

MINISTRY

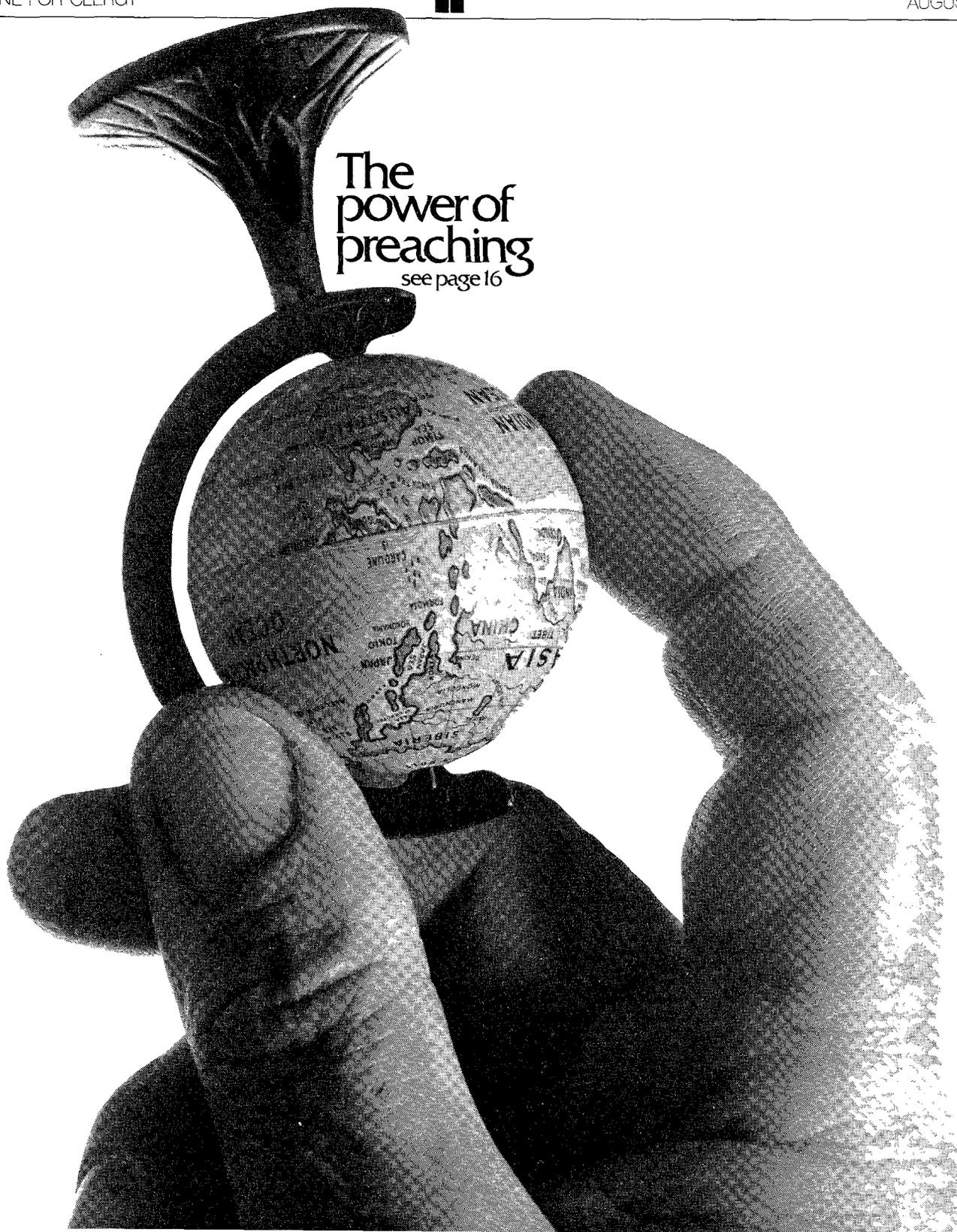
The third angel's
message in Verity

MAGAZINE FOR CLERGY



AUGUST 1980

The
power of
preaching
see page 16



LETTERS

More on "Open Letter"

MINISTRY always makes its way tardily to the British Isles, so it was not until yesterday that I read your "Open Letter" to our General Conference president in the December issue. I bless you for echoing not only my personal feelings but also those of many others, both ministers and members. One can only hope and continue to pray that the renewal and refreshing we so earnestly seek will come to the church quickly and that your letter will hasten the glad day. The most galling of all frustrations is that the spiritual desolation and evangelistic inertia that afflicts us are avoidable and self-inflicted. Before the church can ask God to do for it that which it cannot do for itself, it must first do that which it can do and which God, therefore, will not do for it. We cannot expect God to do for us that which He has made us responsible for doing and has equipped us to do.

I hope your appeal will not fall on deaf ears, but with God's blessing will lead us in penitence and repentance to the cross, the place of renewal and revival. Then we will finish the work, and not die, but bless the Lord and adore Him at His glorious appearing!

Patrick Boyle
Bromley, England

Your "Open Letter" published in December, 1979, has just arrived here in Australia. It translated perfectly the sentiments of my feelings. May the Holy Spirit impress and stimulate all of us to act accordingly.

J. T. Knopper
Wahroonga, Australia

A question of loyalty

I feel compelled to take exception to one of the items in the World View section of the March issue, which, in discussing Theologian Hans Kueng's difficulties with his church, indicates that "it would seem the honorable thing for Mr. Kueng to do would be to (1) cease his attacks on Roman Catholic doctrine or (2) leave the church voluntarily."

These would certainly be the convenient alternatives from the point of view of the hierarchy, but I question whether they are, in fact, the "honorable" thing to do. If Dr. Kueng's greatest responsibility is to the hierarchy, and if his greatest moral duty is to obey, then the proposed "shape up or ship out" alternative might make sense. If, however, Dr. Kueng's greatest responsibilities are to the whole church, to the truth,

and to God, and if his greatest duty is to maintain his witness in the face of opposition, then he should stay in the church and speak up for what he understands to be true. Dr. Kueng seems to have this latter understanding of his obligations, and while I cannot agree with many of his theological viewpoints, I must applaud his moral integrity.

Donn W. Leatherman
Ville St. Laurent, Quebec

We would agree that a person's primary responsibility is to truth and to his God, not to an organized church. However, if that person's commitment to "truth" (as he or she sees it) leads to a position totally unacceptable to the organized church of which he or she is a part, and if no agreement can be reached regarding that "truth," it hardly seems the honorable course for that individual to continue to express his views as an alternative position within the organization that has repudiated them. Intellectual integrity would seem to dictate that he candidly take his stand where his "truth" has led him.—The Editors.

Since 1927

I want to express my appreciation for MINISTRY. I read its forerunner (a little tract) in 1927 while I was traveling by mule cart in old Rhodesia. The December, 1979, issue was especially good. I want to say thank you to Roland Hegstad for his article "Down the Road to a Christian Republic." I read and reread it. It was inspiring, and how my confidence was strengthened anew in the prophetic word. "Prophetic Insight and the Pope's Visit," compiled by A. Leroy Moore, was equally good. Please let these brethren know that down in South Africa is an elderly man who reads and appreciates their articles tremendously.

J. Van Der Merwe
Heidelberg, South Africa

Moving costs astronomical

Pardon me for dipping back into history. I refer to the January, 1980, MINISTRY and Arnold Kurtz's article "Short-term Pastorates." I highly approve of his concept and conclusions. He is on the right track. My question is: Who of us as church leaders has the courage to take action?

Another aspect he touches on provides an interesting challenge—the costs of moving, not only to the worker but to the conference, as well. Our annual moving bill in North America must be horrendously astronomical. Just think of

the money that could be used for more productive purposes if much of this unnecessary and even detrimental moving were eliminated!

G. M. Schram
Keene, Texas

Published prayers?

I enjoy reading the "Prayers From the Parsonage" every month. I can identify with the author's joys, sorrows, frustrations, and challenges in the ministry. The fact that she takes all these things to the Lord is a great encouragement to me.

I'm wondering whether her collection of prayers is published in a single volume or whether there are any plans to do so? It would be a great morale booster to have these prayers in my library in a single volume to read from time to time. Such a book would also make a wonderful gift.

Cherylin Peach
Chula Vista, California

This suggestion has given us an idea, but we would like to know how other readers feel. If you would be interested in having these inspirational prayers collected and published in a single volume, let us know.—The Editors.

Share responsibility

I agree that our people need to realize the closeness of Christ's return, but it seems to me that the article "A Surprise or a Secret?" (January, 1980) put a great deal of responsibility for helping them achieve this experience upon ministers and not enough on other spiritual leaders. Teachers, parents, and church members all share a combined responsibility with the minister for the spiritual well-being of the church. All should enhance the ministry of the others, so that they can help to finish the work quickly.

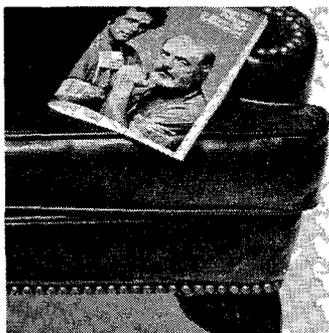
Robin Fix
Collegedale, Tennessee

Good sense

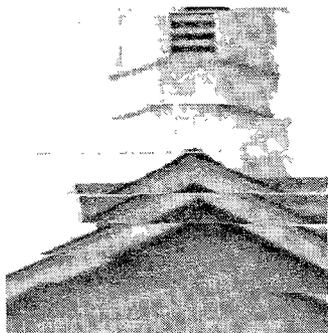
Many thanks for the update and eminently good sense of Rex Edwards' "Every Member a Minister?" (February, 1980). Its appearance was timely and its counsel wise, especially in light of all the furor surrounding the discussions of the "electronic church." The article is solid, well reasoned, and well done.

Donald F. Hetzler
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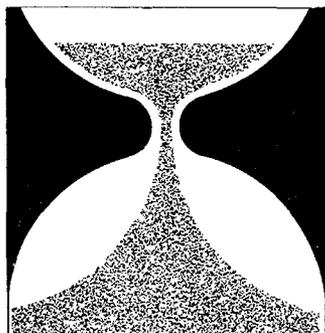
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MINISTRY (ISSN 0026-5314), the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association © 1980 is printed monthly by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, 6856 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012. U.S.A. Subscription price, US\$12.50 a year; single-copy price, US\$1.25. Price may vary where national currencies are different. For each subscription going to a foreign country or Canada, add US\$1.75 postage. MINISTRY is a member of the Associated Church Press and is indexed in the *Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index*. Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C. Editorial office: 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcomed and will be returned only if accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. Vol. 53, No. 8.

The third angel's message in verity

If the third angel's message concerning the law of God and the true Sabbath is to be successful and triumph it must be bathed in the grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ must be the very heart of the message.

by Eric C. Webster

Some ninety years ago Ellen White wrote: "Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity.'"—*Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890. Apparently, justification by faith is not a preamble to the third angel's message; it is not introductory or preparatory; it is the very heart and core of the message.

The initial reaction might be that Ellen White's words would have been easier to understand if she had spoken of sanctification, or character development, or perfection in connection with the third angel's message. Would it not be more logical to confine justification by faith to the first angel's message? Would it not fit in well with the "everlasting gospel" of the first angel? Could it not be regarded as an important, necessary initial step in Christian life? But by the time we reach the third angel's message, the capstone of God's final message to mankind, should we not have eclipsed justification by faith and passed on to something higher?

Furthermore, the very nature of the third angel's message seems to demand something different. It deals with the beast power, its image, and mark. This message emphasizes the importance of obedience to God; the Sabbath becomes a burning issue. Does not the Sabbath fit in well with sanctification, as the very sign of the God who sanctifies? In view of the third angel's call to loyalty to

God's Sabbath, how can justification by faith be the third angel's message in verity?

Many scholars believe that the heart of Paul's epistle to the Romans lies in chapter 3:24-28. Briefly summarized, these verses proclaim that man has sinned and comes short of God's glory. Jesus Christ comes and through His death takes all the penalty and punishment for sin upon Himself. Now God is just when He declares that the repentant sinner is righteous, not on the basis of his own record, but on the basis of his faith in the perfect record of Another. This experience is grace and mercy at its highest. Justification by faith provides that at any stage in the life the entire past is covered by Another's perfect life and God looks at the sinner as if he has never sinned. How wonderful and marvelous is the grace of God!

If substitution is indeed the central truth of justification, Ellen White's statement can mean that those who accept the third angel's message will always need the substitution of Christ's righteous life to make them acceptable to God. No matter how glorious our obedience and our commandment keeping, as saved sinners we will never reach a point in this life where we can stand before God without the merits of a Saviour.

Running like a scarlet thread through both the Old and New Testaments is the glorious truth of salvation by substitution. We see it in the lamb offered by Abel, versus the product of Cain's own hands. It is pictured in the ram, caught in the thicket, that took the place of Isaac upon the sacrificial altar. Dramatically this truth was splashed on the doorposts of Israel, providing salvation at midnight

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for those homes that displayed the blood. Graphically, substitutionary salvation was etched in the sands of the desert as serpent-stung sinners turned their eyes in simple faith to the brazen serpent on the pole. Climaxing the Old Testament, Isaiah 53 stands out like a snow-capped Alpine range, shedding its gospel radiance across all time.

A classic example of salvation by substitution is found in the example of the repentant thief on the cross. In spite of any allowances that we might try to make for the man in his experience prior to the cross, or any compensation we might try to give for his few minutes of belief on the cross, we must realize that this man in his own character stood naked and unworthy of heaven. He will be allowed into heaven not on his own record, but because he relied implicitly on Another's perfect record.

If justification by faith is the third angel's message in verity, it must mean that those who are teaching and living the truths of the third angel must still rely on the merit of Jesus Christ in order to stand uncondemned before the throne of God.

The Sabbath a sign of justification by faith

The Sabbath truth is an integral part of the third angel's message. As a sign of loyalty to the Creator of heaven and earth, it is to be restored to its rightful place in Heaven's final message to men.

We often look upon the Sabbath as a sign of sanctification, and it assuredly is this. (See Eze. 20:12, 20.) But the Sabbath is also a sign that we have entered into God's rest, and have ceased to rely upon our own works for salvation. (See Heb. 4:1-10.) While it is possible to make the Sabbath a badge of legalism, it can also become a beautiful sign that we are resting with Christ in His finished work. Having accomplished our salvation on the cross, Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father, where "He reverently presents at the mercy-seat His finished redemption for His people."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Oct. 17, 1893.

Could such a Sabbath experience be involved in the prediction that the Sabbath will be preached "more fully" (*Early Writings*, p. 33)? To preach Christ and His righteousness in the Sabbath would certainly draw men and women to Him. To show that the Sabbath points to the merits of Christ and His righteousness instead of to our own would be uplifting the Saviour before men. If jus-

tification by faith is the third angel's message in verity, then the glorious Sabbath truth must have a vital link with its heart and essence.

Salvation is all of grace

The great truth of justification by faith is constantly to remind us that our salvation will ever be all of grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). Ellen White agrees: "How inappropriate it is to condemn others, when every soul is to be saved, not on his own merits, but by the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour! We are all erring, finite creatures, accountable to God for our words, works, and influence."—*Review and Herald*, Oct. 24, 1893.

The Biblical parable of the laborers in the vineyard (see Matt. 20:1-16) helps us to realize that the reward is based not on man's works, but on the kindness of the landlord. "By the use of this parable He [Christ] teaches them that the reward is not of works, lest any man should boast, but it is all of grace."—*Ibid.*, July 10, 1894.

Even the judgment according to works is to be understood in the setting of the marvelous grace of God and the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Although we have no merit in ourselves, in the great goodness and love of God we are rewarded as if the merit were our own. When we have done all the good we can possibly do, we are still unprofitable servants. We have done only what was our duty. What we have accomplished has been wrought solely through the grace of Christ, and no reward is due to us from God on the ground of our merit. But through the merit of our Saviour, every promise that God has made will be fulfilled, and every man will be rewarded according to his deeds."—*Ibid.*, June 27, 1893.

Justification by faith is the great truth that is constantly to remind every Christian that his salvation will ever be on the basis of grace alone.

