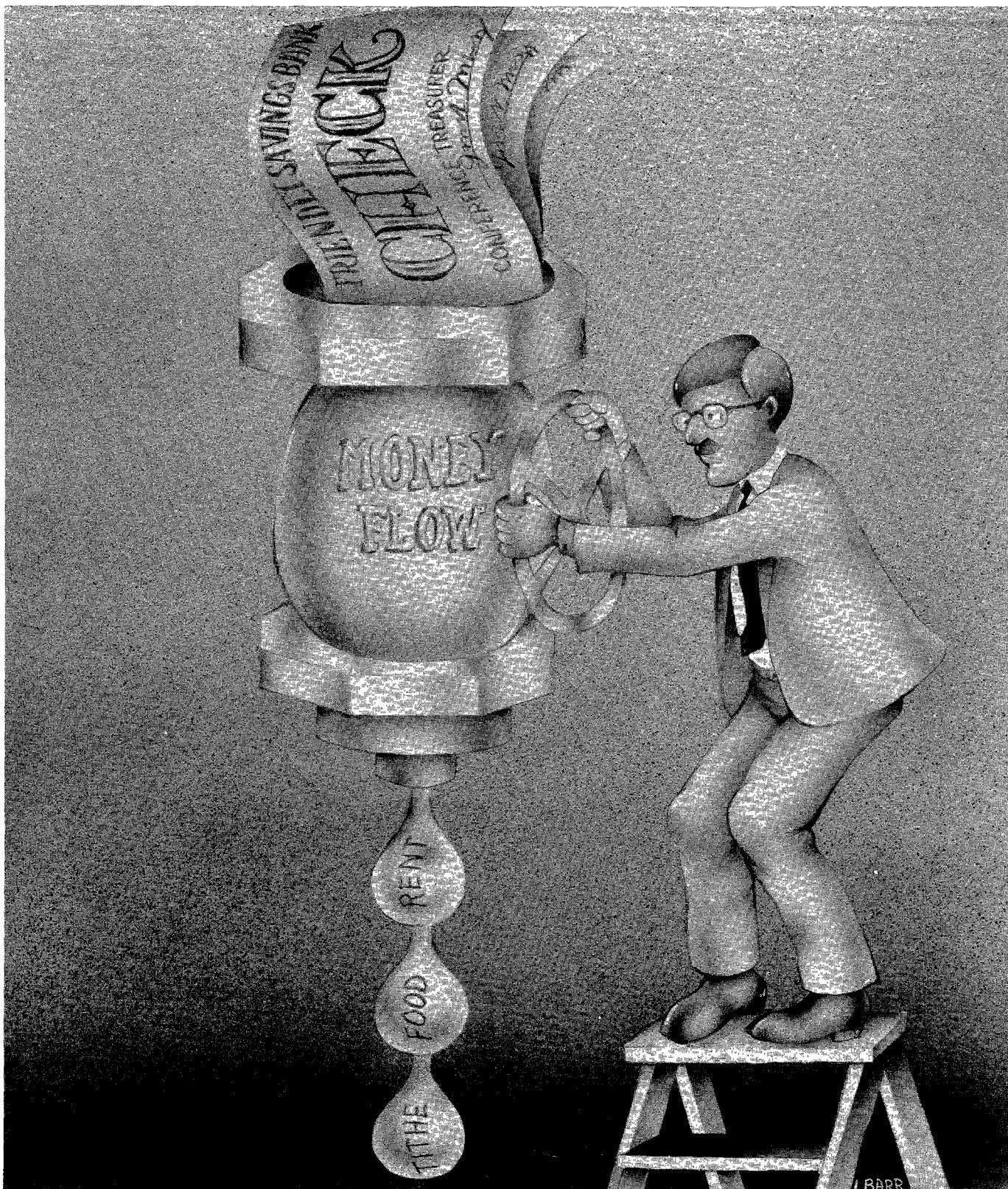


Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

December 1985



Controlling Your Paycheck

Our response

We have received many letters concerning the two articles we published dealing with the nature of Christ (June, 1985). Our small staff cannot give a detailed reply to every letter received. And space prohibits printing all the letters or even segments of all of them. This general response in question-and-answer form covers most of the core questions and statements made in the letters. A representative selection of letters follows our response.

1. Why did the articles appear with pseudonyms?

Unfortunately, prejudice may prevent some individuals from reading a controversial doctrinal article if the reader knows the author's position and disagrees with it. Dr. Herb Douglass and Dr. Norman Gulley, well-known scholars, were the authors. Their positions on the nature of Christ are also well known. We used pseudonyms in an attempt to get all readers to consider the evidence on both sides of the issue thoughtfully, prayerfully, and in an unprejudiced manner. In the August, 1985, issue we printed rebuttals with the authors' names attached. We regret we failed to give, in an editorial note, the reason why we used pseudonyms.

2. Why would MINISTRY publish pro and con articles on a doctrine that has been established in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

The General Conference Archives has furnished us with historical materials on our "fundamental beliefs." We have studied these, specifically concentrating on the nature of Christ. Apparently the first discussion of doctrinal statements appeared in the August 15, 1854, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. Five statements appear under the heading "Leading Doctrines Taught by the Review." They say nothing about the nature of Christ. The December, 1871, General Conference session evidently held doctrinal discussions. The January 2, 1872, *Review* contains an interesting type of

doctrinal listing in the form of resolutions. Again nothing is said about the nature of Christ. In 1872 the Battle Creek steam press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association issued "A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists." The opening paragraph discloses the attitude of our church leaders toward having a creed. "In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them."

Twenty-five declarations of belief under roman numeral headings follow. The second declares "that there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist; that He took on Him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race; that He dwelt among men full of grace and truth . . ."

Two comments are in order. Although church leaders and members may have generally agreed as to a particular view on the nature of Christ, the statement itself, which quotes from Hebrews 2:16, does not specifically delineate whether Christ had a "sinful" or "sinless"—pre-Fall or post-Fall—nature.

Second, according to the preamble SDA leaders held this declaration to be of no authority. So even if it had contained a specific delineation of Christ's nature, that statement would not have been official.

According to the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, "the first serious attempt at a church manual was made in 1882, when a committee consisting of W. H. Littlejohn, J. O. Corliss, and H. A. St. John was appointed by the General Conference to prepare a church manual, to be printed first serially for discussion and criticism (13 articles came out in the

Review and Herald from June 5 to August 28, 1883)."

The fundamental principles of Seventh-day Adventists found in this document use the same wording on Christ as appeared in the 1872 declaration.

The July 31, 1883, *Review and Herald* contained an article setting forth the qualifications that are requisite to church membership. While stating other doctrinal tests, it says nothing about the nature of Christ.

During the formative years of 1844, 1888, 1889, 1905, and 1907, different unofficial lists of beliefs were published. Wherever these lists mention the nature of Christ, they use the same wording as noted above in the 1872 declaration, namely: ". . . He took on Him the nature of the seed of Abraham."

It was not until 1932 that an official SDA church manual appeared, containing the first official list of doctrines. It repeated the list found in the 1931 *SDA Yearbook*. Fundamental Belief No. 3, on the nature of Christ, states, "While retaining His divine nature, He took upon Himself the nature of the human family, lived on the earth as a man, . . ."

The "Summary of Fundamental Beliefs" adopted by the Autumn Council of 1941 for the uniform baptismal certificate found its way into the *Church Manual* in 1942. It contains nothing at all dealing with the nature of Christ.

It should be noted that the 1946 General Conference session declared that no change may be made in our statement of fundamental beliefs except by the General Conference in session, after duly publicized notice of such purpose.

The *Church Manual* was revised from time to time to keep the contents in step with the development of the world work, yet we find no change in our doctrinal beliefs relative to the nature of Christ. In fact, the 1976 *Church Manual* Statement of Belief No. 3 on the deity and nature of Christ is identical to that of the 1932 statement.

In conclusion, we fail to find any
(Continued on page 25)

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MINISTRY (ISSN 0026-5314),
the international journal of the
Seventh-day Adventist
Ministerial Association © 1985,
is published monthly by the
General Conference of Seventh-day
Adventists and printed by the Review
and Herald Publishing Association,
55 West Oak Ridge Drive,
Hagerstown, MD 21740, U.S.A.
Subscriptions: US\$19.95 a year
in U.S., US\$22.95 a year elsewhere.
Single copy: US\$2.00. Member
Associated Church Press.
Second-class postage paid at
Hagerstown, Maryland. **Postmaster:**
send address changes to MINISTRY,
55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagers-
town, Maryland 21740. Editorial
Office: 6840 Eastern Avenue NW.,
Washington, D.C. 20012.
Stamped, self-addressed envelope
should accompany unsolicited
manuscripts.

Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

December 1985/Volume 58/Number 12



COVER: LOEL BARR

Controlling Your Paycheck/4. Financial worries can cause problems for anyone. V. L. Roberts shares four basic principles of personal finance that can help take the worry out of making ends meet.

Church Growth: Catalyst or Method?/7. A proper understanding of Church Growth principles will help you make evangelism more than a once-a-year campaign. Borge Schantz's analysis of what Church Growth really means is designed to help your church grow.

The Long Campaign/10. Is it really possible to draw a crowd several nights a week for six or seven weeks? Even in the city? Owen Troy reports results of two recent campaigns that demonstrate that it is both possible and profitable to try.

MINISTRY Reports

World Ministers Council/12.

General Conference Session/15.

Women for Christ/19.

Annual Council—1985/20.

Sphere of Influence/24. Does everyone in your sphere of influence know of the Saviour who came to live and die for us? Eleanor Zoellner's story of her experience will encourage you to share the blessed story this Christmas and all year long.

Harvest '90 Objectives/18
Shepherdess/24
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Recommended
Reading/32

Controlling your paycheck

Following four basic principles of personal finance will help free you from financial concerns so you can direct your energies elsewhere. Here also are a simplified budgeting plan and practical suggestions as to how you can save money.

Keeping Church Finance Christian □ 12 V. L. Roberts



When you entered the ministry I am sure it was with a clear understanding that you would never become rich by doing so. You were well aware that your salary as a pastor would not enable you to amass any degree of wealth. Your faith in the Lord, though, led you to believe that He would not call you to

proclaim the gospel of salvation to the world and then abandon you to a life of poverty.

In 3 John 2 are recorded these words: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." The Lord did not exclude pastors when He made that declaration. He wishes above all things that you prosper. To prove His wish for you He makes this promise: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

In view of the Lord's commitment, if you are not enjoying prosperity, it could be because you are not managing properly the funds that the Lord provides to supply your need. If you are to enjoy His blessings, you must adhere to certain basic principles of personal finance. You must (1) put God first, (2) establish a reserve, (3) keep your expenses within your income, and (4) carefully control buying on credit.

V. L. Roberts is the stewardship director for the Southwestern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Put God first

You put God first when you lovingly obey the command "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

The Lord is deeply concerned about you and your finances. He promises that if you will return to Him one tenth of your income (the tithe—and verse eight of the same chapter adds the offering), He will pour His blessings abundantly upon you.

Many can testify that nine tenths of their income with the Lord's blessings far surpasses anything they could do with their whole income without His blessings. Think of it. Each month the Lord will pour you out a blessing that you'll not have enough room to receive! That's the promise.

In managing your finances, putting God first must take priority. (Read Luke 6:38 and note an additional blessing the Lord has promised.)

Establish a reserve

Your savings program should have next priority to your tithe and offerings. "Every week [month] a portion of your wages should be reserved and in no case touched unless suffering actual want. . . . With economy you may place something at interest."¹

Pay yourself first. Decide on an amount you would like to have in your savings account. Consider that amount a bill and make payments on it each month. Be your number one creditor.

"If you're trying to form good savings habits, the old rule is still the best: Pay yourself first. Skim your savings right off the top of your pay before you meet other bills."²

Never allow yourself to get into a position where all of your earnings must be used either in living expenses or in debt payments. You need a reserve to cover unexpected expenses such as car repairs, uninsured losses, home repairs, replacement of appliances, and unexpected medical expenses.

How much should you save? Only you can decide. Many recommend that you have on hand an amount equal to two or

Pay yourself first. Decide on an amount you would like to have in your savings account. Consider that amount a bill and make payments on it each month. Be your number one creditor.

three months' income.

Where should you save? It is very important that you select the best institution available. Keep these considerations in mind:

Safety. What happens if the institution goes bankrupt? Is your deposit insured?

Liquidity. How accessible are your funds—how long will it take to get them if you need them?

Yield. You want the highest returns possible on your deposits. Try to avoid the regular checking and passbook savings accounts. Consult your banker about the NOW checking account. The NOW account is a checking account that pays interest. Other savings programs also pay a much better interest rate than passbook savings. Talk with your banker about the types of accounts mentioned in the table on page 6.

Keep expenses within income

Now you've come to the point in disbursing your monthly income that requires adroit management: providing for the needs of the family while remaining within the limits of your income. We commonly call this "making ends meet."

Your first thought may be that you need a budget. That's a good thought. But how many families are willing to be locked into a budget? Very few, if any. And that is understandable, because a budget can be time-consuming, tedious, and even worthless unless you are willing to work with it and keep within its guidelines.

There is a form of budgeting called *controlled spending* that works very well for the busy family. It's not as good as a regular operating budget, but it does help you place some control on your income. Get a pencil and paper and follow as I show you how it works.

Figure your total take-home pay for the month and list it as number 1. Calculate your tithe and offerings and add to that figure the amount you plan for savings for the month. List that total as number 2. Subtract number 2 from number 1 and list the difference as number 3.

Add all of your fixed expenses such as the payments on your home, car, and furniture, and all of the bills that you pay at a fixed amount each month. List that total as number 4. Subtract number 4 from number 3 and enter the difference as number 5.

Number 5 is your operating fund for the month. Out of it you take care of all flexible expenses such as food, clothing, and transportation. Keep a close eye on the amount in number 5. It will have to last until the end of the month.

