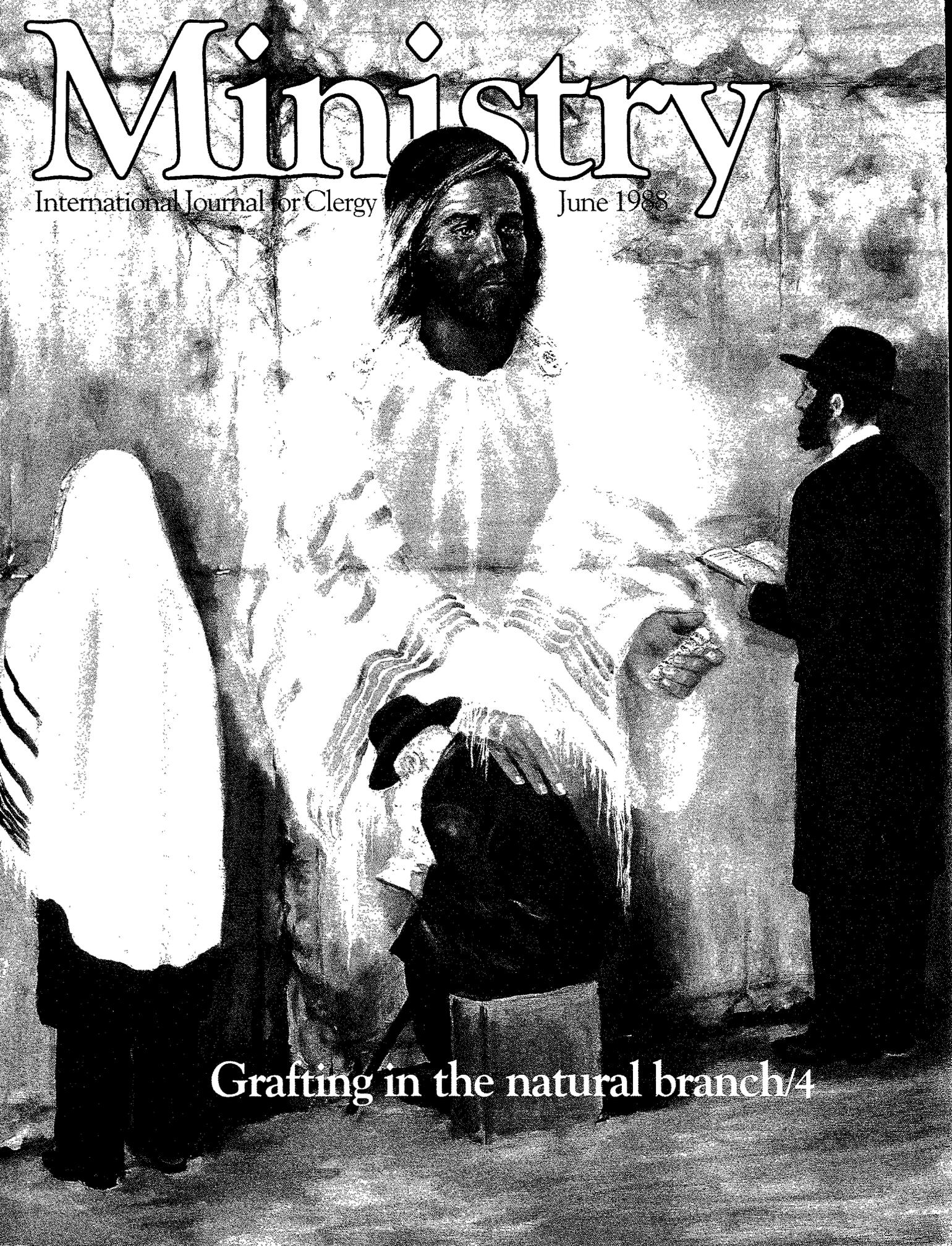


# Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

June 1988



Grafting in the natural branch/4

## Worth the church's consideration

Freddie Russell's article "When It's Time to Move On" (December 1987) is a courageous attempt at addressing one of the problems that has consistently plagued some of our organization's institutions.

The interrogatives and solutions that Russell listed are poignant, piercing, and worthy of our consideration as a church. I trust that the Ministerial Association will not allow this important issue to fade away, but will encourage its discussion at the appropriate forum.