Justification by faith an abiding experience

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). This blessed state of justification does not simply last for a short time at the moment of conversion. The one justified is accepted in the Beloved on the merits of Christ, and the process of sanctification parallels

justification rather than supersedes it. Christ is our justification and our sanctification; we need Him constantly. When as sinful, erring human beings we fail and make mistakes, we do not automatically lose our state of justification. If we had no sin and were perfect we would not require justification by faith. As long as we have a trusting faith in Christ—a faith that accepts Christ's pardon for sin while refusing to use it as an excuse or cloak for sin—our justification remains. Even when we fail miserably we can come to the cross in deep repentance and find anew the wonders of the merits of Christ and the glories of justification. At every moment we have a past and at every moment of our lives we will need the imputed righteousness of Christ.

The abiding experience of justification by faith will be needed by God's people even in the judgment when their names come up for review. After describing the experience of Joshua and the high priest, Ellen White discusses Christ's work for His people in the heavenly sanctuary: "Through His *imputed* righteousness, they are accepted of God, as those who are manifesting to the world that they acknowledge allegiance to God, keeping all His commandments."—*Ibid.*, Aug. 22, 1893. (Italics supplied.)

Here are God's people keeping His commandments in a rebellious world, bravely upholding the covenant of God, and yet finding their eternal security and salvation in the imputed righteousness of Christ through the merits of His precious blood. What a beautiful illustration of the truth that justification by faith is the third angel's message in verity!

Pursuing the illustration of Joshua and the high priest and applying it to the judgment, Ellen White wrote: "In his sin-stained garments, confessing his guilt, he [Joshua] stands before God. But Jesus our Advocate presents an effectual plea in behalf of all who by repentance and faith have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. He pleads their cause and vanquishes their accuser by the mighty arguments of Calvary. . . . We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 471, 472.

Why does Christ not silence the accuser in the judgment by the beautiful exhibition of the lives of God's commandment-keeping people? Why does He not say to Satan, "Look at My peo-

ple. Behold their faultless lives"? No, Christ uses a more mighty argument—the argument of Calvary, the argument of a righteousness outside of man, the merits of His own spotless life.

Justification by faith produces the fruit of obedience

It has been aptly stated that man is justified by faith alone, but the faith that justifies is never alone. As the third angel's message in verity, justification by faith clearly produces the fruit of sanctification and obedience evidenced by the attitude of God's people toward the beast, his image, and mark (see Rev. 14:9-12).

True faith works by love, and faith without corresponding works is dead. (See Gal. 5:6; James 2:20.) Where there is no fruitage of love and obedience in the life one must question the reality of justification by faith. When the sinner understands and accepts the marvelous gift of God's righteousness there will be a corresponding experience of regeneration and growth in sanctification. In the new covenant relationship God's law is written in the heart, and the fruitage of a life in harmony with God will be seen.

Of course, an outward display of works does not always testify to a genuine experience of justification by faith. There will be those who have done great things of whom Christ will say, "I never knew you" (Matt. 7:23). How much we need to be anchored to the cross of Calvary and to trust in the blood of the everlasting covenant so that our growth in obedience will be genuine and Christian!

Note how beautifully Ellen White expresses the relationship between faith and works: "In His divine arrangement, through His unmerited favor, the Lord has ordained that good works shall be rewarded. We are accepted through Christ's merit alone; and the acts of mercy, the deeds of charity, which we perform, are the fruits of faith; and they become a blessing to us; for men are to be rewarded according to their works. It is the fragrance of the merit of Christ that makes our good works acceptable to God, and it is grace that enables us to do the works for which He rewards us. Our works in and of themselves have no merit."—*Review and Herald*, Jan. 29, 1895.

How better could this relationship between justification by faith alone and its corresponding works of obedience be summed up than by these lines? "We do not earn salvation by our obedience; for

salvation is the free gift of God, to be received by faith. But obedience is the fruit of faith."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 61.

Justification by faith humbles man

The third angel's message brings out a people who refuse to worship the beast or his image, or to receive his mark. They are a commandment-keeping people who exhibit the patience of the saints and have the faith of Jesus. They are a people who have chosen allegiance to Jesus Christ instead of to self.

The very essence of sin in the beast power, or Babylon, is self-glorification and human achievement. This original sin of pride began in the heart of Lucifer (see Isa. 14:12-14) and became the dominant trait in earthly Babylon and in apostate religion. It is the principle that permeates all false religion, and also the last-day manifestation of the beast and his image. "The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 35.

This justification by faith is very intimately involved in the efforts of God's people to resist this beast-power principle. Justification by faith is the very antithesis of salvation by achievement and by human works. It is indeed the third angel's message in verity. "What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 456.

As we move into the final triumph of the third angel's message, the light of God will flood the earth. "As the increasing glory of Christ is revealed, the human agent will see no glory in himself; for the concealed deformity of his soul is laid bare, and self-esteem and self-glorifying are extinguished."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Sept. 18, 1894.

When we get around the great white throne we will see that the manifestation of our patience and our obedience to the law of God has been entirely the fruitage of Calvary. Listen to one who in vision has been in heaven: "I have, as it were, been brought before the great white throne, and have seen my life as it will there appear. I can find nothing of which to boast, no merit that I can plead. 'Unworthy, unworthy of the least of Thy favors, O my God,' is my cry. My only hope is in a crucified and risen Saviour. I claim the merits of the blood of Christ.

Jesus will save to the uttermost all who put their trust in Him."—*Ibid.*, Nov. 1, 1881.

Emphasis on Christ and not on man

Justification by faith declares that man is righteous on the basis of his faith in the perfect life and sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the most marvelous exchange in all the world. Christ takes our sins upon Himself and gives us His righteousness. (See 2 Cor. 5:21.) The whole thrust of justification by faith is thus Christocentric rather than anthropocentric. Christ is emphasized over against man. His perfect life, His matchless charms, His atoning death, and His merits are upheld; the accomplishment of man is submerged in His grace. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14).

If the third angel's message concerning the law of God and the true Sabbath is to be successful and triumph it must be bathed in the grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ must be the very heart of the message. Christ must be seen and experienced in the Sabbath. Christ and His righteousness must be made the great center of attraction, and this will result in loyalty to the moral law of God and to the true Sabbath as God's special sign. "Light is to shine forth from God's people in clear, distinct rays, bringing Jesus before the churches and before the world. . . . If through the grace of Christ His people will become new bottles, He will fill them with the new wine. God will give additional light, and old truths will be recovered, and replaced in the framework of truth; and wherever the laborers go, they will triumph. As Christ's ambassadors, they are to search the Scriptures, to seek for the truths that have been hidden beneath the rubbish of error. And every ray of light received is to be communicated to others. One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other—Christ our righteousness."—*Ibid.*, Dec. 23, 1890.

"The law of God is to be magnified; its claims must be presented in their true, sacred character, that the people may be brought to decide for or against the truth. Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness. The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 19.

Give thyself unto reading

If the apostle Paul considered books an important part of his life, should not we take advantage of this inexhaustible source of information and inspiration?

by Harold L. Calkins

He who does not read has little advantage over the man who cannot read. A prep-school teacher, with nearly fifty years' experience, when asked about the nature of his work, replied, "I am a traffic officer. It has been my business to arrange productive collisions—between boys and books and ideas." The pastor can do the same for himself and his people.

When the Ministerial Association recommended a reading plan for preachers in 1980 (see the December, 1979, issue), I was pleased to see the Bible at the top of the list. Our conference has recommended the adoption of that plan by every pastor, teacher, colporteur, and, in fact, every member of the church in our territory.

What are the values of Bible reading?

1. The Bible is the channel for the flow of God's Holy Spirit. "God's holy, educating Spirit is in His Word."—*My Life Today*, p. 44.

2. The Bible is the best means of learning to know Jesus and becoming like Him. It is the Scriptures that testify of Jesus, and by beholding Him in the inspired pages, we are changed into His likeness (see John 5:39; 2 Cor. 3:18).

3. We are born again by the Word of God (see 1 Peter 1:23). "The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. . . . If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. . . . The truths of the word of God meet man's great practical necessity—the conversion of the soul through faith."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 100.

4. The Bible is an antidote for sin. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11). John Bunyan said, "Either sin will keep you from this Book or this Book will keep you from sin."

5. The Bible is the greatest book in the world to stimulate intellectual acuity. "As a means of intellectual training, the Bible is more effective than any other book, or all other books combined."—*Education*, p. 124. "If God's word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose that is rarely seen in these times."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 90.

"John Ruskin's early schooling was from the Bible. His mother taught him the Scriptures daily, explaining all diffi-

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Are You Keeping Up?

A five-year reading plan was announced in the December, 1979, *MINISTRY*. The reading program for 1980 (given below) included the Bible and five other books. By now you should be at least halfway through the Bible and should have read at least two other books. Are you keeping up with the plan? If not, don't despair. There's still time, but you'll have to hurry!

1980 Reading Program

The Bible (N.I.V.)

Patriarchs and Prophets

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1

Evangelism

1 book on preaching and worship

1 book on church history

cult words to him, and requiring him to memorize 126 selections from the Scriptures, including the fifteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus; eight of the Psalms, including the ninetieth, the 119th and the 139th; and the Sermon on the Mount. The purity and perfection of his faultless diction were no doubt owing to this rigorous study of the Bible during his childhood days."—J. G. Lawson, *Greatest Thoughts About the Bible*, pp. 108, 109. Adventist pioneers J. N. Andrews and J. O. Corliss both said that if the New Testament were lost, they believed they could reproduce it from memory.

During World War I, Wilbur Chapman, a noted evangelist, toured America asking people to pledge to read a chapter of the Bible every day. Among many others, Woodrow Wilson and Henry Ford took that pledge and kept it. Ford had a Bible in every room in his house. (See William Stidger, *The Pew Preaches*, p. 39.)

Shouldn't we, as spiritual leaders of America today, urge our people to take a similar pledge and qualify for the blessing upon those who read and hear the words of the Book? Let's teach our children to read aloud from the Bible for family worship. We must teach the words of God "diligently to our children . . . when we rise up and when we sit down, when we come in and when we go out" (see Deut. 6:6, 7). In these days when Satan battles for the minds of men, preachers would do well to be reminded that slavery to drink or drugs, por-

(Continued on page 27.)

The misunderstanding of the church

The misunderstanding is serious and costly, but not incurable; the remedy may best be accomplished by identifying and then living out the possibilities of the church as a fellowship, a community of faith and the Spirit.

by Fritz Guy

The title of this article is deliberately equivocal. On the one hand, it could refer to a misunderstanding *about* the church, and there are certainly many mistaken ideas about the Christian church in general and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in particular. On the other hand, the title could refer to some misunderstanding that the church *itself* has. After all, it does not possess perfect wisdom. As a matter of fact, the title is intended to include both of these meanings—a misunderstanding about the church and a misunderstanding the church has. And yet the two are only one misunderstanding, for one of the characteristics of contemporary Adventism is the church's misunderstanding of itself.

Professionalization of the church

This misunderstanding stems from our tendency to think of the church primarily as an organization or institution, rather than as a fellowship or community of faith and the Spirit¹ (which is the predominant meaning of "church" in the New Testament).² Three phenomena confirm the reality of this misunderstanding. The first is the *professionalization* of the work of the church. Almost all important church activity is accomplished by people who are employed by the church—namely, the clergy.

Consider, for example, the decision-making processes of the church. How many members of the General Conference Committee, or the typical conference or union conference committees, are not clergy or other church employees?³ In a move to broaden representation at the 1980 General Conference session in Dallas, the 1978 Annual Council voted that "at least 10 percent of the regular delegates appointed from the division should be composed of women, youth, and church members not denominationally employed."⁴ That will be a noticeable improvement over the situation in Vienna in 1975, but nine-tenths of

the delegates will still be paid employees of the church.

Just as significant are the respective roles of pastor and people—not in theory, but in the actual life of Adventist congregations. The general impression is that the function of the members is to support their pastor in doing the work of the church. For example, when a minister conducts a series of evangelistic meetings, the members are needed—and expected—to support the endeavor by attending, bringing friends, helping with the ushering or music, or in other ways. And of course the people support the global work of the church by their tithes and offerings.

Although this picture seems natural enough because of its familiarity, it is not the proper function of the people, according to Scripture, to help the professional ministers do their work; it is rather the function of the ministers to help the people do *their* work. Because "the church is the people,"⁵ it simply will not do for them to abdicate their responsibility to a group of professionals whom they have hired to do their work for them.

Centralization and bureaucracy

A second phenomenon that discloses this basic misunderstanding of the church is its *centralization* and accompanying *bureaucratization*. Church administrators, ministers, and people everywhere in Adventism widely feel that for all practical purposes the General Conference speaking is really the church speaking. Thus when a need was felt a few years ago for a statement of the present Adventist understanding of Creation, it seemed only natural that the statement should be prepared by administrative officials in Takoma Park.

Likewise, it is a fact of organizational life that centralization is regularly accompanied by an increasing proportion of administrative and promotional personnel. In 1957, for every ten persons employed by the conferences of North America as pastors, evangelists, ministerial interns, and Bible instructors, there were another seven persons em-

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ployed in administration and promotion. In 1977 the ratio was ten to nine. Thus for every 100 persons employed directly by conferences and union conferences (not counting those employed by medical and educational institutions), fifty-two were "in the field" while forty-eight were doing administrative and promotional work. Of course, these figures are based on totals for *all* conference employees, which includes both ordained and nonordained personnel.⁶

Quantification of objectives

The third phenomenon that discloses a misunderstanding of the church is the *quantification* of its objectives—the attempt to define its success in statistical terms. Playing the numbers game is a very natural, almost inevitable, result of a genuine desire to know how well the church is doing in the work we believe God has commissioned it to do. Since we know that our own personal feelings and subjective impressions are not reliable enough to tell us what is really going on, we look for something "objective" that we can measure.

But in measuring so carefully whatever we can measure, we unconsciously slip into the faulty assumption that what we can measure most readily is what is most important. Thus it becomes easy for us to take as our goal the improvement of our statistics.

Ever so naturally and subtly we come to believe that bigger means better, and better means bigger. We take it for granted that God's blessing is evident in numerical growth, and that such growth is evidence of God's blessing. The more persons we baptize, the more churches we organize, the more tithes and offerings we receive, the more schools, hospitals, and publishing companies we operate, the more God is blessing our efforts and the more we are succeeding in doing His will. On the other hand, if the numbers are not increasing, it seems evident that we are *not* doing His will, and our feelings run from serious disappointment to renewed determination, or to profound despair.

To the extent that these situations prevail, and to the extent that we are comfortable with this condition, we have seriously misunderstood what the church really is.

The cost of misunderstanding

The first cost is the possibility that we may not be actually doing the work that God most wants us to do. In the light of eternal values, it may well be that quality

is more important than quantity, and the *kind* of people we are in the church may be more important than *how many* we are.

This indeed seems to have been Ellen White's view. In a familiar sentence that expresses what has come to be called "the harvest principle," the emphasis is obviously on quality rather than quantity: "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69. Nor do we need to wonder what is meant by "the character of Christ," for this is explicitly described in another impressive (but unfortunately less well known) sentence: "The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance."—*Ibid.*, p. 384. There is no way to quantify "the sunshine of heaven" or to include "the impulse to help and bless others" in a statistical report. Thus one of the dangers we confront in thinking of the church primarily as an organization is the possibility that we may not be putting first things first after all.

Another problem lies in the possibility that a church simply cannot succeed as an organization, but only as a fellowship. By its very nature, an organization is task-oriented and goal-directed; the task and the goal constitute the reason for its existence. But sometimes a "management by objectives" approach just will not work. Some things cannot be achieved in this way. Personal happiness, for example, is never a direct achievement but always a byproduct. Likewise, the effective communication of the gospel is not so much the result of determination, organization, preparation, and implementation as it is a gift of grace. For no matter how diligent our efforts may be, the Spirit, like the wind, blows where He wills.