With this method you can easily tell if you can afford another bill or not. Each new bill cuts down on your operating fund. If you find you do not have enough for your flexible expenses, then you have too many bills. Cut back as soon as you can. If you have more than enough for your flexible expenses, then you can buy some of the extras that you have wanted, or you can increase your savings.

children. Moreover, the statistics say that she will probably outlive her husband, which means that she may someday have to look after the finances all by herself, and they will probably be reduced finances at that."⁴

Carefully control buying on credit

"Many, very many, have not so educated themselves that they can keep their expenditures within the limit of their income. They do not learn to adapt themselves to circumstances, and they borrow and borrow again and again and become overwhelmed in debt, and consequently they become discouraged and disheartened."⁵

I'm not suggesting that you must rule out credit buying entirely. Credit has its advantages and disadvantages. It can be a blessing or a burden. It is how you use it that counts. Buying on credit gives you

Not exactly a budget, this is a practical money management system that makes budgeting unnecessary and that practically insures a comfortable lifestyle and allows for financial growth."

Don and Joan German, coauthors of *The Only Money Book for the Middle Class*, call this plan "budgeting without a budget." They comment, "Not exactly a budget, this is a practical, easy-to-live-with money management system that makes budgeting unnecessary and that practically insures a comfortable lifestyle and allows for financial growth."³

Here is a statement that may startle you. John C. Banker says, "In general, it is recommended that the minister's wife keep the financial books. She has more day-to-day contact with the spending program, for it is she who goes to the supermarket and chooses clothing for the

some financial flexibility. Using it, you can buy things you need when you do not have enough cash at the moment. You can buy during special sales and save money, even though you cannot pay for the item until the next month. Credit allows you to use things while you pay for them. And credit helps you make big purchases (furniture, appliances) that you could not pay for all at once.

Buying on credit causes problems when you buy *impulsively*. That is, when you make spur-of-the-moment purchases, buying something that you don't need and haven't planned for. And buying on credit causes problems when

Stretch your budget

1. *Save on food.* Your food dollar is one of the largest items in your budget. It can also be the most difficult to control. There are two places you can go broke—the stock market and the supermarket.

- * Buying wisely is like increasing your income. The money saved by watching for bargains, making out lists and following them, exercising self-discipline, and applying other principles of consumer economics can be put to excellent use in other ways.

- * Consider buying the economy size of products you use a lot. This is especially important with nonfood items, where savings can often be as high as 15 or 20 percent.

- * Consider buying store brands, which are often cheaper than those of major food companies. They can save you as much as 10 percent on food items and another 10 percent on nonedibles, often with no difference in quality.

- * Consolidate your shopping trips to avoid driving to the store repeatedly for separate items. A running grocery list posted in the kitchen is helpful.

- * Recognize that supermarket managers are smart business people. They put the staples you're sure to buy on the bottom shelves and the expensive gourmet treats at eye level.

- * Know the difference between wants and needs.

- * Watch every item as it is rung up. Cashiers make mistakes, especially on sale items.

2. *Save on fuel.*

- * Drive at a lower speed—it gives you more miles per gallon.

- * Avoid rapid acceleration. Jackrabbit starts and sudden stops can increase your gasoline bills as much as 25 percent.

- * Keep your engine well tuned.

- * Keep your tires properly inflated.

- * Unload your trunk. Hauling excess baggage puts an added burden on the engine. All you need are a spare tire and a few basic tools.

3. *Save through energy consciousness.*

- * Your most expensive appliance is your hot-water heater. Insulate it and lower the temperature set on its thermostat.

- * Turn off the light when you are not in the room.

- * A leaky faucet can consume six thousand gallons of water a year. Leaking toilets consume close to one thousand gallons of water per month. Repair or replace.

- * Stop the dishwasher before it begins the drying cycle and then open the washer a crack. The heat and circulating air will normally dry the dishes.

4. *Save when you buy a car.*

- * Decide on what you need before you go to a dealer. Never make a decision to purchase under pressure or in a hurry.

- * Never trade a car before you finish paying for it. Hold on to it as long as you can after you finish paying for it.

- * Never buy a car on payments extending more than thirty-six months.

- * Shop for financing with the same care and concern that you use in selecting the car. Shop for the lowest interest rate possible.

- * Be very careful when purchasing a secondhand automobile. Purchase a used car from a friend you know and can trust or from a new car dealer who accepts trade-ins from customers who buy a new car every year or two.

- * Never buy a car "as is" unless you are planning to restore it.

- * Avoid, if possible, shopping for a used car during the peak summer season when millions of other people are competing against you.

Bank and money market funds

	Liquidity	Safety	Yield
Bank money accounts	Good	Excellent	Good
SuperNOW accounts	Good	Excellent	Fair
Money-market funds	Excellent	Good	Good
Certificates of deposit	Poor	Excellent	Excellent

Adapted from *Personal Money Management*, p. 33.

you buy *compulsively*, spending when you are depressed in order to feel better; going out and "blowing" a lot of money on unneeded items.

There are super-special, silver-tongued salespeople who could sell ice cubes to Eskimos. From such turn away—politely. And remember, television commercials are put together by professionals who are trained to make you buy what you do not want or need. Beware!

Never borrow the money to take a vacation unless your doctor recommends that you go for health reasons. If you do not have the money, wait (and save) for next year.

Consider carefully the following questions before you make any major purchase:⁶

1. Do I really need it?
2. Have I given God an opportunity to supply it within the price we can afford?
3. Will it advance my spiritual growth?
4. Is this purchase motivated by a "love" of things?
5. How long can I wait for it?
6. Do I have doubts about it?
7. Is it a good investment?
8. Can I pay cash, or will this purchase put me in debt?
9. Is it meaningful to my family?
10. Will the purchase please God?

Remember that "God tests us here, by committing to us temporal possessions, that our use of these may show whether we can be entrusted with eternal riches."⁷

In financial circles you often hear the term *the bottom line*. The bottom line in personal finances is this: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5, 6).

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 396.

² Thomas E. Bailard et al., *Personal Money Management* (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1984).

³ New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1983.

⁴ *Personal Finances for Ministers* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press).

⁵ White, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

⁶ Taken from Don Crane, *Family Finance Seminar Manual* (Washington, D. C.: Church Ministries Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists).

⁷ Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 22.

Church Growth: catalyst or method?

Church Growth is not just another way of saying "evangelism." Properly understood, the term includes research, planning, strategy, and a coordinated thrust at discipling those inside and outside the church. Here are practical suggestions on how you can apply Church Growth in your congregation.

□ by Borge Schantz



When Donald McGavran coined the term Church Growth, he intended that it would replace words such as mission and evangelism, which had lost their relevance through overuse and misuse to describe everything from paving the church parking lot to aiding revolutionary guerrillas. McGavran used his new term

to describe the principles he had discovered through research into what methods worked best in winning disciples for Christ.

Church Growth should not be taken as a synonym for soul winning, evangelism, or mission. Rather, it is a science that involves careful study of the methods used in Christian outreach and of the people the outreach is trying to win. Its purpose is to arrive at recommendations as to which methods will procure the best results.

Until 1972 Church Growth methodology was applied mostly to foreign mission work, but in recent years churches in the United States and other Christian countries have begun to apply its principles, often with great success. In

Borge Schantz has served as a pastor and church administrator in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, and currently is professor of missiology at Newbold College, Bracknell, England.

Seventh-day Adventist circles, Church Growth has been warmly received by many, while some have criticized it for being too results-oriented, and others have treated it like just another program for evangelism. How should we relate to this movement? Does it bode boon or bane for Seventh-day Adventist pastors? And how can we use it if it is boon?

The essence of Church Growth

First of all, I would like to examine some of Church Growth's salient points, then look at how they can be applied by Seventh-day Adventists. I have taken my list of five main points from the writings of one of Church Growth's leading advocates, C. Peter Wagner.¹

1. *A combination of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the responsibility of man must result in the growth of the church.* God expects His church to preach the gospel to every creature and to persuade men to be disciples of Jesus Christ. This task is for the whole church, not just a few

dedicated members. All who are baptized are baptized to witness. The challenge of the unreached millions demands that all Christians shoulder the task.

Numerical growth is not just one task among many; it must have high priority. God is glorified when new members are added to the fold. Effectiveness is measured not in terms of decisions for Christ, nor in people warned or present at evangelistic meetings. What counts is the addition of actual disciples to the Christian church. In evangelism it is not what should have happened, or what the evangelist hoped would have happened, or what was planned to have happened, that counts. The soul winner, in humility and honesty, should realistically face what actually happened and learn from every experience. And it should be kept in mind that in the gospel it is revealed that God is not pleased with: fishing without catching (John 21); an empty banquet table (Matthew 22); sowing without reaping (Mark 4); a fig tree

In evangelism it is not what was planned to have happened that counts. The soul winner, in humility and honesty, should realistically face what actually happened and learn from every experience.

without figs (Luke 13); lost sheep outside the fold (Matthew 18); a lost coin (Luke 15). The implication is that God expects His church, institutions, ministers, missionaries, and laity to produce and increase the number of disciples.

The school of Church Growth has been accused of "numberitis" (an excessive preoccupation with numbers) and "numerolatriy" (worship of numbers). McGavran, however, answers such accusations by stating that "the Church is made up of countable people, and there is nothing particularly spiritual in not counting them."²

When numerical growth has top priority, educational, social, and medical programs have significance only as they result in adding members to the church. It is interesting that McGavran was deeply involved in educational and medical work while in the mission field, but that he pays scant attention to these missionary tools in his writings.

2. *Clear objectives are necessary if we are to be obedient to the Great Commission.* Goals should be discerned from the Bible, put forth in plain terms, and used to measure achievements. No Christian

manpower and finances are always limited in the Christian cause. Methods may vary from place to place and time to time, but if the result is growth, the method is approved as long as it is in harmony with a Biblical theology of evangelism. Every outreach program should be scrutinized regularly to find out whether it is still the most efficient way.

4. *The social and behavioral sciences have much to contribute to evangelistic planning.* As soul winners we must continually study and be aware of what is going on in the world in general and in our area in particular. Activities of economic, political, social, cultural, and religious character affect those we are striving to disciple. Understanding events and implications can help us choose the best strategy for reaching the winnable people in our area.

Social sciences such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology, rightly understood and used, can further the effectiveness of soul-winning activities. One well-known sociological principle applied by the Church Growth school is the homogeneous-unit principle. McGavran puts it this way: "Men like to

ness. While this kind of objective scrutiny may seem painful or even disillusioning at first, evangelistic plans based upon the objective knowledge gained will lead to results.

Research must be kept up to date. Effective strategies and methods must be updated constantly in the light of new findings and developments. This is especially true today as our Christian witness must be carried out in the midst of constant revolutionary changes that affect every aspect of our lives.

The McGavran Church Growth school is radical in its approaches. It is convinced that unfruitfulness is a curable disease. The cures are "diagnostic research, prescriptive treatment and strategic care."⁴ It is not a mystic word or magic method that, when applied, automatically will give results in soul winning. Church Growth is, as C. Peter Wagner says, "that science which studies the planting, multiplication, function and health of Christian churches as they relate to the effective implementation of God's commission to 'make disciples of all nations' (Matt. 28:19, 20). Church Growth seeks to combine the eternal theological principles of God's Word concerning the expansion of the church with the best insights of contemporary social and behavioral sciences, employing as its initial frame of reference the foundational work done by Donald McGavran."

Weaknesses in Church Growth principles and procedures have been pointed out by opponents. We have referred to some in this article. Generally the Church Growth school is accused of lacking sound Biblical, theological backing for some of its principles. Of course, the past thirty years' history of the Church Growth movement, with more than two thousand students and many Church Growth institutes, has done a great deal to eliminate some of the excesses of the Church Growth school of thought.

Adventists and Church Growth

What can Seventh-day Adventists learn from Church Growth principles? It

The command is to make disciples. And whenever a true disciple is made, the church grows. Any method that falls short of making new converts is inferior and in need of correction.

need work under a shadow of doubt as to God's will and objective. Using terms such as "it was not God's will that this effort should succeed" could be a thinly disguised rationalization of evangelistic failure. The command is to make disciples. And whenever a true disciple is made, the church grows. Any method that falls short of making new converts is inferior and in need of correction.

3. *A sound, effective strategy for accomplishing the Biblical objectives must be developed.* Evangelistic methods must reflect Christian maturity and competence. Efficiency is important because

become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers."³

5. *Research is essential for optimum church growth.* Research should lead to an adequate understanding of the target audience, the needs of those in it, the methods available for reaching them, what methods are currently producing good results, and how church structure affects growth. It should not be limited to methods in use within one's own church or country.

Honest research will define methods that work, those that don't work, and circumstances that may affect effective-

Perhaps our need is not new methods, but rather a critical, constructive look at what we already have, and then an upgrading, updating, or perhaps modification of the methods to meet present situations.

is my feeling that we often look upon the Church Growth phenomenon as simply another method to win souls. In areas where our church has a zero growth rate, some have embraced Church Growth as if it were a magic formula to fill pews that are slowly emptying. They perceive Church Growth as merely a new term for evangelism and miss much of what McGavran and his school stand for. No doubt, there are methods to be gained from Church Growth, but it is much more than a method. It is a model whereby all outreach methods are critically analyzed. As a church we have developed a legion of evangelistic methods. Almost every department of the General Conference has detailed a variety of outlines on how to win people. Perhaps our greatest need is not new methods but rather a critical, constructive look at what we already have in our arsenal, and then an upgrading, updating, or perhaps modification of the methods to meet present situations. An evangelistic approach that gave good results thirty years ago is not necessarily efficient today, even among the same people in the same place. And here Church Growth principles, rightly used, can help out. As a scientific tool it will honestly reveal weaknesses, suggest how to update the methods, and point to winnable people.

An application of Church Growth principles on a given evangelistic method will not guarantee results. Soul winning is a delicate, sensitive, and complex science. Many factors play a role. However, Church Growth can help to eliminate some of the uncertainties and increase the probability of good results.

Pastors and Church Growth

The major work of soul winning is, of course, carried out at the local church level. So an important question is How can the local pastor apply Church Growth principles to his work? I would suggest four main ways.

