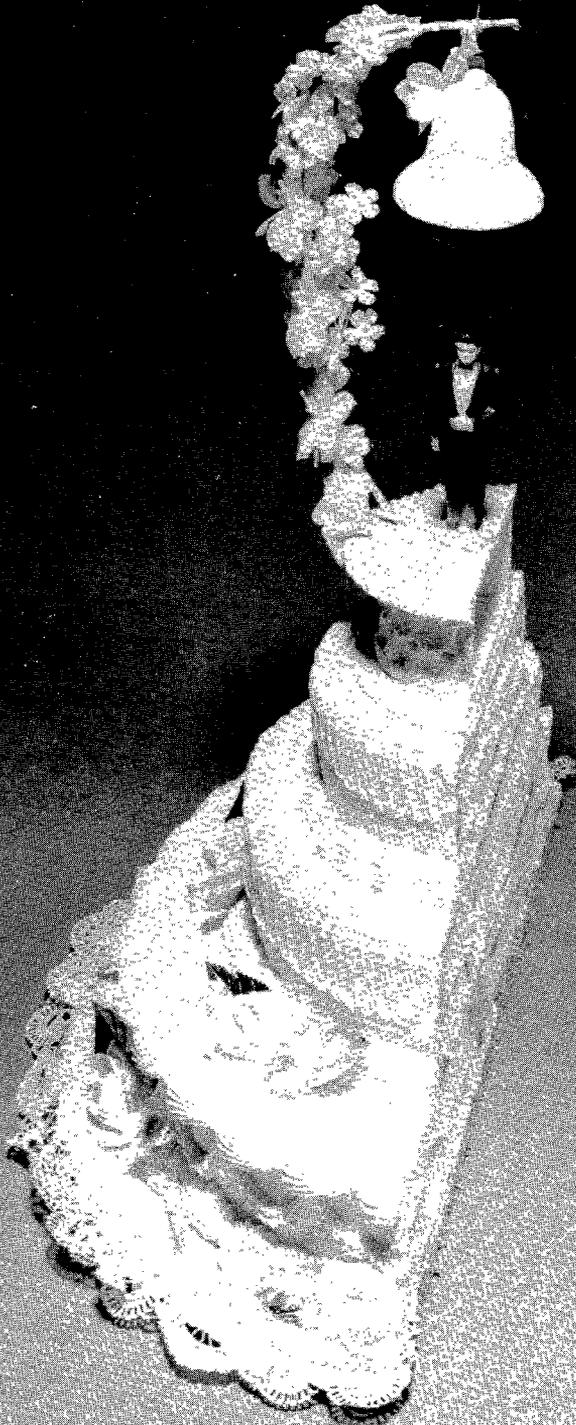


# MINISTRY

A MAGAZINE FOR CLERGY



SEPTEMBER 1978



**MINISTERING TO THE UNMARRIED**

SEE PAGE 4

# LETTERS

## Judge not

Your "Ask the Editor" article dealing with homosexuality (July, 1978) is so interlaced with inaccuracies and blatant prejudice as to be inexcusable. I think your good doctors need to study a bit more current psychology before making such statements as they made. May I also suggest that heed be paid to words that are frequently forgotten by those who are so quick to criticize another's life style—"Judge not, lest ye be judged."

Christian minister  
California

*Must we construe the Biblical injunction "Judge not" to forbid us to point out sin? We believe that the Bible clearly indicates that practicing homosexuality is sin, regardless of the current opinion of psychology. The article in question tried to say that God hates homosexuality while at the same time He loves homosexuals.—Editors.*

## Who can question?

Thank you for a clear, concise, Biblical, and accurate article on baptism by V. Norskov Olsen (July, 1978). Who could question your view?

Christian minister  
Illinois

*That's what we thought too! If you could read our mail you might be surprised at how many have questioned us on that article.—Editors.*

## Misrepresentation

Despite your frequent pretensions to historically accurate scholarship, I find the contributors to MINISTRY no different from most evangelicals I have known who have their doctrinal glasses in place before any examination of the data. A prime example is the article "How the Doctrine of Baptism Changed," in the July issue, which very clearly misrepresents the view of churches that do practice pedobaptism. If your readership considers that reprehensible type of scholarship to be accurate, then it becomes all too

clear that, like you, they have their minds made up too. It is highly unlikely you will print this letter, since you want to put your best foot forward.

United Church of Christ pastor  
Indiana

*Unfortunately, we are not told in what way we have misrepresented the position of those who believe and practice infant baptism; therefore, we cannot respond. Neither is there any attempt to set forth the arguments for another view. A brochure on the subject attached to this letter neither quotes nor cites a single text of Scripture. It seems to be an open question who has his mind made up.—Editors.*

## No Biblical evidence?

Concerning the article "Dispensationalism: Rightly Dividing the Word?" in the July, 1978, MINISTRY, it is very easy to construct a case against any Biblical view simply by making reference to all of the opponents of that view. I would suggest the author do some reading and evaluating of the dispensationalists themselves before trying to publicly evaluate their position. Mr. Neufeld has offered no Biblical evidence.

Baptist pastor  
New York

*It is true that one can always find someone to quote in opposition to any Biblical viewpoint. However, Mr. Neufeld's article does set forth a scriptural basis for his rejection of dispensationalism. Whether one agrees with his arguments is, of course, another matter.—Editors.*

## Help or convince?

Adjectives fail to describe just how bad the article was on dispensationalism in your July issue. Mr. Neufeld resorted to a "straw man" approach which he proceeded to knock down with those quotations of scholars and critics of dispensationalism. He arbitrarily chose some of its weakest points to challenge and refute. Articles of this quality tarnish your stated objective of as-

sisting those of us who serve in the pastoral ministry. We could easily ask, "Is MINISTRY being given me to help me or to convince me?"

Christian minister  
Oregon

*We hope MINISTRY is helping. From the letters we have received on this article, we haven't convinced anyone who didn't already see the subject as we do. MINISTRY is obviously a professional journal basically intended for the clergy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Articles are intended to speak to concerns they have and to help them relate theologically and professionally to their tasks. However, as the first gift copy sent to clergy of other faiths indicated, we feel these same concerns are often shared by the Christian church as a whole, and that MINISTRY can be a help to pastors wherever they serve. It was in this setting that we have invited these additional readers to look over our shoulders as we try to grapple with Biblical themes. We don't expect all our readers to agree with us on any topic—and we haven't been disappointed!*

*We do hope that in spite of some differences we can be mutually helped.—Editors.*

## What the teacher wants

Don Neufeld's article on dispensationalism (July, 1978) struck a chord. This teaching has become so widely disseminated that many take it for granted that it is true or Biblical. It is Biblical only in the sense that the Bible is made to say what the teacher wants it to say.

Baptist minister  
Illinois

## Style and content

Thank you for MINISTRY. I appreciate the style and content. The articles on the seven churches of Revelation are well written and of special interest to me, since we are currently studying Revelation in our midweek service.

United Brethren pastor  
Kentucky

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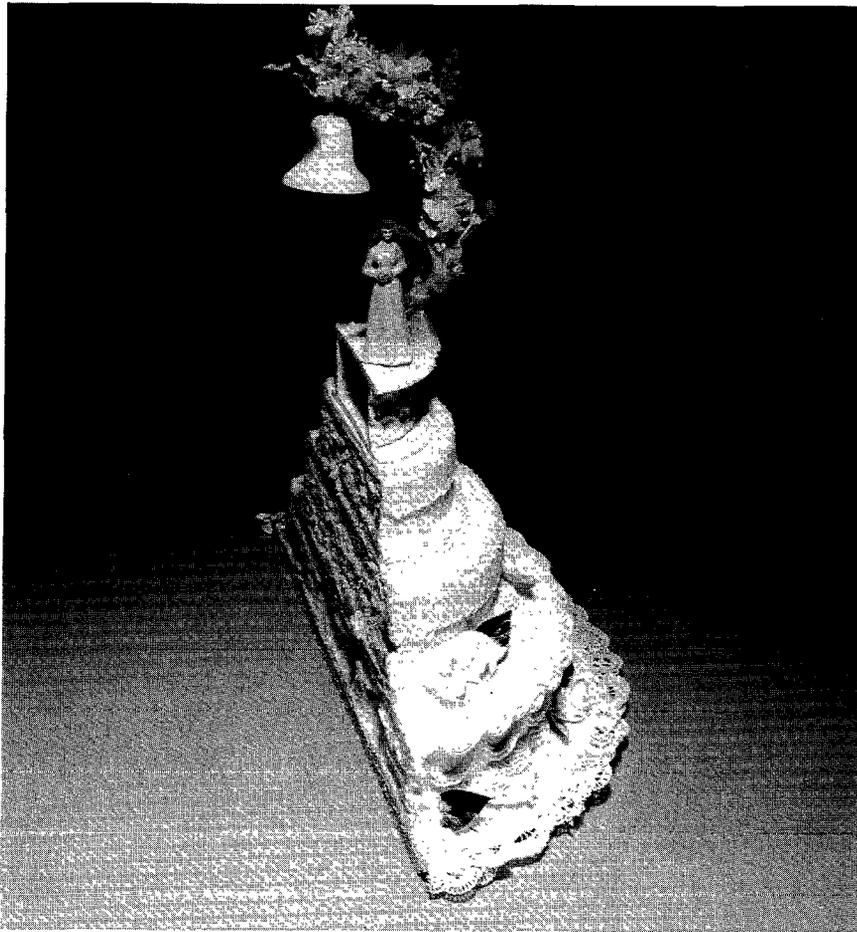
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SKIP BAKER

# MINISTERING TO THE UNMARRIED

Single persons usually find themselves on the periphery of church life, and as a result the body of Christ is seriously crippled.

by Noel Cameron Gardner

Effective ministry to single adults—widowed, divorced, or never married—is one of the most difficult challenges facing the church today. Although church-related activities absorb youth, children, families, young couples, and other special-interest groups, single persons

usually find themselves on the periphery of church life. Many beautiful lives go unnurtured, and the body of Christ is seriously crippled.

If the minister is to meet the needs of the unmarried, he must understand what those needs are. He must understand the pressures the single

adult confronts. And he must grasp the Biblical perspective of singleness.

Consider the dilemma of the single adult. He or she feels isolated and often neglected by the church for several reasons. First, the very fact of his singleness often creates insecurity that makes it difficult for him to point out the deep and varied needs of single people. Moreover, the single person is keenly aware of an apparent church perspective that implies that success and fulfillment and even normalcy as a person are to be found only in marriage. Christianity is often seen as a family affair. Thus, the single person has difficulty identifying fully with the life of the church.

Second, the church is oriented toward couples and families, especially in its social fellowship. How often have churches innocently planned dinners, weekend activities, or socials for couples and families, without a thought for single members, who circulated on the fringes of the activity or avoided it entirely, their hearts lonely and heavy, because they did not really fit? Unknowingly the church has many times shaped its life to inhibit the singles' involvement, thus neglecting vitally important needs.

In some places, organizations for single adults have been formed to meet the needs that the church did not or could not meet. Unfortunately, these groups have often developed a public image as dating services. Again the implication is that fulfillment is based on marriage. If singleness is life's dreaded disease, then marriage undoubtedly is the cure. Is it any wonder that singles walk away from life, disillusioned because they have failed to find the promised pot of gold at the end of the chapel aisle? Because of their image as dating services, organizations for singles face tremendous pressure in the form of scepticism from a large portion of the church, the attraction of unwanted interests, and the alienation of many lonely persons who desperately need the fellowship that such organizations could help to provide.

Third, the church pastor usually finds ministry to the single adult very difficult. Since ministry to singles almost always focuses on social relationships and needs, the pastor feels a desire to protect himself from real or potential dangers to his ministry and reputation, and thus shies away from an involvement in personal ministry with single adults.

In public ministry, church activities tend to center around youth and families or around singles as an isolated group. Both situations substantially sever the single person from the heart of the church.

Perhaps the most critical area in

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## **“Insensitivity in ministering to any segment of the flock is a violation of the minister’s sacred calling.”**

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ministry to singles is the attitude of the minister himself. Insensitivity in ministering to any segment of the flock is a violation of the minister's sacred calling. The Good Shepherd left ninety-nine sheep in the safety of the fold and went to search for one single sheep. Likewise, ministers have been given the task of ministering to *all* the lost sheep—regardless of marital status.

The impact of society's disapproval (not to mention the disapproval of the church) can be devastating to the unmarried. Note the effects in four basic relationships:

1. *Time relationship.* The single person finds it difficult to live vibrantly in the present. If never married, he tends to feel incomplete. He robs the present of beauty by pushing important relationships into the future. If death has broken his marriage, he lives in the never returning land of yesterday. The divorced person often becomes a prisoner in time, locked into a fragmented pres-

ent, rejecting and regretting a bitter past, and fearing and shunning a dubious future. In all tenses life becomes drastically narrowed in perspective and diminished in value.

2. *Human relationship.* The single person struggles to build meaningful human relationships. When marriage is the priority, every relationship is viewed through matrimonyscopes—marriage-tinted glasses. Even casual acquaintances are classified as potentials or nonpotentials. Friendships become loaded with expectations that bleed them of their spontaneity and natural enjoyment. When all the marbles are played into the marriage bag (and one is playing for keeps), there is great pressure in the playing of every shot.

Close friendships between single persons of the same sex are avoided because of the risk of being classified as homosexual or lesbian. Friendship with married couples is a problem for the single adult, too, for his presence may pose a silent threat. So loneliness often walks in his shoes.

3. *Self-relationship.* Finding opportunity for meaningful interpersonal relationships increasingly remote, the single person is prone to a poor relationship with himself. With a sense of being a fifth wheel, he grows unhappy with himself. Doubt and insecurity become his closest companions.

Thoughtless “old maid” or “confirmed bachelor” jokes accentuate the problem. In a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, the single person gradually finds himself conforming more and more to a role that he often despises. The more he perceives marriage as the source and substance of happiness, the more pronounced becomes his rejection of himself as a valuable part of society.

4. *God relationship.* Self-rejection growing from the distorted marriage-happiness equation is devastating to a relationship with God. The single tends to blame God for depriving him of this most-important facet of life, for allowing the circumstances that terminated a marriage or the absence of potential marriage partners. Religion is often

used as a spiritual-emotional pain killer. Spiritual exercises become an escape therapy, prayer a rehearsal of self-pity.