A third problem is the possibility that a preoccupation with organizational (i.e., statistical) success is a kind of "righteousness by works." For the church, as for its people individually, there is spiritual danger in worrying too much about how well we are doing. The church can become obsessed with taking its own temperature when it should be looking primarily at God's love and secondarily at the tasks that are immediately before it, letting God take care of the results. We should concentrate on "doing God's work"—finding opportunities to make

God's love visible and effective, and His will clear and compelling, through appropriately gracious words and thoughtful actions—and leave "finishing the work" to Him.⁷

A fourth problem is almost too sensitive to mention—the possibility that we are dishonest with ourselves and each other, pretending to be doing better than we are, because we cannot face the idea that God is *not* blessing our efforts. Because of our identification of God's blessing with numerical growth, we have made it nearly impossible to admit—at conference workers' meetings, constituency meetings, or even in informal conversations—that our work has met with little if any success that can be statistically reported. So we often indulge in wishful thinking and "evangelistic arithmetic."

So long as we think of the church primarily as an organization, these dire possibilities remain before us. We always confront them, and we sometimes succumb to them.

In trying to understand our misunderstanding of the church, it is helpful to consider some factors that have contributed to its development. In the first place, it is easy to think of the church in organizational terms because it *is* an organization and cannot successfully avoid being one. Among our Adventist ancestors there was much discussion about this very question of organization. Some objected strenuously that organization characterized "Babylon," the church of antichrist. They warned that it would form "a throne upon which the man of sin might sit."⁸ In a sense they were right. Organization is always dangerous to, and often subversive of, religion. But the fact that organization is unavoidably hazardous does not mean that we can get along without it. Neither does it mean that organization is an unmixed blessing. It is, to be sure, a risk that we must run, but while we are running, we must not forget that it is indeed a risk. The risk comes from the fact that because we recognize that a church is *necessarily* an organization, we tend to suppose that it is *primarily* an organization.

Organization does for the church what a skeleton does for the human body. A person could not function without bones. But if he were told that what was really attractive about him was his skeleton, he would probably regard the comment as some sort of joke or he would feel insulted. In the same way, what is important about the church is not its organization but its fellowship, its

experience of community, and what happens among people who belong to each other in Christ.

There are two other prominent reasons for our tendency to think of the church in organizational terms. Adventism has always been characterized by a strong sense of mission and urgency, a conviction that there is a task to be done. And if there is a task to be done, the best way to go about doing it is to get something organized. By planning and working together, combining their resources and their talents, people can do whatever they need to do—including communicating the Advent message—more effectively than they can as separate individuals. Any religion needs some kind of organization in order to survive, and an activist religion (such as Adventism) feels this need for organization much more acutely than does a quietist religion.

In addition, modern Adventism emerged and developed first in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America, where progress has been the motto and production the goal. To get things organized, and to expect bigger and better things, is “the American way.” The notion that “small is beautiful” is a very recent suggestion, with little evidence that it is being taken seriously.⁹ For the Seventh-day Adventist Church to have been born in America may be seen as providential; but its long-lasting cultural consequences should also be noted.

So far there have been no “villains” in this narrative. Rather, the misunderstanding of the church seems to be the inevitable result of the very nature of things—the necessity of organization, the Adventist sense of mission, and the historical and cultural context. But to have the whole picture, we must incorporate another, more embarrassing element—the temptation to take the easy way. It is always easier to “let George do it,” especially if George has been educated for it and is paid to do it. In this case, of course, the idea is to “let Elder George do it.” And, unfortunately, it is often easier for Elder George to do it himself than to persuade some of the reluctant saints to do it (even if he really believes that they are the ones who ought to be doing it). So in congregation after congregation everyone is happily actualizing the church’s misunderstanding of itself. The minister gets paid to do the work of the church, the people faithfully provide the money and moral support, and the church functions as a more-or-less efficient organization. But

that is not what the church was intended to be, and it is not what the church must continue to be.

Remedying the misunderstanding

Remedying the misunderstanding can best be accomplished by identifying and then living out some of the possibilities of the church as a fellowship, a community of faith and the Spirit.

Such a fellowship and experience of community is not just a matter of spatial proximity—being in the same place at the same time, like the dollars in an offering plate. It is a matter of knowing that we belong to each other because we belong to the same Lord. In this “belongingness” there is a security, an “at-homeness.” The church is never regarded as “they”—the pastor, the elders, the church board, or the conference or General Conference officials. The church is always seen as “we.”

A church is a fellowship of love. In the early days of Christianity, when it was the kind of minority religion that Adventism is now, the pagans who knew Christians exclaimed to one another, “How they love one another; and how ready they are to die for each other.”¹⁰ This kind of self-giving love is, of course, precisely what Jesus had demonstrated and then formulated in His “new commandment”: “Even as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 13:34, R.S.V.). And He predicted that this would be their identification: “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (verse 35).

It happened in the early centuries of Christianity, and it can happen now in Adventism. An Adventist church can be a fellowship of persons who know the mutual fulfillment of self-giving love, a fellowship in which the estrangements and hostilities so typical of our world can be overcome, a fellowship so rewarding and valuable that no one would ever want to leave it. An Adventist church can be a fellowship in which every person is respected in his uniqueness—not only accepted, but valued for what he alone can contribute to the experience of his brothers and sisters in Christ—a fellowship in which the differences of race and culture and vocation and age and temperament and economic status are not occasions for separation or suspicion, but opportunities for enriching the quality of our life together.

A church is also a fellowship of ministry. A church that is a fellowship of love is not content to live for itself alone;

it insists on communicating love to others. If a church is genuinely a fellowship of love, it is also—and for that very reason—a fellowship of ministry.

One part of this ministry is service. A fellowship of love and ministry wants to give to the world more than it gets from the world. Another part of this ministry is proclamation and witness—talking enthusiastically and effectively about God’s love and forgiveness, and about His will and His claim. A fellowship of love and ministry thus wants to communicate the good news of Christ and of the Sabbath and the Advent hope.

In such a ministry everybody is involved; no one is left out, for everyone has some gift of ministry. The New Testament makes it clear that it is not just the pastor who is to serve, to teach, and to invite. The special function of the pastor is something like that of a coach to show the players what to do, to help them develop the appropriate skills, to plan the most effective strategy, to encourage and inspire. But the pastor-coach is not the star of the game; it is the members of the team who hit the home runs, shoot the baskets, and make the touchdowns, as they fulfill their ministry.

So the misunderstanding of the church is not incurable. When Adventism becomes this kind of fellowship and community of love and ministry, we will not be inclined to think of the church primarily as an organization. For we will be captivated by the surprising power of grace as our loving God acts to finish His work in our world. 

¹ See C. Norman Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974).

² See, for example, Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), pp. 19-47; G. C. Berkouwer, *The Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 77-102.

³ There is at least one exception to the general pattern: the Potomac Conference, of which the executive committee comprises equal numbers of ministers and laymen.

⁴ 1978 Annual Council of the General Conference Committee, General Actions, Washington, D.C., p. 17.

⁵ See Gottfried Oosterwal, “The Church Is the People,” *Insight*, Oct. 30, 1973, pp. 12-15, and Nov. 6, 1973, pp. 15-18.

⁶ See the analysis of so-called “evangelistic workers” (which include administrative and promotional personnel in the conferences, but exclude institutional personnel) in the *Annual Statistical Reports of the General Conference for the respective years*.

⁷ For the significance of the difference between “doing the work” and “finishing the work” I am indebted to my colleague Robert M. Johnston.

⁸ Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1961), vol. 1, pp. 300-302.

⁹ See E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

¹⁰ Tertullian, *Apology* 39.7.

Not self but souls

We have no time
for fretting over
ourselves,
no time to look
on the dark side.
There are souls
to be saved.
We must live
in Christ and
Christ must live in us,
else we shall preach
and labor in vain.

by Ellen G. White

This recently released letter to a prominent Adventist minister and his wife was written by Ellen White in 1900. This minister had served the church as an editor and an administrator, but at the time the letter was written he was engaged in evangelism. We feel that this letter speaks to the needs of each Seventh-day Adventist minister today.—Editors.

It is three o'clock in the morning. I am sitting up in my bed and trying to write you a few words. There are things on my mind which trouble me. . . .

The Lord has given me a message for you. Ministers of the gospel must keep self in continual subjection to Christ. But in your present state of mind you are not subject to the will or control of God. Self, poor, sick self, is revealed on every hand. When self dies, the peace of Christ will take possession of the soul. As long as you are a minister of the gospel, you are under the most solemn obligation to God to be wise, not in your own conceit, but wise in the wisdom of God.

Every day hereditary tendencies to wrong will strive for the mastery. Every day you are to war against your objectionable traits of character, until there are left in you none of those things which need to be separated from you. Then you will think candidly and wisely how to take yourself to the Lord. You will foresee the evils which will come unless you change by avoiding the cause which produces the effect.

You need now to understand as never before the softening, subduing power of true, Christlike character. You need to understand the warfare in which we are engaged. The power of holy living is far ahead of all doctrinal discourses. . . .

We need now as never before to pray with heart and voice for the Spirit of Christ to use us in His service through the sanctification of the Spirit. We need to pray that we may by uniting with our fellow workers build up God's kingdom. We are never to be satisfied with self, but are ever to press upward, seeking to attain higher fervency and greater zeal. Our heart's greatest desire should be to be found among the meek and lowly people of God. Then we can find souls and win souls.

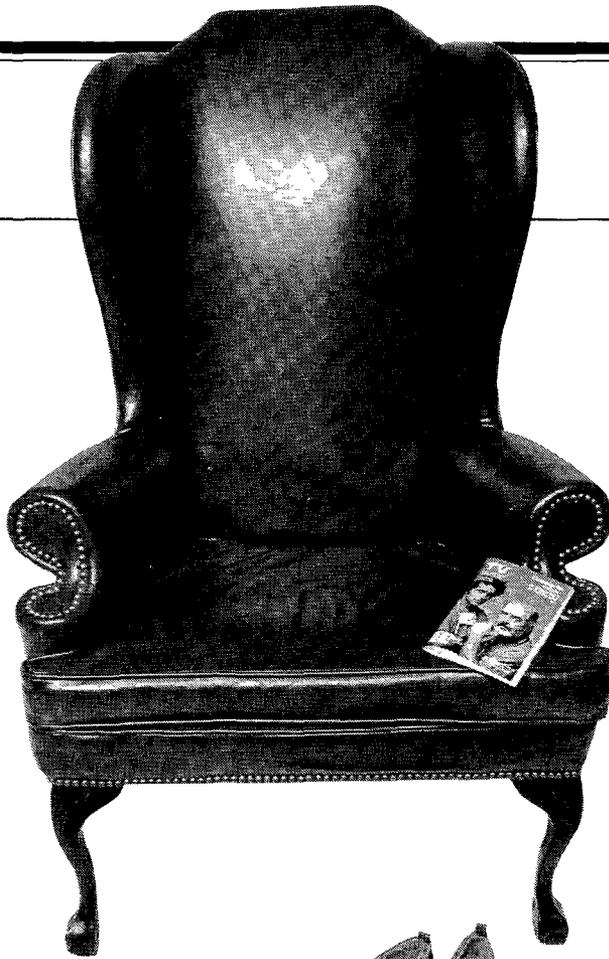
Those who minister in word and doctrine must first be partakers of the fruits of the spirit. Bear this in mind. Bridle your disposition, and then peace and contentment will find room in your soul. If you wish your heart to overflow with the love of God, cultivate grateful thanksgiving for the unspeakable privilege of knowing the truth. If you would lose sight of self by beholding Christ, you would be changed from glory to glory, from character to character, and would rejoice in His redeeming love.

We have no time for fretting over ourselves, no time to look on the dark side. There are souls to be saved. We must live in Christ and Christ must live in us, else we shall preach and labor in vain. Those who are brethren in the faith must stand together in oneness, striving to answer Christ's prayer to His Father. Let us stop fretting. Let us put away all jealousy, all evil-surmising. Let us put on Christ and walk in the light of the Sun of Righteousness. Preach the word. Practice the word. Then souls will be converted.

At present your spiritual condition is a stumbling block to your best efforts. We have the most sublime truths ever given to men. How are we handling them? In Christ, dead to self, open your mouth, and God will fill it. Christ will impress the minds of your hearers.

Cooperation with God means His cooperation with us. Cooperation with our brethren gives standing room for every one who does the work. Cooperation is now greatly needed. Seek not for the highest place. If you do, you will be given the lowest place. Have courage in the Lord. But do not think that you are the only agent through whom He will work. For Christ's sake do your best, without speaking one ungrateful word to God or to your brethren. Then the Lord will bless you. We have not a moment to waste in regrets or recrimination.

Take not your troubles to man, who may have no greater wisdom than you yourself. Take your troubles to Him who hears and answers prayer. Labor, labor with this poor soul and that poor soul. Keep your head out of books and your hand from writing. Seek the salvation of those who are ready to perish. How earnestly should we be engaged in laboring for souls as they that must give an account. ■



nonbelievers! How could they possibly reach this skeptical, hardhearted people when Christ had worked three and one-half years with such meager results?

Just before the Lord returned to heaven, He repeated His commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15, 16). How could this be done when they had no modern means of transportation and no modern communication such as telephones, television, and radios? The secret is found in Matthew 28:18. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." This power was poured out upon the waiting disciples on the day of Pentecost. In one day 3,000 were converted and baptized, and the church began her conquest of the then-known world!

Today with the world population rapidly expanding and seemingly insurmountable obstacles facing the church, the task of sharing Christ with the world seems again humanly impossible. Every time your heart beats, a new person is born into the world! World population will double in just thirty-seven years! And yet with all the growth in population, church attendance is diminishing each year in many denominations. Many churches are vacant on Sunday mornings, while larger sports arenas are being built to accommodate the growing crowds. Our own church, beloved as it is by us, is no exception; many Seventh-day Adventist churches too are almost vacant on Sabbath mornings.

It grieved my heart when I read of an Adventist church that was organized sixty-two years ago with thirty-six members, inviting the public to come and celebrate with them their sixty-second anniversary. The thing that hurt my heart was the article's concluding words: "You are cordially welcome to celebrate this occasion with the congregation that now has a membership of forty-two." A total net increase of six members in sixty-two years!

It bothers me when I attend ministerial gatherings and hear pastors report that they have won to Christ and baptized only three, four, or five people during the whole year! At one workers' meeting recently five ministers stood up to report that they had not added a single member to their church for the entire year!

It bothers me when several of our conferences in North America had a *decrease* in membership last year. It bothers me when I read of a conference president who, having served three

SKIP BAKER

Arise & evangelize

The church is in real danger of becoming so occupied with keeping its organizational mechanism moving that it has energy left for nothing else. We must direct our energies to the true business of the church—evangelism.

by R. C. Connors

This article is not a deep theological discussion analyzing various schools of thought regarding the mysteries of religious psychology. Instead of trying to impress you with something new, I've decided to challenge you to arise and evangelize.

When Jesus looked into the eyes of His disciples and told them that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end would come, it was humanly impossible to conceive how this could be accomplished. After the resurrection of our Lord, there were only 500 believers who were still faithful to Him. The estimated population in Israel at the time—more than 15 million—made a ratio of one believer to every 30,000

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terms, reported to his constituents the progress in that conference during the nine years of his administration. He mentioned the number of persons who were baptized during those nine years. Then he subtracted those who died, and those who left the church during that same period of time, and was left with a total increase for the nine years in his conference of only seventeen.

It bothers me when I meet minister after minister who has been in denominational employment for five, ten, and fifteen years, but who has never held a public evangelistic campaign. It bothers me when I talk to seminarians who have made plans to do everything and anything it is possible to do when they take over their church except win men and women to Christ.

It bothers me when I hear minister after minister preaching sweet, flowery sermons, and then sitting down without making an appeal. Why do we preach and then fail to invite men and women to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour? What's the need of preaching a sermon if there is no appeal?

It bothers me when statistics show that our church has moved from second place to third, then to fourth, and now is in fifth place among the fastest-growing denominations. That bothers me when I know that we have truth for these times.

The last recorded words of Christ to His disciples are found in Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me." The Greek word for power in this verse is *dunamis*, from which we derive the word *dynamite*. Jesus was not talking about a fire-cracker type of power. He was talking about a dynamite type of power—power to proclaim the gospel, power to lead others to Christ, power to witness, power to proclaim the Word with authority. We have too many whispering-hope preachers. A preacher who has something to say should say it! We are strong on information, but so weak on proclamation.

