Protestants—and few books better depict this fulfillment than *A House United?*

Written by Roman Catholic layman and executive director of Pat Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice, Keith Fournier, the premise of the book is simple: though Roman Catholics and Evangelicals have theological differences, they have many theological agreements and, thus, should unite where they can theologically, in order to work together better politically.



Clifford Goldstein

"It's time for all Christians," Fournier wrote, "to lay down their swords and pound them into plows for the recultivation of an increasingly barren Western society. The stakes are too high not to try, and with the help of our common Lord, we will succeed."

According to Fournier, the greatest tragedy of our day isn't abortion, AIDS, pornography, sexual promiscuity, drugs, the devaluing of the family, or corrupt government. Instead, "division within the family of God is. When the members of Christ's body are at each other's throats, defaming each other in the name of our family's Head, the world walks away from our message in disbelief."

An important thrust of the book was to convince Protestants that though Keith is a Roman Catholic, he's still an evangelical Christian, or as he calls himself, "an evangelical Catholic Christian." The first section of *A House United?* deals with his personal testimony: his wandering, rebellion, searching, and dabbling with Eastern religion, until finally coming to Christ after having various "evangelical moments." Fournier's testimony reads like many of those who meet Christ and join Protestant churches.

And that's his point: that he's a "born-again" evangelical Christian, just like his Protestant brothers and sisters. Only difference is, Fournier returned to the Catholic Church.

"My call and my place were in the church of my childhood. This, too, was an evangelical moment, an encounter with the Lord who still incarnates Himself through His church," Keith writes.

The book deals with all the reasons why Catholics and Evangelicals should unite. Fournier praised the 7,500 Southern Baptist delegates at the 1994 Southern Baptist Convention who "overwhelmingly approved" a resolution that affirmed the central tenants of faith between Baptist and Catholics and "strongly affirmed" that both groups work together on the social and political issues concerning them.

"Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox can come together, must come together, and are coming together," wrote Fournier. "The wall of separation is cracking; portions of the wall are beginning to fall away. Christians are waking up to see one another as allies in a common war effort."

Notice his final two words, "war effort."

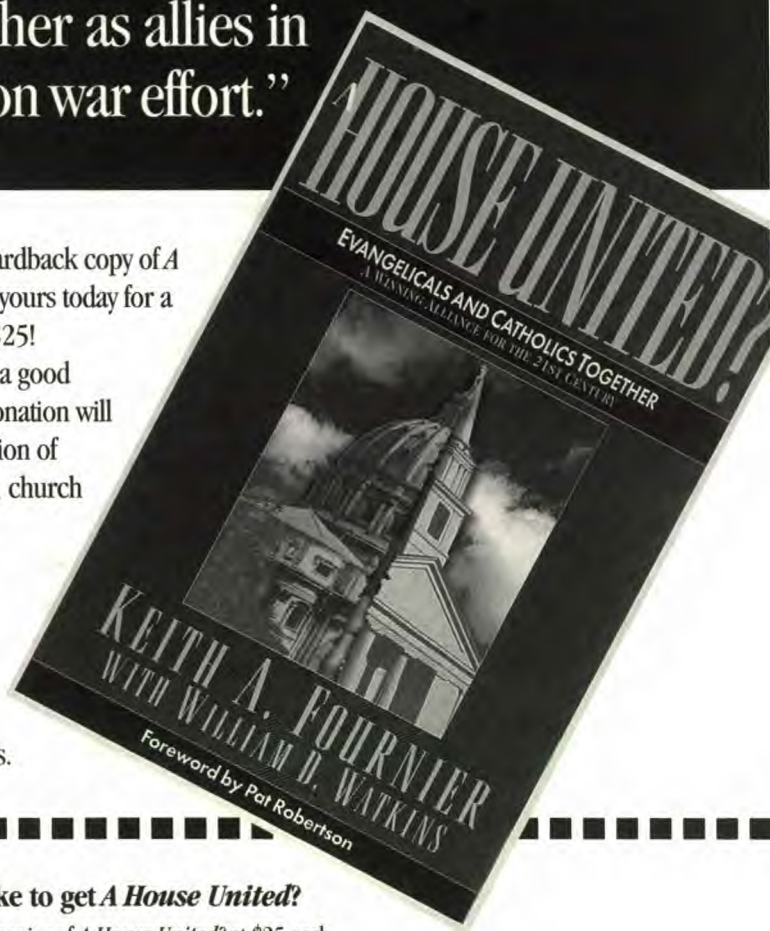
He's right. There is a war. It's called the *Great Controversy*.

Listen, once again, to these words of Keith Fournier, Roman Catholic layman and executive director of Pat Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice:

“ . . . the wall of separation is cracking; portions of the wall are beginning to fall away. Christians are waking up to see one another as allies in a common war effort.”

A 365-page hardback copy of *A House United?* is yours today for a donation of only \$25!

What's more, a good portion of your donation will go to the distribution of *Liberty* magazine, church religious liberty educational programs, and litigation expenses for Adventists with Sabbath problems.



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Hidden Mischief in the Contract with America

By Mitchell Tyner



Mitchell A. Tyner

The Republican House leaders who conceived the "Contract with America" may not intend to endanger our religious freedom, but one of their proposals would do just that. *The Common Sense Reform Act*, which promises to "finally stop excessive legal claims, frivolous lawsuits, and overzealous lawyers," by imposing "loser pays laws, reasonable limits on punitive damages, and reform of product liability laws to stem the endless tide of litigation," constitutes a serious threat to religious liberty.

While we have no stake in product liability litigation, the other elements of this bill are cause for concern. Loser pays laws would force the loser in a court battle to pay attorney fees and court costs of the winner. The argument is that this would discourage lawsuits unless both parties were sufficiently confident of their position to risk their own expenses and those of their opponent's.