Singleness becomes a problem when societal and personal attitudes warp one's relationships with time, fellow humans, self, and God, and leave one convinced that unhappiness and singleness are bosom companions.

### **The Bible perspective**

What does *God* say about the source and substance of man's happiness?

The Biblical view reveals that fulfillment in life comes not through marriage, but from knowing and doing God's will and living in intimate fellowship with Him, thus finding and filling the place of service that God designs. The psalmist declared of God, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11).

Jesus pointed out that the truly happy and blessed individuals were those seeking God's solution to their needs (Matt. 5:3-9). Fullness of joy is promised to those who have a relationship of dependence and communication with God (John 16:24). Love, joy, and peace are the fruits of being Spirit filled (Gal. 5:22). Happiness comes from living a life of loving service, characterized by the humility of Jesus (see John 13:17).

The Bible does not say that marriage is the foundation of happiness and success. The Bible *does* honor and exalt marriage, which was instituted by God Himself. When characterized by principles of unselfish love, this divine gift can be a tremendous blessing, a virtually inexhaustible source of joy. But God never intended for man to seek in marriage a fulfillment that can come only from a relationship with Him.

Then what of singleness? When Jesus emphasized the binding nature of the marriage contract by limiting the basis for divorce, the disciples answered, "'If such is the case of a

man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry'" (Matt. 19:10, R.S.V.). They realized that marriage may not be the best life style for everyone. Singleness is better than a destructive marriage. Being single may actually be the best life style for some people.

Notice Jesus' significant reply: "'Not all men can receive this precept [to remain single], but only those to whom it is given'" (verse 11, R.S.V.). He does not correct the disciples' assertion. Rather, He affirms their conclusion that marriage is not for everyone. But neither is singleness for all. It is for those who will accept God's guidance in this

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## **The Bible honors and exalts marriage, but it does not say that marriage is the foundation of happiness and success.**

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regard. It is for those to whom it is given. Singleness for the Christian, then, is not a problem, but a *gift*.

Paul comments, "I wish that all were as I myself am [single]. But each has his own special gift from God" (1 Cor. 7:7, R.S.V.).

The gift is based on willingness to receive it (Matt. 19:11), suitability for singleness (1 Cor. 7:9), and choice (Matt. 19:12). Singleness may be a temporary gift—which later is exchanged for the gift of marriage—or it may be a lifelong special ministry.

Ultimately, life is good and fulfilling when it is lived as a gift, with God as the recognized giver. When we perceive that God loves us far more than any human being could and that He will choose for us far better than we would choose for ourselves, then we will live each day to capacity, as God's special gift. Freed from the crushing responsibility of determining his own destiny, the single person can joyfully

accept God's gift for today, confident that his submission itself will result in a life that is the very best possible.

"When we really believe that God loves us and means to do us good we shall cease to worry about the future. We shall trust God as a child trusts a loving parent. Then our troubles and torments will disappear, for our will is swallowed up in the will of God. . . . One day alone is ours, and during this day we are to live for God. For this one day we are to place in the hand of Christ, in solemn service, all our purposes and plans, casting all our care upon Him, for He careth for us."—Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 101.

God has a solution for the problem of singleness. When we come to Him in surrender, willing to believe whatever He says, willing to accept whatever gift He offers, and willing to do whatever He asks, *without reservation*, we will find that wellspring of joy that never runs dry.

It is in giving self to God that we receive our gift. It is in accepting the gift that we realize meaning and new life. "If you will seek the Lord and be converted every day; if you will of your own spiritual choice be free and joyous in God; if with gladsome consent of heart to His gracious call you come wearing the yoke of Christ—the yoke of obedience and service—all your murmurings will be stilled, all your difficulties will be removed, all the perplexing problems that now confront you will be solved."—*Ibid.*, p. 101.

Conversion, not diversion or matchmaking, is the desperate need of the single person. Conversion, not diversion, must be the primary focus of church ministry to singles. Conversion, nurtured by deep spiritual and social fellowship that binds together the broken hearts we all have, must be the first priority of every pastor. 

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## Visiting the churches of Revelation-4

# THYATIRA— CHURCH OF THE MIDDLE AGES

by Orley M. Berg

Leaving Pergamos, the Roman imperial road led to Thyatira, the city whose church received the fourth of the seven letters of Revelation. Travel there today is much like New Testament times, with oxen, donkeys, and horse- or oxen-drawn carriages in much wider use than modern vehicles.

Few trees break the monotony, but finally a sign welcomes the traveler to Akhisar, a town of 48,000 inhabitants that occupies the site of Biblical Thyatira founded about 300 B.C. by Seleucus I, Alexander's general. Thyatira's chief deity during Roman times was Apollo, the sun god. Here was the home of Lydia, Paul's first European convert to Christianity at Phillipi (Acts 16:14). The town's central square today features a monument to Kemal Ataturk, Turkey's national hero, but the visitor searches in vain for anything that may remind him of the ancient city.

In Roman times Thyatira became a center of manufacture and exchange, specializing in dyed garments, the most popular being the royal purple. Significantly, the harlot woman of Revelation 17 is pictured

clothed with the purple for which Thyatira was famous.

The old city has little to offer the traveler today, but the message addressed to the church of Thyatira is still meaningful, especially the rebuke regarding the church's intimacy with Jezebel. It reads, "I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" (chap. 2:20).

The mention of Jezebel takes us back to the days of King Ahab and Elijah, the prophet. Ahab, the king of Israel, married Jezebel, a Phoenician Baal-worshiper. The record says, "He took to wife Jezebel . . . and went and served Baal" (1 Kings 16:31). God warned Israel's kings against intermarriage with the heathen, for He knew that marriage to heathen wives usually led to heathen worship. Ahab's marriage was no exception. Through Jezebel, Baal worship was introduced into Israel. It was carried on in the name of Jehovah, but it was Baal worship, nevertheless.

So it was in Thyatira. Pagan temples were transformed into Christian temples. Pagan symbols became Christian symbols. Pagan religious festivals became Christian festivals. But this fusion of paganism with Christianity was accomplished in the name of true worship.

Of this transformation Arnold J. Toynbee writes: "In winning the competition between the higher religions in the Roman Empire, Christianity did not really eliminate [them]. . . . One of the means by which it won . . . was that it . . . [absorbed] into itself what was valuable in those rival religions."—*Christianity Among the Religions of the World*, pp. 111, 112.

This synthesis of Christianity with the so-called "valuable" elements of paganism was believed by the church to be vital to the growth of Christianity. Of this the *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism* declares: "The missionary history of the Church clearly shows her adaptability to all races, all continents, all nations. In her liturgy and her art, in her traditions and the forming of her doctrine, naturally enough she includes Jewish ele-

Church	Significance	Christ's Introduction	Commendation	Reproof	Overcomer's Reward
<b>EPHESUS</b> (1st Century A.D.)	The Passionless Church	He that holds 7 stars and walks in midst of candlesticks	Patience, good works, tested false teachers	"Thou hast left thy first love"	Give to eat of the tree of life
<b>SMYRNA</b> (A.D. 100 to Constantine, c. A.D. 313)	The Persecuted Church	The First and the Last. He who was dead and is alive	Rich in spiritual things	None	Shall not be hurt by the second death
<b>PERGAMOS</b> (Constantine to Justinian, c. A.D. 313-538)	The Popular Church	He that has the sharp two-edged sword	Hold fast My name and have not denied My faith	False doctrines creeping in	Eat of the hidden manna; given a white stone with new name
<b>THYATIRA</b> (Middle Ages to Reformation)	The Compromising Church	The Son of God, whose eyes are like a flame of fire and feet like brass	Charity, service, faith, but primarily works	Jezebel harbored	Power over the nations, and give him the morning star

ments, but also elements that are of pagan origin. In a certain respect, she has copied her organization from that of the Roman Empire, has preserved and made fruitful the philosophical intuitions of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, borrowed from both Barbarians and the Byzantine Roman Empire, but always remains herself, thoroughly digesting all elements drawn from external sources. In her laws, her ceremonies, her festivals and her devotions, she makes use of local customs after purifying them and 'baptizing' them. 'This adaptation of pagan customs,' says Fr. Sertillanges in *Le Miracle de l'Eglise*, p. 183, 'prudently regulated, allows for the utilization of instincts and sentiments that preserve local traditions, and so lends powerful aid to the furthering of the Gospel. . . . The Church's cultus of saints and martyrs is a helpful substitute and replaces popular divinities in the minds of the populace.'—Vol. 88, p. 85.

The letter to Thyatira is the longest of the seven, a fact particularly appropriate to the long history of the church through the Middle Ages. The date A.D. 538 is suggested as the beginning date for this period, for it was then that the decree of Emperor Justinian uniting church and state went into effect. The Thyatira period continued in the time of the Reformation.

In Revelation 2:21 Jesus declares

to the angel of the church of Thyatira, "I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not." Just as God raised up Elijah with a message of reform in the days of Jezebel, so God raised up those within the church during the time of Thyatira who called for reformation.

Foremost among the early reformers was John Wycliffe, "Morning Star of the Reformation" (see Rev. 2:28). Huss, Jerome, and Savonarola followed. These all urged the church to repent, but their voices were silenced. Then came Martin Luther—the Augustinian monk who on October 31, 1517, nailed the 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg church—and John Calvin.

These men originally had no intention of leaving the church. They called it to repent. But when "she repented not" their dedication to the principle of *sola scriptura* gave them no alternative to leaving.

As the Reformation spread, the emperor, kings, leading statesmen, and church officials demanded a council of both Catholics and Protestants to consider needed reforms so that the unity of the church could be preserved. Finally in 1545, under compelling pressure from Emperor Charles V, a council was convened at Trent.

The majority of Protestants were not adverse to reunion with the church on the basis of a thorough reformation. But Thyatira would not

heed the call. The reform messages were rejected as pestilential heresy.

God "gave her space to repent . . . and she repented not." Another general council of the church would not be convened until 1869, 306 years later. So with adjournment of the Council of Trent in 1563 the door was shut to reform, and the Thyatira period closed.

In the parallel prophecy of the seven seals this long period of the Middle Ages is represented by the opening of the fourth seal, symbolized by a rider on a pale horse, the very color of death, an appropriate symbol of the church's dying condition (chap. 6:7, 8).

But the letter to the church of this period includes words of encouragement to the faithful, as well as condemnation of the unrepentant. In all periods of the church there have been those who loved the Lord supremely and served Him to the best of their knowledge. Also, in pointing to the weaknesses of the church during this time, we must recognize that the Protestant churches that followed had serious flaws too.

To the faithful of Thyatira the Saviour declared, "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come" (chap. 2:24, 25).

History records the deeds of those who sought to preserve the Apostolic faith. Although the light dimmed through the long centuries of darkness, some still held fast to what they had. One such was Columba. Having received the Celtic faith as proclaimed by Patrick in Ireland, he, with twelve followers, founded a missionary center on the island of Iona, off the coast of Scotland. From it missionaries went out to Scotland, England, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. Today the historic remains of Iona's picturesque village make it a tourist attraction. Along the path to the abbey stands a well-worn bench on which are inscribed the appropriate words "Rest and Remember." In front of the abbey stands the Celtic cross, which, in the lands the missionaries entered, bore witness to their zeal. Columba spent much of his time copying the Scriptures, which were then carried by the missionaries to other lands.

Among those to receive their training at Iona was Aidan, who in turn established a similar missionary center at Lindisfarne, off the western coast of northern England. Because of his work it came to be known as Holy Island. Visitors today can see the ancient remains of the church and school of Aidan, from which the Celtic missionaries carried the gospel. In the cemetery, beside the familiar Celtic cross, stands a memorial statue to Aidan. His right hand holds a shepherd's staff, symbol of his ministry to his people. His left hand holds a torch, symbol of the truths he proclaimed. As at Iona, much time was spent at Lindisfarne in copying and circulating the Scriptures. A copy of the Lindisfarne Gospel is on display in the British Museum.

The faith of Columba, Aidan, and their successors found its way to Bohemia, where Huss and Jerome became its leading exponents. It was spread in France through the witness of the Huguenots and Albigenses.

Persecution well nigh exterminated these groups in the valleys of southern France, but the same truths

were kept alive by the Waldenses amid the Alpine mountains of northern Italy, where the towering mountains around their headquarters at Torre Pellici, about forty miles southwest of Turin, gave protection in times of danger. The Waldensian motto *Lux lucet in tenebris* ("The Light Shines in Darkness"), symbolized by a burning candle or torch, still appears in their churches and schools.

High in the mountains, not far from the ancient church of Ciabas, hidden beneath rich foliage, is a huge cave. The inscription on a large stone near its mouth reads, "Church of the Earth." Here in times of danger the worshipers congregated. At times of greatest danger they would make their way up narrow ledges and crevices to even higher retreats.

Far up the Angrona Valley at the height of the Pra Del Tor was the "School of Barbes" or "uncles," the name given to Waldensian ministers. A commemorative plaque on the wall of the present seminary-school reads: "The school of the uncles which, according to tradition was in this very place, opened its doors from the 14th through the 16th century to all the young Waldensians who wanted to become ministers. The Bible was their only textbook. They stayed here for three or four years during the winter season. Their studies finished, they went to another place for a whole year of meditation and spiritual maturation. Then, ordained at the time of the yearly meeting of the uncles, they left their valleys, two by two, to begin a long and arduous task which lasted all their life, till they met their death or martyrdom came and put an end to their ministry."

In the middle of the one-room school is the old stone table on which, by the light of small oil lamps, the students copied the precious Scriptures, which they would then take with them on their journeys, circulating them far and wide. The stories of Waldensian valor are carefully recorded by Ledger, one of the pastors, and by Samuel Morland,

who got them from eye witnesses. Today these stories are carefully preserved in the museum at Torre Pellici and in the library of Cambridge University.

It was the Waldensian church that became the door by which the freedom-of-conscience clause was incorporated into the Italian constitution. Because of this witness "the light still shines."

To the faithful of the Thyatira period the appropriate promise is given, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (verses 26, 27). ■■

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Orley M. Berg is an executive editor of MINISTRY.