1. All activities of the local church should aim at winning souls. The pastor, with the church board, should evaluate

all programs the local church is involved in. This should include prayer meeting, Sabbath school, and even business meetings. They should ascertain whether any member would be comfortable in inviting relatives, friends, neighbors, and colleagues to the church. The people responsible for the church building and facilities should aim at making them as attractive as possible and plan a maximum use of the building in outreach programs.

2. The pastor should ascertain his own spiritual gifts and his strengths and weaknesses. In doing this, he must always bear in mind that every pastor should strive to excel in five areas. The pastor of the local church in the Seventh-day Adventist tradition is a leader, teacher, preacher, shepherd, and evangelist. The congregation expects him to be competent in all of these areas. He should seek all of these gifts.

The first four of these gifts are largely church oriented and are essential for helping the pastor lead the congregation in preparing for Church Growth. The gift of evangelism is of prime importance in implementing plans for growth. Steady, sound Church Growth takes place best where evangelism is an integral part of the pastor's and church's ministry throughout the year. Here the pastor must understand his or her own strengths and weaknesses. Some are public evangelists who can draw and reap big audiences in hired halls. Others are more effective when working out from the church, using its pulpit as a basis. And others' strength is in personal evangelism in the homes or with small groups. Not all these methods are equally spectacular but all can give good results. Manpower, energy, and finances can be wasted if a David tries to fight in Saul's armor.

3. Shared ministry, where the pastor helps his members to recognize and utilize their spiritual gifts, has proved to be a great eye-opener for many pastors. Those who have become involved with this training, motivating, and mobilizing ministry have been amazed at the many hidden gifts they discovered lying

dormant in their congregations and how willing a great proportion of the laity were to become involved in ministries where they could use their abilities to God's glory. The churches that are growing steadily and keeping their members are churches where laypeople are involved in evangelism in ways that fit their talents.

4. Attempt to determine who are the winnable people in the district. Church Growth people have pointed out that persons in transition are more apt to accept a new way of life, especially when their felt needs are met. Christianity in the Western world has declined largely because many churches have not only lost their hold on the working classes but really have no meaningful message for them. If the pastor can lead his church in discovering how to meet the needs of the unchurched effectively, this can open new doors for growth.

When the Seventh-day Adventist Church applies the Church Growth principles to improve her evangelistic methods, she must do it on the basis of a sound Biblical theology of evangelism. We must avoid unwarranted confidence in pragmatism. All means (evangelistic methods) employed to reach the end (the conversion of souls) should reflect the perfect means God used to effect the end, namely Jesus Christ. It is true that God has given us our goal: to preach the gospel to the whole world. But He has entrusted us with the responsibility to determine the method to reach this goal. And the method is not a secondary matter. In Jesus Christ, ends are not more important than means. Christ, who is the end, is also the means; and Christ, who is the means, is also the end.

¹ My sources include: C. Peter Wagner, "Church Growth: More Than a Man, a Magazine, a School, a Book," in A. Martin, ed., *The Means of World Evangelization: Missiological Education*, pp. 488, 489; C. Peter Wagner, *Church Growth Principles and Procedures* (Pasadena, Calif.: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1980); C. Peter Wagner, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel* (San Francisco, Calif.: Harper and Row, 1981).

² Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1980), p. 83.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

⁴ Wagner, "Church Growth," p. 489.

The long campaign

Is it really possible to draw a crowd several nights a week for six or seven weeks? Even in the city? Results of two recent campaigns indicate that it is both possible and profitable to try. □ Owen Troy



he day of the long evangelistic effort is not past. Recently two part-time evangelists, one an educator, the other an administrator, conducted meetings lasting six or more weeks. The results of both campaigns were excellent, and both evangelists are convinced that the long campaign has definite advantages.

Seven weeks in Laurel

During the summer of 1984 Dr. Ken Stout, head of the religion department of Columbia Union College, conducted a seven-week series in Laurel, Maryland. He was assisted by theology students from the college and members of the Laurel church.

Stout's announcement of a seven-week series in the metropolitan area of Washington, D.C., met with opposition from veteran members and workers. "People are too busy in the cities. They will not attend religious meetings, especially in the summer," they told him. And when he announced that the meetings would start in a motel, then transfer to the church, he received even more negative feedback.

Before the series started, Stout met with church members and outlined his plan. He kept no secrets. The church's pastor, Milton Pruitt, feels that this meeting helped the members develop a better attitude. Twenty-five of the two hundred members decided to become part of the evangelistic team, and they provided valuable assistance.

After three nights in the Holiday Inn the meetings transferred to the Laurel church with little decrease in attendance.

Stout was cautioned against using strong appeals in his sermons. "Residents

in the metropolitan area do not respond to sermonic appeals," he was told. When he went ahead and made appeals every night, the response was excellent. Members conducted a Vacation Bible School for the children during the meetings, and between thirty and fifty attended. Three weeks before the completion of the seven weeks of meetings, Stout formed a discipling class that met on Tuesday evenings and Sabbath mornings during Sabbath school.

When the non-Adventists attended the Sabbath services in Laurel for the first time, they saw the doctrines of the church listed on the back of the bulletin, and asked about ones that were new to them. Pruitt prompted some to tell him that they "had finally found out how to join this church."

On the last Saturday night Stout called the ninety non-Adventists present to the front of the sanctuary and asked them about their desire to join the church. Twenty-five wanted to become members, and eighteen said that they were considering it.

At the conclusion of the meetings the thirty-six who were baptized remained in Stout's discipling class for seven weeks. One year later thirty-four were still actively participating in the church program. They have been responsible for

conducting a Revelation Seminar directed by the pastor, and at this writing were excitedly preparing for another summer campaign to be led by Stout.

Stout reports that the new members in Laurel are also giving strong financial support to the church. One couple has sold a home and recreational vehicle and bought another home so they will be able to make greater contributions. They said that keeping up with the payments was taking too much of their time and money.

Stout maintains that the longer series is very helpful, especially in establishing the new convert. It gives time for the new members to become fully integrated into the church family. And the nurture and training received in the discipling class effectively prepares them for active church service.

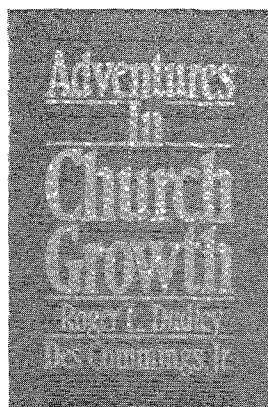
Six weeks in Philadelphia

Following Annual Council last year Elder C. E. Bradford, president of the North American Division, conducted a six-week series in the West Philadelphia church in Pennsylvania. Forty non-Adventists attended the first night, and before the series was over, two hundred were attending nightly. More than 550 non-Adventists attended at least once.

Bradford, assisted by several Bible

(Continued on page 28)

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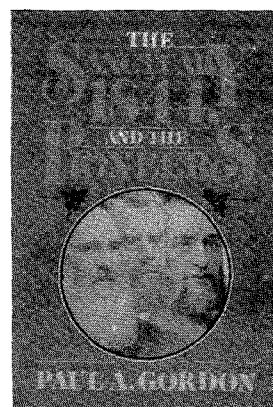
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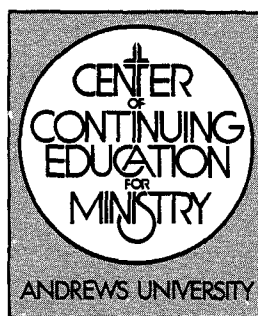
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1985 World Ministers Council

The ministerial pre-session to the 1985 General Conference was the best attended ever. Although it required an enormous amount of preparation, the plenary sessions and seminars enriched all who attended.

"I searched desperately for adequate words to express what this tremendous ministerial pre-session has personally done for us. My wife and I have been very deeply moved by the morning and evening speakers, as have all the others with whom we have spoken. Surely the Lord has heard every prayer raised to heaven for the rich outpouring of His Holy Spirit!"

These words, from a handwritten letter we received at the close of the World Ministers Council, summarize what scores of individuals expressed verbally.

A little more than two years ago our Ministerial/Stewardship staff began planning for the World Ministers Council to be held June 23-27, just before the 1985 General Conference session. Our regular staff and various subcommittees met scores of times, investing hundreds of hours in this important convention. In our preparations we encountered obstacles, yet we forged ahead steadily, knowing that by God's grace every roadblock had to be overcome.

Our first scare came from the General Conference Central Planning and Program Committee. Wording on an agenda item for one of its early meetings suggested that there be no ministerial pre-session in 1985. Fortunately, the wording belied the real intent.

Frankly, at times some of us would have been glad had the meetings been cancelled, since preparing for them involved so much work. We had had pre-sessions for years, yet questions still haunted us. Could we do something different that would bring more of a blessing to our ministers and their spouses? Should we use the same motto as the General Conference session: "Christ Our Hope"? In the past we had started our pre-session on Monday evening, thus giving attendees plenty of time to arrive after Sabbath. Should we start a day earlier in order to allow our afternoon seminars more time? How

many seminars should we have? Should we charge a fee for the seminars to supplement the mere \$6,000 allotted us for the pre-session? Should we preregister participants to avoid a crushing rush at New Orleans?

At times our general staff meetings resembled the English Parliament as a cacophony of voices and a plethora of ideas poured out. The ever-present Christian spirit in no way diminished creativity and strong conviction. Prayer saturated our committee meetings. United in the hope that God would bless the pre-session with latter-rain power, we pressed forward with our planning.

Under the direction of W. B. Quigley, who coordinated all pre-session planning, the pieces of the convention jigsaw puzzle began to fit together. We built our program around ten plenary meetings and thirty-six seminars. Seeking suggestions as to topics and speakers for both the plenary meetings and the seminars, we sent questionnaires to all division presidents and Ministerial and Stewardship secretaries.

Since our minuscule budget would have been exhausted quickly if we had been forced to use it for travel expenses, we had to limit our selection of personnel to either those who were coming as delegates to the GC session or those who would come on their own. Unfortunately, this made it impossible for us to include as many speakers from outside North America as we would have liked to.

Having no idea how many would attend, we struggled with the decision as to where in New Orleans to hold the pre-session. At our San Francisco pre-sessions in the fifties, a church holding no more than a thousand was jammed but adequate. In Detroit, 1966, and in Atlantic City, 1970, a large auxiliary auditorium seating perhaps three to four thousand sufficed. Now we had to choose between an auditorium that seated four or five thousand but was off the beaten

track and a bit dingy, and the huge New Orleans Superdome, where the General Conference session was to be held. Seating some 95,000, the New Orleans Superdome is said to be the largest domed stadium on earth. Naturally, the size of the place concerned us. Imagine how an audience of a thousand, or even two thousand, would look scattered about an auditorium that immense. Ultimately we chose the Superdome—to our knowledge the first time a pre-session has been held in the same auditorium as the General Conference session. The General Conference officers kindly allowed us to use not only their auditorium but also their platform, decorations, organ, and even their motto, "Christ Our Hope."

Fortunately, the stage was placed in the middle of the arena floor, cutting the seating capacity in half. Attendance at our pre-session plenary meetings ranged from three to five thousand, keeping the five thousand seats on the floor of the Superdome well filled and spilling over into the bleacher-type seats.

Music played an important role

Both congregational and special music played an important part in our plenary meetings. It seems that Adventists have been specially blessed with talented musicians who perform high quality music.

We used both familiar and new songs from our official pre-session songbook—the new *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*. The Review and Herald Publishing Association graciously offered discount coupons to all pre-session registrants.

Wayne Hooper wrote both the words and music to our pre-session theme song, titled appropriately "A Song of Hope." Both the music and words exalt Christ, describing Him as our hope, our truth, our life, and our rock. (See the April, 1985, *MINISTRY* for music and words.)

Harold Lickey and others worked closely with North American division

president C. E. Bradford to prepare the final evening meeting. Bradford's message dwelt upon the phrase in the first angel's message, "and worship Him." And the program, which saw our largest attendance, featured a special worship service centered around our new hymnal. The congregation not only sang some of the magnificent hymns it contains, they also used its other worship aids, participating in the call to worship and scripture reading and, like a great choir, singing responses.

During a fifteen-minute practice period, Dr. Lickey instructed the more than five thousand participants to ensure that the worship program would go smoothly. And it did! That night the Superdome, so often filled with the clamor of sporting events, rang instead with spiritual songs and power-packed preaching.

Plenary meetings focus on the minister

After prayer and thoughtful deliberation, we decided to pack our time fully with spiritual but practical items. We determined to elevate Christ our Lord, not man. We wanted Him to be lifted up in such a way that we ministers and spouses would understand more fully three important concepts: (1) the necessity and joy of bringing honor to our Lord through dedicated lives, (2) the need of a deeper knowledge of and greater confidence in the whole Adventist system of truth, and (3) the mission and purpose of our movement.

To fulfill these objectives, we divided the morning into four parts. First came the morning devotional, which dealt with the minister as a person. Second, we set aside time for prayer and discussion. Third, a presentation of a major Adventist doctrine followed. And finally, a panel discussed a particular doctrine.

The morning devotionals included Leslie V. McMillan, pastor from the Bahamas Conference, "The Minister: A Life With God"; Benjamin F. Reaves, chairman of Oakwood College's religion department, "The Minister: A Person of Integrity"; and Dwight K. Nelson, senior pastor of Andrews University's Pioneer Memorial Church, "The Anatomy of a Pastor: The Case of the Missing Heart."

The second half of the morning session was dedicated to theological presentations. Richard M. Davidson, professor of Old Testament, Andrews

University Theological Seminary, presented "The Sanctuary and Adventism"; Hans K. LaRondelle, professor of systematic theology at the seminary, presented "The Timeliness of the Three Angels' Messages"; and Gerhard Hasel, dean of the seminary, presented "The Remnant Church in Prophecy."