—Lester A. Parkinson, Zambesi Union Mission, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

## A fantastic issue

This (*Ministry*, February 1988) was fantastic—the information, background, balance, etc. I just couldn't put some of the articles down without finishing them. Keep up the good work!—Edwin Gibb, Columbia, Missouri.

■ Just a note to thank you for your inside cover editorial (First Glance) in *Ministry*, February 1988.

The comments relative to our need to present before the people the matchless grace of Christ are heavy on my heart as I witness what happens in so many of our churches today. I am very anxious that somehow, some way, we as ministerial workers and lay leaders have the courage to persistently and constantly do ministry as you have suggested in your editorial. —Ron M. Wisbey, President, Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Columbia, Maryland.

■ Thank you for the February special edition of *Ministry*. I cannot remember reading an issue of any journal as thoroughly as I have read this one! The focus on righteousness by faith and the glimpses into the life of our church at an important period in its history are excellent.

May I suggest a similar focus in the future on other Bible doctrines that are so helpful to our Christian experience? We are grateful for the contribution such issues as this one provide as we

study our Bibles to know more of God's will for our church.

You have my prayerful support as you continue in your important ministry. —Skip Bell, Secretary, Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Mount Vernon, Ohio.

## On corporate repentance

Your article ("Corporate Repentance") in the February 1988 *Ministry* is a landmark of progress so far as corporate repentance is concerned, in that you make it clear that there is indeed a biblical basis for seeing the church as a corporate entity. But it is also obvious that you strongly oppose the concept of corporate repentance that Donald Short and I have held for some years.

I shall try to point out wherein your three-point understanding (p. 34) of our "assumptions" may not be entirely accurate:

1. We have never said that "the church committed a sin . . . by rejecting the message of righteousness by faith." There are two misconceptions here: a. We have understood that the church never rejected the message—the leadership did. The church never had a proper chance to accept it undistorted and unopposed (*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 234, 235). b. What was rejected by the leadership was not the doctrine of righteousness by faith, but the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry, something far greater than the evangelical or sixteenth-century concepts.

2. Your misconceptions in the first point consequently throw your second point out of focus.

3. Christ's message in Revelation 3:14-21 is addressed "unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans," not to the church itself.

You conclude your article by saying: "Repentance belongs only to those who actually commit an offense." I do not wish to contend or to argue; heaven forbid that we should bring shame on the cause of Christ by dissension. But I would earnestly, kindly, in a spirit of respect, inquire as to how you understand Calvary. Would you take the position that "repentance belongs only to"

the Jews and Romans of two millennia ago?

This question is not trivial, and I hope you will not respond accordingly. It is a very serious question, one that your brother in Christ can ask in all Christian courtesy. The answer is fundamental to the biblical topic of repentance.

If you say that repentance for the sin of the murder of the Son of God "belongs only" to those people of an ancient era, you have trouble with many passages such as *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 38; *The Desire of Ages*, page 745; Romans 3:19; Zechariah 12:10; *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, page 1085; etc., etc. If you say that repentance does belong to all of us for that basic sin of mankind, then the thesis of your article is seriously compromised.

My appeal is only this: do let us understand each other so we can do what Ellen G. White said so often, "Press together, press together." —Robert J. Wieland, Meadow Vista, California.

*The author's response: I am convinced that the topic of corporate identity is crucial to our understanding of how God wants to work in and through His people. At this point in my understanding, I believe that God accepts the decisions of the leadership as the decisions of the corporate group. This is why I devoted the last of my four articles that appeared in the Adventist Review during the month of February 1988 to this topic.*

*I wholeheartedly agree that we are all responsible for the death of Jesus, and that our attitude toward His messenger is an index of our attitude toward the One who sent the messenger. Certainly the carnal nature is at war with God, and will strike out at Him when the opportunity is presented. This, of course, was seen in the decision of the religious leaders to kill Jesus.*

*Within the context of our history as a church and what happened in 1888, my understanding is based upon The Great Controversy, page 28: "The children were not condemned for the sins of the parents; but when, with a knowledge of all the light given to their parents, the children rejected the additional light granted to*

*(Continued on page 26)*

**What is the gospel?** Robert Spangler in his editorial reviews two books published during the past three years—and comments briefly on a third—that seek to answer this vital question. *Face to Face With the Real Gospel*, by Dennis E. Priebe, *Perfect in Christ*, by Helmut Ott, and *What Every Christian Should Know About Being Justified*, by Arnold V. Wallenkampf, all stress certain answers to this question.