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*For further reading on the Waldenses we suggest J. A. Wylie's History of the Waldenses and Walter Utt's Home to Our Valleys! Wylie's classic volume, for many years out of print, is now available in paperback in the form of a photographic reproduction published by the Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California.*

*Home to Our Valleys! also printed by Pacific Press, recounts the return of the Waldenses to their mountain home in the Alps following their exile in Switzerland. The Waldensian Historical Society in Torre Pellice, Italy, has given this book high praise.*

*You may order these interesting histories at \$4.95 and \$3.50, respectively, by sending your check or money order to: Aspire Book Club, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012. Postage is included in these prices.—Editors.*

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*The Thyatira period of the church, characterized by adversity and persecution for those who clung to the New Testament truths lost sight of by the established church, provides a background for the article beginning on page 10, which examines the history of the Anabaptists, who sought to restore and maintain baptism in its original form and meaning.*

# THE RECOVERY OF ADULT BAPTISM

Protestants and Catholics alike opposed and persecuted those who sought to restore the New Testament doctrine of adult baptism.



by V. Norskov Olsen

During the Middle Ages men and movements arose from time to time attempting to restore believers' baptism, which, along with many other elements of New Testament Christianity, was lost for the main body of the Christian church when the church entered the tunnel of what has been called the Dark Ages. New Testament baptism was first fully revived, as part of evangelical Christianity, when Christian history emerged into the open this side of the Middle Ages.

## **Continual opposition to adult baptism**

The ancient church and the Christian emperors of the Roman Empire had pronounced rebaptism (meaning essentially believers' baptism) a civil crime punishable by death. The medieval papacy both in theory and in practice regarded heresy, including believers' baptism, as a grievous sin,

deserving not merely excommunication but capital punishment. The Inquisition and decrees of medieval emperors had the same aim. The decree issued April 23, 1529, by Emperor Charles V against the Anabaptists demonstrates the attitude of both secular rulers and church leaders, whether Catholic or Protestant, toward the Anabaptists during the sixteenth century. This decree was addressed to all the rulers and administrators of the empire whatever their rank—even burgomasters, village mayors, and bailiffs—and forbade rebaptism on pain of death. The various statements of faith issued during the sixteenth century likewise expressed condemnation of the Anabaptists.

All the Protestant Reformers agreed on infant baptism, but they differed in their theological justification for the rite. However, to-

gether they disputed the concept of the Roman Catholics. The latter maintained that baptism (by the very mechanics of the act itself) is an instrument, and not merely a sign, by which God confers His grace on the infant child.

Luther disagreed emphatically, saying that faith is most essential in order to benefit from baptism. In his *Large Catechism* of 1525 he writes, "Without faith baptism avails nothing."

Did Luther believe an infant had faith before the age of reason? In the early years of the Reformation, Luther justified infant baptism by the faith and prayers of the godfathers. However, he would not, as the Roman Catholics, accept the collective faith of the church as a basis for infant baptism. Luther later came to the view that infants believe. Of course he could not prove it, but apparently he did not feel it necessary to do so. In the *Large Catechism* of 1529 Luther does not emphasize the faith of the recipient, but rather places importance on God's Word and command, implying that through the Word *something* happens in the act of baptism.

Zwingli, the Reformer of Zurich, differed from Luther on the concept of the sacraments, and accordingly held a different theological view of infant baptism. He considered a sacrament as a sign, a ceremony, or a pledge that did not actually convey something, even by the help of the Word of God. For Zwingli baptism was a pledge of faith, but even more, baptism expressed the covenant relationship between God and His people, as circumcision did in the Old Testament. Zwingli saw in baptism a corporate significance that, as the act of reception into the church, became a visible sign for those present, telling them that this child had become a member of the covenant people of God.

Baptism as the sign of membership among the covenant people appeared as a recurring theme in many of the confessions of the Reformed churches. For Calvin, infant baptism presupposed faith that was found in

the parents. Since the parents belonged to the elect, their children likewise belonged to the covenant people.

In response to these positions, the Anabaptists asked: "With what right can a church in alliance with a city or a state compare itself with the theocracy of the Old Testament? How is it possible to ascertain that all the citizens are believers? Since the justification for infant baptism rests on believing parents, it seems of fundamental importance that this should be determined."

### Confirmation

The rite of confirmation illustrates the weak theological base for infant baptism. In the early church, baptism was preceded by instruction and accompanied with the laying on of hands, through which the gift of the Holy Spirit was believed to be conferred. From the latter ceremony, always performed by the bishop, confirmation developed as a separate rite administered when the child reached maturity. The ceremony became accepted as one of the seven sacraments by the medieval church. Baptismal grace was said to be perfected through the sacrament of confirmation. Wycliffe, in England, and Huss, in Bohemia, rejected the sacramental concept. The Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Trent confirmed it. However, the Protestant Reformers rejected not only the sacramental concept of confirmation but the rite as a whole, on the grounds that it had no Biblical foundation.

Yet Martin Bucer, the Reformer of Strasbourg, instituted a Protestant confirmation as a result of debates with the Anabaptists, who lived in the city in considerable numbers. The Anabaptists reasoned that infant baptism was not valid, for the baptized had not been instructed in the gospel nor had they made a public confession of faith (the two elements of New Testament baptism). In order to meet these arguments Bucer instituted Protestant confirmation, which spread from Strasbourg to other Protestant cities

both in Germany and Switzerland. Thus Protestant confirmation was seen as a renewal of the baptismal vow and a personal confession of faith. Confirmation became a crutch to support infant baptism against the claim of the Anabaptists, who maintained that instruction and confession of faith belonged to the very act of baptism itself.

### Anabaptism defined

The Protestant Reformers gave those who denied the validity of infant baptism and insisted on believers' baptism the name *Wiedertäufer*, a German word translated into English as "Anabaptists," or "rebaptizers." They received the label also in order that the imperial laws of capital punishment for rebaptizers could be applied to them. Although the Anabaptists baptized those who joined their congregation, they did not consider themselves rebaptizers, since infant baptism, they believed, was not a baptism at all in the light of the New Testament teaching. Accordingly, they named themselves Baptists. The Baptist movement at the time of the Reformation comprised many groups, the major ones being the Swiss Brethren, the Hutterites in Moravia, and the Mennonites in Holland. Their aim was to reform the church according to the norm of Scriptures. Like Luther at Worms, they refused to let the question of survival affect their obedience to Scripture. The sober, evangelical leaders among the Anabaptists had much in common with the young Luther and Zwingli. However, after 1525, the Anabaptists dealt with a different Luther—one who had changed after submitting the Reformation church to the protection and support of the civil authorities, and thereby compromising some of the basic tenets of evangelical Protestantism.

### Zurich beginnings of Anabaptism

The story of the Anabaptist movement actually begins in connection with the reform efforts of Zwingli in Zurich. He began to

preach Reformation doctrines in 1519 by emphasizing that only what Scripture teaches is law for the Christian. In 1522 some of his followers asked him for the New Testament basis for infant baptism. For some time Zwingli wavered regarding the validity of infant baptism. Balthasar Hubmaier, an Anabaptist and former colleague of Zwingli, later reminded the Reformer about this and scolded him for having changed his mind.

What made Zwingli decide to retain infant baptism? The Anabaptists rose from the inner circle of his friends and associates—men such as Felix Manz and Conrad Grebel, as well as Hubmaier. The initial question on which they conflicted with Zwingli was not that of baptism, but that of a New Testament church. Manz and Grebel desired a church free from civil authorities, and when Zwingli sought to realize the Reformation through the authority of the city council, these men departed from him. Infant baptism and the state-church principle go hand in hand. When Zwingli said Yes to the latter, he also had to adhere to the former. From the concept of a voluntary membership of believing and confessing Christians free from the authority of magistrates, and from their strong belief in Biblical authority, these former associates of Zwingli were led to adult baptism.

Nearly two years passed from the time Grebel and Manz began to doubt the validity of infant baptism until they translated theory into practice. On January 21, 1525, Grebel baptized Georg Blaurock, most likely in Manz's house. Blaurock, in turn, baptized Grebel and others present. This was the birth not only of the Baptist movement but also of the free-church principle. Two years later Felix Manz suffered death by drowning, being the first Anabaptist martyr. The free-church principle became a significant part of the theology of the Baptist movement and had a marked influence on Christian thought, not least through the Mennonites in Holland and elsewhere.

Anabaptists did not enter the main

part of Germany until the latter part of the 1520's, and Luther himself did not have personal contact with them as Zwingli had. Luther's written attacks upon the Anabaptists are colored by the events caused by the extremism of the Zwickau Prophets and Thomas M nzer. The great debacle of Munster, 1534-1535, was a religious and sociological revolt by Anabaptists who held extreme apocalyptic and eschatological views, and was by no means normative of Anabaptism.

Luther wanted, at one and the same time, a confessional church established on personal faith and a territorial church including all in a

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## **“It seemed that those who began to refute believers’ baptism began to limit the authority of the Bible.”**

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given region. He tried, as did the rest of the Reformers, to straddle the fence, and by so doing he sought to harmonize what the Anabaptists realized could not be united. It is interesting to note that in his great *Catechism* Luther's final argument for infant baptism was that it could not be displeasing to God because through the centuries so many saintly persons had been baptized as children. Here Luther relied upon tradition. Inevitably, it seemed that those who began to refute believers' baptism began to limit the authority of the Bible.

### **The piety of the Anabaptists and the extent of a movement**

The Anabaptists sought first and foremost to exemplify Christ in their lives. Even opponents such as Zwingli and Bullinger testified to the fact that they seemed to have achieved sanctified lives.

The Anabaptist movement was to a large degree a spontaneous one

that mushroomed here and there without initially having direct ties with other groups. On the other hand, when congregations were organized, persecution (as in the early church) spread its members far and wide, thus extending their sphere of influence. The rapid growth of the movement is indicated by the official action taken against them by local and imperial authorities, who revived the ancient Roman laws against heresy, making Anabaptism punishable by death.

A renowned Reformation scholar, Roland H. Bainton, gives an objective historical evaluation of the Anabaptist movement in the sixteenth century when he writes: “Anabaptism spread in Switzerland, down the Rhine Valley, and in the Netherlands. The documents now in process of publication reveal an amazing dissemination and indicate a real possibility that Anabaptism, if unimpeded by the sword of the magistrate, might have become the prevailing form of the church in Germany. However, the Great Commission did not succeed. Persecution turned the Anabaptists into the church of the remnant.”—Quoted by Guy F. Hershberger, ed., *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision*, p. 231. 

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*For further reading about the Anabaptists, we suggest Pilgrim Aflame, by Myron S. Augsburg, the story of Michael Sattler, an early Anabaptist leader who was executed for his faith at Rottenburg in May, 1527. Written in the form of a historical novel, this book allows the reader to breathe and live the atmosphere of the times and to understand better what made these often-misunderstood people so willing to suffer for truth as they saw it. The book is published by the Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania 15683 (Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4M5), and costs \$4.95 in hardback (Canada \$5.45), or \$2.25 in paperback (Canada, \$2.45).—Editors.*

# ASK THE EDITOR

## How can Seventh-day Adventists publish articles on God's grace, and at the same time be so legalistic as to keep the seventh-day Sabbath?

This question is typical of a number that have come to our office recently. There seems to be sincere confusion on this particular point expressed in numerous ways. One Baptist pastor from Michigan wrote, "While there are many commendable things in your publication, I cannot conscientiously accept it as long as Seventh-day Adventists continue to adhere to the mixture of law and grace . . ." A friendly Lutheran pastor from California wrote, "It was interesting to read the article by Raoul Dederen, 'What Does God's Grace Do?' It seems rather strange that a church so legalistic as to worship on Saturday should have anything to say about God's grace."

Are we legalists—people who ignore the central gospel truth of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ? Undoubtedly the single most common misunderstanding about Seventh-day Adventists is the assumption that we teach salvation by the works of the law. Others have believed that we mix law and grace, depending partially on each for salvation.

We would be the first to admit that Seventh-day Adventists themselves have had a part to play in these misunderstandings. Too often Adventist publications and preaching have sounded legalistic because of the emphasis given to the importance of obeying God's law. When the Adventist Church arose in the midnineteenth century, most Christians shared a common belief in the unquestioned authority of God's law. It was natural for Adventists to place great stress on this mutual ground in presenting what they believed to be a recovery of a long-neglected truth—the seventh-day Sabbath. Yet the fact is that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has always firmly believed in salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Actually, the relationship between law and grace can be clarified

quickly if we answer a single question: Is the law of God (meaning the Ten Commandments) a standard of right and wrong, or is it a method of salvation? If the law is used as a method for salvation, then we fully agree with one of our readers who wrote that law and grace are as far apart as the east is from the west. But if the law is used as a standard of right and wrong, then law and grace fit together beautifully and as closely as the forefinger and thumb. A correct understanding of the relationship between law and grace will show that both are as important to spiritual life as are the heart and brain to physical life. Both are absolutely indispensable.

This brings us to consider whether God's plan for saving man was different during Old Testament times from what it was in New Testament times. In Job, one of the earliest books in Scripture, the question is asked, "How then can man be justified with God?" (chap. 25:4). From Genesis to Revelation one finds a unity of thought declaring that there can be no other provision for justification except Jesus Christ and His shed blood. The Old Testament system of sacrificial types simply pointed forward to Christ's sacrifice. Just prior to His death Jesus declared, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28, R.S.V.). God did not institute a plan of salvation by works *before* the cross and then switch to a program of salvation by faith *after* the cross. (We trust our readers are carefully studying the articles on the sanctuary, written by Desmond Ford.) The entire sanctuary system taught the blood atonement of a coming Messiah. From the first lamb offered by Adam and Eve to the last animal slain before Christ cried out on the cross, "It is finished," the theme of the sacrificial arrangement was "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins"

(Heb. 9:22, R.S.V.). "It is the blood that makes atonement" (Lev. 17:11, R.S.V.) was the Lord's instruction to Moses. The relationship between law and grace is so broad and deep that we cannot fully treat it here, but we will attempt to set forth briefly what we believe the Scriptures teach concerning this important subject.