Kenneth Vine, chairman of Loma Linda University's Religion Department, and Richard Leshner, Andrews University president, respectively, moderated Monday's and Tuesday's panel discussions, "The Certainty of the Advent and the Crisis of the Delay." The third panel discussion, "The Seventh-day Sabbath: Origin and Eschatology," was moderated by Raoul Dederen, associate dean at the Seminary.

Participating in these three panels were Jack Blanco, Southern College; Jim Londis, pastor of the Sligo church; Gottfried Oosterwal, Andrews University; Mervin Warren, Oakwood College; Arthur Ferch, field secretary of the Australasian Division; Calvin B. Rock, Oakwood College president; Angel Rodriguez, president of Antillian Adventist College; Werner Vyhmeister, dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary—Far East; Frank Holbrook, General Conference Biblical Research Institute; Samuele Bacchiocchi, Andrews University; George W. Reid, director of the Biblical Research Institute; and Ariel Roth, director of the Geoscience Institute.

A special panel discussion dealt with the topic "The Ideal Pastor's Wife: Myth or Reality?" This particular discussion was originally slated for the women's meetings during the General Conference session, but the planners felt that not only the women but their minister spouses should attend and listen. Miriam Wood, author, lecturer, and teacher, moderated this lively discussion. Panel members were Gordon Bietz, senior pastor of the Collegedale, Tennessee, church; Ernest Castillo, senior pastor of the Los Angeles Spanish-American church; Thomas Mostert, Jr., president of the Southeastern California Conference; and E. C. Ward, senior pastor of the Oakwood College church.

The opening night, General Conference president Neal Wilson challenged us to a more committed lifestyle and a greater faithfulness in preaching the gospel in the setting of the three angels' messages. J. R. Spangler presented the

evening's sermon, basing his remarks on the book of Malachi, most of which is directed specifically to the Old Testament priesthood and is applicable to ministers today.

Speakers for the other evening services were Ron Halvorsen, senior pastor of the Takoma Park church; John Carter, senior pastor of the Wahroonga, Australia, church; and Charles E. Bradford. Eight of the thirty major contributors were pastors—we attempted to use as many as possible.

A fifteen-minute portion of each evening meeting featured "Evangelism That Works." The speakers shared soul-winning methods that are being used successfully. George Vandeman, *It Is Written* speaker, discussed using videocassettes in an evangelistic outreach, and Mark Finley, director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute, spoke on the use of seminars as a soul-winning tool. Carlos E. Aeschlimann, Ministerial secretary of the Inter-American Division, and Ted N. C. Wilson, Ministerial/stewardship secretary of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division, described the methods they use in their fields.

Renewed spirit; strengthened faith

We believe the Spirit of God came upon every speaker. The morning devotionals pierced our hearts anew, causing us to reexamine our personal relationship to Christ. One listener commented, "Never have we heard such sustained, Spirit-filled preaching. Truly, it has brought a heart-stirring revival." Another minister declared, "The preachers are not afraid to preach what we need today."

The five presentations on our major doctrines helped strengthen the faith of those whose confidence in our message may have become a bit shaky. The evening messages made a similar impact. One pastor declared, "I can hardly wait until I get back into the field to minister more effectively and powerfully for the Lord."

Floyd Bresee, director of our General Conference Ministerial/Stewardship Association continuing education program, labored diligently in putting thirty-six afternoon seminars together. Approximately four thousand eager learners packed these sessions, which covered a broad range of subjects. (Some of these seminars will be made into

continuing-education courses. MINISTRY will keep you informed as to their availability.) The seminar program was so effective, the seminars so practical and helpful, that some wished that the entire day could have been given over to them. One minister remarked, "It has really been put together in a wonderful way, and it makes you feel proud to be a Seventh-day Adventist!"

Two things characterized the session: First, in it God attempted to show His ministers and their wives what could happen to His church if its leaders truly experienced revival and reformation. If the fragrance of our Lord's life permeated our souls daily, surely the latter rain would fall quickly. We did experience a few dewdrops which, we hope, presage the outpouring of the latter rain around the world. We enjoyed immensely a small taste of the sweet presence of Jesus. Repeatedly our hearts burned within us as our Lord drew nigh to commune with us as He so often did with the disciples.

Second, the straight preaching, focus-

ing on our lives, beliefs, and mission, reflected similar experiences in other areas. For instance, the president of one of our larger conferences spoke with us after a particularly forthright message that pointed out the sins of leadership, yet offered hope through repentance and reformation. He said, "This is astounding. The message I just heard was similar in content to one I just shared with our ministers. I determined to present such a message without seeking counsel from my staff, fearing they might feel I would come on too strong. With God's help I delivered my soul, and the response was like what I see and feel here." Then he added, "I have heard others speak of similar experiences, and it seems as if all over the world individuals and small groups sense the nearness of the Lord's return and are eager to place all on the altar of sacrifice and fully to commit their lives to Him."

Many others said similar things, expressing deep appreciation for what took place during the session. It seems that although the church has gone

through some rather traumatic times during which its entire fabric seemed to be threatened with disintegration, God is raising up individuals to call us back to a full dedication to Him and His cause. While standards may be collapsing and the church may be drifting to the world, we as individual ministers must search our own hearts. Are we responding to God's call? Regardless of how dark things may look, we are confident that God is with His people and that thousands in our midst are pleading for a personal purifying and for power to be more effective instruments in our Master's hands.

This is not time to lose confidence in our message or in our mission. It is time for us to draw closer to Christ and to one another as with arms of prayer we reach around the world to uphold His ministers and people on every continent and island.

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1985 General Conference session

The 1980 General Conference session gave us the twenty-seven Statements of Belief. This year's session marked a major change in the departmental structure of the church and saw the beginning of Harvest '90.

Tension and harmony, debate and consensus, discord and melody, strong words and soft words, marked the fifty-fourth session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Just as the Bible comprises human and divine elements, a General Conference session exhibits both. Only a divine miracle enables so many diverse groups and cultures to work together with such unity.

The divine was evident from the start. In his opening address, President Neal C. Wilson reviewed how God has blessed this church. At the time of the 1909 General Conference, there were fewer than 100,000 Adventists in all the world. Now church membership stands in excess of 4.5 million. Tithe receipts for the year 1909 totaled approximately \$1 million. Today they exceed \$400 million. Then Wilson asked perhaps the most critical question of the whole session: Is the spiritual power of the church greater than it was in 1909? Have we been more faithful in addressing ourselves to the challenge of evangelizing the cities?

He continued: "From night to night you will be hearing the expanded story. You will be reading chapters from the modern book of Chronicles and the twentieth-century book of Acts. When you hear these reports and see these stones, you should tell your children and everyone you meet how the Lord has led His people during these past five years and how He has dried up turbulent waters and helped us to overcome the obstacles put in the way by Satan. The greatest days of soul winning are just ahead. I believe this fifty-fourth General Conference session will place us in a relationship with our Lord and with one another so that the Holy Spirit working through us can fill the earth with the glory of God."

With this introduction, the General Conference session got under way. Spend a few minutes with us on the floor

of the Superdome and listen to the cut and thrust of the discussion. In many ways there is more freedom to debate at a General Conference session than at a local church business meeting. At this session much of the interaction between delegates reminded us of the Jerusalem council described in Acts 15.

Role and Function report

The major document to come before the delegates was the recommendation from the 1984 Annual Council concerning the Role and Function Commission report on church structure. Discussion of this document occupied five of the General Conference's fifteen business sessions, beginning Friday afternoon and concluding Monday afternoon.

Here is a taste of the questions from the floor and the response from the chairman. In this case Elder Francis Wernick was answering questions, since he had chaired the commission that prepared the report.

Section I of the document is titled "Preserving the Unity of Church and Message." It names eleven points as essential for unity, point number five being "faithful obedience [modified by vote to "adherence"] to the Church Manual, applicable throughout the world." A delegate asked whether number five was now a test of fellowship. Wernick replied No, but that it was a test for leaders. Those who lead the church should be willing to follow and uphold its policies.

The delegates voted on the report section by section. Most sections quickly received a majority vote, but so few of the delegates were voting that Elder Wilson interrupted the process. He said that this was one of the most significant documents to come before a General Conference and he wanted the delegates to give it serious consideration, taking several days to discuss it if necessary. He wanted the church to be united when

they were finished.

The first major discussion came on a seemingly insignificant point. One of the General Conference's functions is to prepare the various Sabbath school lessons. Twenty minutes of debate resulted in a motion that the General Conference should prepare only outlines, leaving the divisions to prepare the content. This motion was eventually defeated.

One phrase of the report evoked some heated discussion: "from everywhere to everywhere." A number of the African delegation felt that this was inaccurate. The church sends Americans to Africa, but not many African workers to America. Some of the delegates added that many of the missionaries sent are unsuitable for that work, and they felt that higher levels of the organization did not want to allow Africans more authority.

Wilson's answer came with considerable tact. He said that the General Conference tries to screen people very carefully before sending them overseas. It now uses personality testing in selecting mission appointees and provides them with comprehensive instruction as to how to work in various cultures. All mission appointees must attend the Institute of World Mission conducted by Andrews University. Wilson agreed that the General Conference has been embarrassed by people who did not fit into a different culture. At times local people could have done a better job. His gracious reply calmed the troubled waters.

The section stating that our church administrative structures were to follow the committee rather than the presidential system was voted without comment. Section IV, B, 2, b brought the most debate, heated at times. This section mandates combining the Lay Activities, Sabbath School, Stewardship and Development, and Youth departments and the Home and Family Service into

one "Church Ministries" department. Delegate after delegate from the Eastern Africa Division rose to speak against this proposal, and Inter-American Division delegates soon added their objections.

One delegate stated that he opposed the proposal because the present system worked well at the local church level. Wernick responded that the proposed change would extend only from the General Conference through the local conference levels. The local church would not be changed.

Another delegate moved to refer the whole report for further study. Wilson urged that this motion be voted down, and it was defeated.

Father and son disagree

During this debate an interesting exchange occurred between Neal Wilson and his son Ted, who serves in the Africa-Indian Ocean Division. Ted rose to speak against the proposed combination of departments. He observed that in Africa the current arrangement functioned very well and did not need to be changed. And he said he feared the consolidation might stifle creativity.

A few minutes later his father responded by saying, "Fellow delegates, you can see that my son and I do not always agree. He is simply following a Wilson tradition. My father and I also disagreed at times." [His father had served as vice president for the North American Division.] "However," Wilson continued, "time shows that the father is usually correct." This brought the house down!

Some of those speaking to the Role and Function report sounded as if they planned to preach until midnight. One speaker after another droned on until one of the editors of MINISTRY leaned over to a delegate standing at the microphone and said, "If you want to be the most popular man at this session today, please move to limit speaking to one minute."

The good brother moved this suggestion, it was overwhelmingly approved, and business really speeded up. Speeches became crisp and to the point. Some tried to extend their time, but the chairman now had a control that he exercised freely over the debate.

An exchange between Wernick and Elder Howard Rampton, the retiring chairman of the Sabbath School Department, reveals the intensity of the debate this proposal engendered. And it shows the human and divine elements that

characterized this session.

Rampton argued that combining the departments would lead to congregationalism. He agreed that there was need for greater coordination between the departments, but combining them would make that coordination more difficult to achieve, not easier. It would not be possible to wholly eliminate overlapping.

He pointed to the recent merger of the Health and Temperance departments,

A little of the human had shown through, as it once did between Paul and Barnabas, but the divine had ultimately won out. Throughout the General Conference session, floor debates ended like this one, in conciliation.

saying that in his opinion it has not worked well—it hasn't saved money. He then moved that a secret ballot be taken on this section.

Wernick replied that Rampton was incorrect on the Health-Temperance merger. He had chaired the committee that worked on the merger, and things had gone very well. A few minutes later Wernick was back at the microphone, apologizing to Rampton for the tone in which he had responded to him. He still felt that Rampton was incorrect on the Health-Temperance merger, but he wanted the delegates to know that he had the highest regard for Rampton's Christian character. A little of the human had shown through, as it once did between Paul and Barnabas, but the divine had ultimately won out. Throughout the General Conference session, floor debates that looked like they might lead to acrimony always ended like this one, in conciliation.

Gradually the tide began to turn. Delegates from North America and other divisions began to speak in favor of this proposal. When the vote was finally taken, it passed with a more than two to one—some thought a three to one—majority. And late on Monday afternoon the whole report was voted with only some editorial changes.

Business proceedings

At intervals reports from the nominating committee punctuated the business sessions. These reports were noted for their tedium. There were, however, two notable exceptions. When the delegates were voting on the vice presidents, several of the East African brethren asked for more black representation. They presented their request so forcefully that Wilson himself responded, saying that they would indeed be getting

their representation. Subsequently an African was elected president of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division, and another was elected to serve as a general field secretary.

During another nominating committee report, Lenard D. Jaecks, secretary of the Washington Conference, requested that a sentence or two of background information on each individual nominated be given. For some reason, this request was ignored. It was strange to see the delegates passively voting into office individuals about whom they knew nothing. On the division level this could be more readily understood, as representatives of the delegates from each division recommended their own leaders. But surely the delegates ought to know something concerning the people they are electing to serve on the General Conference staff in Washington.

In general, the discussion moved along well, but there was confusion at times as to what parliamentary procedures were being followed. In reply to a question from the floor, Wernick stated that the session did not follow Robert's *Rules of Order*. At times the chairman seemed to make up the rules as he went along. In such a large assembly, tremendous power resides in the chair if the rules are not clear to everyone.

One close vote highlighted the lack of clear rules. Elder John Stevens from the Pacific Union wanted to delete the term *hospitals* from a list of institutions that a proposed *Church Manual* amendment named as fulfilling a major role in the mission of the church. He suggested that hospitals be listed in another section as "assisting" in the church's mission. When he moved this and the vote was taken, the show of hands for and against was so even that the chairman did not know how to call it.