**According to Spangler**, two of these books are unbalanced, and one is balanced. This editorial will help you determine whether you are providing a balanced spiritual diet for your members.

**The color cover** is the first *Ministry* has run in several years. Extra copies of this painting are available. See the information given at the bottom of this page.

**Clifford Goldstein** in “Grafting in the Natural Branch” challenges the church to really minister to Jews. Of all Christian groups, Seventh-day Adventists probably have the most in common with them. Let us share the glorious saving truths of Jesus’ Messiahship.

**What are the principles** of Sabbath observance? While Thomas Blincoe (“The Preparation Principle”) does not pretend to be exhaustive on this subject, he does outline some important principles that can help us prepare for the Sabbath.

**“The Gospel Confronts** the ‘Me Generation’” looks at the tension between the individual and the group. Does God consider the individual believer or the body of believers more important?

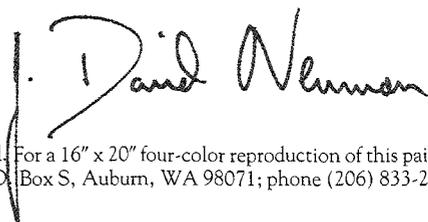
**“Laodicea: The Church That Will”** is an exciting article. James McLain describes a simple remedy that has rejuvenated his ministry, brought new life to his church, and added new members. Often we search for costly remedies, complicated programs, sophisticated planning, in-depth training, when a simple, inexpensive solution lies right at hand.

**This solution costs** nothing except time!

**The most significant book** ever published on our doctrines is advertised in this issue. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .* takes a look at each of the 27 fundamental doctrines. A reading committee of more than 200 has contributed the best of Adventist scholarship to this book.

**Like the facets** of a diamond, each doctrine reflects a different part of the glorious gospel of Christ’s righteousness. We sometimes have difficulty seeing how a particular doctrine sheds light on Calvary. This book explains how each doctrine reveals a different aspect of Christ’s righteousness.

**The purpose of this book** is not just to explain Adventist beliefs, but also to help the reader experience them. Righteousness by faith, while a doctrine rooted in what Christ accomplished at Calvary, will also bring victory in the life of the believer.



Cover painting by Beth Sweigard. For a 16" x 20" four-color reproduction of this painting send US\$21.50 to Beth Sweigard, P.O. Box S, Auburn, WA 98071; phone (206) 833-2363.

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VOLUME 61 NUMBER 6

# Grafting in the natural branch

Clifford Goldstein

**Building on what we share with Jews, you and your members can make your witness to them more effective.**



*Clifford Goldstein edits the journal Shabbat Shalom.*

**I**f any church in the world should be filled with Jews on Sabbath, it's the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The health message, the sanctuary, the Sabbath, and our unique eschatology give us great ties to the Jewish people. Indeed, if any message in the world should appeal to the Jews, it's ours.

Unfortunately, on Sabbath you can find Jews in synagogues, on the beach, at work, in Messianic congregations, and just about every other place you can imagine except in Adventist churches. Why?

The problem is not our message, but the way it is presented. Many people have no idea that a different approach is needed in reaching our Jewish friends. Ministers, in working for Jews, it's especially important to understand basic principles so you can share them with your members, who often know Jewish people but are at a loss to know how to reach them.

It shouldn't take you long to realize how sensitive a Jewish person can be to Christianity. And no wonder. The Jews have suffered endless persecution in the name of Christ. Thousands upon thousands have been killed, tortured, uprooted, and persecuted by the church. They have suffered atrocity upon atrocity from "Christians." In seminars I give around the country on how to witness to Jews, I spend the first half hour listing church-inspired persecution of the Jews in Poland, Hungary, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Russia, France, England, and on and on. The list is endless. Many of our people are not aware of all that has

happened—but the Jews are, and so they are skeptical about the religion that has brought them so much suffering. Imagine how you would feel if someone tried to convince you to join a group that for centuries had murdered your ancestors.