Speaking of Pentecost, Acts 2:4 says that when the Holy Ghost came upon them, they began to speak. Many people emphasize the part of this text that refers to tongues, but the important thing about the apostles' speaking was not the language, but the message. What was the message that the early church shared with the people in their witnessing? Christ was the central theme of their witnessing. They did not talk about the weather or the Temple or the city of

Jerusalem; they talked about the One they loved, the One who filled their every thought and plan. This is our message, as well. Years ago we were instructed: "Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world."—*Gospel Workers*, p. 156.

Jesus told the disciples that, after the Holy Ghost came upon them and they received power, they were to be witnesses. A witness is one who gives evidence, one who has personal knowledge or proof or evidence of something. When one witnesses, he affirms or declares his beliefs and his convictions. A witness is simply one who tells what he knows and has experienced. Perhaps the reason there are so few, even among Christian ministers, who are witnessing is that only a few have had a personal experience with Christ. Those who have had such an experience will cry out like Jeremiah, "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer. 20:9).

Now and then, various church bodies announce that during the coming year they expect to major in evangelism. What would you think of a railroad company that announced it would be majoring in transportation during the next twelve months? The *business* of a railroad is transportation, and the *business* of the church is evangelism. Evangelism is God's chief business for any church at any time. The founders of our faith were a group of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, filled with the Spirit, witnessing and winning others. Their business was to know Christ and to make Him known; to be Christians and to persuade others to be Christians. They had a story to tell, and they told it everywhere. They were not out to dispense good advice, but to declare good news. They carried the gospel to the high and to the low, in season and out of season, but in time the simple became complex. There grew up a vast organization that today seems to be rapidly becoming an end in itself. Like the oil well that produced nothing because it required all the oil it pumped simply to grease its own machinery, the church today is in real danger of becoming so occupied with keeping its organizational mechanism moving that it has energy left for nothing else.

Too many are merely occupying positions. Those who are ordained and those who will be ordained need to remember that they have not been, nor will they be,

ordained to sit behind a desk. They have been, or will be, ordained to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to win souls to Him. That's what it's all about, and we have our priorities mixed up if we think otherwise. There is no better evidence of a genuine call to the ministry than a passionate desire to make Christ known to others. Any preacher whose business is not God's business will soon be out of business, and God's business is restoring His image in man. The reason so many are leaving the ministry and going into some other line of work is that they fail to make God's business their business.

The proverbial anonymous writer penned this paraphrase of the apostle Paul:

Though I speak with the tongues of scholarship and use high-sounding phrases and well-coined sentences, and though I have a winning personality, and have the art of getting along with people, and have failed to win souls to Christ, I am a cloud without rain and a well without water.

And though I have the best of education and understand all the mysteries of religious psychology, and though I have all Biblical knowledge, and lose not myself in the task of winning souls to Christ, I become as high-polished brass and a tinkling cymbal.

And though I read the latest books and magazines and attend the church Bible conferences and camp meetings, and I am satisfied with less than winning souls for Christ and building Christian character, I am a wandering star without light or heat.

The soul winner doth not behave himself unseemly; does not make it hard on others and easy on himself; is not envious of others who seem to be more successful; is not puffed up over his own attainments.

The soul winner never faileth, but if one does not win souls, he is a failure. And though he wins the highest position in the church and is recognized and honored by all, and fails to win souls for Jesus, what will it profit him in eternity?

Now abideth positions, popularity, and personal soul winning, but the greatest of these is soul winning.

Give us a watchword for the hour,

A thrilling word of power,

A battle cry, a flaming breath,

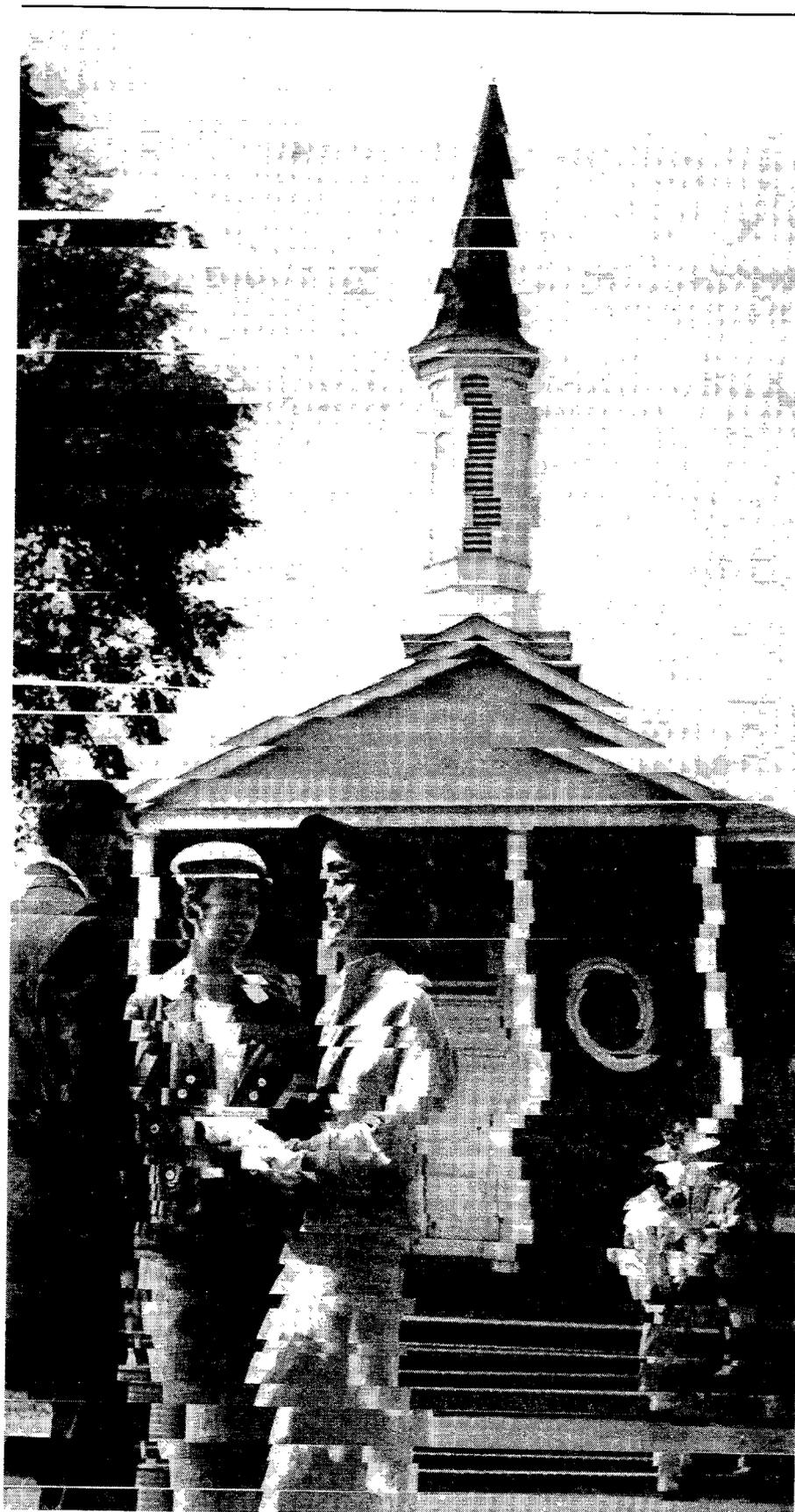
That calls to conquest or to death;

A word to rouse the church from rest

To heed her Master's high behest.

The word is given; Ye hosts arise;

Your watchword be: *Evangelize!*



As others see us

A bit of doggerel on a bulletin board implies that our public image as Seventh-day Adventists does not match the message we have been commissioned to give the world. People should see the beauty of Christ's character in us.

by Dorothy Parfitt

The official bulletin board in the religion department of the leading university in our area recently provided a rare opportunity for Seventh-day Adventists to see themselves through the eyes of others. Believing, as we do, that this church was raised up by God to present a certain message to the world, it

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becomes crucially important, then, how the world perceives us who bear the message.

What truths do Seventh-day Adventist Christians believe we are divinely destined to present to the world? If we cut through the mists of theology, is not the total aim and ideal of Seventh-day Adventist Christians that the world may see Jesus reflected in them? How successful we are in achieving this goal is perhaps shown in the following anonymous ballad that was posted on the university bulletin board for all to see:

A Pilgrim's Progress

I was baptized a Presbyterian,
Before the tender age of one;
My parents didn't ask me first;
They simply had it done.

Now Mom was Presbyterian,
But Dad was C. of E.
It didn't mean a thing to them,
And meant still less to me.

They sent me off to Sunday school,
The nearest one to home.
"It doesn't matter much," said Dad,
"As long as it's not Rome."

But when I started work, you see,
My boss, a plumber's foreman,
Soon made it very plain to me
That I should be a Mormon.

And so a Mormon I became,
Until I found conversion.
A worthy man—Brown was his name—
Baptized me by immersion.

But in a very little space,
In mood of bold defiance,
I found a better way of grace,
And practiced Christian Science.

And so I might have ceased to roam,
Had I not met a dentist
Whose probing deep has made me now
A Seventh-day Adventist.

If the rhyme had ended thus, we could have said, "That's good!" To be known for deep Bible study is something to be thankful for (in the proper way and not like the Pharisee, of course). However, it is the next verse that arrests our attention:

I often yielded to despair
Of finding moral fitness;
But now I stand, without a care,
A staunch Jehovah's Witness.

"I often yielded to despair of finding moral fitness." Apparently this line characterized Seventh-day Adventists in the mind of the poet. Have we deserved

such an image? If we look objectively at ourselves we must admit that to a great degree we have.

How often we have heard sermons in which the main emphasis was "Our greatest concern at this time should be getting through the judgment!" Of course, being red-blooded Seventh-day Adventists, we all want to jump to the defense of ourselves and one another. "We know what such sermons mean. They are talking about reflecting the character of Jesus fully." But do we reflect His character by making our own salvation our main obsession? Is this what Jesus did? No, He did not. If He had been primarily concerned about His own salvation, He would have changed the stones into bread; He would have stepped off the cross and allowed angels to transport Him back to heaven in a cloud of glory.

Jesus was the Son of God, yet He did not consider His position in heaven something to be grasped at and retained at all costs. He willingly emptied Himself and went to the cross. Did He forsake heaven so that we might grasp possessively at it? I think not. He laid aside His own interest so that we could reflect His character by laying aside our own interests. He made His position in heaven secondary to His concern for the well-being of the universe, so that we could reflect the same unselfishness by doing likewise.

We are told that Jesus will be satisfied when He views the result of His suffering in the characters of those who reflect Him. Should not our main obsession, then, be to bring satisfaction to Jesus? If this is what the sermons mean, why do they not say so plainly?

Instead, too often we hear in church prolonged discussions about the technicalities of how we are to be saved (Is it by justification or by sanctification?), with all the tortuous ramifications such discussions engender. Worse still, the speakers believe that in this way they are upholding Christ before the people in every discourse!

It isn't difficult to see why a visitor could think that the main concern of Seventh-day Adventists is how to get themselves saved. He could easily conclude that we are all in the seat of the unconverted, calling out, "What must I do to be saved?"

Yet, if we remind an Adventist who is "yielding to despair of finding moral fitness" that the Father accepts us in Christ just as surely as He accepts Jesus Himself, he will say, "Of course I know

that, but . . ." But what? But we are still chiefly concerned with a (selfish) consideration of how we are ever going to get through the judgment! How are we going to make it to heaven at last?

It doesn't make sense, does it? I have an apple, but I am chiefly obsessed with getting the apple! I have salvation in Christ, but I am chiefly obsessed with getting salvation! Even toddlers know better than that, and their recently shed tears glisten like rainbows of happiness when they see on their plate what they cried for.

If only the ballad writer could have written that as a Seventh-day Adventist, "I can't take my eyes from the attractions of Jesus, as upheld before me always by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Whereas before, I searched for salvation from eternal death, I now scarcely think about it, so intent am I on resembling the character and life style of the Son of God; so concerned am I with helping Him achieve the things He shed His blood to win—the salvation of every willing soul, the lighting and lightening of every heart; so radiantly happy am I with the knowledge that He Himself is with me 'even unto the end of the world,' wherever that may be. I know my search is over, for I have found the presence of the glorious, incomparable Jesus to be the meaning of life and all my soul has longed for. I have now a sense that there is an infinity beyond, waiting to be experienced and enjoyed in Him."

Instead, in our misdirected anxiety, we are like a child wanting to take home every shell on the beach; every bluebell in the woods to wilt in our sticky clutch; every minnow in the stream, to choke in our tiny pail of water. And all the time fresh wonders abound everywhere the eye turns, and grasping a small portion of beauty blinds us to the rest.

A selfish anxiety for victory and heaven is not beautiful. Christ's character is beauty. It is pure, self-sacrificing love. That is beauty in every language and in any philosophy. Could people see that beauty reflected in us, then our public image would match our commission. We would be living the message we are destined to give the world. Can the peaceful lake reflect the stars better by screwing up its face?

It is our privilege to study and to promote Christ's interest, with a heart at rest from self-interest. Then we will give Christ the satisfaction He died to achieve, for we will be reflecting His selfless character as it is, direct from the light of God. ■

The power of preaching

The power of the Word that spoke creation into existence flashes forth from the pulpit when the congregation hears the voice of God Himself speaking through His ambassador.

by Roy Allan Anderson



The Christian church was built by powerful preaching. In apostolic days it was preachers, not politicians, that “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6). The Reformation was fought and won by consecrated preachers of spiritual power. Preaching has changed social structures, shattered tyrannies, and set the masses free from slavery and superstition. Every great day in the history of the church has been a day of Spirit-filled preaching. Nothing, then, is more important to today’s church than having kindled, consecrated personalities with the ability to interpret God’s message to this generation.

Small wonder the devil seeks to minimize the power of the pulpit! He makes preaching a sideline rather than a mainline, fearing ministers less in the role of administrator, supervisor, counselor, financier, and organizer than as preacher. For in this role the minister is an ambas-

sador representing the court of heaven, and hence stands a spokesman for God. We preachers today stand at the end of a noble line of witnesses—men who have moved multitudes for God. What a privilege to venture forth to herald the advent of the kingdom of happiness to a world of sadness and desperate need!

Under Spirit-filled preaching, the kingdom is even now established in the heart; men and women are remade into fit citizens of that realm. The power of the Word that spoke creation into existence flashes forth from the pulpit when the congregation hears not merely something about God, but the voice of God Himself speaking through His ambassador. In this perspective and this power lies the difference between a sermon and a lecture, an oration, or a political speech.

Purpose of preaching

The sermon has two fundamental purposes: It reveals the character of God for man’s redemption, and it contributes to refinement of character through response to the story of redemption. It is not how much man knows, but who he knows and how he transmits knowledge of this acquaintanceship that invests the sermon with recreative value. The sermon, then, should be both a symbol of divine power and a corrector of evil.

Powerful preaching will reveal God at work in the world, shaping not only nations but also the individual. It will assure bewildered men and women, blasted by circumstance and blinded by grief, that their Saviour has engraved them on the palms of His hands (Isa. 49:16). Their future is certain in the light of Christ’s everlasting love. The sermon should flow as living water from the Rock, bringing healing, love, comfort, and grace for the hearers. To accomplish this, the message must be plain, purposeful, winsome, and moving.

Sermons are not works of art for the purpose of display, but tools to achieve specific results. Roman oratory in the classical age had three aims: 1. To please, so as to create interest; 2. To teach, by imparting beneficial knowledge; 3. to get action. The primary aim of preaching is step number 3; the preacher stands in the pulpit not so much to inform as to transform and to inspire action.

Test the sermon you plan to preach by these questions: Will it help your listeners to live better? Will it lead them to be more kind, more honest, more Christlike? Unless the preacher is help-

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We have too many whispering-hope preachers. A preacher who has something to say, should say it!

ing his people to don the robes of Christ's righteousness, he is helping them not at all.

Ultimately, your sermons' value will be tested in the character of people who must stand at last before their Redeemer at the consummation of the ages. What a day of unexcelled glory that will be, when in the presence of the greatest assemblage of all ages the redeemed of Adam's race will crown Christ the Lord of glory, the Lord of all! To prepare a people for that day is the purpose of all true preaching—indeed, of all witness by Christ's followers. More important than the time or manner of His coming is our preparation for that mighty event. Mere theological understanding will not suffice us in that great day. Those who proclaim the message of the judgment hour are "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Thus real preaching must not simply excite or inform, but transform—make saints out of sinners.