For several minutes confusion reigned as those conducting the session sought a way out of the dilemma. Eventually they had the delegates vote by standing. They appointed several people to walk up and down the rows, counting the votes. With almost two thousand voters, that was quite a task. Because the end of that session was upon them, they had to interrupt the proceedings to receive the nominating committee report. The matter was not resolved until the next session, when the delegates voted the amendment down. The delegates then passed a motion requesting the General Conference Committee "to compile and publish rules of procedure to be followed in conducting the business meetings of a General Conference session." They also voted a motion requesting the General Conference Committee "to consider the possibility and practicability of appointing a parliamentarian for the business meetings of future General Conference sessions."

On one occasion the delegates exercised their power from the floor. A proposed revision in the General Conference constitution would have brought a major change in the way church officials would determine the number of delegates each field could send to a future General Conference session.

Under the old system "each local conference or local mission directly attached to divisions or to the General Conference, as has been or shall be properly organized and accepted by vote of the General Conference in session, shall be entitled to one delegate without regard to number, and an additional delegate for each 4,300, or major fraction thereof, of the membership of the local conference or mission."

The problem was that under this system the continual growth of the church meant a continual and ever-increasing number of delegates and a corresponding rise in expenses for each


General Conference session. Previous General Conference sessions had dealt with this simply by voting a change in the membership figure entitling a field to a delegate (e.g., from 4,000 to 4,300 between 1980 and 1985). This, however, was always a temporary solution and required changing this part of the constitution with every session.

The proposed change was an attempt to deal with the problem once and for all. It set a cap on the total number of delegates to General Conference sessions. Each field would still automatically be entitled to one delegate, but its portion of the remaining delegates would be determined by membership. Thus while a field's total number of delegates might decrease, its proportional representation would remain the same (if their membership kept pace with overall church growth).

The proposed change read: "Each union conference, union mission, and

of the last business meeting of the session. When 4:00 P.M. arrived, the delegates were to begin discussing the union and conference model constitutions the General Conference officers were proposing. If these models were accepted, unions and conferences would be expected to adhere very closely to them. Wilson made two points: one, the Sabbath would soon begin; and two, not enough time remained to debate these items adequately. Fifteen microphones were scattered through the delegate section, making it possible for the delegates to discuss the items brought before them. People had lined up behind all fifteen when this item came up. Obviously this would be no short session.

Wilson said this item afforded tremendous potential for friction and dissension, and he did not want to end a General Conference session on a discordant note or go into the Sabbath hours with tempers frayed. So he recom-

 *our church is caught by the dilemma on which other churches have come to grief: How do we continue to grow while maintaining our original fervor and uniqueness?*

attached field described in Section 5a and 5b shall be entitled to additional delegates based upon its proportion of the world church membership. The total delegates under this provision shall not exceed 1,000" (this wording to replace the "an additional delegate for each 4,300, or major fraction thereof").

This proposal brought spirited resistance from the floor, to the extent that it was referred back to committee. When it came back to the floor the old provisions had reappeared and the proposed change was gone. Again the membership figure was simply increased, the new figure being 5,000 instead of 4,300. This question will not disappear as the church continues to grow, if for no other reason than because of the great expense of bringing people together from all parts of the globe.

Neal Wilson's statesmanship was nowhere more evident than at the close

mended that the delegates table this proposal until the 1990 General Conference. In the meantime these constitutions would be circulated to all divisions, unions, and conferences for discussion and input. There was a collective sigh of relief from the delegates; they immediately seconded and voted Wilson's suggestion.

Sabbath highlights

The two Sabbaths were high points for delegates and guests alike. On the first the newly reelected secretary of the General Conference, G. Ralph Thompson, preached a vigorous sermon entitled "The Hour and the End." One of his illustrations stands out: During World War II, Col. Warren J. Clear's superior officer asked him to leave Corregidor just before it fell. He was to board a submarine at midnight. His orders included these words: "Be ready to go

aboard. No personal baggage." Thompson drew out the point—when we embark for heaven we can bring no personal baggage, only the righteousness of Christ.

That afternoon saw the climax of the One Thousand Days of Reaping. A superb production directed by Elder and Mrs. Franklin Hudgins dramatized in pageant form events in the struggle for men's souls, beginning with the Garden of Eden and running through scriptural and Adventist history right into the One Thousand Days of Reaping. Division after division reported its baptismal total, and finally W. B. Quigley, coordinator for the One Thousand Days, gave the grand total—1,171,390.

The first Sabbath program not only celebrated the successes of the past thousand days; it looked forward as well. The pageant concluded by introducing Harvest '90 and the goals the church has set for the next five years. Like the One Thousand Days of Reaping, Harvest '90 intends to keep the church focused on its reason for being—winning converts from the kingdom of darkness. (The adjacent box lists the goals Harvest '90 encompasses.)

In a stirring sermon delivered the second Sabbath, Neal Wilson called the church to refuse compromise with the world. He was especially concerned that our great institutions not lose their distinctiveness. Our church is caught by the dilemma on which other churches have come to grief: How do we continue to grow while maintaining our original fervor and uniqueness?

That afternoon's glorious mission pageant ended with the Hallelujah Chorus, presented by a five-hundred-voice choir and full symphony orchestra. In somewhat of an anticlimax, the division presidents and the General Conference officers ended the day with another report and challenge.

The spirit at the meetings bordered on the charismatic. People clapped for everything, even some of the prayers. This grated on the nerves of some, and at times individuals made motions deploring the clapping. Fortunately, these motions were ignored. It was important to allow the different cultures to make their presence known. Some pointed out that the Bible speaks approvingly of clapping: "Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy" (Ps. 47:1, N.I.V.).

(Continued on page 22)

1985 General Conference session

HARVEST '90 objectives

We are in the days of the harvest. The times demand that the church arise and direct her energies to reaching every region and every ethnic, cultural, and social group. A vast multitude waits to be gathered from "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6). Said the Lord Himself, "The harvest is the end of the world" (Matt. 13:39).

The final harvest of souls is far beyond our human resources. We need the promised latter rain of God's Spirit (see Joel 2:23) in pentecostal blessing and power to prepare the church for evangelizing the world. To seek this should be our first work. The proclamation of the everlasting gospel and its power demonstrated in the lives of a Spirit-filled people will be used by God to call for the final events of earth. "If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 189.

During these closing events of the great controversy, we, as leaders of God's people, beseech the Lord of the harvest to pour out His Spirit on the church. We call upon our members to commit themselves to the goal of Adventism: the completion of the gospel commission in the setting of the three angels' messages in preparation for the coming of Jesus.

Realizing that the goal of completing the gospel commission will be reached only with revival and reformation, we call the church worldwide to:

—Renewal and personal growth through Bible study, intercessory prayer, fellowship, and worship.

—Revitalization of family religion, that our homes may become centers of love, care, and witness.

—Recognition of the local church as the center of evangelism,

nurture, and training of members for ministry.

—Renewed proclamation of the Biblical-prophetic message of the Seventh-day Adventists.

—Reclamation of inactive members of the church, and emphasis on maximizing church attendance.

—Reaffirmation of the principles and standards of the church, calling for reformation in appearance and lifestyle.

—Reaching the large numbers of people who as yet are unreached by the gospel.

In view of our solemn responsibility to this desperate world, we urge each member to seek the "double portion" of the Spirit (2 Kings 2:9), and we prayerfully commit ourselves to doubling the strength of God's worldwide spiritual family during the quinquennium 1985-1990. By God's grace our united desire and decision is to:

1. *Double*, in every division, union, conference, local field, and church, the number of accessions that were achieved during the One Thousand Days of Reaping.

2. *Double* the number of members equipped for soul-winning activities according to their spiritual gifts, making every Seventh-day Adventist church a center of training for service.

To Jesus, the Lord of the harvest, we give glory as we launch HARVEST '90. We pray that every member will join together in prayer, sacrifice, and commitment to double the strength of the church between now and 1990.

Women for Christ

One special feature of the 1985 General Conference session was the women's meetings, planned and directed by Shepherdess International.

Imagine three thousand Seventh-day Adventist women filling and overflowing the largest ballroom of one of New Orleans' premier hotels. Imagine the excitement as women from all over the world meet and greet old friends. Imagine sharing the joy of fellowship, music, and a spiritual feast with a standing-room-only crowd of enthusiastic Adventist women workers, wives, and lay workers.

If you can imagine what it would be like to participate in such an event, you can share in some of the joy experienced by thousands at the Women for Christ meetings held during the 1985 General Conference session at New Orleans last July.

The messages presented by the speakers at the three women's meetings will be published in future issues of MINISTRY, so this brief article will serve simply as a report of what happened and the inspiration those of us in attendance gained.

The weeks and months of planning and effort finally came to fruition on Tuesday, July 2, as the start of the first meeting found virtually every one of the three thousand seats in the Regency Ballroom filled. After the song service, led by Charlotte Dennis, Marie Spangler, codirector of Shepherdess International—the organization that planned this meeting—welcomed us. Marie mentioned that two other ladies who are very important to Shepherdess International could not be with us. Both Ellen Bresee and Kay Dower were absent because of illness. After the theme song, written and introduced by Lorraine Hudgins, first lady Elinor Wilson shared greetings in several languages.

Virginia Cason, the only daughter of Elder and Mrs. H.M.S. Richards, Sr.,

was our first speaker. Her eloquent and persuasive message about Christian growth helped us see that it is our duty to allow the Holy Spirit to work even when growth is painful.

One daily feature everyone enjoyed was the "Oxygen Cocktail," five minutes of exercises set to music. Jeanne James got us up and stretching, and got our blood circulating in preparation for the rest of the meeting.

Norma Crabtree's presentation, "She Hath Done What She Could," pointed out that the work before us right now is the greatest work we can do. We may, however, by a thoughtless word or a stony silence, unwittingly destroy work that the Holy Spirit has been years in accomplishing.

We were blessed by superb music throughout the meetings. On Wednesday we heard from Del Delker, a steel band from Trinidad, and Sonoko Mimura, a richly talented flutist from Japan. Our speakers for this second day included Wayne Hooper, who shared with us the contributions women made to our new hymnal, Miriam Wood, and Phyllis Bryan Paytee.

Phyllis challenged us to train our minds, under Christ, to excellence. Almost all of creation has unlimited potential for growth and development. We will have the privilege of continuing to think and learn even in heaven.

On Thursday, the final day of the Women for Christ meetings, the ballroom filled up fast. By nine-thirty a hundred or more ladies were standing against the back wall. After a rousing song service led by Gwendolyn Foster, and music from the Pine Tree Academy Bell Choir, Sister Galina Gritshuk, the only woman delegate from the Soviet Union, led us in prayer in her native tongue.

Then Marie Spangler introduced Elder Neal Wilson, our surprise guest for the day. He shared the experience of meeting with a 9-year-old boy named Ross. Ross expressed his pleasure with the session, and in parting, asked if he

could have prayer with Elder Wilson!

Nancy Vyhmeister, our next speaker, learned as a child that girls can do many "boy" things. At 12 she was able to give a Bible study, aided by her father. She has conducted several surveys that reveal that women hold many leadership positions in our worldwide church, and she introduced us to three such leaders from different parts of the world.

If being exposed to "accomplishing" is catching, all of us will return to our homes as committed doers. The next four guests, each of whom spoke briefly, both humbled and inspired us. We were humbled as we became aware of how little we *have* done, but inspired as we realized how much we *could* do under God's direction.

Gloria Baylon practices an effective ministry to the sick at the Manila Sanitarium and Hospital. Laura Gonzalez, of Trinidad, is a lay preacher who has won nearly two thousand souls to Christ. Juanita Kretschmar developed, and works tirelessly with, the very successful E-Van-gelism program in New York City. Doracy Passos, of Brazil, works with *Telepaz*, a telephone counseling service that handles as many as 2,500 calls a day.

Our final speaker, Rhona Cooper, told us the story of the Syrophoenician woman—she would have been satisfied with crumbs, but she received so much more. So it is with us. In response to the simple plea, "Lord, help me," the strength of heaven becomes available to us.

We stood together and sang the second stanza of "Rise Up, O Church of God":

Let women all rise up!

Have done with lesser things.

Give heart and soul and mind and strength

To serve the King of kings.

In spirit we joined Marie Spangler's prayer of consecration, and then it was over. May God grant that the inspiration of these six hours together may sustain and inspire us in the days ahead.

Bobbie Jane Van Dolson is supervisor of the junior high curriculum for Home Study International, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Annual Council—1985

*Are you “down on” what you are not “up on”?
What every minister should know about decision-making in the church.
Ninety-one percent of the world budget is by faith alone!*

Few ministers and fewer laypersons understand the structure and policies of the church. Furthermore, fewer than these few understand how policies and plans become a part of the church program. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is an extremely complicated organization. Even in Paul's day the church was compared to the most complicated form of life—the human organism. After thirty-one years of service on the General Conference level, I am still learning how we operate.

In spite of efforts, such as the recent inauguration of the Church Ministries Department, to simplify our structure, numerous policies and plans cannot be simplified or dispensed with without serious consequences.

A brief look at the 502-page book titled *Constitution, Bylaws, and Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* reveals hundreds of policies that if dispensed with could catapult our church into chaos. For instance, our church owns and operates a number of aircraft. The index of the *GC Working Policy*, under “Denominational Aviation,” lists sixteen subentities that deal with everything from equipping the aircraft to pilot training programs. Some may think this is unnecessary, but the church must ensure that its aircraft are operated in a safe and responsible manner. Thus, recommendations and rules are made a part of our church policy at Annual Council. Add to the aircraft illustration hundreds of other items that through debate and discussion on committees, boards, and councils eventually become a part of our operating policy.

Nearly all church policies have the exclusive distinction of being ratified at an Annual Council (AC), which is generally held the first part of October. On page 36 of the *GC Working Policy* we

are told that an AC is “a meeting of the Executive Committee of the General Conference, known as the Annual Council. It is to be held yearly for the purpose of considering budgets for the divisions and making appropriations, and for the transacting of business pertaining to the general policy of the worldwide field.”