God's plan for dealing with sin became operative as soon as transgression occurred in Eden. The explanation of that plan began immediately, as well, and progressed through the years from the simple altars of the patriarchs to the time when God gave a fuller picture in the sacrificial ritual provided for the children of Israel. Every part of the sanctuary building and services was deeply significant. Daily, the ministration of the tabernacle taught the people the great truths concerning Christ's death.

The correct relationship between law and grace was illustrated in the ark of the covenant, placed in the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament sanctuary. Inside the ark was enshrined the law of God, written by His own finger, while covering the sacred chest was the mercy seat. The two golden cherubim at each end of the mercy seat had their faces turned toward each other looking downward, signifying their respect for the holy law and the mercy seat. Thus in the heart of the sanctuary "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10). What a beautiful illustration of the relationship between law and grace!

Thus the Scriptures clearly indicate that salvation in the Old Testament was of grace through faith in a Saviour. True, many then, as now, perverted God's gracious plan into a system of earning salvation by works, but they did so contrary to the will of God. (See Isaiah 1:10-20.) Any claim that God changed His method of salvation after the cross is

definitely unscriptural. One might well ask, "If man could be saved before the cross by works, why did God then change His plan to one of grace after the cross—a plan that required the suffering and death of His own Son?" Not a single scripture can be cited to show that between the time of Adam and John the Baptist an individual was saved by works. Whether Abraham or Amos, Paul or Peter, the sinner's right to the kingdom is based on faith in the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Undoubtedly those living in Old Testament times did not have the great advantage of studying the atonement from a historical stance, as we do. But, though sometimes dimly perceived, God's method of salvation was still the same. Paul's declaration that God "hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4) refers to all people living before and after the cross. The precious "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8) shed His blood for every person who has lived, from the days of the first Adam until the day when the second Adam shall appear in the clouds of heaven. God is a consistent God. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever" (Heb. 13:8, R.S.V.).

One major difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is in God's *method* of teaching the plan of salvation. Teachers may use different methods of explaining that two plus two equals four, but the answer always remains the same. So God used a "kindergarten" method of symbols and sacrifices in explaining His plan of salvation to those who had not the privilege of seeing the reality of Calvary. Naturally, this method of teaching by types and shadows ended at the cross. Since that time, God's instruction in the ways of salvation has been more direct, but His plan is still the same.

The system of ceremonies and laws dealing with the sacrifices met its fulfillment in Christ and His death. But we cannot and dare not confuse these temporary laws with

the eternal moral law of Ten Commandments. The entire life of Christ on earth exalted this eternal law of His Father. It existed before the creation of earth or man, and will continue to exist as long as God Himself. Far from being a temporary shadow of things to come, the ten-commandment law is so permanent that God could not possibly alter a single sentence in order to save man. That law is the foundation of His government—His unchangeable, eternal, infinite constitution, by which the universe is governed.

How *could* the plan of salvation be changed? Sin and its penalty have not changed. Stealing is sin, whether a person stole in 1978 B.C. or in A.D. 1978. Interestingly, charges of legalism almost always come in reference to the fourth commandment—Sabbathkeeping. Almost never is one accused of legalism for obedience to the commandments forbidding stealing, adultery, lying, or idol worship, in spite of the fact that one can just as easily be a legalist in these areas as in Sabbathkeeping. It should be obvious, as well, that just as one may be obedient to the commandment forbidding adultery without being a legalist, so may one be obedient to the commandment requiring Sabbath observance without being a legalist. The real question, therefore, must be: Is the fourth commandment an integral, binding part of the eternal ten-commandment law of God? If it is, obedience is not necessarily legalism, but disobedience is unmistakably sin.

In Old Testament times sin was tied to the violation of God's commandments. Nehemiah clearly states, "We have sinned against thee. . . . We have acted very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances" (Neh. 1:6, 7, R.S.V.). Jeremiah 44:23 connects sin with disobedience to God's law. A clear statement of what sin is can be found in the book of Leviticus: "If any one sins, doing any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done. . . ." (chap. 5:17, R.S.V.).

Coming to the New Testament, we find the definition of sin unmistakably clear. "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). "For by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (chap. 7:7). "For where no law is, there is no transgression" (chap. 4:15). "But sin is not imputed when there is no law" (chap. 5:13). "The strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. 15:56). The point is that sin cannot be defined except in terms of the law. And the violation of the law cannot be defined except as sin.

Sin, the breaking of the law, began with Adam and Eve in Eden. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Paul emphasizes the point in another passage when he claims that "all have sinned" (chap. 3:23), and because of this, "death passed upon all men," for "the wages of sin is death" (chaps. 5:12; 6:23).

The death penalty is not arbitrary. For God to remain true to His character, which, in a definite sense, is expressed in the law, He has no choice other than to invoke the death penalty upon those who rebel against His will. Otherwise His law, the entire foundational constitution of His government, would be threatened, His authority would be challenged, and ultimately the entire universe would be in as chaotic a condition as our present world. God has no choice—in order to maintain peace, liberty, and harmony throughout the universe—other than to take back His life from those whom He has created who rebel and refuse to obey His law.

Keep this point clearly in mind when you read, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (chap. 3:20, 28). The reason no person can be justified by works of the law is that the penalty for transgressing the

law is *death*, not works. A man who is sent to prison for ten years walks out a free man after serving his sentence. He has paid the penalty and now stands justified in the presence of the law. This is justification by *works*. But if a man has committed a crime that requires the death penalty, would he be justified by serving 10 years, 20 years, or even 50 years? No amount of works would justify him; only death would satisfy the penalty. For this reason the Christian can never be made right with God on the basis of anything that *he* can do.

To try to justify ourselves by our works is even worse than impossible; it tremendously reduces in our minds the enormity of sin. If there is *any* work that I can perform to pay for the violation of any of God's commandments, then the removal of the penalty becomes a mere human effort. The real magnitude of sin becomes apparent only in the light of its penalty—death. But even greater than *my* death demanded by the law to deal with my sin is the staggering fact of *Jesus'* death to save me. That the sinless Lamb of God would willingly come to suffer the unspeakable agonies of my guilt and voluntarily bear my sin-caused death defies comprehension, and demonstrates, as nothing else possibly can, the malignity of sin and the enduring holiness of God's law. All this is seen in the radiance streaming from the cross.

No wonder, when Paul concludes in Romans 3:28 that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," he goes on to ask the question, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (verse 31). Paul's statement gives us deep insight into the relationship of law and grace.

Seventh-day Adventists tenaciously hold to the doctrine of justification by faith alone, while at the same time pointing out the subtle error that the cross has abolished God's law, freeing the Christian from its claims. As the apostle Paul affirms, nothing could be further

from the truth.

Calvary is an eternal argument that God's law is as unchangeable as His character—as unchangeable as His throne—as unchangeable as His love. When our Saviour pleaded with the Father in Gethsemane to spare Him from drinking the cup of death, the only answer He received was the immutability of the sacred law. Death is the penalty for transgression. If salvation was to become reality, Christ must die, not for Himself, but for the transgressors of that law, including me. The fact that no other way could be found even by God Himself to satisfy the claims of the law is supreme proof of its eternal, unchangeable character. Would God have given His Son to die in order to redeem sinners from the penalty of the law if any other way could have been found? If God could have altered His law or its penalty, surely He would have done so!

How then can we behold the sacrifice upon the cross and at the same time ridicule the law He died to uphold? The cross, rightly comprehended, leads us to a true understanding of the terribleness of sin, which is the transgression of that law. The cross causes us as sinners to cry out for faith to lay hold of the merits of Christ and to cease from breaking that law.

The thought that Christ's death brought about the end of obedience to the law is blasphemy. This is why Paul cries out, "Does faith in Christ do away with the law?—God forbid, yea it establishes the law."

As Seventh-day Adventist ministers and Christians, we daily pray for power to overcome greed, thoughts of immorality, selfishness, and sin of every hue—not primarily for the harmony with Heaven this brings to us, but because of the knowledge of what our sins cost Heaven to forgive. To be canceled, our sins demand either our death or the death of our Creator.

How can Christians downgrade the law of God? Look at the center cross of the three on Mount Calvary. See the agony suffered by One who

knew no sin. See Him whose tender skin as a baby was pricked with the straw in the manger now enduring the stabs of sharp thorns piercing His brow. See rough spikes, made to hold one board tightly to another, now holding human flesh against a cross, piercing His hands and feet. Watch a soldier thrust a metal spear into His side. Why? Why? Why did Christ suffer all this?

The Saviour was willing because in no other way could sin be eradicated, and sin is the one thing in all the universe that God hates. We see glimpses of the misery caused by sin, but God sees it in all its enormity. Imagine His great heart of love twisted in pain at the sight of a world filled with His children who must endure the unrelenting onslaught of sin's crippling, emaciating destruction. Watch with Him the effects of sin—the widow weeping over her murdered husband, the heartaches of the lonely and forgotten, the physical and emotional scarring of the battered child, the starving millions, the drunkard careening his car into the bodies of innocent families. We can capture a fragment, but God has to view it all in the blinding noonday of omniscience.

Because it was unthinkable to God to allow sin to continue unchecked, and because the only way to destroy it was to accept its consequences personally, Jesus willingly went to the cross. The law demanded death for the transgressor as the only appropriate, adequate penalty. To demand less would reduce the importance of the law and permit sin to reign eternally.

It is not a question, really, of law *or* grace. Rather it is a question of law *and* grace. God's grace is based upon His law; His law forms the foundation upon which His grace is built.

Let us rejoice with all of heaven in God's free grace, which releases us from having to pay the penalty of our transgressions of His law. And let us with all of heaven rejoice that having been saved by His grace, we may freely follow His law by that same grace. J.R.S. and B.R.H.

# LOVE THAT BLED AT CALVARY



DENNIS CREWS

# Sacrifices were not human attempts to ward off divine anger, but the revelation of divine love.

by Desmond Ford

“Law and terrors do but harden  
All the while they work alone,  
But a sense of blood-bought  
pardon  
Will melt a heart of stone.”<sup>1</sup>

Does not this verse contain the dynamic solution to the problems of evangelism? How can a sin-crazed world be arrested if not by the most amazing of all wonders—the Creator’s sacrificial love for a race that loved Him not! It is the goodness of God that moves men to repentance, not the threatened fires of hell. The cross, not the law and its penalty, is the mystic talisman that can transmute sinners into saints. Had not the penitent thief his fill of law at his trial? But the love of the Sufferer at his side, whom he initially cursed, broke his heart and brought forth the prayer—“Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42).

The tabernacle in the wilderness shows all men the way home. And it must be emphasized repeatedly that the blood was the most prominent factor in the ceremonial ritual. If we connect the furniture of the holy places and the court by intersecting lines, the outline of a cross emerges. Similarly, the sanctuary apartments themselves rested on foundations of silver sockets made from redemption money, reminding us that the whole structure was based solidly upon the gracious salvation of God. Salt characterized all the meal offerings, and incense pervaded the atmosphere of the sanctuary to remind men that only the righteousness of the Messiah—a righteousness woven in the twin looms of a perfect life and a sacrificial death—could provide the righteousness of God for perishing sinners.

Thus did the parable of the Mosaic tabernacle set forth the basic truth that forgiveness, righteousness, the Spirit, and eternal life are Heaven’s gracious gifts bought for us by the death of One of infinite worth.

New Testament writers continually refer to the death of Christ as the prevailing motive that excites faith, hope, and love.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, “the love of Christ controls us, because

we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died” (2 Cor. 5:14, R.S.V.).

What a revelation to a lost world! When the God-man died He died as our representative, and His death is counted as our death. The price for all our sins was paid in the person of our Representative and Substitute two thousand years ago. Now who-soever will, may come, “and him that cometh,” Christ “will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). After Lincoln’s proclamation of liberty to the slaves, thousands toiled on under the lash of their masters because they did not know that they were free men! Is it not the same today? Does not the cross assert that man is reconciled to God, and that we need only accept?

Only one New Testament book systematically explains the plan of salvation. It was written by Paul, the theologian of the church, when the early controversies had waned and his authority had been established. Now was his opportunity to write, not in answer to an emergency, but to set forth the gospel committed to him. In this important book of Scripture—Romans—one pregnant passage enshrines the meaning of the sacrificial system. This passage has been called the acropolis of the New Testament: “But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, . . . to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus” (chap. 3:21-26, R.S.V.). The word translated *expiation* means literally “mercy seat,” a reference to the atoning blood in the Holy of Holies of the sanctuary.

Notice this beautiful summary of

Paul’s meaning: “The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.

“It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God’s law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen, and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ’s character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

“More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith.”<sup>3</sup>

Every significant revival in the Christian era has been accomplished through the proclamation that the sinner can be justified freely before God on the basis of Christ’s shed blood alone. It is this good news “that a man is justified by faith quite apart from success in keeping the law” (verse 28, N.E.B.)<sup>4</sup> that breaks men’s hearts and frees them from the shackles of sinful habits. Shout it to the multitudes from the housetops: “Sin shall no longer be your master, because you are no longer under the law, but under the grace of God” (chap. 6:14, N.E.B.). Man has often sought justification by striving for sanctification, but God’s way of sanctifying a man is

through the motivation of gratitude that justification brings.

Some today may wish to turn the grace of God into license and lasciviousness just as some desired to do in Paul's day (chap. 3:31; 6:1, 2), but he who is taught of the Spirit knows that, though he is justified by faith alone, the faith that justifies is never alone. It is ever accompanied by a love that works in gratitude for so great a salvation. Though no man is saved by faith *and* works, he is saved by a faith *that* works. Let us recognize the clear teaching of both Testaments as expressed in type and antitype. The sinner is saved by faith alone—which means by the blood alone, by grace alone, by Christ alone. It was God who in the Old Testament sacrificial service provided the blood (Lev. 17:11). Sacrifices were not human attempts to ward off divine anger, but the revelation of divine love. As Abraham told his son Isaac, God Himself provides the lamb. James Denney once exclaimed, "I envy the priest who can thrust a crucifix under the eyes of a dying man and say, 'God loves like that.'"

The New Testament continually links the themes of sacrifice and love. After Christ's reference to the uplifted serpent, which prefigured Himself on the cross, we hear the most familiar words of the entire Bible: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son . . ." (John 3:16). Paul speaks similarly when he writes, "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8, R.S.V.).