The preacher's message, then, is a life-and-death issue and should be delivered in the name of Christ and by the authority of Heaven. The congregation must see "the Son of man . . . lifted up." Unless they do, the brilliant arguments, the winsome language, the impressive illustrations all will be to the preacher's shame. "Ichabod" might well be written over his pulpit.

Expository preaching

In no type of sermon are the people more likely to hear God's voice than the expository, for the preacher finds his message in the Inspired Word itself. He may—and should—relate it to some current situation, permitting it to bring light to a present-day problem or personal need, but the listener must know that he is hearing God's counsel.

Sadly, expository preaching seems to have become a lost art. Contributing to the loss are Biblical illiteracy and the critical approach to Scripture. How refreshing it would be, for both pulpit and pew, to seek for God's solution to a current issue not from reason but from revelation! Nothing will do more for a congregation spiritually, evangelisti-

cally, culturally, or socially as real expository preaching.

Churchgoers are tired of discourses that give merely the preacher's views and arguments on social issues. They want to know, "Is there any word from the Lord?" "What has God said to past generations in similar circumstances?" Such queries can best be met by the exposition of some book of the Bible. The outstanding preachers—and, not incidentally, soul winners—of the centuries were all expositors. And it should be noted that the preaching of such men as John Wesley, Martin Luther, and John Calvin changed the social outlook of their hearers.

Expository preaching, admittedly, is demanding. It is much easier to present a particular topic or doctrine, setting it forth as a proposition and possibly supporting it with Scripture texts, than it is to expound a chapter of a book. Although propositional preaching is not to be rebuked, it does increase the risk of taking texts out of context. Less study and less scholarship are needed for topical preaching than for the expository. To take a book or chapter of the Bible and let the message flow naturally from it requires much more preparation. But the method is also generally more effective. The challenge is not what a single text says, but what that text says in its context.

The expository preacher is a teaching preacher. Expository preaching does not consist of slavishly following a passage phrase by phrase, but rather in gathering that which conveys the theme. There should be system and logic. Exposition is only analysis brought to synthesis—always, of course, in the framework of Biblical context. Just as the scattered facts of nature have to be systematized to understand their meaning, so it is with the Bible, which was written not as a systematic theology, but as a divine revelation.

The preacher must abridge his exegesis, bringing into focus only pertinent ideas. Practiced too little is the art of omission. Pity the congregation whose minister seeks to include in his sermon

everything he knows about the text or context. Even most dictionaries (certainly those that are referred to most often) are abridged.

The preacher should never attempt to expound a chapter or a book until he knows it thoroughly. G. Campbell Morgan once told a group of ministers that he never began to analyze the message of any book in the Bible until he had read it at least fifty times. Ability to read the Scriptures in the original languages is helpful, but don't overload your sermon with foreign terms. Paul once asked for comprehensible speech, arguing that one who spoke in an unknown tongue could be regarded as a "barbarian," or foreigner.

Yes, expository preaching is hard work. And woe to the man who tries to make it easy. A French proverb says, "We cannot have omelet without breaking eggs." Nor can we have expositors without diligent work and application. David's reply to Araunah, the Jebusite, who offered him oxen and wood for a burnt offering, was: "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing" (2 Sam. 24:24).

Know your congregation

The hard work embraces study not only of Scripture, but of one's congregation, for the preacher must mold his message to meet specific needs. He must live with his people, see through their eyes, and feel with their hearts. Worthwhile sermons grow out of contact not only with God but with people. Sermons found in homes are more heartwarming than those found in stones. The preacher may be described as a marksman whose efficiency increases when he determines the exact range between himself and his hearers.

The stepping down of electricity from high-tension lines to make the power usable to the consumer is a good illustration of the preacher's function. He is the instrument in God's hand through which "all power" is brought to the level of individual homes and lives. He is not the source of the power, but the transformer.

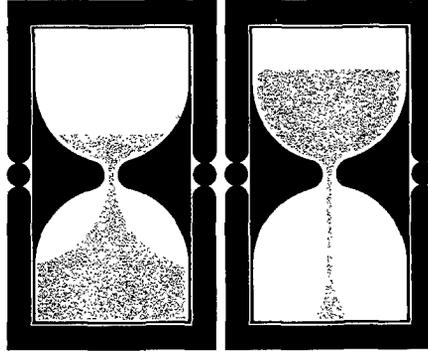
Finally, a sermon is more than saying something; it is doing something. It must do something to the preacher and something to the people. No matter how profound the reasoning or how eloquent the phrasing, only the sermon that is truly "the sword of the Spirit" will be powerful "to the pulling down of strong holds." 

Imminence mainspring of Adventism-3

by W. B. Quigley

This is the third in the series of articles on the return of Jesus. The first article raised the question of whether today's Adventism still possesses the sense of imminence that characterized Millerism and the Adventism of the nineteenth century. The second article asked, "Dare we today believe that the coming of Jesus is imminent?" and concluded that never before has Adventism had more reasons to take a stance in favor of imminence.

This final article speaks to the conundrum of a postponed Advent. As a church existing more than a century past its initial expectancy, Adventists have more than a passing interest.



In a context of expectant living, Christians have looked for and longed for the return of their Master for 2,000 years, and thus, for just this long, the Advent has been postponed. Were it not for Scripture's account of the delay, this could be a horrendous nightmare to Christians and especially to Adventists to whom "the blessed hope" is so meaningful. Here we are—149 years past the launch date of "the Great Second Advent Movement," when William Miller began to warn the world of the imminent return of Jesus. Generation after generation has passed into the grave whose faith assured them that they would not see death until the skies parted and their blessed Master appeared for them. To be sure, they will see Him come, but these have all "died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off" (Heb. 11:13).

New Testament Postponement of the Advent

The Advent was postponed in the first generation of Christians. Expectancy of the coming of the Lord ran high in those early churches! Several New Testament texts indicate clearly that these early believers looked for a speedy return of their Lord and had to deal with the question of a delay. "For in just a very

little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay'" (chap. 10:37, N.I.V.).*

Paul took pains to assure believers in Thessalonica, whose loved ones fell asleep in death and who feared lest these would miss the great event or even be second-class citizens in the kingdom: "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep. . . . We who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thess. 4:13-15, N.I.V.). It seemed a clear and definite article of faith that Christians then living—c. A.D. 54—would see their Lord come in glory. In chapter 5 Paul speaks of the suddenness of His coming, and again takes a stance of imminence. In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, he vividly describes the coming of Jesus as an event the believers were anxiously awaiting. "God is just: He will . . . give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels" (N.I.V.).

In Matthew 24 Jesus presented the signs of Jerusalem's destruction and of His coming in such a way that the disciples apparently believed His coming would occur in their lifetime. Especially must verse 34 have indicated this hope, and indeed, the text has been difficult for Christians of all generations to understand: "'I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened'"

(N.I.V.). This is a distinct prophetic utterance in the context of verses 30-33, which describe His coming. Two important things, however, must be abundantly clear: (1) all prophecy is conditional, and (2) Jesus always taught that "no one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father'" (verse 36, N.I.V.).

Yet, other New Testament references seem to counsel caution in looking for an immediate return in the first century. The parable of the ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) unmistakably portrays the situation of a late-arriving Lord, who comes when many who looked for Him are no longer expectant. The lesson of the parable is emphasized in verse 13: "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour'" (N.I.V.).

In 2 Peter 3:1-14, Peter effectively deals with a delayed Advent, pointing out the cruciality of understanding revealed truth. He predicts that infidels will attack the doctrine of the second coming of Christ because of the delay and that scoffers will reject God's plan because they are willfully ignorant of God's past judgment.

Peter presents the delay of Christ's coming as an evangelistic necessity. In the sovereign will of God based on His love and mercy for all mankind, He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Thus He delays the coming of Jesus in order to avoid cutting short the hour of mercy to the world. Peter closes with a solid affirmation that the coming of Jesus is sure and certain, and appeals to his readers to live godly, diligent, and expectant lives.

The last Scripture reference we will note concerning the delay is Revelation 7:1-3. Inasmuch as the most important accomplishment of redemption's plan is not yet completed (the "sealing" of the godly for eternity), final events on Planet Earth are in a holding pattern, and there is postponement of the time of trouble and the coming of Jesus. It seems clear that whenever God decrees it, the four angels will cease from holding the four winds, and the final events will quickly

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culminate in the glorious appearing of Jesus.

Our question must be, What are the influences that will cause God to cease His postponement of the closing work and the Advent?

Spirit of Prophecy interpretation of the delay

In the writings of Ellen G. White we see distinct evidence that it was Heaven's plan to send Jesus during the nineteenth century in response to the Millerite movement. William Miller was not a wild fanatic who built a movement based on his independent whims. Angels frequently directed this servant of God. It would naturally follow that if the movement was divinely inspired, surely it was God's plan to see it through, finish His work on earth, and usher in the coming of Jesus. There are nine clear references in the Spirit of Prophecy that indicate that this was precisely God's plan, and that Jesus might have come at some time between 1844 and 1883. The first of the nine statements was written in 1883, indicating God's plan to finish His work on earth during the preceding 39 years. "Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith, and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward. . . . It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 68.

In 1884, one year later, she repeated the statement in essentially the same words, but added the phrase "years ago," stating that "years ago . . . Christ would have come" if those in the 1844 movement had unitedly labored on in the power of the Spirit. (See *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 291; also *The Great Controversy*, p. 458.) Thus the evidence is clear that Jesus' coming was divinely scheduled years prior to 1884.

The other seven statements use similar language to reemphasize this point—Jesus planned to and wanted to come long ago (*Review and Herald*, Oct. 6, 1896; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 633, 634 [1898]; *Australian Union Record*, Oct. 15, 1898; *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 450 [1900]; *Evangelism*, p. 694 [1903]; *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 116 [1904]; *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 29 [1909]).

Reasons for the delay

The major Biblical reason for the delay of our Lord's return is expressed eloquently in 2 Peter 3:9 and Revelation 7:1-3. God's redemptive message must reach earth's population in the quality and quantity that meets God's standard, and that generation of His people who will, by His grace, allow themselves to be His vessels for that conquest will experience the glorious return of their Saviour!

It is clear that this achievement is the primary criterion for the coming of Jesus. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24:14). "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise ["I will come again"] . . . but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). And the four angels are holding the four winds, or the final events, until Heaven has "sealed the servants of . . . God in their foreheads" (Rev. 7:3).

Ellen White confirms this as the major reason for our Lord's delay. "The long night of gloom is trying; but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God's unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason for so long delay."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 194.

"In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning and find Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 458.

Other reasons for the delay that relate to the spiritual lack in God's people are stated in the contexts of the nine statements on the delay, cited above, including these ideas: (1) unbelief, worldliness, unconsecration, and strife of God's people; (2) lack of unity; (3) the same sins as those of Israel; (4) lack of a living experience in the things of God; (5) God's people failing to do their appointed work; (6) God's people failing to give "the trumpet a certain sound"; and (7) "while men have slept, Satan has stolen a march upon us."

The delay is still occurring today

Quite obviously, God is even now continuing to postpone the coming of Jesus. In spite of the fact that the "final movements will be rapid ones," and it is God Himself who will "finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness," we

lack final evidence today that 1980 or 1981 will be, as the popular gospel song states it, "the year when Jesus comes." The paradox is that while beholding the most convincing array of prophetic fulfillments in history, we as Adventists do not seem to assure ourselves and the world that Jesus will come almost immediately, even though ideally we should be! We whose "mainspring" is indeed a belief in an imminent return of Jesus are simply all too lacking in conviction that His coming is indeed imminent! Perhaps we see here a credibility gap between a faith expressed eloquently on paper and a faith carried through flesh and blood and voice and heart into the streets and hovels of the cities of earth.

If the Advent is still being postponed, and Adventists acknowledge this disturbing and awesome fact, what more urgent reason could there be for revival now, reformation now, and a finished work! This is the Adventist emergency! It is the emergency of every minister and committed Christian. It is yours; it is mine.

The postponement will cease

Not only are the factors causing the delay abundantly clear, but we also have clear testimony as to what influences will signal the cessation of this postponement and release the final events.

Unsavory characteristics in God's people have been listed as causes for the delay, and the antitheses of these qualities are necessary to release Heaven's hold: great faith; sacrifice and self-denial; consecration; unity and love; a living experience with God; great faith-filled exploits to advance His work in all the world, to herald the message for our time. The righteousness of our Saviour must be the transparent quality of the lives of God's people.

When these things are revived; when God's people "weep between the porch and the altar" for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, not unlike the searching that preceded Pentecost; and when God's people determine that this is the hour, there will be an outpouring of the power of the Holy Spirit as has not been witnessed since Pentecost. Then Christ will come to claim His children, and the "blessed hope" will be a hope no longer, but an overwhelmingly wonderful reality. 

* Texts in this article credited to N.I.V. are from *The New International Version*. Copyright © 1978 by The New York International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.

APOLLOS, PAUL, OR CHRIST?

No Adventist pastor can afford to allow another human being to do his thinking for him or to command his ultimate allegiance.

The command of the Lord through David, "Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no help" (Ps. 146:3, R.S.V.), needs to be heeded vigorously in today's church. Frail human nature, like the tender vine, desperately tries to entwine itself about some strong stalk. We seem incapable of making decisions individually, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There is an inordinate reaching out to other human instrumentalities for emotional, intellectual, or spiritual support. Certainly there is nothing wrong with receiving encouragement and help from fellow believers, but I am talking about excessive dependence.

In my lifetime, I have been appalled not only at how often those of high intelligence have followed the particular teachings of a certain individual but also at the way these poor souls, like lackeys, kept in step, even when their leader radically changed his position, and the direction they were formerly being led was entirely reversed! To my mind, this is nothing short of mental slavery, similar to that of those who followed Jim Jones of Jonestown fame to their suicidal deaths.

As I write these words, I have before me a letter that illustrates the point. The writer, in defending his position on a particular point, seemed to build his case not on Scripture, but on a man of whom he declared, "I consider _____ the consummate theologian in the Adventist Church today."

The facts are that we have no single "consummate theologian" in the church! We have many qualified, dedicated Bible scholars and theologians who have expertise in many areas. But the enormous amount of knowledge available is still only barely tapped, even by the most brilliant minds. To put one person at the top of the list, in my thinking, is simply another way of saying, "I am of Paul" or "I am of Apollos" or "I am of Peter."

In a certain sense, such an attitude is related to idolatry. Perhaps all of us have been, or are, guilty of it. In my own case, I remember my attitude toward Seminary professors during school days. It was not difficult to place them on a high mental pedestal. These men were knowledgeable, experienced, sharp. I admired them. But for years following my Seminary training, I found myself

rejecting any concepts, important or unimportant, that were contrary to what my teachers taught me. It isn't easy to overcome this type of mind-set. Let it be clearly understood, I still have deep appreciation for our Bible scholars and depend on their expertise in all areas. But in the final analysis, God holds me responsible for my own beliefs and decisions. In view of this bit of idolatrous attitude in all of us, our only safety is in placing our confidence in the good Lord and His revealed will, as found in the Bible. Let the Spirit speak through the Word! Let the Spirit direct our minds! Let the Spirit enable us to be individuals! Let the Spirit command our respect for the Godhead! Let no man do our thinking for us.

I may be unique, but as things stand today, I know of no one with whom I entirely agree on every single facet of theology. There are those with whom I agree more than others, but certain understandings of various doctrines I have and hold as my own unique possession. No two minds are exactly alike! My own particular package of beliefs does not contradict the major pillars of our faith. Not at all! But there are shades of understanding that, when all put together, make me uniquely different from any other human being on earth.

Thus I appeal to my fellow ministers and leaders of the church: Pin your faith on the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and not on any man. To do anything less is bound to be divisive. There was division in the Corinthian church over the idolizing of a particular spiritual leader. We

are told, "The success that attended Apollos in preaching the gospel led some of the believers to exalt his labors above those of Paul. This comparison of man with man brought into the church a party spirit that tended to hinder greatly the progress of the gospel."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 270. Time has not changed the divisive effects of making man an object of praise, adoration, and undue loyalty.