Some question why, if ACs are so important, we even need a General Conference session. Only at a world session can the General Conference constitution and its bylaws, as well as changes and additions to the *Church Manual*, be accomplished. The General Conference constitution and the bylaws make up approximately sixteen pages. They constitute Part I of the *GC Working Policy*. The other 485 pages constitute Part II, which deals with every aspect of church organization. These 485 pages contain the cumulative fruitage of years of AC actions. There are twenty-nine sections dealing with the nuts and bolts of general administrative policies, division policies, departmental policies, the ministry and ministerial training, terms of service and furloughs, general financial policies, use of the tithe, Ingathering, retirement plans, et cetera.

How to change a policy

Often individuals write to suggest some change in church policy or recommend a plan the church should put into effect. How do these ideas become a reality? To begin with, we should understand that it is not easy to put any new plans into operation or to bring about changes in present policies. The church moves slowly; and the larger it becomes, the slower it moves! This is not all bad, but it can be most frustrating at times. Obviously, ideas must be screened carefully through various committees before they reach the floor. It is unfair to waste a world delegation's time unless a recom-

mendation has been thought through thoroughly and carefully worded. Even the best thought through recommendations are often found wanting, and delegates point out weak spots or errors.

If any of our readers thinks that a policy should be changed or initiated, the first step is to formulate the recommendations on paper. Share it with some peers for evaluation. Then take it to the conference president and ask him to present it to the conference committee for evaluation. If it goes to the committee members and passes their scrutiny, they will take an action to recommend it to the union committee, which in turn can recommend it to the division officers. Through this screening process many of the “bugs” will be eliminated. The division officers then pass it along to the General Conference officers, who send it through the proper channels until it reaches the AC floor.

An illustration of a portion of the above procedure was seen at our recent 1985 Annual Council. At the New Orleans General Conference session an action was taken requesting the North American Division committee to “clarify the functions of ministerial workers who hold ministerial licenses, including how such functions relate to women who serve as pastors or associates in pastoral care, and to request that a complete proposal on roles and procedures be submitted by the North American Division [NAD] to the 1985 Annual Council for consideration.”

On October 8 the North American Division committee met in response to this directive and gave study to a proposed policy dealing with associates in pastoral care that would exclude them from baptizing and solemnizing marriages.

This exclusion can be traced back to a recommendation by a committee that met prior to the General Conference session and dealt with the role of women

in the church. Their recommendation, which was passed by the 1985 Spring Council, was accepted by the General Conference delegates. In that report it was voted "to take no definite action at this time regarding the ordination of women to the gospel ministry." Further study was to be given the subject, and a special representative committee would be scheduled to meet early in 1988 with its findings to be presented in a report to the 1988 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Committee and subsequently to the 1989 AC, at which time the entire issue would be reviewed.

One statement in this voted recommendation was "to maintain the church's present position on this matter."

In the October 8 NAD meeting a proposal was introduced to delete the portion of the policy that excludes associates in pastoral care from baptizing and solemnizing marriages. After a lengthy and heated discussion, it was voted "to refer to the General Conference officers for further study and counsel the proposal that associates in pastoral care be permitted to baptize and solemnize marriages."

Following this, the General Conference, division officers, and union presidents considered the request of the North American Division committee for counsel. Again there was a healthy discussion, and the final vote rejected the request that associates in pastoral care be permitted to baptize and solemnize marriages.

When the request was brought to the floor, more discussion took place, and the position stated above was sustained by a narrow margin.

We will deal more in depth with this particular subject in a future issue, but we wanted to share with you how recommendations are dealt with.

It would be well for every minister to have his own General Conference division policybook. Some may think that these policies do not affect them, but in the final analysis the way our policies go, so goes the church!

In view of our extensive report in this issue of the World Council of Ministers and the General Conference session in New Orleans, space will not be used for in-depth reports of the AC. It is not our objective to give a detailed report on all the AC actions, since the *Adventist Review* covers most of them. If you are not a subscriber to the *Adventist Review*,

become one! MINISTRY will report only on those actions that are of special interest to our readership. We hope that this type of reporting will increase your interest in church activities and help you understand our organizational operations.

At times negative remarks are aimed at church leadership. Some feel that the General Conference constitutes a dictatorship and that there is no latitude for disagreement. This is untrue. Hours are spent in discussion and debate on various subjects. The delegates have total freedom to express themselves as they wish. Some of the best oratory in the form of fiery speeches and impassioned pleas will be heard on the council floor. The Lord has blessed many of our leaders with sharp minds and an excellent ability for communication.

I'm not saying a better or a more efficient way to enact policies can't be found, but I confess I don't see how the church can do it differently without establishing a dictatorship! To maintain democracy, secret ballots are used on certain crucial issues. This is a step ahead of most secular democratic governing bodies.

Actions of special interest to ministers

Following are some of the AC actions to which we will give full treatment in later issues. The action dealing with the use of tithe has a long history of study by a number of groups. First there was a committee on the use of tithe, which included representatives from various parts of the North American Division, including laypersons. It spent days discussing how the church handles tithe funds. This committee sent a proposed action to the General Conference officers, North American Division officers, and union presidents. Those officers passed it on to the AC, where it was passed after discussion on the floor.

Under the title "Ministerial Ordination—Reform of Practices" it was voted "to institute reform in the church's ordination practices for the purpose of limiting ministerial ordination only to those who perform direct pastoral, evangelistic, ecclesiastical, or other clearly ministerial-type duties."

Other actions included a recommendation dealing with a Jerusalem center for archeological and Biblical studies, life insurance, Christian Leadership Seminars, expanded circulation of the *Adventist Review*, use of Ingathering

funds, pastoral support for Christian education, auditing of church employees' tithe records, and remuneration rates and allowances.

Our pastors will be especially interested in a recommendation that was referred back to the General Conference officers for further study. One paragraph of the recommendation read: "To grant a stipend, not exceeding 20 percent of the spouse's salary, to the wives of pastors who carry specific responsibility in connection with their spouse's pastoral work." Here is an instance of a recommendation finally reaching the floor of a church legislative body. For years there has been talk about paying pastors' wives who are willing to be accountable for the work they perform in connection with their pastor-husbands in soul-winning outreach. As far as I know, this is the first time an action of this type has been discussed on the floor.

One of the major actions of an AC is to vote the budgets for the coming year. Please underscore the fact in your thinking that salvation is by faith through Christ alone, and that our world budget is more than 91 percent by faith alone! This year's budget is \$151,867,000. More than 91 percent of that amount is expected to come in during the coming year through tithes, Sabbath school offerings, and other donations. The budget itself, twenty pages long, is composed of various categories of funds, some of which have been earmarked for specific projects.

One outstanding event that made recent history was the voting of a budget of more than \$31 million for the North American Division. Although a part of the total world budget, it is now for the first time entirely separated from the General Conference and is in the hands of the North American Division leadership for dispersal. Charles E. Bradford, NAD president, said, "We are grateful for this recognition of our work for Harvest '90, and the challenge of moving the Caring Church into action."

We hope that sharing these actions and policies with you will stimulate your interest in the entire church program. Remember, this is your church. It is not a General Conference church. You, as a member and pastoral-evangelistic leader, are a part of this church structure. "People are down on what they are not up on." We want you to be "up" on all of the important actions that affect your work in the field.

GC Report

From page 18

The music performed at this General Conference provided some of the most stirring parts of the whole event. One of the unique groups was the steel band from the Caribbean. Playing classical as well as religious music, they drew the most melodious sounds from full-sized to small quarter-sized steel drums. And listening to the choirs from around the earth gave us a foretaste of heaven's music.

One of the marvelous things about a General Conference session is the fellowship. You see people you have not seen for years. The exhibits all around the plaza level of the Superdome provided plenty of opportunities for meeting old friends and making new ones. This became a problem, however, because the exhibits could not be shut off from the arena, and especially on Sabbath, the conversations taking place detracted from the main program.

Improvements needed

There is much more to a General Conference than the business sessions on the floor. During the ten days of the session approximately ninety-four hours were scheduled for meetings. While the business sessions took up 35 percent of the time, spiritual meetings took up 46 percent. The other 19 percent was divided between committee sessions and video reports.

Considering the amount of time and money invested in the various video reports, the returns in terms of audience viewing were minimal. Almost an hour of one business session was given to a succession of reports. But during that time the vast majority of the delegates were visiting with their friends and ignoring completely the video presentations.

Much of the business session time was spent debating words and phrases and making editorial changes. One individual remarked privately that it reminded him of the story of the Russian Orthodox Church debating the color of the priests' vestments while the revolution raged in the street outside. It seems imperative that all delegates learn the function of a General Conference session and the purpose of discussion. Perhaps some were simply frustrated because they knew the real power lay not on the floor but in the

nominating committee and in the other subcommittees that brought the recommendations. No name brought to the floor was defeated. Wilson's leadership was evident throughout the session. Some felt he played too strong a part, especially on the nominating committee. However, it takes a strong leader to keep a world church together. And Wilson combined that leadership with a tact born of the Holy Spirit. When the proceedings tended to bog down, the chairman for the session would turn to Elder Wilson, and in most cases his comments helped to resolve the situation.

Other General Conference actions of interest to pastors:

1. The delegates discussed a document on Sabbath observance. Curiously, they were asked not to make this an official document by voting on it, though some wanted to. Leadership did not want it included in the *Church Manual* because it would cause difficulties for some of our believers, especially those in Communist lands. In some areas, because their children may be taken away if they don't, Adventists allow their children to go to school on Sabbath. (MINISTRY intends to report on this more fully in the future.)

2. The recommendations from the special commission on the ordination of women to the gospel ministry were also brought to the session. Although the delegates did not spend a lot of time discussing them, some of the recommendations voted were highly significant. In essence, the recommendations provide for ongoing study of this issue. The next major event in the church's consideration of women's ordination will be the 1989 Annual Council, which will review the further studies made. Two of the recommendations are of particular significance: "Recommended, To institute a reformation in the church's ordination practices for the purpose of limiting ordination only to those performing direct pastoral, evangelistic, ecclesiastical, and other clearly ministerial duties." Clearly, it is a reform whose time has come.

While the delegates did not endorse the idea of ordaining women, they did urge "an 'affirmative action' plan for the involvement of women in the work of the church to be a priority with church leadership, and to request leaders to use their executive influence to open to women all aspects of ministry in the

church that do not require ordination."

3. The Health and Temperance departments were formally merged. Their previous association together had been on a trial basis for five years. Now they are one.

At the 1984 Annual Council an observer asked Elder Wilson how much the upcoming General Conference session would cost and whether it was worth that expense. He replied that no one had ever tried to figure the total cost, but the church needs to get together to discuss its business and take corporate actions. After observing the session in New Orleans, we have no doubt about the value of a General Conference session. A worldwide church cannot be administered only from Washington. The spiritual sharing, the fellowship, the discussions, the rubbing of shoulders with diverse groups from all over the world, is absolutely necessary for the unity and health of the church. Church leaders are aware of the huge costs involved and are searching for sites that will moderate the expense of future sessions.

These words from Ellen White best summarize the fifty-fourth General Conference session: "Unity existing among the followers of Christ is an evidence that the Father has sent His Son to save sinners. It is a witness to His power; for nothing short of the miraculous power of God can bring human beings with their different temperaments together in harmonious action, their one aim being to speak the truth in love."—*Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 9, p. 194.

General Conference Bulletins available:

Additional copies of all ten *General Conference Bulletins* can be obtained in a package for US\$6.95. This price includes the postage for mailing the package via surface mail. Those ordering airmail service will need to send a total price of US\$11. Individual copies will be US\$1 each plus US\$1 for mailing charges for up to ten *Bulletins*.

Orders should be placed through the Review and Herald Publishing Association, GC *Bulletins*, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.

1986 Sabbath school lessons

Ah, December—a time when, once Ingathering is done and the Christmas program completed, the pastor can (and should) take time to relax by the fire or on a balmy beach and contemplate the year to come! If you are among those organized pastors who plan a sermonic year, you may find this list of Sabbath school lesson titles and Scripture portions helpful.

First Quarter: Ephesians—"One Lord, One Faith"

One Hope of Your Calling	Eph. 1:1, 2; 6:21-24
The Blessings of the Believer	Eph. 1:3-14
The Praying Apostle	Eph. 1:15-23
From Death to Life	Eph. 2:1-10
One Building, One Cornerstone	Eph. 2:11-22
Paul's Commission	Eph. 3:1-13
Unity, an Outgrowth of Love	Eph. 3:14-21
Unity, the Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts	Eph. 4:1-16
The New and the Old Contrasted	Eph. 4:17-32
Light and Darkness Contrasted	Eph. 5:1-21
A United Home Helps Make a United Church	Eph. 5:22, 23
Everyday Christianity	Eph. 6:1-9
Strong in the Lord	Eph. 6:10-24

Second Quarter: Habakkuk and Hebrews—"In Full Assurance"

How to Handle Doubt	Hab. 1:1 through 2:4
God in Control	Hab. 2:5-20
The Celebration of Faith	Hab. 3:1-19
In Full Assurance	Overview of Hebrews
The Better Revelation	Heb. 1:1-4
The Better Name	Heb. 1:5 through 2:18
The Better Leader	Heb. 3:1 through 4:13
The Better High Priest	Heb. 4:14 through 5:10; 7:1-28
The Better Ministry	Heb. 8:1 through 9:5
The Better Sacrifice	Heb. 9:6 through 10:18
The Better Hope	Heb. 10:19-39
The Better Country	Heb. 11:1 through 12:2
The Better City	Heb. 12:3 through 13:25

Third Quarter: John—"Heaven Came Down"

All Heaven in One Gift	John 1:1-18
Why the Devils Tremble	John 14:1; 6:47, 29
The Gospel According to You	John 1:7, 8, 43-46; 3:32
Lord of the Impossible (signs and miracles)	John 2:1-11; 5:1-16; 11:1-44
A Congregation of One (Jesus and individuals)	John 3:1-21; 4:5-42; 21:15-23
Extravagant Love	John 3:16; 13:34, 35; 15:13
The Door to Forever (eternal life)	John 14:6; 17:3; 6:47
The Bush Still Burns ("I AM")	John 6:35; 10:11; 15:1
The Revelation Room	John 13-17
Like Father, Like Son	John 1:18; 14:10; 15:4
Pentecost Now	John 14-16
The Day He Wore My Crown	John 18, 19
He Lives!	John 20, 21

Fourth Quarter: Haggai, James, Malachi—"Total Commitment Now"

What Are You Doing With Your Life? (Overview of stewardship and total commitment)	John 10:10
A Bag Full of Holes	Haggai 1
I Am With You	Haggai 2
Our Christian Commitment Tested	James 1:1-15
How Real Is Your Christianity?	James 1:16-27
Attitudes, Actions, and Faith	James 2:1-26
Fire and Fruit	James 3:1-18
Self or Submission?	James 4:1-12
Presumption, Oppression, and Retribution	James 4:13 through 5:6
Living for the Coming of the Lord	James 5:7-20
How God's People Excuse Their Failures	Mal. 1:1 through 2:17
How God's People Are Judged	Mal. 3
How God's People Prepare for Deliverance	Mal. 4

Sphere of influence

Does everyone in your sphere of influence know of the Saviour who came to live and die for us? Pray that God will lead you to the ones who need to know.