Because of this historical experience, you must use extra tact and sensitivity. The Jew you are talking to probably feels some resentment about these persecutions. Show sympathy for what has happened. But most important he must see that you are different, and that if all Christians in history were like you and your church, then the Jews would have been treated with love and kindness instead of hatred and spite. For many years my greatest excuse against Christianity was "The Christians have murdered us." Yet when I met some wonderful Christians who exuded Christ's gentle, loving character, I realized these people would never harm a Jew. Suddenly the excuse that I had been using for years became void. In a short time a loving, self-sacrificing Christian can undo 15 centuries of hate.

Another point, perhaps the most crucial, is that Jews never want to forsake their Jewish identity. You must explain to the Jew that by accepting Jesus he is enhancing this identity. He is becoming a "completed" Jew. Avoid statements like "I knew somebody who was a Jew but is now an Adventist."

Don't initiate a religious conversation; your Jewish friend will automatically think you are trying to convert him. Be especially careful if his family or friends are present. Your contact may be interested, but at that point not want anyone else to know. If the subject of religion

does come up, be humble, and listen to his points, but don't argue. If you get on the topic of Jesus, avoid emphatic statements like "Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah!" or "The Messiah has come." Instead, say that prayer, experience, and study have led you to believe that Jesus of Nazareth fulfills the Hebrew prophecies concerning the Messiah.

Certain words have negative connotations to the Jew and should be avoided. Never use the word *convert*. Thousands of Jews have died because they have refused to convert. For a Jew, to convert means to no longer be a Jew. In place of this term, use expressions like a "new life" or "change of heart." Instead of *Christ*, say *the Messiah* or *Jeshua* (Christ's Hebrew name). In place of *baptism*, say *immersion*; for *church*, say *congregation*; for *saved*, say *redeemed*; for *Old Testament*, say *Hebrew Scriptures*. After you have won his confidence and have talked religion with him, you can gradually introduce these words (though never *convert*.)

Never criticize Israel or its leaders. If you are not sympathetic to Israel, say nothing. If you are favorable, say so, and this will help establish a bond. For many Jews, their only tie to their Judaism is Israel, so we must avoid criticizing the nation. Many Jews see anti-Zionism as a modern manifestation of anti-Semitism, and if your Jewish friend suspects that you are anti-Semitic, you will only reinforce his notion about Christian hostility toward Jews.

Mention that you consider yourself a "spiritual Jew." Explain that you eat only clean foods and are a Sabbathkeeper. Unless your friend is religious, he might say something like "You're a better Jew than I am."

It is always better to say too little than too much. If you want to say something but are unsure, don't. The Jew is very sensitive, and the wrong words might lose him forever. Also, don't be quick to give him Ellen White's writings. They contain certain phrases and comments that your Jewish friends may completely misunderstand and be prejudiced by. Wait until he has had an experience with Jesus, and then you can start him with *Counsels on Diet and Foods* or *Education*. Don't, in your well-meaning zeal, run out and give him *Patriarchs and Prophets* or *The Desire of Ages*.

#### The best approach

Unquestionably, the best approach is through the health message. The Jew

may reject everything you believe about the Bible, religion, the Messiah, and everything else Christian. He might not even be interested. But he will be interested in health. Most Jews first come in contact with Adventists, not through Revelation seminars or evangelistic series, but through some health program. Most Jews in the Adventist Church today came in from a health contact (I met my first Adventist in a health food store). Cooking schools, stop-smoking clinics, stress seminars, and so forth are excellent ways to make contact with the Jew and win his confidence. He might not take any spiritual literature you have to offer, but he will take your health material (just make sure it doesn't have a cross or the name of Jesus on it).

If your friend shows an interest in Bible study, the book of *Daniel* would be an excellent place to start. Study with him the prophecies of Daniel 7 and show that the Bible warned against an apostate religious power that would make "war against the saints" (verse 21, NIV). Be sure to mention that among these saints were godly Jews. These prophecies were the first I ever studied in the Bible, and the realization that it was *apostate* Christianity that was the persecutor helped me to put the past persecutions in proper perspective. You might add, "Why, even the Christian Scriptures warn about this power," and take him to Revelation 12-14.

The Jew is extremely sensitive to anti-Semitism. He is especially fearful of what is happening with the New Christian Right in America. As Adventists we have a unique understanding of where all this could lead. Explain to him about the mark of the beast and the rise of intolerance in this country. The Jew will have no problem believing that the church could bring on persecution. Yet be sure as you explain these prophecies that you leave your friend with hope. Hope is what we have. He has none. Show him the assurances we have through God, despite the impending perils we all face.