Recently, as one of our leaders was speaking to a group of workers, a listener stood and declared, "If _____ leaves the church, then I will leave too." Would that this individual had listened to Paul's appeal in 1 Corinthians 1:13: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (R.S.V.). Our salvation is not dependent upon any human leader; Christ alone is the one to whom we should look.

Perhaps the most significant sign of the nearness of Christ's coming should be the love and the unity among the followers of Jesus, who have as their magnetic center of attraction not some earthly being, but our Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus. If He is the hub of the church wheel, we will be drawn together tightly and present to the enemy a united front. There will be no disputing as to who will be accounted greatest. No true believer will say, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas." The testimony of one and all alike will be "Christ is my life, Christ is my joy, Christ is my Saviour, Christ is my pattern." J.R.S.

Programs or People?

Recently I attended the annual meeting of the Adventist Chaplains Association, hosted this year by Shawnee Mission Medical Center, Shawnee Mission, Kansas. (It sounds like a log-cabin dispensary on an Indian reservation, but actually it is a modern, gleaming, highly equipped hospital in an affluent suburb of Kansas City.) Meeting with this group of Adventist ministers dedicated to a specialized ministry was a new experi-

ence for me in more ways than one. First, because I had never met with this group before, most of the faces were new to me, although I did come across some old friends. Second, it was a new experience because I detected an attitude that I had not often found (at least with the same intensity) in other groups of church workers. If I were to try to sum it up in one word, the word would be *sensitivity*.

From the first meeting, it became clear that here was a fellowship of Adventist ministers that was unusually sensitive to people—their needs, their feelings, their potential as human beings. I haven't yet decided whether this sensitivity came as a result of their work and training as chaplains or whether those who have this heightened quality are drawn to the chaplain ministry. However the case may be, its result was evident in the satisfaction with which these individuals met the challenges of their work. It is evident also in the lack of pretense among them or the need to impress their colleagues.

Since my own ministry has been primarily the traditional one of a pastor-evangelist, I couldn't help reflecting that much of what the chaplain does in ministering to people in a specialized way, the parish minister also finds included among his duties in a more diffused manner. Like the chaplain, he is called upon to deal with people in a variety of crises and situations. I carried from that meeting the conviction that ministers, whatever their responsibilities as pastors, evangelists, administrators, departmental directors, et cetera, could learn an important lesson from these chaplains—sensitivity to people.

How easy it is as busy pastors to schedule several hospital visits with a prearranged agenda in our minds—go in, greet the patient, express our concern or encouragement, read a text of Scripture, have prayer, and leave. In our impatience to get to our next appointment, we may never take time to find out how this person really feels, his fears or needs. We may never really minister to him individually. What we perceive as an expression of pastoral concern may seem to him mere mechanized, unfeeling ritual.

Likewise, do we see that Bible-study interest as a unique human being with a background and desires and fears and potential that make him or her like no other person on earth? Or is that Bible study just a time slot on a particular evening, a statistic moving on its way to the baptistry?

As an administrator, do we see our workers as fellow children of the same Father? Are we sensitive to their needs, their talents, their weaknesses? Do we seek to help them grow? Or do we come to view them as parts of a program that fulfill their positions with varying degrees of reliability and efficiency and thus either advance or retard our own objectives?

It's easy to become calloused to humans, their unpredictableness, their problems and their sufferings, in spite of Paul's counsel to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that do weep" (Rom. 12:15). Paradoxically, ministers whose work revolves around caring for people are among those most tempted to erect barriers against genuine involvement and sensitivity.

As gospel workers, detachment and a lack of sensitivity to people may be less demanding, but I am convinced it is also less satisfying; it may allow us to squeeze more activities into our day, but it will prove unproductive in the end.

Our Lord identified with and entered into the feelings and lives of those to whom He ministered. If we are to be like Him, we cannot do otherwise. B.R.H.

Brain Strain

Recently my wife and I purchased a microwave oven. It sat for several weeks without being used, simply because neither of us had time to master the voluminous book of instructions! Could a high school dropout possibly learn to operate this sophisticated piece of kitchen machinery? The point is that knowledge is increasing at a fantastic rate. An article written by T. Harrell Allen, Ph.D., in the April, 1977, *Life & Health* magazine pointed out that the average person processes an astonishing 41,000 words a day through his brain.

Brain overstimulation inevitably leads to bewilderment and confusion. Although the brain is a fabulous instrument, more marvelous than any computer, it still has its limitations. Those who fail to recognize this point, and who permit themselves to be subjected to an information overload, end up with various forms of mental illnesses, such as depression.

The only answer to this problem is to be highly selective with the information we feed our brain computers. Many a pastor is discouraged today because of the endless demands made upon him. He thinks that he is expected to know everything about everything in order to meet the needs of his people. Endless articles and numerous cartoons have appeared in religious journals portraying the pastor as an expert in finance, architecture, politics, teaching, theology, counseling, sympathizing, visiting, evangelizing, world traveling, fathering, being a husband, orating, et cetera. Regardless of what people may expect of their minister, he is responsible first of all to his Lord. I have often wondered what kind of life Jesus would lead if He were in our world today. How much would He know about automobiles? Would He try to keep up with all the world events? What would His library

look like? Would He be conversant on every new religious concept? How many conventions would He attend? How many seminars would He include in His schedule? What amount of time would be spent watching television? What news journals would He take? How many book clubs would He belong to? If He had a home, how many gadgets, relics, and souvenirs would He have sitting around waiting to be dusted? Or would Jesus practice the "Seek ye first" principle? It is my belief that our Example and Guide, as the Master Minister, severely curtailed His involvement in any activity except those that helped salvage a soul from ruin and death. He refused to permit Himself to become entangled in the politics of Rome, He refused to counsel a man as to what course he should pursue in the settlement of the family estate. He certainly did not become involved in any hairsplitting theology or innovative religious activities that were an end in themselves.

All too often the Christian ministry today is allowing elements to come into their lives that ought never to be there. Our strength, our time, our energy, is to be used first in seeking a deeper relationship with our Lord, and second, in communicating God's love to those about us. We don't need to be experts in all areas of life's activities, but we do need to be experts in the things of the Spirit. This will require blocking out much of the sensory stimuli around us. Thus we become living proof of the fact that the gospel is a great simplifier of life's problems. To exhibit this kind of life before our parishioners is of utmost necessity in a confused world, which is under continual bombardment of masses of information, which really amounts to little when we compare this with the reality of eternity that faces us all.

J. R. S.

ADVENTIST ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

No longer can the church hide its head in the sand and ignore what is becoming an increasingly serious problem—alcoholic Adventists.

The Adventist doctor who has related his experience in connection with this article raises some painful questions for us as fellow Seventh-day Adventists. Often in the past we have not been willing even to admit that we have an alcoholic problem in our church. We wish we didn't, but we do—and in ever increasing numbers.

As a psychiatrist who has spent years in the care and treatment of the alcoholic, I find these poor sufferers in all religious faiths. Alcohol is no respecter of persons or creeds. It is well known that one of every eight persons who begin drinking alcoholic beverages will become an alcoholic. This figure applies to social drinking as well. Apparently there is a factor in some individuals that makes them susceptible to the habituat-

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by L. A. Senseman

ing effects of alcohol, and as yet we cannot determine beforehand who these people are. In today's permissive society, drinking is an accepted way of life. Almost any social activity involves alcohol. The abstainer feels uncomfortable in such settings in spite of the fact that non-alcoholic drinks are served as well.

It is time for us as Seventh-day Adventists to recognize that we too have a problem among us with alcohol. In too many Adventist homes alcohol is being served, not only at parties, but as a refreshment at the dinner table! Wet bars can be seen in some Adventist homes. Nor should we think that only professional people are involved in the problem.

Some of our own young people are growing up in this tolerant atmosphere regarding alcohol. They are using alcohol and other drugs and thus getting into the same problems as other students in spite of the church's influence. Peer

pressure, of course, is very strong, but so is parental example. Young people today are not deceived by their parents' attitude. What can we expect of young people when their parents take a social drink or have beer or wine in their refrigerator? Or what can we expect if their Adventist minister agrees privately that "a little wine is all right," using Paul's advice to Timothy (1 Tim. 5:23) as his Biblical authority?

Need we be reminded of what Ellen White has to say on this subject? "The only safe course is to touch not, taste not, handle not, tea, coffee, wines, tobacco, opium, and alcoholic drinks."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 488. "Moderate [social] drinking is the school in which men are educated for the drunkard's career."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 332.

If parents, teachers, physicians, and ministers in our churches are not totally committed to abstinence, how will students under peer pressure to take a drink of beer or wine react?

In my profession I am appalled at the lack of applied knowledge on this very



important human problem by well-educated and knowledgeable people, both in and outside the church. The liquor industry would like nothing better than to have its potential victims not to apply their knowledge but to heed the clever and misleading ads that are present everywhere. Unfortunately many Seventh-day Adventists are also succumbing to the delusion that it can't happen to them—but it is, and in alarmingly larger numbers.

It is time for Seventh-day Adventists to recognize that we too have a problem among us with alcohol, and to begin to do something about it as other denominations have done. We may ignore it, hide it, deny it, but it doesn't go away. Like the individual alcoholic, we must, as a church, first recognize it as a prob-

lem and then take action before it is too late.

I have treated many Adventist members both in and out of the church who have an alcoholic problem. I find them coming reluctantly to an Adventist physician or hospital. Many would rather go secretly for help elsewhere. Is it possible that our attitude toward drinking and the alcoholic needs to be changed? Can we accept the alcoholic and provide support while maintaining our high standards? Can we assume enough maturity to accept the fact that we have a growing problem, and take a realistic look at it? Or shall we let others assume the responsibility for our alcoholic members? Surely there are many like the doctor whose experience is given here who, after a sincere and complete return to

sobriety and church attendance, long for and are pleading for a constructive attitude of acceptance among their fellow church members. Shall we continue to exclude them from real fellowship with us?

Each Seventh-day Adventist hospital should have a special service area for the care and treatment of the alcoholic patient. Alcoholism has reached epidemic proportions in the United States, and there seems to be no way to change this trend in the foreseeable future.

Seventh-day Adventists have the expertise to make a contribution in this area of human woe. As Adventists mix more and more with alcohol, we will have an increasing need to apply that expertise—physiologically, psychologically, and spiritually. 

Hooked on the first drink—the testimony of an Adventist doctor

I was invited by a friend to an evening at his home with his wife. It was a pleasant occasion; his lovely wife served some delicious punch that neither she nor her husband bothered to identify, nor did I ask. I had no idea what she served. It was something I had never tasted before, but it was delicious, and when she asked whether I cared for more, I eagerly accepted another and another.

"This beverage really did something for me that I had never experienced. It made me feel good and very relaxed. I can't remember how many glasses of the wonderful punch I had, but later, when getting up to leave, I had difficulty standing and couldn't walk straight. My hosts laughed at my predicament and told me I had had too much alcohol. I remember driving home and laughing because I felt so good and self-confident. I knew that I had found something that could make me feel so wonderful and that I had to have more. From that time on, I pursued alcohol. It seemed that I became an alcoholic from the very first drink. It became a habit, a consuming interest, and a constant pursuit that led me on. I couldn't stop finding an

endless solace in the bottle. I was hooked.

"Yes, I was raised a Seventh-day Adventist. I was aware that alcohol was taboo in my family, in our home, and in my church, of which I was so very fond. I had attended Loma Linda University Medical School, after graduating from a fine Seventh-day Adventist college. I was married and had three children. It was very clear to me that I was on a downward trip, but I couldn't seem to stop. My wife left me; the bottom fell out of my life. I was discouraged, but self-pity merely became an excuse for further drinking, and I mean *really* drinking. I couldn't get enough; in order to get the feeling I had learned to enjoy so much, I had to keep drinking more and more. I got into all kinds of trouble. I was guilty of every vice imaginable, but the degradation didn't seem to bother me as long as I had a bottle.

"I have now found sobriety, thanks to a period of hospitalization and to Alcoholics Anonymous. I have found peace with God and my conscience. My AA sponsor, also a recovering alcoholic, has been very helpful and is a great human being. I love him for what he has done for me, and it has been plenty.

"Right now I am attending a nearby Seventh-day Adventist church, but I have a problem that others like me have experienced upon their reentry into their church. It seems to us that we are not accepted. In fact, our sincerity is looked on with some suspicion and skepticism. Of course, the pastor is pleasant, even reassuring and helpful, but the impression of caution is present. I have the

feeling of being a second-class citizen looking in from the outside and not really a part of the action. I know that work for the church and for God is important for my sobriety, but how to go about it is the question. There seems to be a reluctance on the part of church members to accept me, to believe in me, or to respect me as in the past. I admit I made some grave mistakes, but I have made amends as far as I am able; what else can I do?

"There are many others like me who are alcoholics and who are now sober and trying to get back into the church. I know a group of Adventist doctors who have been through an experience with alcohol similar to mine and who are trying to reestablish themselves in the Seventh-day Adventist Church but who are meeting with the same uncomfortable feelings that I have met.

"Yes, it *could* be my own guilt feelings or uncomfortable associations in the church that cause me to feel as I do, but my medical friends have shared with me similar feelings, and we have tried to deal with them on a rational basis. We all have a desire to get back into the church and to be in good standing with our fellow believers, and thus be both benefited and beneficial.

"I believe I've been born again; my experience means a lot to me. How can I, an ex-alcoholic, be fully accepted in the Adventist Church? Christ came to earth that sinners might be saved, and that surely means alcoholics as well as all of us. He did not come to judge us, but to save us from our sins. Alcoholics, too, can have full salvation by our faith in Him." 

A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

A reconsideration of man's ultimate purpose results in a new understanding of the Christian scientist's use of his particular gifts.

by Brian S. Bull

Until recently the consensus of Western civilization has been that science can do almost everything, religion is unnecessary, and that man is the arbiter of his own destiny. This deification of man goes under the more pleasant designation of humanism, but it amounts to the same thing. An outwardly religious outlook on the part of a scientist, as opposed to a "humanistic" outlook, was considered definitely detrimental. A truly humanistic scientist could and would accept a co-worker who acknowledged and worshiped a Creator God, but the humanist felt that it was a credit to his humanism and to his tolerance that such a state of affairs was even workable!

All this is in the process of changing. The recent developments in cosmology, particularly in the area of beginnings, have changed the prevailing attitude. The big-bang theory now reigns supreme, whereas ten years ago it was strictly a secondary, fall-back position.* From a position where science can, in theory, know and explain everything in the material universe, the leaders of scientific thought, in cosmology at least, have come up against barriers that are impenetrable on theological grounds. All that happened before the supposed big bang is inaccessible to science: all that occurs at the opposite end of the universe, the black holes of the universe, is likewise inaccessible. For the first time in several hundred years the scientists, as one writer colorfully put it, have scaled what they hoped was the final range of mountains, only to find the theologians already sitting there!

Science's religious background

Science and religion were once inseparable; all scientists worked within a religious framework. In fact, there is good reason to believe that without religion (the Judeo-Christian religious heritage in particular), science would never have gotten off the ground. The concept of Providence—a kind and benevolent Father God interested in all His creation and particularly in man—is virtually unique to the Old and New Testaments

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and religious faiths based on these writings. Accepting this concept gave Western man the freedom in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to "think God's thoughts" after Him, believing that those thoughts would be logical and in some measure comprehensible to man.

It is perhaps in the medical sciences that this belief in a rational God, concerned about the suffering of His creatures, was of greatest value. The first known description of the circulation of the blood, written by Servetus in 1553, arose out of speculations concerning the Trinity.

We owe the popular and widespread use of salicylates to a belief in the providence of God. In 1763 Edward Stone proposed the use of willow bark as a cure for fever. Although the efficacy of such extracts in breaking a fever had been known to primitive peoples the world over, the popularization and subsequent widespread use in Western Europe was largely on the basis that if a provident God had made such medicine available, then mankind should use it with gratitude. Approximately 100 years later MacLagan, believing again that Providence would have provided a remedy for most ills in nature, was able to extract salicin, the active ingredient of the willow-bark infusions.