Karen arrived for her first day of school wearing a dress that was a bit too long, with hair unkempt and tears streaking her small face. She was trying hard to be brave but it was not easy. Her mother seemed insensitive to her daughter's fears and admonished her to "stop acting like a baby." Any chance to flee was blocked by Karen's mother who filled the doorway. I held out my arms. Slowly and reluctantly Karen walked into them.

Fall flew by, and before I knew it December had arrived. My class was deep into plans for Christmas. There were decorations to be made, gifts to finish, and a party to plan for.

The day of the party dawned cold and rainy. Karen's health had not been good, and I was terribly afraid she might miss the party. I should have known better. Karen was one of the first to rush through the door.

The whole day was a howling success. We played games, we made some decorations to take home, we wrapped our parents' gifts.

As the room mothers prepared the refreshments I called the children to the story rug. The lights on the tree shone on their happy faces. I was carrying two books, and the children wiggled with anticipation at the prospect of more than one story.

The children helped with the telling of "The Night Before Christmas."

My second story was a particularly poignant one. Mother and Daddy had to take a long trip. Mommy was expecting a baby and she didn't feel like traveling.

The children knew instantly what story I had saved until last. They settled in comfortably, and as the story unfolded I could see the students were anticipating each part. Only tiny Karen seemed puzzled by the tale. She moved closer to

my chair, hanging on to every phrase, hardly blinking in her effort to catch each word.

At the conclusion of the story the children rushed to devour the party food. Karen ate her ice cream and cake quietly, a faraway look in her eyes.

When the last of the punch had been slurped and the last plate licked clean, the children gathered their belongings and left. But Karen lingered; something was on her mind.

"Could I take the book about Jesus

home, please?"

"Don't you have a manger scene to put up at your house?"

Karen shook her head.

"Don't you hear the story at Sunday school?" Again Karen shook her head.

"Do you have a book at home with pictures of the baby Jesus?"

Slipping her tiny hand into mine, she replied solemnly, "I never heard that story before."

I stiffened. Here in America—in Arizona—in sophisticated Scottsdale—

(Continued on page 28)

Prayers from the parsonage

It seemed fitting to conclude this column with prayers that could have come from each member of my family. During the ten years I've written, Dick, Lisa, and Hans have let me refer to them without even asking to read the manuscripts before publication. Raymond, born in December, 1984, has been crawling around my legs as I've typed the last columns, but he will not know what it's like to live with a mother whose thoughts are on monthly deadlines.

Almost twenty years ago, when my husband was an intern, I observed that ministers' wives were "on guard" when they socialized. They discussed children, grandchildren, and church members, but they did not reveal personal feelings and needs.

Fortunately, times have changed. Today women are urged to discover and use their gifts. Books, classes, and magazines address the specific challenges of the "shepherdess." Strong marriages and secure families are considered most important, and couples are encouraged

to work as partners.

The first prayer I wrote, about 1-year-old Lisa's reaction in church, represents the kinds of prayers I'm still bringing before the Lord. As workers' wives, we face unique situations, but God can help us see the special privileges of our position. Although the members may not expect us to be more actively involved than they are willing to be, they do look to us as spiritual leaders. And though we do not have to "know all the answers," we should know where and to Whom we can look for them.

Obviously, a printed prayer is not spontaneous, yet I have honestly described my experiences, emotions, and discoveries rather than trying to speak for some nebulous composite "everywoman." At the same time, I've attempted to make the prayers meaningful for the variety of people who read the column.

I hope that you have turned to this section each month the way you might go to a close friend to talk and pray together. If Prayers From the Parsonage has helped you affirm your worth before God, my daily prayer will have been answered. Farewell.

Eleanor Zoellner writes from Scottsdale, Arizona, where she assists her husband, a minister of the Lutheran Church in America.

Cherry B. Habenicht

LETTERS

From page 2

evidence that the church has ever taken a definitive, voted position at a General Conference session on whether Christ took a pre-Fall or post-Fall, sinful or sinless nature. We may summarize the evidence in the following way:

1. The first statement that reappeared in various documents but was never voted as an official position simply said that Christ "took on Him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race."

2. The second statement, officially adopted by the church at a General Conference session, states, "While retaining His divine nature, He took upon Himself the nature of the human family, lived on the earth as a man . . ." This explanation was our official position from 1932 to 1980, a period of forty-eight years.

3. Finally the wording was changed in 1980 to read "Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God."

While books and pamphlets such as *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* advocated that Christ took a post-Fall nature, we must remind our readers that only a General Conference session can issue authorized statements of belief. Those who state that the nature of Christ has been a definitively established doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are incorrect. The only authorized, established doctrine as to Christ's nature that we can find states that He was a member of the human family and was truly man as well as truly God. In view of this, we do not feel that we have violated any principle by presenting opposing views on the nature of Christ.

3. Why would you publish any material favoring the sinless nature of Christ when this is the pivotal point on which the new theology, which has caused many individuals to leave the church, has been built?

We deeply regret that anyone would leave our church because of a doctrinal misunderstanding. A much-needed

emphasis on the justification aspect of salvation has led some to follow a liberal lifestyle and ultimately to repudiate our message, including the Sabbath truth. Yet this should not stop us from proclaiming the precious doctrine of justification in a balanced way or restrain us from studying deeper into the glorious truth of Christ's imputed righteousness. Regardless of the doctrine under consideration there is always the danger of some individual going to extremes.

However, it is difficult to see why believing in the sinless nature of Christ would lead anyone out of the church. Many loyal, consecrated Seventh-day Adventists believe in the sinless moral nature of Christ, just as many committed Seventh-day Adventists believe He took a sinful nature. It is regrettable that an individual would use the sinless nature concept as license to sin. And it is regrettable that some have become discouraged over a perfectionistic concept stemming from an extreme emphasis on a sinful-natured Christ. Perhaps a misunderstanding of or overemphasis on either view has similar consequences in terms of apostasy. Believers must find a balanced understanding of Christ's humanity, which will lead them to obey His will joyfully and progress in the path of sanctification.

4. Why would you publish any material that would lead us to the conclusion that human nature is not perfectible?

If there are those Adventists who claim to be solid members of the church yet by their lifestyles deny their profession, could it be that something far deeper than an absolutely definitive understanding of the nature of Christ lies at the root of their problem? Those who daily maintain their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and love Him sincerely will do everything possible to follow His injunction "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Regardless of the position one takes in this matter, he or she can and should achieve victory over sin. Yet we are convinced that the victorious Christian will ever maintain the belief that the closer one comes to Christ the more imperfections he will find. In the light of the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, how can anyone claim to have "arrived," and how can anyone ever despair of salvation? There is a peace and joy that emanates from our precious Redeemer,

and yet we ever sense our great need. It is a true but strange paradox.

We can walk in His footsteps of obedience and strive for perfection, but never will we equal the perfection of Jesus, who defeated Satan. Nor can we fallen beings ever say as Jesus said, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (verse 30).

In support of the pre-Fall view

Do you really mean that "a person born with sinful flesh need not be a sinner"? If people born with sinful flesh are not sinners, then do babies need a Saviour? Then will all babies who haven't sinned be saved by their own virtue?—Edward Graves, Lake Elsinore, California.

If Jesus had a fallen nature, He inevitably had propensities toward sin, He was born separated from God at His birth, and He could not stand in the presence of God, just like all fallen men. His fallen nature bore the stamp of the evil nature of Satan. If Jesus had a sinful nature, His sinful nature needed to be changed to a sinless nature. At what moment of His earthly life was His sinful nature changed to a sinless nature?—Lewis Johnson, Quebec, Canada.

Mr. Gage's division of thinkers on this subject omitted those who believe Jesus' body bore the results of sin, but that He did not come into the world with the same relationship to God that all people have, namely a broken relationship (which is what sin is at its root).

He betrays a shallow concept of sin with his remarks that "a person born with sinful flesh need not be a sinner" and that Jesus "was never a sinner. . . . because He never sinned." If that is his concept of sin, then if today a person lived a life without sinning he would not be a sinner and would not need to have the atoning blood of Christ applied to his life. Mr. Gage would say of that person, "He is not a sinner because he never sinned."—John Hood, Owensboro, Kentucky.

Understanding Christ's nature is critical to understanding man's nature. It is man's self-worship (believing that *saxx hamartias* can possess creature merit),

Revelation 13, that leads to the armies of man confronting the armies of heaven in Armageddon (Revelation 19)!

The cases of Barth and Nygren are to the point. Barth topples into the humanist camp with Gage, as Rand points out. But not so Nygren! Gage, perhaps inadvertently, only partially quotes Nygren (p. 14), who rightly belongs in Rand's camp. Nygren does not hold to Gage's view of Christ's *sarx hamartias*. On page 315 of his commentary on Romans, Nygren clearly says, "Paul is firmly convinced that, in some way, Christ stood under the power of sin. . . . Sin had no place in Christ. . . . Paul can therefore not use the absolute expression *sarx hamartias*, 'sinful flesh'; for that would mean that Christ was subject to the power of sin in the same way as we who are sinners. . . . He [Paul] comes close to the dividing line; but he does not step over it."

Further, Nygren rejects the idea that "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Rom. 8:4). It points to our sanctification. Gage's whole argument is directed toward this view. Nygren states: "But such an interpretation flies directly in the face of Paul's whole view. On the contrary, it is just such a view that he opposes. . . . 'Righteousness by the law' never ceases to be, for Paul, an expression of the false way of salvation."—*Ibid.*, p. 317.

It is high time for "legalism" in Adventism to cease confusing the gospel with "permissiveness" and for all of us to gather unitedly under the banner of "Christ our righteousness."—N. L. Meager, Akron, Ohio.

In support of the post-Fall view

The nature of Christ and the definition of sin form bases for theological conclusions: (1) If sin is a state of being inherent within our natures (versus an action of the will made imperative because of our natures), then (2) Christ could not have been born with our nature or He would have been a sinner, and (3) He could not be our example except idealistically (unless He is going to give us unfallen natures too), and therefore (4) we cannot overcome as He did and must continue sinning, and therefore (5) Jesus' primary ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is to administer justification, begun in A.D. 31, with no

real change thereafter.

But, as with the immortality of the soul, no inspired statement specifically says Christ took unfallen human nature. All conclusions to this effect are drawn by inference. We are told that He took "fallen nature" (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 112). When Christ came in the "likeness [*homoiomai*] of men" (Phil. 2:7), it was in the "likeness [*homoiomai*] of sinful flesh," so that righteousness "might be fulfilled in us" (Rom. 8:3, 4). Indeed, there was no human inheritance but fallen; for Adam had no unfallen bloodline.

Yet, as when He touched the leper, Christ remained uncontaminated by our degeneracy. For unlike us, He was born with two natures. He daily offers the born-again Christian this other nature so that he too may recoil from sin by exercising its power. We also "need not retain one sinful propensity" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on 2 Peter 1:4, p. 943). Though tempted, we may crucify the lusts of the flesh.—Marshall J. Grosboll, Hyattsville, Maryland.

SDA theology does not present two alternative views concerning the human nature of Jesus our Lord. Our pioneers and the Spirit of Prophecy were not in conflict with respect to the question of the human nature of Christ. It's as if we as a people have decided to believe that Sundaykeeping and Sabbathkeeping are justified in the eyes of God. Obviously, there has been a change in our historic position, and we should heed the admonition in 2 Thessalonians 2:15: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."—Anibal Rivera, Jr., Marion, Indiana.

The author assumes that every baby is born with the death sentence hanging over it. It is true that the first death will inevitably come to every baby born, but this is not the penalty for sin—it is only the physical consequence of inheriting a mortal, sinful nature from Adam.

But is every baby born with the sentence of the second death hanging over it? Does God ascribe guilt to the newborn baby, making it worthy of the second death even before it has a chance to commit any personal sins? No. The second death is reserved for those who fail the second probation given man based on their own personal actions. No one will be cast into the lake of fire

because of Adam's sin, but only because of his or her own personal sins. This is why there must be a resurrection for both the good and the bad so that each one can be brought back from beyond the effect of Adam's sin (the first death) and be judged on the basis of his own personal choices.

The author makes the absurd claim that this universal corporate death (first death) that passed on all mankind as a consequence of Adam's sin necessitated the atoning death of a Saviour. "We must understand that both aspects of sin's effects—corporate death and personal guilt—necessitate a Saviour." This is a new doctrine that I have never heard expounded before. He is saying we need a Saviour to save us from the first death. No one questions the need for redemption from the second death and also from personal guilt, but can Christ's sacrifice on the cross have any redemptive power over the first death? Of course not.

He not only confuses sin with the effects of sin, but moves into the area of making a sinful nature equivalent to sin itself. "Though sin includes wrong choices, and therefore acts, and even thoughts, it also includes nature. If we were not born sinners, then we would not need a Saviour until our first act or thought of sin."