If your friend wants to study about Jesus, take him to the Old Testament prophecies. Fascinatingly, the ancient rabbis applied to the Messiah almost every Old Testament scripture that Christians believe is Messianic. For example, the Talmud (Sanhedrin 98b) identifies Isaiah 53:4 as a Messianic prophecy!

Order a subscription to *Shabbat Shalom*, a magazine designed to give the Jew principles of our message in a way that

# Shabbat Shalom

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will not be offensive. Adventists themselves can benefit from this magazine also; they can see the approach we take in the journal and apply it as they work for their Jewish friends.

It's also very important to teach these principles (those in this article) to all your church members if Jews are visiting your church. The wrong word by a well-meaning member can send your contact fleeing. In one church a local saint, meaning no harm, said to me, "I feel so sorry for what you Jews have suffered, but you brought it all upon yourselves." Clearly, our people need some training.

The key to winning Jesus is that you must not offend them. If you can learn their sensitivities, learn to avoid offending them, then they can be brought in like anyone else. It just takes more time, more patience, more prayer, and most important—more unselfish love.

Ellen White has given many promises concerning the work for the Jews. She wrote, for instance: "The time has come when the Jews are to be given light. The Lord wants us to encourage and sustain men who shall labor in right lines for this people; for there are to be a multitude convinced of the truth, who will take their position for God. The time is coming when there will be as many converted [avoid that word!] in a day as there were on the day of Pentecost, after the disciples had received the Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup> She also says that the Jews in the message will "proclaim the immutability of the law of God with wonderful power."<sup>2</sup>

What was the original rebellion in heaven over? God's law. What will the climax of the ages center around? God's law. Imagine the impact of all these Jews proclaiming God's law with "wonderful power." No wonder Ellen White writes that "converted Jews are to have an important part to act in the great preparations to be made in the future to receive Christ, our Prince."<sup>3</sup> No wonder, too, that Satan does not want to see Jews join this church.

We have been given the mandate "To the Jew first, then the Gentile." There should be a hundred Jews in this church where there is now one. We need, in faith, to take up this important work. Before long many Jews will be where they belong—swelling the ranks of our churches on Sabbath. ■

<sup>1</sup> In *Review and Herald*, June 29, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> *Evangelism*, p. 578.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 579.

# The preparation principle

Thomas Blincoe

**Has modern technology eliminated our need to carefully prepare for the Sabbath?**



Thomas Blincoe, Ph.D., was dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University before his retirement. He now lives in San Marcos, California.

**W**e all sense the need of preparation for significant days in our lives, whether it is a holiday, a family reunion, or the birthday of a loved one.

Who would think of coming up to his or her wedding day without having made careful preparations? The day of your baptism was probably preceded by weeks or months of thoughtful, prayerful preparation because you wanted it to be a day never to be forgotten. It is evident then that the principle of preparation is well known and accepted in connection with important days in our lives. In fact, we can all testify that the preparation we make for a particular day affects our enjoyment of that day and reflects the degree of importance we attach to it. Let us see how this applies to the observance of the Sabbath.

The first mention of preparation for the Sabbath in the Bible is found in Exodus 16. The setting is the giving of the manna in "the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai . . . [in the] second month after they [Israel] had departed from the land of Egypt" (verse 1).<sup>\*</sup> This is not to say that preparation for the Sabbath was unknown before the giving of the manna. But this is the first written record of it.

God marked the sixth day of the week as a day of preparation for the Sabbath by giving a double portion of manna, by allowing the people to gather twice as much on the sixth day, by preserving the manna gathered on that day (which He did not do on any other day, see verses 19 and 20), and by commanding the people

to prepare their Sabbath manna on the sixth day. Verse 35 implies that this arrangement lasted for 40 years. In this way the principle of preparation for the Sabbath was impressed deeply upon the minds of God's people.

Although the fourth commandment of the Decalogue contains no explicit words of instruction on preparation for the Sabbath, it points in that direction. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8). This part of the divine injunction implies the need of spiritual preparation for the Sabbath. How can one keep the Sabbath holy unless he himself is holy? In other words, an ongoing lifestyle that is the outgrowth or expression of an inner relationship with the Creator is implied here (see Lev. 11:44, 45; 1 Peter 1:14-16).