Any presentation of divine love that ignores the blood of Christ is not the religion of Scripture, for such presentations minimize the sacredness of the law of God. The testimony of Heaven is that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins"; therefore, "even the first covenant was not ratified without blood. . . . He [Moses] sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels used in worship" (Heb. 9:22, 18, 21, R.S.V., margin). The Christian

church today is declared to be one of the antitypes of the Mosaic sanctuary (see 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:19-22). If then we are to do our work aright and fulfill our allotted task, the blood must ever be made prominent in our preaching and ministry. All worship and service is acceptable only because of the blood. Not only at the beginning of the Christian life but throughout it, the believer is dependent upon the atoning merits of the Saviour. Note how the arrangements of the sanctuary taught this truth very clearly.

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## **Any presentation of divine love that ignores the blood of Christ and thus minimizes the sacredness of God's law is not the religion of Scripture.**

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The penitent sinner who stepped inside the courtyard was first confronted by the altar of burnt offering—the symbol of his justification through the blood of his substitute. Next came the laver with its demand for purification, as well as pardon. (The next article of this series will have more to say on this topic.) But how was the sinner to grow in truth and holiness, becoming more like the God he worshiped? The holy place, with its table of shewbread and its candlestick, offered him two great gifts—food and light, symbols of the nourishment of Scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There was, however, one other item in this apartment—the altar of incense. Even while growing in grace and Christlikeness the Christian is ever dependent upon the fragrance of Christ's merits—His perfect righteousness. Thus Peter reminds us that all our spiritual sacrifices are

acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5; cf. Rev. 8:1-4; 7:15).

We who must pray daily, "Forgive us our debts" (Matt. 6:12); we who recognize that we "make many mistakes" (James 3:2, R.S.V.) and that "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1:8, R.S.V.); we who are sinners in ourselves but righteous in Christ, find in the shed blood of Christ our assurance and hope, our righteousness and strength. The love that bled at Calvary energizes as nothing else can, and enables us to count all things as "so much garbage, for the sake of gaining Christ and finding . . . [ourselves] incorporate in him, with no righteousness of . . . [our] own, no legal rectitude, but the righteousness which comes from faith in Christ" (Phil. 3:8, 9, N.E.B.).

The ancient prophet recorded this promise of God: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Ex. 12:13). Note three things: 1. It was the blood and *nothing but the blood* that brought salvation. 2. *Whoever* was under the blood was safe. 3. It was *God's* estimate of the blood that counted. These were the great teachings of the Mosaic tabernacle, and they remain the saving message of the New Testament church.

"What more could He say than to you He hath said,

Who unto the Saviour for refuge have fled?"

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!" (Rom. 6:23, R.S.V.; 2 Cor. 9:15, R.S.V.).

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<sup>1</sup> From the poem by Augustus Toplady.

<sup>2</sup> See Rom. 5:6-11; 8:34; Gal. 1:4; 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Phil. 2:8; 1 Thess. 5:9, 10; 2 Tim. 2:8; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:28; 10:10; 13:12; 1 Peter 2:21, 24; 3:18; 4:1; 1 John 2:2; Rev. 1:5, 18; 5:9.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> Texts credited to N.E.B. are from *The New English Bible*. © The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press 1961, 1970. Reprinted by permission.

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# PRESIDENT'S PAGE

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**Reason and Faith in Tension. These twin gifts are both from the Creator, but reason must submit to the authority of faith.**

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by Robert H. Pierson

Seventh-day Adventists have been historically a people of prophecy. Because of this, many Adventists develop an above-average interest in history and archeology, for there they find evidences of the accurate fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Because the Adventist recognizes that sin has marred nature, and therefore limited man's capacity to observe and to interpret without bias what he sees, he has consciously sought to take this factor into account in his studies.

In this connection I would like to review with you briefly the story of the church throughout the Christian era. Such a review may have something vital to say to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and to the Christian church at large, regarding the role of human reasoning.

Undoubtedly, history and natural science have been useful servants of God's revelation of Himself to man, but there have been repeated instances in the history of the Christian church of a process in which reason first became the equal of faith in God's self-revelation through the Scripture, then gradually came to dominate that faith. The result? The supreme authority of the Scriptures, which Jesus cited to vindicate His Messiahship, was neutralized, especially among those whose knowledge and training most forcefully confronted them with the claims of science and history. These claims have often led either to an outright denial of the unique nature of the Scriptures or to various methods of interpreting the Bible that stripped it of its authoritative character as the God-given history of this world, of man, and of the universe. This, in turn, has led to a reinterpretation of the history and nature of sin and of the divine plan of salvation.

This oft-repeated controversy between human reason and faith in God's Word surfaced in a pro-

nounced manner during the startling events of the French Revolution. That revolution was in part a reaction against the dogmas of a world-dominating church, so much so that in the process of the revolution reason was enthroned as a goddess above the authority of Scripture and the monolithic church. This led France into the excesses so familiar to historians of the revolution.

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**One of Satan's supreme goals in his work against the church is to shift subtly the original relationship of reason and Biblical faith to one that subordinates faith to reason. We must ever remain alert to preserve the authority of faith.**

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It is inevitable in a church such as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which, in proportion to its size and resources, places considerable stress upon education for its youth, that the challenge of reason to Bible faith will be repeatedly encountered. In general, the higher the educational levels attained, the stronger the encounter.

Every thoughtful Christian scholar, leader, minister, parent, student, and church member must be prayerfully concerned as to what the result of these encounters may be. Unquestionably, reason is a gift of God; undoubtedly it is one of the

major elements of the "image of God" in which man was made. But reason must ever be exercised in connection with faith. In the Garden Eve listened to the voice of reason above the words of God, and was deceived. Adam disobeyed because he did not trust God to resolve the problems created by his wife's tragic choice.

Noah could not controvert the strong reasons given by the philosophers and scientists to prove that there would be no flood, "but he could proclaim the word of God; for he knew it contained the infinite wisdom of the Creator."—Ellen G. White, in *Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1895, p. 4.

If Seventh-day Adventists ever give credence to the concept that faith in the revelations of God must find its vindication and court of final appeal in human reason (whether as philosophy, history, science, or whatever), what will the future of our faith be? One of Satan's supreme goals in his work against the church is to shift subtly the original relationship of reason and Biblical faith to one that subordinates faith to reason. With this objective accomplished, all his other aims would be assured in time. It would please Satan for us to elevate science, so-called, and human reasoning to a place of equal authority with God's Word. He is constantly endeavoring to cause men to exalt their own rules and regulations and traditions to an equal place with revelation. Having accomplished this, his next step is to exalt man's words above the Word of God.

As leaders in God's church, we must ever remain alert to preserve the divinely given relationship of these heavenly gifts so that reason ever submits to the authority of faith and remains faith's servant.

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# HEALTH AND RELIGION

**“Pastor, I’m Going to Kill Myself!”** The pastor is the one most often turned to when internal strength wanes. What is he to do?

by Vern R. Andress

“Pastor, I thought you should know. I’ve made one of the most important decisions of my life. Everything has been mixed up for so long, and it just seems to get worse continuously. But I feel completely at peace now. I’ve found the perfect solution to my problems, and it’s a relief to know that they will soon be over. I’m going to kill myself!”

The voice on the other end of the telephone was flat and emotionless, despite the urgency of the words. Somehow, almost instinctively, the young pastor knew that the matter-of-fact way in which this person spoke indicated his absolute seriousness.

The last sentence reverberated in the pastor’s mind during the few seconds it took to evaluate what he had just heard. At the moment it was impossible for him accurately to analyze all his emotions. Uppermost in his mind was a feeling of helplessness—what should he do? If he had ever had a class on how to handle such a call he had failed to remember what he was supposed to do next. He was alone on the firing line, handling his first suicide call.

Every year approximately 24,000 Americans end their own lives; estimates are that another 75,000 destroy themselves but remain unidentified as suicide victims.<sup>1</sup> This means that at least one American commits suicide every 20 minutes. And for every person who actually kills himself, another 10 people make a serious attempt.<sup>2</sup>

Most of these self-destructive individuals give distinct clues of their suicidal decisions, and a large number of them make overt attempts to seek help by calling friends, relatives, or professionals such as doctors or ministers. For a professional person to be helpful to a potential suicide victim, he must have some understanding of the phenomenon of suicide.

Here are some of the most common characteristics: 1. Two or three men kill themselves for every woman who does. 2. The risk of suicide increases with age. 3. More Caucasians commit suicide than do other ethnic-group members. 4. Suicide is greater among individuals who are separated, divorced, or widowed. 5. More women attempt suicide than do men. 6. Every suicide

threat should be taken seriously. Many threateners become attempters, and many attempters become committers. 7. Once a person attempts suicide and fails, each succeeding attempt becomes more likely to be lethal. 8. Most people who attempt or commit suicide are ambivalent about dying at the time of their act.<sup>3</sup>

Research indicates that the typical



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person who commits suicide is a middle-aged (50-59) Caucasian male who is employed as a skilled or unskilled laborer. He is usually separated from his wife and has a history of physical illness, with which he feels he can no longer cope. He will likely kill himself with a handgun, which he originally purchased for the protection of his family and himself. Women who kill themselves do so most often between the ages of 35 and 54.<sup>4</sup>

Most men who commit suicide choose a method that is both fast and irreversible, such as shooting or hanging themselves or by jumping from a high place. The majority of women who kill themselves do so with an overdose of drugs, a method that is neither fast nor irreversible. This difference between men and women in their choice of methods may reflect a basic difference in approaches to life in general. Women use suicidal gestures as a form of communicating their despair while there is still hope for help; men wait until suicide becomes the only viable option that they can perceive.

If suicide is indeed actually a form of desperate communication—a cry for help that is resorted to when all other attempts at communication have failed—then all suicidal gestures (both threats and attempts) should be taken seriously. Unfortunately, many people tend to look at these gestures as offensive manipulations that are whimsical and not serious. The ambivalence toward death displayed by the average suicide attempter should not be interpreted as a sign of intentional deceit. Such an individual actually vacillates between the desire to end his misery through death and a desire to have someone show a concern that will convince him that suicide is not necessary. The majority of people who actually kill themselves have made previous threats and attempts that have failed to generate the help for which they were seeking. Therefore, every suicidal gesture should be taken seriously.

Overt attempts at suicide, however, are only the most obvious in-

dications that a person has come to such a point of desperation that he considers self-destruction as one way out of his problems. People who are contemplating suicide often leave clues. Some of these are very direct and fit into the category of suicide threats. Others are more subtle, consisting of hints that one would be better off dead or that one has become tired of living. Other clues involve changes in behavior and attitude that may not be recognized until after the suicidal act has taken place. Much suicidal behavior could be prevented if those close to

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**“Suicide is rarely a spur-of-the-moment, impulsive act. Most are well planned and have matured through much thought.”**

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the potential victim could understand the suicidal clues and respond by reopening needed communication channels.

Here are some of the subtle clues to watch for: (1) unusual difficulty in sleeping, followed by periods of general sadness; (2) sudden, unexplainable losses of appetite, weight, or interest in sex; (3) an unexplainable loss of interest in work or customary activities such as hobbies or sports; (4) an unexplainable loss of interest in one's friends and relatives; (5) frequent talk about death or the wish to die; (6) unexpected preparations for death such as the making of funeral arrangements, updating insurance policies, preparing trusts and wills; (7) any sudden and unexplainable giving away of prized possessions; (8) a sudden interest in either the purchase or borrowing of guns, knives, ropes, medications, et cetera.<sup>5</sup>

Obviously not everyone who ex-

hibits one or more of these behaviors is contemplating suicide. However, the more of these common signs an individual displays, the more important it is for those around him to seriously consider techniques of suicide intervention.

Contrary to popular belief, suicide is rarely committed as a spur-of-the-moment, impulsive act. Most suicides are well planned and have matured through a long period of thought. The typical suicidal person goes through an orderly planning process from the point of inception to the point of action. Generally, the plan evolves through the following stages:<sup>6</sup>

1. *The resolution.* The suicidal person must first resolve the philosophical and ethical considerations of his self-destruction. The individual generally exhibits agitation and preoccupation as he overcomes his basic cultural inhibitions against suicide. This phase will likely be continued over a long period of time, with some resolution being made each time the individual faces a personal crisis that generates suicidal thoughts.

2. *The initiation phase.* After the individual has overcome his preliminary abhorrence of suicide, he initiates concrete actions toward making his plan a reality. First, he must choose a mode of death. At this point the individual weighs the “virtues” of one weapon against another; resolution comes when he chooses the means with which he will end his own life. Next, he must choose a suitable location. Consideration is given to such things as the amount of time needed, the time lapse between the suicidal act and the time of discovery, who will most likely make the discovery, and the impact it will have upon them. Throughout this phase, the individual continuously rehearses the suicidal act in his mind until he feels he has perfected his plan. During this time his family and friends may be aware of mild degrees of agitation.

3. *Postponement phase.* During this final stage the individual frequently becomes peaceful. Since he

has resolved all of the issues of his impending self-inflicted death, he can turn his efforts toward opening communication channels with those who are significant to him. The suicidal action is still reversible, although it becomes increasingly less so with the passage of time. Yet if the channels of communication can be adequately opened even during this final phase, it is possible that the act of suicide can be averted. If the individual's efforts toward communication are thwarted, however, he may express the urgency of his needs through a sublethal suicide attempt. If this desperate measure fails to resolve his problems, he will almost certainly make another attempt, with each succeeding one becoming more desperate and more lethal. If another attempt is made, it will likely occur within ninety days of a previous attempt.<sup>7</sup>

It should be reemphasized that most suicidal people are ambivalent about dying.<sup>8</sup> This ambivalence toward death may explain why a suicidal person quite often calls his pastor or physician and openly expresses his suicidal intention. The important question now becomes, "What should I do if I get a suicide call?"

The first rule is to remain calm! Conveying anxiety in your voice or manner accentuates the ability of the person on the other end of the line to manipulate you. Despite the urgency of the situation, your caller has telephoned because of his ambivalence about dying and his desire for help. He needs your confidence and stability as reassurance of his capacity to survive the present crisis.