Here the author gets to the heart of his major thrust in the article. Since the fallen nature is the same as guilt and sin, every baby born is in need of redemption before it can think or speak or act. This means that Jesus would be guilty by just being born, unless His nature was different from all other babies. Throughout the article, the point is made that there is a separation from God, a broken relationship, because of this fallen nature inherited by all Adam's descendants. This, the author claims, is why Jesus could not have been born with such a nature. He writes: "He was similar to us, as born within human physical limitations, but not the same as us, because not born a sinner in a broken relationship with God."

By the way, how did he establish this inherited "broken relationship" for infants? By recounting Eve's visit to the tree and speculating that she sinned in her mind by doubting God even before she took the fruit. So the relationship was broken before any act of sin was committed. On this basis, he claims that every baby is born with a broken relationship and in a lost condition, without committing any act of sin. We

can only assume that he believes Eve would have been lost whether she ate the fruit or not. But it is definitely the author's opinion that the separation from God brought on by Eve's sin has been transmitted to every baby born since that time.

He calls the sinful nature "the result of separation from God." There can be no argument over this statement if it is clearly defined that our sinful natures are the result of Adam's separation from God. Please take note that there is a big difference between "separation from God" and "the result of separation from God." Adam's children did not inherit "separation from" God, which would have involved guilt, condemnation, and the penalty of the second death. They inherited only the "result" of Adam's separation from God, which involved a weakened, fallen nature, and the inevitability of the first death. The author believes a fallen nature is the same as personal guilt, and that it is also equivalent to being separated from God. He writes: "*It is unthinkable that Jesus would plunge into separation from His Father in the very act of coming to do His will.*" Thus he emphasized again the central theme of the paper—that fallen nature is guilty nature, and separated from God and salvation. Therefore, Jesus could not be related to such a nature.

But notice how he confuses terms by setting up a straw man. He writes: "*He could not be sinful in nature. . . . Union with God and sinful spiritual nature are as far removed from each other as are heaven and hell.*" Notice how he counts sinful nature and sinful spiritual nature as the same. I doubt very much that the author has ever heard anyone claim that Christ had a "sinful spiritual nature." His spiritual nature was holy and sinless. It was His human nature that was the same as fallen man's. By setting up this straw man, he makes it appear that those who believe in the post-Fall nature of Jesus actually charge Him with having a sinful spiritual nature.

The writer seems to ignore the fact that those who believe in Christ's post-Fall nature also believe that we may partake of His victorious experience through conversion and sanctification. He asks, "*What good is a sinful nature like ours if He had a divine nature unlike ours? The one cancels out the other, removing the reality of temptation from Him.*" This would be true only if Jesus had used His

divine nature to overcome the temptations. He battled those temptations with the same power that is available to every one of us as Spirit-filled Christians. After conversion, we begin to partake of the same divine nature that was in the humanity of our Lord and to which He limited Himself in His battle against temptation.

In the same way that he confuses sin with the sinful nature, the results of sin with sin itself, and separation from God with the fallen nature, the author confuses evil propensities with natural propensities. He defines evil propensities as "a leaning to sin." He writes, "*Evil propensities (a leaning to sin) are acquired in two ways: through sinning and through being born a sinner. Christ did neither.*" Of course He did neither. I don't know a single person who believes that Jesus sinned or was born a sinner. Neither do I know anyone who believes that Jesus had "sinful propensities." But I do know many who believe that He had "natural propensities," just as all of us do, as a result of being born like us, with a fallen nature. Evil propensities are those leanings toward sin that have been cultivated and strengthened by indulgence in sin. Natural propensities are those leanings that have been inherited. Guilt is involved in one, but not the other. It is not sinful unless one yields to the propensity.—Joe E. Crews, Frederick, Maryland.

The question of the nature of Christ is not a debate over certain theological fine points that have entertained and frustrated the great Christian thinkers for two thousand years. It is a spiritual equation that confirms or nullifies the foundation of the sanctuary doctrine and the destiny of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Either the cleansing of the sanctuary that began in 1844 is to purify and perfect a people to stand without sin or our denomination is the result of the inability of a group of disoriented fanatics to admit that their prophetic understandings of Daniel were wrong. The real issue is upon the point of overcoming sin. If Jesus could not enter the conflict and overcome in our flesh, then we cannot. Let us face the issue squarely and repent of the intellectual stupidity we have nurtured by educating our theologians in the spawning beds of higher criticism and "anti Christ" institutions. It is not a time for debate; on the contrary, it is a time to act. Will we

cower before the pseudointellectual Goliath or believe the Lord has led us in the past?—Doug Mielke, Hendersonville, North Carolina.

Benjamin Rand claims that the Bible gives two definitions of sin—behavior and relationship. Contrary to his assertion, there is only one Biblical definition. First John 3:4 is that one. He uses Romans 14:23— "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin"—as a definition.

Rather, Paul was demonstrating that unbelief is transgression of God's law. This is so because faith is a principle of that law (Matt. 23:23). Therefore, since "whatsoever is not of faith is sin," and since "sin is the transgression of the law," it follows that "whatsoever is not of faith" "is the transgression of the law." Doubt does not merely lead to disobedience. It is disobedience. *Doubt is sin!*

And further, it has not been proved that a broken relationship with God comes before the act of sinful choice. Isaiah 59:2 states unequivocally that active sin separates man from God. Any discussion to the contrary takes us out of the arena of Biblical exegesis into the quagmire of interpretive philosophy.—G. L. Finneman, Harrisville, New Hampshire.

Pseudonyms

I hate pseudonyms.—William Parks, Tenmile, Oregon.

The pseudonyms were a wise decision.—Alan Williams, Byhalia, Mississippi.

Does it really matter?

I get a very uneasy feeling when fundamental truths are being dissected. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" The energy and time consumed by those who scrutinize majestic truths in what one can call a histological manner are largely misspent.

There is some intellectual satisfaction in dissecting. But I seriously question that one soul is saved from sin in this fashion. Where in Holy Writ are we encouraged to dissect the divine-human nature? To do so during the emergency of these final days is as much out of place as it is to discuss the nature of water while people are drowning around us.

I am quite satisfied to know that Jesus was truly a man, tempted in all points as I am, victorious and sinless because He trusted God as I must; trust. Histolo-

gical discussions leave me cold.

Let's be about our task of uplifting Him as the one able to save us to the uttermost. This attitude does not stifle proper study or research. It does avoid wasteful discussion.—R. L. Klingbeil, Canby, Oregon.

Both correct

Both authors ("What Human Nature Did Jesus Take?"—June, 1985) are correct. Christ had degenerate physical, mental, and moral natures; but He did not have a degenerate spiritual nature. The spiritual nature is one's relationship with God, whereas the moral nature is one's behavior. The majority of the Pharisees were morally upright (they did all the "right" things), but spiritually they were full of dead men's bones. For four thousand years humans had been practicing immoral behavior, thus degenerating their moral natures; this nature Christ took. But His relationship with His Father was the same as Adam's.—Ray Cress, Crestline, California.

This our task

Amid the clatter of theological discussion on Christ's nature, all of us would do well to prayerfully ponder Hebrews 2:14-18, and the following statement by God's messenger: "The Lord Jesus took upon Him the form of sinful man, clothing His divinity with humanity. But He was holy, even as God is holy. If He had not been without spot or stain of sin, He could not have been the Saviour of mankind. He was a sin-bearer, needing no atonement. One with God in purity and holiness of character, He could make a propitiation for the sins of the whole world."—Ellen G. White, *This Day With God*, p. 357.

In the certainty and confidence of the above, let us go forth and unitedly proclaim the "everlasting gospel" of Revelation 14:6-12. Which, incidentally, the enemy of all righteousness would most gladly sidetrack by lining us up in opposite theological positions and thereby effectively muting the proclamation of the pardoning, justifying, sanctifying, and glorifying grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Having experienced this saving grace, we are qualified and empowered by the Holy Spirit to make it known. Let's get on with the glorious task assigned us by God!—Theodore Carcich, Colton, Washington.

Sphere of Influence

From page 24

there was someone who had never heard the Christmas story! It seemed incredible, yet Karen's honest little face told me that, indeed, she had not heard the blessed story of our Lord's birth.

Tucking the book under her arm and blinking back my own tears, I said, "You keep this book as long as you want to, Karen." And giving her a hug, I added, "Have a happy Christmas."

I learned later that Karen's parents were atheists. The following year Karen moved out of my sphere of influence. I was thankful for the opportunity to tell the miraculous story to a child of God who did not yet know Him.

Each one has a sphere of influence great or small. Therein lies an opportunity to spread God's love. A grieving neighbor, an abused child, a drug-addicted teenager, a lonely senior citizen—they are all part of God's world. Each needs to feel the care and concern that we as Christians can offer. Blessings will come to you as well as to those you touch.

We need to pray daily for the many who do not yet know God and Christ Jesus. Pray that *you* may be an instrument for love and goodwill in His hands.

The long campaign

From page 10

instructors, also conducted a special Bible-marking class that eventually became a Sabbath school class for new believers. Although the pastor of the church was ill, he gave strong moral support to the meetings.

Sixty-four were baptized as the result of Bradford's meetings. Among them were community leaders, college and university students, and senior citizens. Approximately twelve persons joined other Adventist churches in Philadelphia, and twelve children were enrolled in Sabbath school divisions. Thirty-seven others are still attending the special Sabbath school class.

Because of North American Division responsibilities, Bradford was unable to continue in Philadelphia after the close of the crusade, but he has kept in

constant contact with the new members. He asserts that the extended effort helps the new convert develop staying power in the church. It makes it possible for the candidates to become seasoned. "The day of the full evangelistic campaign is still with us," he says.

Portrait of a Pastor

Jeanne B. Woolsey

Face like the Master:

Smiling face
Noble forehead
Lines of mercy
Unflinching
Caring

Eyes like the Master:

Knowing eyes
Sympathizing
Looking upward
Inspiring
Searching

Voice like the Master:

Pleading voice
Softly calling
Firmly teaching
Exhorting
Praying

Heart like the Master:

Yearning heart
Compassionate
Bearing sorrow
Forgiving
Loving

Hands like the Master:

Helping hands
Lifting burdens
Blessing children
Baptizing
Serving

Feet like the Master:

Faithful feet
Seeking lost ones
Speeding gospel
Untiring
Guiding

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Recommended reading

Encouragement: The Key to Caring

Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr., and Dan B. Allender, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1984, 144 pages, \$8.95. Reviewed by Kenneth R. Wade, assistant editor, MINISTRY.

If you've ever been challenged by the concept of the caring church as a place where Christians gather to stir up one another to love and good works, and to encourage one another (Heb. 10:24, 25, R.S.V.), but haven't known how to bring it about, this book is for you.

Starting from the Hebrews text, the authors explore the problems and hang-ups that hinder us from being effective encouragers, examine various solutions, and then point to a solid Biblical basis for beginning an encouraging ministry. Their keen insights will help you understand your own needs as well as your congregation's.

But there's more. Not content to remain in the realm of theory, they go on to chapters on discovering and responding to opportunities to encourage, and two chapters on techniques. This book could prove especially valuable as a starting point for discussion in small groups.

Beyond Rejection: The Church, Homosexuality, and Hope

Don Baker, Multnomah Press, Portland, Oregon, 1985, 95 pages, hardback, \$7.95. Reviewed by Ella M. Rydzewski, editorial secretary, MINISTRY.

Beyond Rejection is a powerful story of God's deliverance and His people's love. It is more about love than sin. It is a book not only for those who seek to understand the complexities of homosexuality, such as the pastor who is counseling the homosexual, but also for those who have difficulty wanting to understand, and whose emotional responses to this sin are different from their response to other sins.

It is a story of Jerry, a church leader living a secret life. One day he and his wife seek the help of their pastor, who is the author of the book. Pastor

Baker tells of Jerry's incredible pain, guilt, and suffering. With the help of a wife whose forgiveness knows no limits and the supportive concern of friends, Jerry gradually finds his way to wholeness. It is a long journey—there are no quick remedies. Jerry progresses from depression and attempted suicide to healing, and he and his wife begin an organization to minister to homosexuals. (The book lists organizations where interested persons can find help for themselves or others.)

We see in Jerry's struggle one that is not so different from other battles with ingrained habits, addictions, thought patterns, and destructive behaviors. The pain is all too familiar when we compare it to our own special frustrations.

According to the author, there are two lies about homosexuality that many Christians believe—(1) that this orientation cannot be changed, and (2) that it is one that is chosen. "Homosexuality is not the worst sin. . . . But it is sin. Like any other sin, however, it is forgivable."

Recently published

Whose Church Is This, Anyway? Robert John Versteeg, C. C. S. Publishing, Lima, Ohio, 1985, 169 pages, \$5.95, paper.

Versteeg's humorous viewpoint on parish life is captured in 130 imaginary letters from people like Atilla D. Hunn, D. D. S.; Hulk Hagerson, the sports enthusiast; and Henrietta Peckingham, the lady who refuses to come to a church where the pastor doesn't stay behind the pulpit. Most of the letters will give you a smile. All will give you a spiritual tweak.

The Smaller Church in a Super Church Era, edited by Jon Johnston and Bill M. Sullivan, Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City, Missouri, 1983, 152 pages, \$5.95, paper. Written under the auspices of the Association of Nazarene Sociologists of Religion, this book grew out of the realization that most Nazarene congregations have fewer than one hundred members. The book deals with both

plusses and problems of small churches. Discussion questions at the end of each chapter facilitate its use in study groups.

At the Lord's Table, Ralph G. Turnbull, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1967, 141 pages, \$4.95, paper. If you find it challenging to bring new thoughts to the quarterly communion service, this book may provide the help you need. Recently reprinted (1985) in a paperback edition, it contains twenty-one communion meditations.

Pastoral Care With Children in Crisis, Andrew D. Lester, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1985, 143 pages, \$9.95, paper. The author touches on areas overlooked by many pastors. He suggests practical ways to help the young members of families in crisis. His ideas are useful for anyone wanting to minister to children, whether or not they are undergoing crisis.

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