How would that affect a typical suit involving religious rights? Suppose an Adventist is fired for refusing to work on Sabbath. The church member—typically having little money for an expensive court action—asks the Church to provide legal counsel and assume the cost of the suit. A religious liberty litigation fund provides support in these cases. The attorney's time and incidental costs may be as little as \$5,000 or as much as \$70,000, depending on the complexity and length of the case. The defendant—usually a corporation—will hire outside counsel at market rates of \$250 to \$400 per hour. If the loser pays laws were voted, the religious liberty litigation fund would have to risk not only its own relatively moderate expenses but also those of the defendant, which often run six figures. Plaintiffs would be at a tremendous disadvantage: church members who just lost their jobs and churches with perennially tight budgets will be far less able to place large sums at risk than transnational corporations.

But shouldn't we be hesitant to go to court with a less than

sure case? It isn't that simple. Typically the plaintiff is a sincere Sabbathkeeper who, after informing his employer of a conflict between job schedule and religious convictions, was fired. Often we can only guess as to the applicable grounds for a defendant's defense, and we can't explore all the facts and possibilities until after a suit is filed.

The law states that although an employer must accommodate an employee's religious practices, it need not do so if accommodation imposes "undue hardship." Undue hardship is deemed anything that violates a labor contract, costs more than a minimal amount, decreases efficiency, or violates the rights of other employees. If the employer has offered even one method of accommodation—no matter how punitive to the employee—it has done all that is required by law.

Given the complexity of legal analysis, there is widespread difference of opinion on what constitutes undue hardship. That very complexity provides room for a pro-management judge to find for the defendant. Under the loser pays laws currently proposed in the "Contract with America," only the few clearly winnable cases would be filed. And employers in cases where discrimination had occurred, would not be challenged because we could not risk the cost of losing.

At the very least, cases involving individual rights, and employment discrimination should be exempted from the so-called *Common Sense Legal Reform Act*. Unless congressional leadership is hostile to individual rights and the protection of religious freedom, they will agree that such an exemption would just be good common sense.

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The Real Contract with America

By Gary M. Ross



Gary M. Ross

Everyone knows that, unprecedentedly, the Republicans "contracted" with America last year to do certain things if elected to and given control of Congress. Their historic takeover of both houses in November is well publicized.

Now comes the moment to deliver. As to how we should judge the gradually emerging product, religious liberty advocates answer emphatically: judge it by the *real* contract with America, the federal Constitution framed in 1787 and amended to include a Bill of Rights in 1791.

From this standpoint the current political revolution is not entirely bad, but it raises qualms that should make us vigilant observers of the situation. These qualms spring from a whole plethora of legislation, related and unrelated to the contract per se, and from the accompanying atmosphere or climate.

1) Although the church does not officially oppose limits on the terms of federal legislators, fears arise about the shift of power to unelected staffers, bureaucrats, and special interests that limits might cause, and about the premature loss of members we ourselves slowly but carefully nurtured in the particulars of religious liberty and church-state separation.

2) Republican proclivities to repudiate the 1960's could discard the baby with the bath water. For example, a markedly reduced interest in civil rights poses dangers for legislation written last year by Adventist and Jewish experts that would preclude employers from making facile claims of "undue hardship" against Sabbatarian employees. To shore up the meaning of undue hardship we had drawn upon the Americans with Disabilities Act, not realizing that this Act itself would be "revisited" by the new Congress.

3) Fiscal conservatism is one thing, social conservatism another. Not all newly arrived Republicans uphold both, but to the extent that they do, and to the extent that the social conservatives reflect the goals, strategies, and enabling theories of the Christian Coalition, Adventists could encounter difficulties.

The prime case of a very real difficulty is teacher-led or student-initiated prayers in public school classrooms. Either by way of a constitutional amendment or by way of a statute that withholds federal funding from schools refusing to allow "constitutionally permissible" prayers, the Republicans promise to reinstate such religious exercises (or at least begin the process) by the Fourth of July.

Adventists have steadfastly opposed such activities. In negative terms we have held that they contravene the no-establishment provision of the Bill of Rights inasmuch as high school teachers are functionaries of the state. (In other words, we stand by the 1962 ruling to this effect by the U.S. Supreme Court). But, wishing to respond to the school prayer controversy as affirmatively as possible, we argue two positive points: (1) that "open doors" already exist for religion in the public schools and should be used in lieu of introducing a dubious additional practice; and (2) that genuine, effectual prayer is profound and ought not to be debased or trivialized by orchestrating, ritualizing, and diluting it or by reducing it to a gimmick alleged to cure the ills of society.

Like their very distant predecessors, the Anti-Federalists (those who were opposed to the ratification of the Constitution) of the late 1780's, today's Republicans wish to constrain the national government, although the Bill of Rights may not be their preferred device.

Both groups bear another similarity, noted by *Roll Call*, a Capitol Hill publication, on January 26, 1995: "Despite their frequent talk about individual rights and liberty, the Anti-Federalists were not libertarians. They feared the power of government to be sure, but they were not comfortable simply getting government off the backs of its citizens. They talked [as the current generation of Republicans do] about the importance of civic virtue, public morality, and individual responsibility. . . . They would understand the contemporary debates about family values and school prayer and sympathize with those who simultaneously want less government while making the argument that what government does, and does not do, is vital in shaping the character of its citizens."

Peculiarly, this lingering responsibility of government (as viewed by the Republicans), not the reduction of government, prompts the greatest worries.

ALERT

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LIBERTY

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*"...And all the world
after the be"*

REVELATION 11:1



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