The second rule is to assure the caller that you take seriously his ability to kill himself. This indicates that you are not going to deal with his problem in an unrealistic manner. Likewise, it is often beneficial to indicate to the caller that you do not intend to talk him out of his action. These two ploys indicate your acceptance of his potency and reduce the necessity for him to convince you of his need and ability to kill himself. It is a psychological

principle that in trying to convince you of the "rightness" of his course, the would-be suicide victim may very well succeed in convincing himself.

You might say, "I am glad you decided to call me and share with me your present pain. I'm sure you have carefully considered your situation and I fully realize that suicide is *one* of the options open to you. Because I feel it is important for each person to make his own decisions, I won't try to talk you out of killing yourself; however, I would like to take a few minutes to see whether you have fully considered some of your other options."

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**"Most people who actually kill themselves have made previous threats and attempts that have failed to generate the help they need."**

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The next step is to review some of the possible nonsuicidal options available to the individual. This is most easily accomplished by asking him to list some of the other options that he has already considered. It is easier for him to tell you what is important to him than for you to guess. This step will make up the bulk of the conversation. To assure its effectiveness you must *really* listen to all the subtle messages that you will be receiving. One of the most important things in the mind of the suicide caller is his need to be heard. The appropriate activity for the counselor at this point is active listening. Listen for ways in which you can honestly reaffirm the caller's feelings of self-worth and value. Your personal concern and love can be shown by patient and intense listening at the time of crisis, and by continued contact after the crisis has

passed.

Finally, it is important to realize one's limitations in this highly specialized area. Persons who have contemplated suicide should be encouraged to seek professional counseling. Sometimes a pastor feels that referring the suicide caller to another counselor might be viewed as another in a series of rejections. On the contrary, such a referral is commonly viewed as showing the pastor's true concern for the individual, especially if the pastor maintains a warm and interested relationship with the person following referral. Most large communities now have suicide-prevention centers or hot lines where specially trained helpers are available on a twenty-four-hour basis. Information about local suicide-prevention centers may be obtained by writing: American Association of Suicidology, P.O. Box 3264, Houston, Texas 77001.

One of the most important links in the support network for a suicidal person is the individual's pastor—the person most frequently turned to for strength when internal strength is waning. ■■

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<sup>1</sup> Leonard Linden and Warren Breed, "The Demographic Epidemiology of Suicide," in *Suicidology: Contemporary Developments*, Edwin S. Shneidman, ed. (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1976), pp. 71-98.

<sup>2</sup> Erwin Stengel, "Attempted Suicides," in *Suicidal Behaviors: Diagnosis and Management*, H. L. P. Resnik, ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), pp. 171-189.

<sup>3</sup> David Lester, *Why People Kill Themselves* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, publisher, 1972).

<sup>4</sup> Vern R. Andress and David M. Corey, *The Demographic Distribution of Suicide in Riverside County Between 1965 and 1969* (Loma Linda, Calif.: Loma Linda University Press, Loma Linda: Occasional Papers, No. 3, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, 1976).

<sup>5</sup> Calvin J. Frederick and Louise Lague, *Dealing With the Crisis of Suicide* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. National Institute of Mental Health, Public Affairs Committee, Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 406A, 1972), p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Robert E. Litman and Norman D. Tabachnick, "Psychoanalytic Theories of Suicide," in *Suicidal Behaviors: Diagnosis and Management*, H. L. P. Resnik, ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), p. 78.

<sup>7</sup> Edwin S. Shneidman and Norman L. Farberow, eds., *Clues to Suicide* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1957).

<sup>8</sup> Erwin Stengel, *Suicide and Attempted Suicide* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1964).

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# SCIENCE AND RELIGION

## Moses' Creation Account. This study of the opening chapters of Genesis uses the Bible itself as its own best interpreter.

A view that places man in control of Scripture rather than under the control of its testimony frequently either begins or is first manifest in an acceptance of conclusions that are popular in scientific circles but contradictory to the direct grammatical sense of the first eleven chapters of Genesis. It is commonly asserted that these chapters of the Bible deal only with the existence of God, His supremacy, and man's obligations toward Him as Creator, but that they do not present factual historical and cosmological data; that they are authentic only in areas not subject to investigation by the physical and biological sciences.

Such views have crucial and far-reaching implications. A well-known contemporary theologian affirms: "Absolutely everywhere where the New Testament refers to the first half of Genesis the New Testament assumes (and many times affirms) that Genesis is history and that it is to be read in normal fashion, with the common use of the words and syntax."<sup>1</sup> All the New Testament writers except James refer affirmatively to Genesis 1-11.<sup>2</sup>

The magnitude of the assault that has been made on the first eleven chapters of Genesis is a measure of the importance of understanding them correctly. In the following material I do not propose to present an absolute interpretation of Moses' Creation account. I only outline the insights that have proved helpful to me after extensive and intensive study of the various views advanced by the theologians and Biblical scholars and of the scientific data that relates to the significance of the testimony given by Moses. I urge each reader to develop his own interpretation out of intense, prayerful study, rather

than to be content with borrowing an interpretation advocated by someone else.

"The Bible is its own interpreter, one passage explaining another."<sup>3</sup> This is a guiding principle of the highest importance. In the development of any language word definitions change over generations and centuries. Many words have a broad range of connotation. When one is reading a translation (as in an Eng-

wrought prose, as clearly indicated in the Jerusalem Bible, for example.

The basic Creation account given by Moses extends from Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 2:4a. The structure of this account indicates that Genesis 1:1 is an introductory statement and that Genesis 2:1, 4a are corresponding concluding summary statements. One's understanding of this account depends crucially on the meaning he assigns to the terms *beginning*,

*heavens*, and *earth*. According to Matthew 19:4, the word *beginning* includes all seven days of Creation week. The Hebrew word translated *heaven(s)* appears in Genesis 1:1, 8, 9, 14, 15, 17, 20; 2:1, 4, and is defined in Genesis 1:6-8 as the atmosphere that had its beginning on Day Two. The Hebrew word translated *earth* appears in Genesis 1:1, 2, 10, 11, 15, 17, 20, 22, 24-26, 28-30; 2:1, 4, and is defined in Genesis 1:9, 10, as the dry solid portion of the planetary surface that had its beginning on Day Three. These meanings are preserved throughout the Bible in references such as Genesis 6:13; 9:11; Exodus 20:11; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 146:6; Acts 4:24; 14:15; Revelation 10:6; 14:7; 21:1 (compare Isa. 65:17 and 66:22 with Rev. 21:1). Peter divides the history of Planet Earth into three epochs, each of

which has a distinct "earth" (1 Peter 1:20; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:6, 7, 13).

One or the other or both of the Hebrew words that are translated "without form, and void" in Genesis 1:2 appear in Job 12:24; Deuteronomy 32:10, Isaiah 34:11; 1 Samuel 12:21; Isaiah 24:10; 29:21; 40:17, 23; 41:29; 44:9; 49:4; 59:4 and Jeremiah 4:23. The Hebrew in Jeremiah 4:23 is identical with that in Genesis 1:2.

For the meaning of the Hebrew term translated *day* it is sufficient to



lish rendition of Genesis) the principal connotation of a key word may differ from the connotation the writer had in mind in selecting the word found in the original text. Hence there is great danger in reading space-age meanings and connotations into key words used in the Creation account. One should as far as possible restrict himself to the definitions given or implied in the Biblical text. It should be emphasized, too, that the Creation account is not Hebrew poetry, but finely

say that the overwhelming opinion of scholars is that whenever modified by an ordinal number this term designates a standard solar day marked off by one complete rotation of the planet. Accordingly, Creation week extended over seven consecutive rotations of Planet Earth. While the present rotation rate is probably not precisely the same as that which was established on Day One, any difference that may exist is not an issue in the “day” concept of Creation week.

In this connection Ellen G. White has made certain illuminating comments: “The first week . . . was just like every other week.”<sup>4</sup> “Of each successive day of creation, the sacred record declares that it consisted of the evening and the morning, like all other days that have followed.”<sup>5</sup> “When the Lord declares that He made the world in six days and rested on the seventh day, He means the day of twenty-four hours, which He has marked off by the rising and setting of the sun.”<sup>6</sup>

Discussions on the interpretation of the Creation account often place much stress on the Hebrew verb *bara*. It is true that the simple active form of this verb is used in the Old Testament only with God as the subject. However, the same verb is used in the intensive form with man as the subject (Joshua 17:15, 18; Eze. 21:19; 23:47). In the Creation account Moses also used the verb *‘asah*, which has the primary meaning of “to make” or “to accomplish.” In addition, he used the verb *yasar*, which has the primary meaning of “to form” or “to mold.” In the summary statement given in Genesis 2:2, 3, *‘asah* appears three times and *bara* once. The R.S.V. translates each with the word “done,” using a simple “done” also for the combination of *bara* and *‘asah* in verse 3. One could expect that Moses would have favored *bara*, rather than *‘asah* in these verses if *bara* were a stronger verb and had unique significance with respect to deity.

The use of *bara* in Genesis 1:21 indicates that this verb is not limited

to an *ex nihilo* situation, as many exegetes have contended in connection with Genesis 1:1. That *bara* does not designate an *ex nihilo* creation is further indicated by its use in Genesis 1:27; 5:1, 2; 6:7, the use of *yasar* in Genesis 2:7, and the use of *banah* (“build,” “build up”) in Genesis 2:22.

On the basis that “the Bible is its own interpreter, one passage explaining another,” the use of *bara* by the prophet Isaiah is instructive. In Isaiah 45:7 *‘asah* is used as a composite term that includes all the usual creation verbs: “. . . form [*yasar*] light . . . create [*bara*] darkness . . . make [*‘asah*] weal . . . create [*bara*] woe . . . do [*‘asah*] all these . . .” (R.S.V.). In Isaiah 45:18 (R.S.V.) all the creation verbs are placed on an equal basis and used in concert for an inadequate attempt to describe God’s creative work: “. . . created [*bara*] the heavens . . . formed [*yasar*] the earth . . . made [*‘asah*] [the earth] . . . established [*kun*] [the earth] . . . create [*bara*] [the earth] . . . formed [*yasar*] [the earth] . . .” If *bara* specifies an *ex nihilo* creation and *‘asah* a creation involving preexistent material, the verb order in Isaiah 45:12 should be reversed: “I made [*‘asah*] the earth, and created [*bara*] man upon it.” The creation of new heavens and a new earth on Planet Earth after the millennium is described in Isaiah 65:17, 18 with the verb *bara*.

It is significant that the Creation account makes no reference to the creation of water. Water is presented as in existence on the planet before the creative work of Day One is described. For Day Three creative work is described that utilizes preexistent water in the formation of seas (Gen. 1:9, 10). Possibly the mineral component of the earth (dry land) created also on Day Three is to be treated on the same basis as the mineral component of the seas.

Moses pictures Planet Earth as covered with water and enshrouded in darkness at the beginning of Creation week. He reports that on Day Four sun, moon, and stars appeared

in the “firmament of the heavens”—the atmosphere. There is unquestionable evidence that these extraterrestrial objects are not located in the atmosphere, they only appear to a surface-based observer as if located there. It is my opinion that the entire account of Genesis 1:1-2:4a is correctly understood only as a brief summary of what an observer situated at the surface of the planet without artificial aids to his perception would have seen during Creation week, plus the comments, “and God said.”

Genesis 1:16, 17 regarding the creation of the sun, moon, and stars, are two statements in typical Hebrew parallel structure. Each of these statements should carry equal force. In verse 16 the Hebrew verb is *‘asah* (“made”); in verse 17 the verb is *nathan* (“set”). For the meaning *‘asah* may convey see Psalm 104:19 (“made” or “appointed”), Exodus 25:31 (“make”), Job 14:5 (“appointed”), and 2 Chronicles 2:18 (“set” or “assigned”). For the meaning *nathan* may convey see Genesis 9:13 (“set”) and Exodus 18:25 (“made”). Both *‘asah* and *nathan* can refer to a status or function imposed on an object of previous existence, and neither of these verbs necessarily implies an appearance *ex nihilo*. Many Christians believe that other inhabited worlds were already in existence before Creation week (see Heb. 1:1, 2; 11:3, K.J.V.; also Job 2:1, 2). The existence of such worlds would imply that at least some of the stars of Genesis 1:16 were also in existence before Creation week. The possibility that our own star (the sun) may have been in existence before Day Four is a highly probable consequence.

I must emphasize that God was not dependent on nor obligated to preexistent material at any stage of His activities during Creation week. Over the total history of the universe all things, both visible and invisible, were created *ex nihilo* by Christ (Col. 1:16, 17; John 1:3). Furthermore, it is my opinion that during Creation week, at least on Days

Two, Three, Five, and Six, original matter was created in the newly formed atmosphere and organic life.

At the opposite extreme from the one who dismisses Genesis 1-11 as not presenting factual historical and cosmological data is the student who draws unwarranted scientific conclusions from the Biblical record. I would suggest that claiming more for the Creation account than Moses, or

the Holy Spirit, intended it to say may be as detrimental, at least in some circumstances, as rejecting its testimony. 

<sup>1</sup> Francis A. Shaeffer, *No Final Conflict* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1975), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 19:4, 5; 24:37-39; Mark 10:6; Luke 3:38; 17:26, 27; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 6:16; 11:8, 9, 12; 15:21, 22, 45; 2 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:31; 1 Tim. 2:13, 14; Heb. 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:4-6; 1 John 3:12; Jude 11, 14; Rev. 14:7.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1948), vol. 4,

p. 499. See also by the same author, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Assn., 1923), p. 187.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1945), vol. 3, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1958), p. 112.

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1944), p. 136.

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## Loma Linda University faculty presents creationist view

LOMA LINDA, Calif.—A difference of opinion exists among some members of the scientific community over such issues as the age of the earth and whether or not man evolved from a lower form of life.

Interest in this area has been particularly great in the Santa Clara Valley area of California. Public-school leaders there have debated at length the issue of presenting the Creation theory in the classroom along with the theory of evolution.

Three faculty members from Seventh-day Adventist owned and operated Loma Linda University were invited last month to teach a four-week course entitled "Evolution or Creation? A Look at the Evidence" at West Valley College, of Saratoga, and De Anza College, of Cupertino.