The Adventist Christian and scientific research

Western scientific thought arose out of a religious background and perhaps was made possible by the generally accepted views of God implicit within the Christian religion. Now there is at least some evidence that, after a few score years of separation, at least a partial reuniting of science and religion may be taking place in Western thought. What about the situation within the Adventist Church? Superficially, there is every encouragement for the young Adventist scholar to pursue a scientific career. I say superficially because that encouragement frequently stops at the level of medicine or dentistry. If science can produce better dentists or more effective physicians, it is wonderful. Eyebrows are raised, however, if a young scholar gets carried away with his studies and begins talking

about a career in "pure science." Questions about the dedication of that scholar are raised. This attitude, its underpinnings, and its effect on our program of higher education in general are what I would like to consider further.

A terrifying shadow rests over the world and blots out the future for those who care enough or have courage enough to concern themselves with anything further removed than next week's problems. That shadow is, of course, "the bomb." For the first time in history, mankind has the capacity to decide whether civilization itself will continue.

What business, then, do we have concerning ourselves with such trivialities as the names of the muscles that move the ossicles of the middle ear? What earthly use are studies of the biochemistry of gastric secretion when, in a moment of anger (owing, perhaps, to an excess of that same gastric juice), one man could destroy the world?

For the Christian, there is the firm conviction that the world will not end that way. The second coming of Christ is a truth that forms part of the very foundation of revelation. We believe this to be so important that the very name of our denomination expresses our conviction.

In our early history, the belief that there were actions more suited to the times than scholastic pursuits led to a disdain for higher education. However, with growth in size and sophistication, the church has encouraged the pursuit of higher education on the part of its youth to the extent of founding and supporting two universities. How can we justify this with the end so near? It will make little difference if all our feeble efforts are vaporized by a bomb or swept away by the brightness of His appearing—they will perish with equal dispatch and with equal finality. How can we, on the very doorstep of such momentous change, concern ourselves with anything other than the great and awful questions of existence here and in the hereafter?

Pragmatism and research

An answer is implicit in the fact that our two universities are strongly oriented to the ministry and the healing arts. We have thus said that intellectual pursuits can be justified on pragmatic grounds. Since preaching the Word and

healing the sick are effective means of fulfilling the gospel commission, they therefore justify the support of the church. If it is good to train ministers and if the health work is the right arm of the message, then universities that facilitate these tasks have a right to the support of the church. (The unvoiced caveat is, of course, they have a right to support only to the extent that they contribute in a direct and clear-cut manner.)

As is true of any secular institution, the Adventist Church has a right to support only those activities it deems desirable. Furthermore, for a church that feels itself called to a prophetic role just prior to the end, some activities are clearly more relevant than are others. It is only when the church's support for particular programs becomes confused in the mind of the believer with God's will for that believer's life that major damage may occur. The notion that intellectual pursuits are generally not approved of God and should hence be supported by the church only insofar as they contribute to the training of doctors and ministers is a very subtle and damaging heresy. It is as devastating as the notion that intellectual pursuits inherently justify themselves. The latter idea deifies man, inferring that an activity that can be pursued by man is *ipso facto* an activity worth pursuing. This is pure humanism. The opposite notion, that a search for truth is justifiable only if it increases our output of doctors and ministers, is seldom clearly enunciated, but has already permeated deeply and damaged us.

There is nothing wrong in academic pursuits having a practical outcome. Since our world was created by a wise and loving God, it would be most unusual if further understanding of God's creation did not at some point make our sojourn more bearable here below. As we have already noted, the whole scientific enterprise sprang from a religious world view that included a "provident" God. I do not believe it is wrong to use all available knowledge to make our ministers more effective witnesses and our doctors more effective healers. Still, to undertake as a career the pursuit of knowledge in an academic environment with this as a primary motivation will, I submit, lead to a flawed and unsatisfying life. It is to confuse means with ends.

To please God

It is not the ultimate goal of man to heal the sick, nor even to preach the gospel. Man's appointed end is to please God (John 8:29, Rom. 8:8, 1 Thess. 4:1,

Heb. 11:6, Rev. 4:11). To fulfill the Creator's intentions would perhaps be a slightly more accurate rendition in modern speech. While it is true that Christ pleased God (Matt. 3:17) by preaching the Word and healing the sick, He made it clear that others were appointed to please God in other ways, to "clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and visit the prisoners." The gifts of the Spirit are given so that the body of Christ may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. But all gifts are not given to all believers. To fill our appointed place in the divine scheme, each of us is to use his talents to the glory of God.

It is necessary for those who are called to the ministry to preach the gospel to please God. The preaching is the *means*, and the pleasing of God the *end*. While the medical work may well be the right arm of the message, physicians are to heal the sick as the means by which they with their talents achieve the purpose in their creation—the pleasing of God. To justify the medical work because it contributes to the effectiveness of the preaching ministry is to confuse means with ends. To justify the academic life and its pursuits solely because it contributes to the ministry is to miss the point. As Christians our end is to please God—to fulfill the Creator's intentions.

One of the means by which a Christian physician achieves that end is the healing ministry. Other means exist. The drafting of health-related legislation, the formulation and execution of public-health policy, the administration of health-care institutions, teaching, and the pursuit of research interests in an academic setting are all ways in which a Christian physician may, because of his native talents and the educational opportunities afforded him, please God. He should not take pride in the fact that these are all, in society's estimation, higher callings. God appoints the mole to dig and the cock to crow to His glory. Whatever our lot in life, it is equally acceptable to Him if done with an eye to His glory rather than to our own. The obverse is also true: the saving of souls by the most eloquent description of His graciousness is repugnant to Him if undertaken for the greater glory of the preacher.

Institutional goals

Granted that any talent exercised with an eye single to the glory of God is equally acceptable to Him, does not the present critical state of the world place a premium upon the more active forms of warning a dying generation? Surely, if this is the last hour of earth's history,

those who feel that God has called them to a career of research or of teaching must be mistaken. Not so! It is right and proper to devote institutional resources to institutional goals. To carry the gospel to the world is a most fitting goal for a religious institution—especially one that exists in the closing days of earth's history. But these are institutional goals, and God is at work in the world to save people, not institutions. It is the institutions that are facing nuclear annihilation. Persons are by God's grace potentially immortal.

As we please God, the activities in which each of us spends our days may apparently be coextensive with the goals of our church and hence may appear to be directed toward the preservation of an institution—but that, from the viewpoint of eternity, is inconsequential. The tasks we are called upon to perform are the means of fitting us for the presence of God or eternally disqualifying us for that privilege. If God has called us to research, then in His eternal wisdom that for us is the most effective means by which our ultimate end is to be achieved. To undertake an academic career for any lesser reason is to give hostage to success both here and hereafter.

To refuse God's appointed means of our perfection and attempt to assume some other role in the body of Christ because it is a "higher" calling or because the times demand it or because it is traditionally more acceptable for an Adventist young person is likewise to elevate means to the status of ends.

In the final analysis, research, broadly defined, is what the hereafter is all about. It is the one activity common to this life that can be carried almost unchanged into the world to come. As we cross the portals of that new existence sickness will vanish and the need for healers will disappear. The preacher will no longer carry the message to the unconverted: the pastor will no longer bind up the brokenhearted. The researcher and the teacher, however, will have "new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of body and mind and soul. All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's children."—*Education*, p. 307. ■

*The big-bang theory implies that at some time in the past all the matter in the universe was condensed into an unimaginably dense and hot primordial mass, which shortly exploded. The material that was flung outward became the galaxies, suns, and planetary systems we know today.

ARCHEOLOGY AND THE SABBATH

Is there any basis for the claim that the ancient Hebrews borrowed the seventh-day Sabbath from their idolatrous neighbors?

by Siegfried H. Horn

In making unwarranted claims about the existence of the Sabbath and the week in ancient times, some scholars have asserted that the Hebrews and the Bible writers borrowed the Sabbath from the ancient Babylonians. This view was probably expressed for the first time by Friedrich Delitzsch, the famous German Assyriologist, in a lecture presented January 13, 1902, in the presence of the German emperor Wilhelm II. Delitzsch said, "There can therefore be scarcely the shadow of a doubt that in the last resort we are indebted to this ancient nation [Babylon] on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris for the plenitude of blessings that flows from our day of Sabbath or Sunday rest."¹

In this article we will examine the evidence for this and similar claims. It will be seen that no ancient nation except the Hebrews observed a weekly day of rest, and that, at best, only a vague memory of an earlier, prehistoric existence of such a practice occurs in their records. It seems that the Sabbath had already been discarded by the ancient nations before they invented the art of writing and began to produce historical records. Except for the Hebrews, the peoples of antiquity were all idolaters and polytheists, and could hardly have been Sabbath observers at the same time in view of the fact that the Sabbath is a memorial to the true God.

Let us examine the evidence on which the claim that the ancients knew about the seven-day week and the Sabbath is based.

1. King Gudea of Lagash, a city state in Lower Mesopotamia, who ruled in the twenty-first century B.C., says in two inscriptions that the dedication of a temple was celebrated for seven days during which certain steles were set up in this temple.²

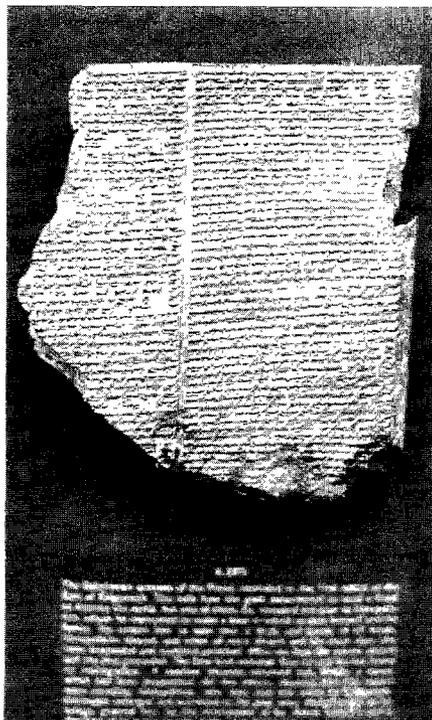
2. In Mesopotamian stories of the Flood—in the Akkadian versions—the actual Flood-producing storm lasted for seven days.³ In the Akkadian Flood story the first bird was sent forth from the ark seven days after the ship had settled down on Mount Nisir.⁴

3. The Assyrian hemerologies list



Above: Gudea, King of Lagash, city of Lower Mesopotamia, who ruled in the twenty-first century B.C.

Below: Akkadian Flood tablet with remarkable similarities to the Genesis account.



regulations of what should be done or avoided on certain days supposed to be either lucky or unlucky. In some of these hemerologies the seventh, fourteenth, nineteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days of each month are designated as unlucky, or "evil days." The ruler was not to eat cooked or smoked flesh, to change his garment, or to offer sacrifice. A physician should not heal, and no malediction should be pronounced.⁵ The Babylonian months alternated between twenty-nine and thirty days, with the result that intervals between the last evil day of one month and the first of the next might be either eight or nine days.

4. Mention must also be made of a certain Neo-Babylonian syllabary. These syllabaries are bilingual lists of Sumerian words and their Akkadian (Babylonian or Assyrian) equivalents. Some of them contain the names of the days of the month, from the first to the thirteenth. One, however, has entries only up to the seventh day, underneath which a line has been drawn. This document implies that the writer considered the first seven days of the month to be a unit.⁶

5. The strongest apparent evidence for the existence of the week and the observance of the seventh day in the Mesopotamian valley is a letter written during the second millennium B.C., in which the recipient is admonished to "complete the day of new moon, the seventh day, and the day of full moon, as you have been taught."⁷ H. and J. Lewy, however, have pointed out that the Akkadian expression translated "seventh day"—literally "seventh"—can only mean the "seventh [part of the year]."⁸

This is all the evidence for an early Babylonian week of seven days, and it is meager indeed, especially in view of the hundreds of thousands of cuneiform records recovered in the Mesopotamian valley. If the ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, or Assyrians possessed a week like that of the Hebrews in Biblical times, or gave to the seventh day of such a week special sanctity, they would certainly have left us a clearer record of it.

1. Now, let us examine these few alleged examples of the existence of the week among the ancient Mesopotamians. The dedication ceremonies of a

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temple lasting for seven days in Gudea's time is no proof whatever for the existence of a seven-day week, for records exist of many temples dedicated at other times, by other kings, in shorter or longer periods of time.

2. On the other hand, the mention of periods of seven days in the Sumerian and Akkadian Flood stories may be a vague reflection of the existence of a seven-day week at the time of the Flood, but certainly not for the time when these stories were written down. These stories are obviously based on true tradition about the historical Flood, which in Noah's time destroyed the earth and its inhabitants. Although these cuneiform Flood stories do not give an altogether accurate picture of what happened, and do contain wholly legendary and distorted concepts, the narratives are closer to the Biblical story than similar stories of other nations.

The Biblical account of the Flood mentions seven-day periods as intervals between the sending out of the various birds from the ark (Gen. 8:10, 12). Commentators generally agree that this repeated mention of seven-day periods points to Noah's acquaintance with the seven-day week. That there were seven-day periods in connection with the Deluge tradition seems to have been perpetuated in the memory of the ancient Sumerians and Babylonians, but they have the Flood-producing storm lasting seven days, instead of forty days as in the Bible (chap. 7:17), and the hero of the story sending the first bird out seven

days after his ship came to rest on a mountain, while the time in the Biblical report is again forty days (chap. 8:6, 7).

3. The meaning attached by the Akkadian hemerologies to the seventh day of their month certainly does not prove the existence of a sacred day of rest comparable to the Biblical Sabbath. In the first place, the seventh, fourteenth, nineteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days of the Babylonian month were not holy days, but unlucky days, or "evil days," on which certain acts were forbidden because they would bring disaster. This belief is similar to the superstitious notion that business transacted on Friday the thirteenth will not be profitable. The cuneiform records do not say that anyone should rest on those five particular days of the month, or refrain from work, or worship the gods. They simply admonish certain persons—kings, physicians, et cetera—to avoid doing certain specified things on those given "evil days." In the second place, these unlucky days did not follow one another in an unbroken sequence.

4. Why one of the many syllabaries giving the names of the month ends with the seventh day remains unexplained. This tablet may be an incomplete school exercise, or the unknown scribe may have left his work unfinished. At best it is weak evidence.

5. We must similarly plead ignorance with regard to the apparent instruction given in the Babylonian letter, to complete the "seventh day" along with the days of the new moon and the full moon.

Even if the translation "seventh-day [of the month]" be accepted as correct, which is very doubtful, we still do not know what religious or civil duties the sender of the letter had in mind. A lone and ambiguous admonition "to complete . . . the seventh-day" does not of itself constitute proof for the existence of a seven-day week or of the Sabbath.

Thus there is not the slightest valid indication that any of the ancient nations of the Mesopotamian valley possessed a seven-day week or considered the seventh day of such a supposed week as sacred. However, the records do seem to indicate that they still had a vague memory of the existence of a week of seven days in earlier, prehistoric times. The logical conclusion is that there had once been a seven-day week, but that it had been lost before historical records were kept, and that only an indistinct memory of it remained. 

¹ Friedrich Delitzsch, *Babel and Bible* (Chicago, 1903), p. 38.

² George A. Barton, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sumer and Akhad* (New Haven, 1929), pp. 187, 229, 253.

³ James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, 1955), pp. 44, 94.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁵ George A. Barton, *Archaeology and the Bible* (Philadelphia, 1944), p. 308.

⁶ A. L. Oppenheim, "Assyriological Gleanings II," in *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 93 (Feb., 1944), pp. 16, 17.

⁷ Alfred Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients*, 4th ed. (Leipzig, 1930), p. 75.

⁸ Hildegard and Julius Lewy, "The Origin of the Week and the Oldest West Asiatic Calendar," in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, vol. 17 (1943), p. 77.

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Give thyself unto reading

(Continued from page 7.)

nography or demonism, materialism or cynicism, can all be alleviated by the simple, practical, continuous application of the Bible.

Commenting on Paul's request that Timothy bring his cloak and books but especially the parchments (of the Old Testament), Spurgeon says: "'Even an apostle must read. . . . He is inspired, and yet he wants books! He has been preaching at least for thirty years, and yet he wants books! He has seen the Lord, and yet he wants books! He has had a wider experience than most men, and yet he wants books! He had been

caught up into the third heaven, and had heard things which it was unlawful for a man to utter, yet he wants books! He had written the major part of the New Testament, and yet he wants books! The apostle says to Timothy and so he says to every preacher, "Give thyself unto reading."'"—Quoted in Wilbur Smith, *Chats From a Minister's Library*, p. 177.