During the four extended meetings at each institution, various issues of the controversy were discussed. First, Greig Rose, of West Valley College, and Leonard Brand, Ph.D., chairman of the Department of Biology at Loma Linda University, discussed the biological aspects. The relation of fossils to questions of origins and the Flood of Genesis was discussed by Ariel Roth, Ph.D., professor of biology at LLU and member of the Geoscience Research Institute. Monte Andress, assistant professor of anthropology at LLU, discussed the question of the origin of

man, while Dr. Roth concluded the series with a study of various time factors as they relate to the age of the earth.

Attendance at the classes was very good, according to Dr. Roth. "Toward the end of the presentations we discovered that a number of students and community members who formerly denounced the Creation theory had changed their minds in support of it," he says.

Of concern to public-school administrators and faculty is the possibility that teaching Creation in the classroom constitutes establishing a religion, which is forbidden by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. According to Dr. Roth, the LLU team tried to show that studying about Creation need not establish a religion, but that a creationist viewpoint can be introduced through scientific evidence.

Some recent studies make it appear that a majority of the citizenry prefer that both Creation and evolution be taught in the public schools. In Del Norte County, California, a public survey of 1,518 individuals indicated that 89 percent want Creation taught in the public school, and 58 percent want evolution taught. Of this same group, 34 percent do not want evolution taught and 8 percent do not want Creation taught.

A 1974 survey of 1,995 residents of the Cupertino Union School

District, the largest elementary school district in California, indicates that 84.3 percent thought that both evolution and Creation theory should be taught. When the respondents were asked about their personal convictions, 23.3 percent said they believed in evolution, 44.3 percent said they believed in Creation, and 32.4 percent were unconvinced either way.

A recent random telephone survey of 2,500 individuals, taken mainly in the Midwestern States, indicates that seven out of ten persons queried want both evolution and Creation taught in public schools. About half as many want only evolution taught as want only Creation taught.

"It should be noted that public-opinion polls can be deceiving and are often influenced by many unknown factors. Owing to lack of precise definition of terms, the results reflected above are probably not free of the influence of compromised views between Creation and evolution; however, the results are distinctive enough to carry some meaning," says Dr. Roth.

Loma Linda University has been actively involved in disseminating scientific evidence for the Creation concept. The university offers graduate degrees in earth history and biology, along with seminars designed to inform teachers about the evidence for Creation.

# BIBLICAL ARCHEOLOGY

## King Solomon's Royal Cities. Excavations at three ancient sites convincingly corroborate an Old Testament text.

by Larry G. Herr

First Kings 9:15 (R.S.V.) reads, "And this is the account of the forced labor which King Solomon levied to build the house of the Lord and his own house and the Millo and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer."

Admittedly little in this text would attract the theologian or the spiritual devotionalist, but for the archeologist and the Biblical historian it contains riches.

Evidently Solomon embarked on a large-scale construction plan that required forced labor. Such a situation bespeaks a master plan, organized

from a central bureau, and indicates that archeologists excavating these sites should find a similarity of architectural conception and construction.

Three of these sites, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer, all strategically located on main highways, have been excavated with results that have strikingly confirmed the Biblical record. Gezer was extensively excavated in the early twentieth century when the science of archeology was still young; at that time it was reported that very little of the Solomonic city had been found. Megiddo was dug during the 1930's by a well-financed team from Amer-

ica, which discovered a large Solomonic city with such public buildings as storehouses, and gubernatorial palaces. The city gates were also uncovered.

But the real story began with the excavations at Hazor undertaken by the Israelis, directed by a former military chief of staff, Yigael Yadin. Yadin's team found impressive remains of the city of Solomon mentioned in the Bible text, including a distinctive type of wall construction known as a casemate wall (two narrow, parallel walls interspersed with cross-walls). Pottery recovered from within these casemates testified that the construction was from Solomon's time. Archeologists found a large, distinctive gate with six guardrooms (three on either side) flanking the entrance into the city. This gate was virtually identical in dimensions and construction to the one found earlier at Megiddo.

Excitement ran through archeological circles when this discovery was announced, for it tended to confirm 1 Kings 9:15. But where was the gate at Gezer, the other city mentioned along with Hazor and Megiddo? Was the Biblical record to be only partially confirmed?

Yadin, the archeologist who explored Hazor, turned to "excavating in a book" with most interesting results. In published reports of the Gezer excavations he found plans describing a series of walls which he recognized as one side of a typical Solomonic gate. Yadin suggested that this structure should be dated to the time of Solomon (tenth century B.C.) and not to the second century B.C. Maccabean period, as the original excavators had done.

Fortunately, just at this time an American archeological group was reexamining Gezer, and volunteered to check the structure in the light of Yadin's suggestions. (Among this group was Orley Berg, an executive editor of MINISTRY.) When the digging was finally completed, a Solo-



PHOTO BY AUTHOR

Detail of the gate at Megiddo, showing the typical Solomonic construction technique.

monic gate, complete on both sides and identical in size and construction to the Hazor and Megiddo gates, had emerged from the debris. All three sites were thus found to have identical city gates during the time of Solomon!

But the skeptics pointed out that whereas Hazor and Gezer had remains of casemate walls the wall at Megiddo was of solid, thick construction, with periodic sections offset from each other.

Undaunted, Yadin began a small excavation at Megiddo near the gate and over the remains of the city wall. He believed that beneath the offset-inset wall, wrongly attributed by the Megiddo excavators to Solomon, a casemate wall would be found. At his earlier excavation of Hazor an offset-inset wall identical to the one at Megiddo had been found on top of the casemate wall of Solomon's time, and he was convinced the same would prove true at Megiddo. Sure enough, upon removing the stones of the upper offset-inset wall he uncovered a perfect casemate wall of practically identical size and construction as the ones at Hazor and Gezer.

Incidentally, Yadin's short dig at Megiddo indicated that the so-called "stables of Solomon" were not at all from the time of Solomon, but contemporary with the offset-inset wall probably from the time of Ahab, who, like Solomon, was a great dealer in horses and chariots. Scholars even debate the function of these buildings, for they could easily be storehouses, as well as stables.

One thing is certain, however: the construction of the walls of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer (along with their gates) very strongly reflect the genius of one architectural conception, thus harmonizing remarkably with 1 Kings 9:15. ■■

Larry G. Herr, Ph.D., is currently working with the Heshbon publication project at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, and is under appointment to teach at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary—Far East, at Philippine Union College, Manila, Philippines.

# MINISTER'S SEMINAR ON BIBLICAL ARCHEOLOGY

## For ministers of all faiths

Monday, October 30, 1978

Seventh-day Adventist Church Auditorium  
620 S. Sunrise Way, Palm Springs, California

## SPEAKERS AND TOPICS:

- ★ Siegfried H. Horn, Ph.D., professor emeritus of archeology, Andrews University, director of Heshbon Archeological Expedition, and noted author.  
"The Ebla Tablets of Tell Mardikh"
- ★ Kenneth H. Vine, Ph.D., professor of archeology, Loma Linda University, and participant in several excavations at Caesarea, from which he has just returned with the most up-to-date information.  
"Archeology and the New Testament"
- ★ Orley M. Berg, M.A., executive editor of MINISTRY, participant in Gezer excavations and numerous study tours of the Middle East, and longtime student of archeology.  
"Archeology and the Old Testament"
- ★ Raymond O. West, M.D., coordinator for family practice and chairman of the Department of Health Sciences, School of Health, Loma Linda University.  
"The Minister and His Health"

**For further information or reservations, write:** Seminar on Biblical Archeology, 9709 Magnolia Avenue, Riverside, California 92503, or phone John Rhodes (714) 689-1350.

The Biblical-archeology seminar is provided without charge as a continuing education feature. However, space is limited, so please make your reservations early. A complimentary meal will be provided (reservation required). The seminar begins promptly at 9:45 A.M. and closes at 4:30 P.M. Sponsored jointly by the Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and MINISTRY magazine.

**NOTE:** Orley Berg will present an illustrated lecture, "The Discovery of King Tut's Treasure," Sunday, October 29th, at 3:00 P.M., 5:00 P.M., and 8:00 P.M. at the Ramada Inn International Hotel, 1800 E. Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, California. Admission free.

# SHEPHERDESS

**“Not Cancer! Not Me!” A pastor’s wife learns that cancer is not the worst thing that can happen—if one faces it with God.**

*Dear Shepherdess: This month I want to pass on some news from the people at the Sunshine Biscuit Company. They write, “At Sunshine, we take pride in what we bake and how we bake it. We use the finest ingredients available. You know how light-textured and deliciously flaky vegetable shortening makes baked goods. You know how important vegetable shortening is to your family these days. That’s why we insist on using only 100 percent vegetable shortening in every cookie and cracker we bake.”*

*If you don’t bake your own, then use those products made with vegetable oils or shortening. We need to read labels to give our families the very best foods.*

*With sickness increasing in this world, our hearts and minds need to be fastened on Jesus, the Great Physician, who gives peace and comfort. I appreciate Vera Groomer’s faith and confidence as she writes of her hour of trial.*

*God bless us all with health, happiness, and trust in the One who “doeth all things well.” With love, Kay.*

## Hope for cancer patients

by Vera Groomer

I think sometimes it would have been easier if someone had been with me, maybe my husband or a friend—anybody—to share that first awful announcement, “You have cancer.” But there wasn’t anybody.

I was home alone.

The telephone rang.

I walked from the kitchen sink where I was preparing vegetables for dinner. It was a nice day; the sun was reflecting off the white snow in the yard. The chirp of a red cardinal reminded me that winters don’t last forever; brighter days were on the way. Cheerfully I answered the telephone; then suddenly I froze.

Dr. Dawson’s voice sounded



J. BYRON LOGAN

calm, as if he were about to tell me I had tonsillitis. But his words came out bluntly: “Yes, you have cancer. Please report to the hospital Thursday afternoon. I have scheduled you for surgery at seven o’clock Friday morning.”

The telephone clicked.

I placed the receiver back on the hook. The sky had turned dark. The red cardinal had flown off the tree limb. The vegetables in the sink had lost their appeal. I walked to the center of the room and realized that I was shaking. I wondered whether I should cry—but I was too shocked for that. I had known many people who had been told this same thing. Two close friends had gone to their final rest soon after they had heard those words.

For a long time I stood in the middle of the kitchen and stared. I was motionless except for the short breaths and fast-beating heart. Thoughts chased through my mind.

How shall I tell Clyde? Thirty-six years we had been together, working side by side. It would be so hard to part now. Our five girls, what would they do? The youngest, at 13, needed me so much. How could I leave them?

After what seemed an eternity of trying to keep pace with such thoughts, I realized I hadn’t even thought of talking over the problem with God. I knelt where I was in the middle of the kitchen. I shut my eyes

and opened my mouth, but I didn’t say a word. What could I say? How could I expect God to spare my life and heal me when so many others wanted the same thing? Was I so different from them? Should I even ask God or plead with Him to heal me? For a long time I remained speechless on my knees. And then the words came—not from my lips, but from my heart. Suddenly I realized as never before that God loves me. And with that assurance I knew that I love God. I knew I could put my hand in His and say, “Thank You, God, for loving me.”

I opened my eyes. The vegetables were still waiting in the kitchen sink. I picked up the knife and hummed a song as I finished cleaning them.

When the girls arrived home from school and my husband from the office, those vegetables along with other food were ready. Why should I spoil a good meal and a pleasant evening revealing news that might upset them? There would be time enough, and now that I felt more than ever that God loved me, I knew His way would be best.

That night when my husband and I were alone in bed, I said as casually as possible, “I have to go to the hospital on Thursday to have surgery on Friday. I want you to promise me that whatever the doctor tells you, you will tell me the whole thing and not try to hold anything back. I’m not afraid. I love God and I know He loves me. He will do what is best.”

“Do you have cancer?” My husband’s voice was choked.

I answered, “Yes.”

He reached for my hand. For a long time we both were silent, each busy with his own thoughts.

Many times in the years he had served as a minister I had accompanied him to the hospital or to sickbeds at home; many times I had heard his strong voice ask God to send help to the suffering ones. Always his voice had been full of

faith and confidence as he had pointed the sick to the One who is always waiting to help.

Where was that strong voice tonight? Where was that faith and confidence he had so willingly shared with others?

Wasn't God just as interested, just as strong, now? Why should it be any different when the pain touched the one who was part of you? And then the same love and assurance that had come to me in the middle of the kitchen came again as we lay quietly in our bed. Clyde said, "Let's pray."

Hesitatingly, choked with emotion, but full of faith, he prayed, thanking our Father for His love and leaving all things in His hands. We slept.

The word spread, it seemed, by the wind. Phone calls came from loved ones and friends from coast to coast, telling how saddened they were by the news. We were delighted that they cared so much. Many spoke with emotion in their voices that told of tears in their eyes. We were touched. But how much we wanted to tell them that God loved us; He was in control.

There were times, like the time I left for the hospital, when I wondered, Would it be long? When I returned home, would I know it would be only for a short time? Would I always have to spend the rest of my life worrying over every new pain? I told Clyde good night at the hospital, knowing I would be too medicated the next morning to have a clear mind; but before that good-night kiss, his strong voice prayed again with me, full of trust and confidence in our heavenly Father's love.

When the nurse came with my medication I whispered softly, "The Lord is my shepherd."

Through the painful days and nights that followed, only half alert as a result of medication, I repeated again and again, "The Lord is my shepherd." Although I lay on white sheets, with a glass of water and a drinking straw beside me and a uniformed nurse hovering near, I visu-

alized a green pasture, a stream of water, and a loving Shepherd. They brought the quiet assurance that "the Lord is my shepherd." His love was my confidence and strength.

I knew that medical science had done all it could for me, but that malignant cells might yet grow again.

I couldn't know. I couldn't again be sure of life. But could anybody? Because a person has never had cancer or any other possibly fatal disease, does that give him an edge on life? Couldn't he in some way lose his life even faster than I might—perhaps in an automobile accident or with a heart attack?

I could pray now as never before, "Thank You, God, for being my shepherd. I don't know how many stormy paths lie ahead. I don't know the hills I must climb or how thirsty I may become. But I do know You are my shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

*As a footnote to this article Vera Groomer writes:*

*"Three beautiful years have been given me since my surgery for cancer. Each time I go for my physical check-up I trust that my Good Shepherd is still leading, and there has been no sign that cancer has returned as yet. My life is a busy one. Besides caring for my home and family, I work full time and also help my husband in his work. This is demanding physically. But what a joy each day to say, 'Lord, lead me today. Give me strength for today's task.'*

*"Tomorrow is uncertain. No promise has been given to any of us, well or ill, that there will be a tomorrow. But God's strong arm has been promised for every need. All we need to do is take hold and say, 'Thank You, heavenly Father.'"* ❧

Vera Groomer is manager of the Michigan Conference Sabbath School Evangelism Center and lives with her minister husband in Lansing, Michigan.

This is a condensation of an article that appeared in the *Signs of the Times*, May, 1978. Used by permission.

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## Prayers from the parsonage

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by Cherry B. Habenicht

Nothing about this call appeals to her. She doesn't want to move two thousand miles from her grown children and relatives, and there seems to be no opportunity in this new area for her own training to be effectively used.

With a heavy heart she packs, sells furniture, and distributes her plants. It is a test of devotion and love. For her husband the move is right, but the fact that everyone expects her to be rejoicing at his good fortune only increases her discouragement.

"I believe God led us here and gave me the chance to prepare for my job. What of my contacts and my influence? Aren't my interests and goals important?" she asked me, her voice unsteady.

Those questions echoed my own conflicting thoughts as I've faced some decisions. You remember, Lord, my bitter disappointment when, diploma in hand and eager to teach, I was told it would be impossible to hold a regular job during Dick's first year as a ministerial intern. Yet that year of freedom from the pressures of school gave me new experiences in service. I waited for the time we'd be settled.

Our first assignment seemed the ultimate frustration of my teaching dreams. Not even the county high schools offered courses in my major field. But in that isolated rural area You helped me find a better job than I could have imagined.

I shared these proofs of Your leading with Claire, but she must learn her own lessons. Give her confidence that You will not let her talents be neglected. Reassure her that You direct her paths, too, that her satisfaction and self-worth are as relevant to You as are her husband's. May this move hold something so good that Claire will discover new dimensions of faith.

# WIDENING OUR WORD POWER

## Sacred Words

### The gates of hell shall not prevail

"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Jesus asked His disciples one day at Caesarea Philippi. Peter, speaking for the group, replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:13, 16). Jesus assured them that the time would come when together with them, a whole body of believers, an *ekklēsia*, or church, would be solidly established.

He continued with a remarkable promise about this church; He said "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (verse 18). Some commentators take this to mean the powers of Satan would not be able to overwhelm the church. The Greek word *ischuō* means to be strong or have power; *katischuō*, the word translated "prevail" in Matthew 16:18, means "to be superior in strength" or "to overcome."

It is possible, however, that Jesus had another idea in mind when He spoke of "the gates of hell," *pulai hadou*. The Greek word for hell, *hadēs*, means the abode of the dead, or the grave. The Jews undoubtedly understood it to mean the same as *she'ol*, their word for the grave. The "gates" of death call to mind the many ancient walled cities with their massive gates. These crucial openings were heavily fortified with locks and bars and surrounding earthworks so that residents who heard of an impending invasion could swing the great gates shut and fasten them tight.

So with the "kingdom" of death. Throughout history death has brought an inexorable end to everyone's ambitions; rich and poor alike sooner or later topple

into the grave. None can find rescue from it; the gates have opened only to receive, never to release.

Could it be that Jesus was saying that these unyielding gates *would* submit to Him, and through Him they would also yield to His church? He raised Lazarus from his grave, then Himself was laid in a tomb over a weekend that brought anguish to His followers. He recounted His experience later to John on Patmos: "Fear not; I am . . . he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:17, 18). Christ had come out of the tomb triumphant, holding the keys to the gates of death. None who watched Him ascend to heaven could doubt that He had the power to burst the grave. He promised to use that power someday to rescue His people.

In His behalf the church invites sinners to be reconciled to God and share in that rescue. He extends His invitation through the body of His believers; those who accept become part of the *ekklēsia* and receive a foretaste of His life eternal. Today a portion of the church, the past generations, lies behind the *pulai hadēs*. But the gates will open for them when Christ comes with the trumpet of the archangel. The risen ones will then rejoice. In the words of the apostle Paul: "O death, where is thy sting: O grave [*hadēs*], where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:55-57).

## Secular Words

### Watch your words

Every now and then I read of someone trying to "illicit" a response. Writers

and speakers often mistake the word *illicit* for the word *elicit*. English has many such pairs of words, called homonyms, which look or sound almost alike.

Compounding the confusion are words such as *bat*, which has more than one meaning: a club used in baseball, and a furry flying creature. Actually this word represents the convergence of words from two different languages—one a Celtic word related to the Gaulish term for gladiator, and the other a Scandinavian word for a night-flying creature, *natbakken*.

Other sets of words are confusing, however, because of slight differences in either their spelling or their pronunciation, or both. Thus *disparate* is often confused with *desperate*, *ingenious* with *ingenuous*, and *principle* with *principal*.

How can one be sure of getting the right word? One way is to analyze the segments, or roots, of a word with the aid of a good dictionary. Thus *desperate* is derived from the same root as *despair*, while *disparate* comes from the Latin *dis*, "apart," and *parare*, "to prepare." *Elicit* comes from the prefix *e*, meaning "out," and *lacere*, "to allure," while *illicit* is made from the Latin prefix *il*, meaning "not," and *licitus*, "lawful." Some words, such as *principle* and *principal*, which come from the same Latin root, may simply have to be memorized.

Attention to the meanings of prefixes will enable one to avoid redundant forms such as "irregardless" (*regardless* is sufficient) and "inflammable" (instead of merely *flammable*).

The words in the following list include pairs that are occasionally confused, as well as terms drawn from a theological dictionary and articles in this

issue of **MINISTRY**. Test your knowledge of each one by selecting the best definition or synonym from the choices offered.

1. **alienation:** (a) immigration; (b) peculiarity; (c) disgust; (d) estrangement.

2. **discreet:** (a) secretive; (b) prudent, especially in speech; (c) individually distinct; (d) confused.

3. **discrete:** (a) individually distinct; (b) prudent, especially in speech; (c) confused; (d) secretive.

4. **ex nihilo:** (a) without the use of preexistent matter; (b) in seven days; (c) unaided; (d) all-powerful.

5. **immanent:** (a) demanding; (b) paralyzed; (c) remaining or operating within a domain of reality; (d) ready to take place.

6. **imminent:** (a) ready to take place; (b) demanding; (c) paralyzed; (d) remaining or operating within a domain of reality.

7. **normative:** (a) large; (b) effective; (c) setting forth standards of behavior; (d) approved.

8. **Platonism:** (a) view of actual things as but copies of transcendent ideas; (b) denial of bodily pleasures; (c) free love; (d) pursuit of pleasure as the greatest good.

9. **proscribe:** (a) to set down as a rule; (b) a short paragraph added to a letter; (c) to forbid; (d) to accept or agree.

10. **prescribe:** (a) to forbid; (b) to set down as a rule; (c) to accept or agree; (d) a short paragraph added to a letter.

11. **tenant:** (a) temporary shelter; (b) doctrine; (c) tithe; (d) renter.

12. **tenet:** (a) renter; (b) tithe; (c) doctrine; (d) temporary shelter.

13. **vacillate:** (a) empty; (b) waver; (c) faint; (d) inoculate.

For correct answers, turn to page 32.

# SHOP TALK

## Science of soul-winning workshop

The science involved in saving physical bodies is well recognized. Is there also a science of soul winning? Are they related?

October 18-22, 1978, at Loma Linda University, the Public Health Association of Seventh-day Adventists will probe scientific disciplines for a methodology of analyzing and cultivating spiritual interests.

The following papers will be presented: "The Soul-winning Clinician," Jack Provonsha, M.D., Ph.D.; "E. G. White's Formula," Graham Maxwell, Ph.D.; "Diagnosing Spiritual Health," Wilber Alexander, Ph.D.; "Establishing Spiritual Values," Joyce Hopp, Ph.D.; "Epidemiological Model for Soul Winning," Jan Kuzma, Ph.D., and Roland Phillips, M.D., Ph.D.; "Nutrition and Souls," Rose Ludlow, R.D.; "It's Working," Mark Findley; "Christ's Prescription," Lewis Venden, Ph.D.; and "Projections," Robert Spangler.

In addition, leading health educators and health evangelists from across the country will share new and creative techniques and report on experiments conducted during the past year.

This is the first in a series of workshops that will study ways to help health professionals meet the spiritual, as well as the physical, needs of their contacts.

Registration fee for the workshop is \$20.00. You may receive more information or preregister by writing: Stoy Proctor, 1st V.P. PHASDA, Director, Health Services, Pacific Union Conference, P.O. Box 5005, Westlake Village, California 91359.

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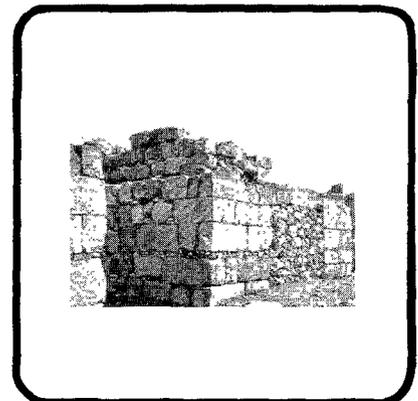
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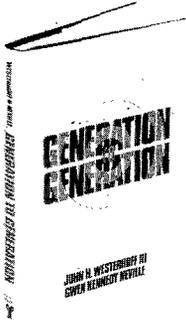
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# RECOMMENDED READING



**GENERATION TO GENERATION, CONVERSATIONS ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND CULTURE, John H. Westerhoff III and Gwen Kennedy Neville, United Church Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1974, \$5.95.**

For any church, the basic task of religious education is

## Answers to Widening Our Word Power (see page 30).

1. **alieniation:** (d) estrangement. From the Latin *alius*, "other."
2. **discreet:** (b) prudent. From an old French word, taken from the Latin *discernere*, "to separate, distinguish between."
3. **discrete:** (a) individually distinct. From an old English word, taken from the same Latin word as *discreet*.
4. **ex nihilo:** (a) without the use of preexistent matter. From the Latin for "out of nothing."
5. **immanent:** (c) remaining or operating within a domain of reality. From the Latin *in*, "in," and *manere*, "to remain."
6. **imminent:** (a) ready to take place. From the Latin *imminere*, "to project over" or "threaten."
7. **normative:** (c) setting forth standards of behavior, or norms.
8. **Platonism:** (a) view of actual things as but copies of transcendent ideas. From Plato (427-347 B.C.).
9. **proscribe:** (c) to forbid. From the Latin *pro*, "before," and *scribere*, "to write."
10. **prescribe:** (b) to set down as a rule. From the Latin *prae*, "before," and *scribere*, "to write."
11. **tenant:** (d) renter. From an old French word, a participial form of the Latin verb *tenere*, "to hold."
12. **tenet:** (c) doctrine. From the Latin *tenere*, "to hold."
13. **vacillate:** (b) waver. From the Latin *vacillare*, "to sway to and fro," or "waver."

Scores: 13-12 Excellent  
11 Very good  
8-10 Good

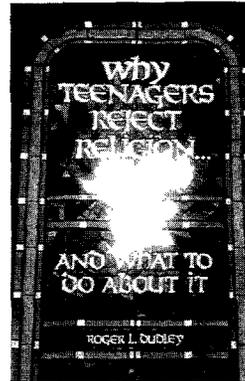
the transmission of its faith and life style from one generation to another. In *Generation to Generation* John Westerhoff and Gwen Neville discuss, in a series of essays, the union of culture and religious education, and the implications for the transmission of a spiritual heritage.

In its attempts to induct its youth into full church life, the church has placed most of its religious education efforts into formal schooling, failing to recognize the impact of the larger socialization process. Profound possibilities for a new approach to religious education emerge when we broaden our understanding from the traditional classroom-centered concept to include the wider expanse of "religious socialization"—the total process by which an individual is inducted into a particular community of faith, educated to its values and ideals, and led to internalize these values and ideals as his own.

Westerhoff and Neville urge the church to consciously mold the socialization process by developing within the church the same mechanisms for transmitting its values and life style that are common to all cultures; for example, cyclical ritual celebrations that grow out of and express the faith of the congregation.

The practical application of the insights of anthropology to the church make this book especially worthwhile to pastors, religious educators, and all those who are concerned to develop a truly Christian culture within our churches and to successfully pass our faith from one generation to the next.

Ed Dower



**WHY TEEN-AGERS REJECT RELIGION AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT, Roger L. Dudley, Review and Herald Publishing Assn., Washington, D.C. 20012, 1977, 160 pages, \$4.50.**

Adventist young people are slipping out the back door of the church in alarming numbers. Why does a child from a Christian home turn his back on the religion of his parents, and forsake a relationship with Jesus Christ as soon as he comes of age? What part do parents and teachers play in the tragedy? Can they do anything constructive to change this trend of religious alienation?

Dr. Dudley has done a scientific and detailed study of the thinking and attitudes of Adventist youth of academy age. His findings are startling, but not devastating, rather offering a broad area of hope in which correction and healing of religious alienation are highly possible. Nor is the reader left to grope blindly for means whereby he may begin the process. From his study, based on twenty years' experience as a successful youth worker, the author presents definite, logical steps that can, and must, be taken by the concerned adult.

In reading this book, one finds himself better able to view the issues from the perspective of the

inexperienced youth. Such things as dress and hair length, which seem unimportant to the youth as far as his eternal destiny is concerned, become less significant also to the adult reader. What *does* loom as of momentous consequence is a correct perception of the real religion of Jesus Christ. For the young, the religion of Jesus is visualized in how they perceive the "important others" in their own existence—their parents, teachers, youth leaders, and ministers.

Without a doubt this book is one of the year's most important volumes. It should be read, carefully, and its principles applied, by every person concerned with the high attrition rate among the youth of our church.

Bobbie Jane Van Dolson

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