As ministers we have the privilege and responsibility to influence teachers, parents, and children to become once again "people of the Book." To do so, however, we must ourselves be "men of the Word."

"The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safeguard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to pre-

vent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions. . . . The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. . . .

"In order to endure the trial before them, they must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character, government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 593. 

CICADA—SYMBOL OF THE MINISTER’S WIFE?

An ancient tale illustrates the support role a shepherdess usually plays. But is she limited to just one-note chirping?

by Opal Hoover Young

In one of his delightful monologues, Robert Browning tells the tale of a bard competing with other minstrels for a prize. He not only had to sing but also had to accompany himself on the ancient seven-string lyre. The playing was of equal importance to the singing, and the judges carefully evaluated every tone of both voice and instrument. To paraphrase:

The bard was obviously going to be the winner. “When a mischief!” It happened that one of the strings on the lyre snapped, the string that sounded the soft love tone “whenever the bass asked the treble to atone for its somewhat somber drone.”

But all was not lost. A cicada (an insect), attracted by the music, left its thicket and “with its little heart on fire lighted on the crippled lyre.” When the singer with disconcerted finger sought the truant string, what did the cicada do but fling forth the note wanted. Aye, and even to the ending the cicada chirped at need and saved the singer from defeat.

The role played by the minister’s wife is as important to the total performance of shepherding the flock as was the little

cicada’s support to the minstrel whose lyre had a broken string. However, a young minister’s wife often finds her position a frightening one. What is she expected to do? What does the congregation want from her?

Youth is scared; older persons already in the role, often disenchanted. What *are* the qualifications for a “good minister’s wife”? What *does* the congregation want? or need? The answers are as many and as varied as the members in the congregation and are also dependent on the locale, personal tastes, and education of the members.

But isn’t the question itself largely the product of a philosophy of conformity—trying to turn out ministers’ wives with a preconceived, one-style cookie cutter? Stock considerations are “Does she play the piano and/or organ?” “Can she sing?” “A nurse is a good choice; she has the advantage of being able to get a job anywhere you *might* be located.”

Must a person play, sing, nurse, or what have you? Have the criteria makers lost sight, perhaps, of God’s part in working through a dedicated person of whatever talent? Or could it be that the

“bard” wants only to be assured that his own performance will be enhanced by a charming accompanist who can “shrill forth the F-sharp note” on the lyre as he thinks he needs it? And the wife with that clue becomes self-conscious in her role, striving to become a fashion-plate greeter in the foyer, standing by and looking for admiration and acceptance from the congregation.

When the Lord spoke to Moses about returning to Egypt to free Israel from captivity, Moses was reluctant to respond to the call. He felt he lacked the qualifications he needed—in his case, the gift of speech. The Lord did not try to convince him that he had that gift. All He asked was willingness. And so He queried: “Moses, what do you have in your hand?” “Only a staff,” Moses replied. Only a staff! But what miracles God worked with that staff in a dedicated hand!

The minister’s wife may enter the service with only a staff in her hand, only one talent. But if that talent is dedicated to the service of the Lord and to the people of the parish, then she need not be concerned about those mystic qualifications that “make a good minister’s wife.”

Moving from the one talent to the

Opal Hoover Young writes from Niles, Michigan.



many talents, or spiritual gifts, some ministers' wives have, there's another angle to the question that becomes apparent. Could it be that, while in some instances the members of a church expect too much from one person, they may also put up a fence of traditional expectations that keeps a shepherdess corralled in too narrow a role?

There are ministers' wives who have the ability to pluck several, or all, of the strings on the lyre, for gifts of the Spirit are given to all dedicated, reborn persons, whether they be minister, minister's wife, or those playing other roles. It does seem that the minister's wife should be allowed to use her own Spirit-endowed talents to meet the needs of the congregation—be her achievement the simple, one-note approach of the cicada or a professional multistringed service. Might she in some cases even have a major role of her own to perform instead of functioning merely as an accompanist to the "bard," important as that may be?

Perhaps congregations need to reconsider the role of the minister's wife. For example, what a part the wife of a minister could play if she were educated for, and experienced in, the art of giving Bible studies! Or if she were trained in counseling—a work more often effectively done for women by a woman.

In fact, leaders in some denominations feel that if ministers' wives were educated in the same kind of work as their husbands, a team approach could be used, resulting in a more effective pastorate. Often it is necessary for the minister's wife to find remunerative work to supplement the family income, especially if there are children of school age. With both husband and wife having the same educational background, the wife could be employed with her husband instead of having to seek work in some

"If ministers' wives were educated in the same kind of work as their husbands, a team approach could result in a more effective pastorate."

other area. The new kind of partnership made possible by the position of associate in pastoral care opens the way for a husband and wife both interested in the ministry to work together with united interests.

A minister husband (especially if he is working in an administrative capacity) is often called upon to spend much time away from home, and his wife is faced with a lonely existence. This situation is listed as a strong contributing factor to the high divorce rate found today among ministers, the wives usually leaving their too-occupied husbands. A team approach to ministry would alleviate this problem. Even when the wife is working full time at the many-faceted job of homemaking or is employed elsewhere, it would seem good if the two had similar educational backgrounds, including religion and theology courses. Mutual interests and education would lead to an ex-

change of ideas with strengthened results.

Of course, the whole question of what a congregation wants from a minister's wife has another side. It is just as fair to ask, "What does the minister's wife want from a congregation?" "What does *she* need?" The answer, first of all, would be friendliness and acceptance. The shepherdess should not be made to feel she is being scrutinized and evaluated before she even has a chance to get acquainted.

It is important for all to learn Christian charity and the great art of getting along with people. On these two platform planks hang all the problems of public relations. And they cover a multitude of shortcomings.

Working together with Christ to accomplish His work erases power struggles, eradicates dispirited melancholia about a supposed or real oversight or neglect, and closes the fellowship gap that hinders the work of the church.

Summing up, a word to the wise is always helpful—if not sufficient. *For the minister's wife*: "Be your own sweet self," a suggestion meant to encourage the beginner, isn't always the answer for the novice or the veteran. Dedication will lead her to study to show herself approved unto the Lord, as well as to the congregation, ever growing in grace and expertise. *For the congregation*: Appreciation and cooperation curb many disruptive fears and ward off deadly discouragement. *For the minister*: The cicada tale even dares advise the minister, for the story ends by questioning whether, when the bard's fame is recognized and celebrated, will he pay tribute to the cricket's part in making the performance perfect? Will he ungrudgingly share the highlights with his partner in performance?

Prayers from the parsonage

by Cherry B. Habenicht

Slanting sunbeams strike the Mason jars cooling on my kitchen table. Deep-gold peaches lie layered in translucent syrup. The *plop* of their lids being sealed is cheery music after a busy morning of canning.

These sturdy jars were already survivors of many moves when my mother passed them along to me. Since then they have been wrapped and packed,

taken out, and used time after time.

How often have they been checked for a chip or hairline crack, then scrubbed until they sparkled? Plunged into boiling water, they are finally ready to hold fruits and vegetables prepared at their peak.

Plain glass jars, designed for practical use, are transformed into something beautiful when filled. They brighten my shelves with stained-glass colors. Yet, much as I enjoy looking at the rows of

jars, I know their ultimate purpose is to be opened—opened and used, emptied so they can be refilled. Only then can people savor the bounties of summer.

Cleanse me, Father, of unrighteousness. Examine me for wholeness. Purify me from selfishness. When I am a fit vessel, fill me with what is good and seal it by Your Spirit. Then, as I am needed, empty me. Use me that others may taste of Your goodness, but make me full again.

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The Evangelistic Supply Center, sponsored by the General Conference Ministerial Association, in conjunction with the Review and Herald Publishing Association, has been established to provide pastors and evangelists with materials at the lowest possible cost. The following aids to your ministry are stocked at the Review and Herald and may be ordered directly by calling (202) 291-2035 or by writing the Evangelistic Supply Center, P.O. Box 4353, Washington, D.C. 20012. Other materials are also available. Write for a complete list and prices.

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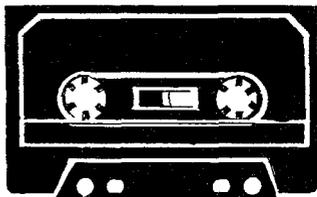
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Ministry, and others. Fifty-five books have been recorded on 551 cassettes. For further information please write directly to Ralph Martin, Oak Haven, Pullman, Michigan 49450.



and *Spirit of Prophecy* references. This book should prove helpful to all who would explore the riches of these subjects. Order from E. W. Hon, Weimar Institute, Box A, Weimar, California 95736.

reason. Kaarlo Toivio, 62, was standing in a heated pool when an assistant handed him a microphone. There was a noise like an explosion, and the pastor collapsed. He died while being taken to the hospital.

Please exercise extreme caution around electrical equipment during baptisms.

New for children

Judy Burton, a pastor's wife, has developed two new kits that will be of real interest to parents and those who work with children.

The Family Worship Kit, designed for preschoolers, will change family worship from "Do we have to?" to "Hurry up, Mommy and Daddy!" It is modeled after the activities the child is familiar with in Sabbath school and contains complete materials for many evenings of family worship. Other uses include emergency leadership in a Sabbath school where no materials are available and missionary contacts with parents of VBS children.

Each activity is individually bagged with its own instruction card and song. The whole kit is packaged in a convenient, permanent container that is easy to take along or store.

The Missionary Kit is designed to help small children (and their mothers) witness of their love for Jesus to neighbors and friends in natural, inoffensive ways that are nonthreatening to those who are basically insecure about witnessing. The kit leads the child step by step into a planned program of sharing his or her faith.

Order either of these kits directly from Judy Burton, P.O. Box 416, Bourbon, Missouri 65441. The Worship Kit costs \$10.80 postpaid; the Witnessing Kit costs \$5.80 postpaid.

Limited edition

Uriah Smith, best known for his scholarly prophetic masterpiece, *Daniel and the Revelation*, published in 1897 another book, *Here and Hereafter*, which has probably never been equaled for its powerful and exhaustive presentation of the subject of death and the soul.

Amazing Facts, Inc., has now reprinted this 360-page book, complete and unabridged, with a foreword by H. M. S. Richards, Sr. After eighty years this literary gem is available once more in a limited edition. A *must* for every student, pastor, or evangelist. Price is \$6.95.

Order directly from Amazing Facts, Box 3194, Baltimore, Maryland 21228. Payment must accompany order.

Useful booklet

The Pastor Dispenses is a small 32-page booklet filled with Bible references and brief *Spirit of Prophecy* statements designed to meet the many needs that arise in the Christian's experience. Pastor Joseph S. Damazo has brought together hand-picked gems that offer

relevant counsel and guidance for today's personal needs. Among these are: feeling unworthy, fear of unforgiven sin, facing surgery, anxiety over children, and many others. The booklet is ideal for use with shut-ins, the bereaved, the discouraged, the troubled, the lonely, and in hospital visitation. In fact, pastors will find constant opportunities to point individuals to the inspirational counsels in this booklet. Published by Pacific Press, it is available at your Adventist Book Center.

Health classics

A Call to Personal Ministry has been specially compiled as a study aid to the six volumes of *Spirit of Prophecy* writings in the area of health. The purpose of the book is to emphasize the importance of medical missionary work and its place in the gospel message and the health message as an integral part of present truth.

The book contains twenty-five studies on these and related topics. The studies have been purposely set out in detail in order to give the reader immediate access to important Bible

Sermons available

A set of twenty sermons for lay evangelists is newly available from the Lay Activities Department. The 324 pages of material are punched for use in an 8½-by-5½ three-ring notebook, and provide both outlines and full contents for each sermon. An additional advantage is that these sermons are coordinated with the Encounter audio-visual series for those who want to use illustrations on the screen.

Order through your local conference lay activities department. The price is \$2.50 per set, or \$5.00 with the binder.

Baptistry electrocution

It has happened again. Several years ago a Seventh-day Adventist minister was electrocuted by touching a microphone while standing in the baptistry. Now from Stockholm, Sweden, comes the report of a Pentecostal pastor suffering the same fate and apparently for the same

RECOMMENDED READING

ELLEN G. WHITE PERIODICAL ARTICLES, SUBJECT INDEX

Ellen G. White Estate, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C., 1980, 1,072 pages, \$19.75.

Ellen White wrote some 4,600 articles that appeared in such journals as the *Review*, *Signs of the Times*, *The Youth's Instructor*, and *The Health Reformer*. Of these, 75 to 80 percent have not been reproduced in currently available Ellen G. White books. Now, for the first time, the White Estate is making available a copy of the card index for this valuable spiritual material. This new volume is the only index available today to the journal articles. It makes accessible information that until now was obtainable only in the White Estate and the several Ellen G. White Research Centers.

Russell Holt

GOD'S WAY TO A NEW YOU

Dick Winn, Pacific Press, Mountain View, California, 1979, 171 pages, \$1.00.

Using the analogy of restoring antique cars, Winn unfolds the encouraging story of how God restores sinners. Replete with down-to-earth illustrations from real life in the now, the book goes back to the original rebellion in heaven to emphasize the good news of Christ's coming to earth to bring salvation and restoration. The accent is on how God can do for us that which we cannot do for ourselves.

Winn shows how God's great plan for ancient Israel will ultimately succeed through spiritual Israel. This topic leads into a discussion of the messages of the three angels of Revelation 14, with

special attention to the great truth of righteousness by faith, and the assurance of Christ's second advent.

The closing chapters deal with the completed restoration as presented in Revelation 20-22.

Various elements in the book encourage thoughtful reading—frequent lists of provocative questions, true or false statements, and line drawings.

Winn's background includes teaching and authoring religious textbooks. He is presently associated with Weimar Institute, in northern California, a unique health and educational enterprise.

Orley Berg

A BOLD ONE FOR GOD

Charles G. Edwards, Pacific Press, Mountain View, California, 1979, 160 pages, \$4.50.

FRAU LUTHER

Yvonne Davy, Pacific Press, Mountain View, California, 1979, 126 pages, \$4.50.

The story of the Reformation is one that continues to inspire hearts to courage and loyalty. These two books, written in narrative style with youth as well as adults in mind, portray vividly some of the great events that are the heritage of Protestantism.

A Bold One for God is a gripping account of John Knox, one of the lesser known Reformation figures. His flight from England just in time to escape the imprisonment and death that came to Lady Jane Grey, Ridley, Latimer, and others provides action and excitement; his work in Geneva and subsequently in Scotland makes an absorbing account. It was he who declared, "Give me Scotland or I die." Knox was not only a Reformer but also a

great statesman and patriot.

Charles Edwards, an ordained minister and public relations secretary of the Northern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, writes from a background of extended research in this period of church history. He has packed a tremendous amount of historical data into the book's 160 pages, and has done so in a style that keeps the interest.

Frau Luther is the equally exciting story of Katharina von Bora, a nun who with eleven others escaped convent life to pursue, at the risk of their lives, the truths of the Reformation. Ultimately Kathe became the wife of Martin Luther and thus "first lady of the Reformation." Yvonne Davy, the author, has gathered into this small volume a wealth of information bearing on the exciting experiences of Dr. Luther, but from the unusual perspective of his oft-forgotten wife.

Orley Berg

LET'S FAN THE FLAME

Dick Jewett, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C., 1979, 142 pages, \$5.95.

In some ways this is a disturbing book because the author asks some disturbing questions—What is the mission of the church? Where does the laity fit in? How can we put it all together and finish the task? Apparently inspired by the document "Evangelism and Finishing God's Work," adopted by the 1976 Annual Council, this author ably points up the fact that that document has not yet had the impact on the church that is potentially inherent in it.

The cover states, "This is

a book that may not please all, but it will prompt the reader to admit that present attitudes, incentives, methods, and goals are, in many cases, in need of examining, and revising." Although Jewett seems sometimes to talk to ministers and at other times to the laity, the entire book ought to be pondered by both. Jewett presents more than a challenge to finish the Adventist task; he deals with the nuts and bolts of getting it done.

He presently serves as campus pastor at Auburn Adventist Academy, Auburn, Washington. Youth counseling is a special interest; he currently writes such a counseling column for *These Times* magazine, and has conducted radio talk shows and hot-line telephone service for troubled youth.

Orley Berg

MINISTRY

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