The remainder of the commandment speaks of physical rest, for every person and animal in the household, from that labor that earns a livelihood. Obeying this commandment requires preparation. The week's work must be planned ahead with the Sabbath in mind so the work program can be shut down during the Sabbath hours. "Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest" (Ex. 34:21). While it is true that the fourth commandment, along with the other nine, was given by God through Moses in a certain historical context and slanted toward an agricultural society, the principles set forth can be applied to the human race in all ages and circumstances.

The principle of preparation comes to light again in the postexilic period at the time of Nehemiah's Sabbath reform (Neh. 13:15-21). Nehemiah 13:19 says, "When it began to be dark at the gates of Jerusalem before the sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut and gave orders that they should not be opened until after the sabbath." Nehemiah recognized that in order to guard the sanctity of the Sabbath under the prevailing conditions it was necessary to shut the gates of Jerusalem during its sacred hours. The fact that he ordered them to be closed "when it began to be dark . . . before the sabbath" shows that he understood and was following the direction the Lord gave to Moses, "from evening to evening shall you keep your sabbath" (Lev. 23:32). Thus all buying and selling and business traffic in and out of the city were halted *before* the begin-

ning of the Sabbath, in preparation for its observance.

In the Gospels the sixth day of the week, our Friday, is designated as "the day before the sabbath" (Mark 15:42; see also Matt. 27:62; Luke 23:54; John 19:31, 42). Luke records one specific thing the women who had come with Jesus from Galilee did during the last moments of the preparation day. They "saw the tomb, and how his body was laid; then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment. But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared" (Luke 23:55-24:1). Jesus' followers did not overlook the principle of preparation.

For those who believe in the immutability and perpetuity of the law of God and thus in the immutability and perpetuity of the seventh-day Sabbath, and who understand the nature of the Sabbath and God's will concerning its observance, adequate preparation for the Sabbath is of extreme importance. Without it the Sabbath cannot be kept holy.

#### Sabbath meals

In her writings Ellen G. White not only affirms the biblical principle of preparation for the Sabbath, she amplifies it and applies it to the contemporary scene. Her statements fall into the three categories of physical, mental, and spiritual preparation. Her commentary on Exodus 16 is found in *Spiritual Gifts*, volume 3, pages 253 and 254. We take up her remarks just after she has quoted Exodus 16:14-26: "The Lord is no less particular now in regard to His Sabbath than when He gave the foregoing special directions to the children of Israel. He required them to bake that which they would bake, and seethe [that is, boil] that which they would seethe on the sixth day, preparatory to the rest of the Sabbath. Those who neglect to prepare for the Sabbath on the sixth day, and who cook food upon the Sabbath, violate the fourth commandment, and are transgressors of God's law. All who are really anxious to observe the Sabbath according to the commandment will not cook any food upon the Sabbath. They will, in the fear of that God who gave His law from Sinai, deny themselves, and eat food prepared upon the sixth day, even if it is not as palatable. God forbade the children of Israel baking and boiling upon the Sabbath.

That prohibition should be regarded by every Sabbathkeeper, as a solemn injunction from Jehovah to them."

This is a rather straightforward statement. Some may wish to remind us that Ellen White was a child of her times. In her day there were no microwave ovens and no frozen foods. It required much time and labor to prepare a meal then, but not now. This is true. An appeal to modern technology to cancel the counsel, however, misses a major point. The Lord is telling us through His messenger that the planning and the preparation of Sabbath meals on Friday will help us to "remember the sabbath, to keep it holy." It will help to remind us that the Sabbath is a special day, a sacred day made for men by the One who declared that He is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27, 28).

Some, in order to circumvent the problem of planning and preparing meals, especially the noon meal, have advocated eating out on the Sabbath. If this plan is followed, the plain word of God is set aside for the sake of expediency. Unnecessary buying is involved, and the environment makes it difficult, if not impossible, to keep the mind stayed on the things of God.

Because of its effect on Sabbath observance Ellen White is concerned also about the quantity and quality of food prepared on Friday and eaten on the Sabbath. On pages 307 and 308 of her book *The Ministry of Healing* she writes: "We should not provide for the Sabbath a more liberal supply or a greater variety of food than for other days. Instead of this the food should be more simple, and less should be eaten in order that the mind may be clear and vigorous to comprehend spiritual things. A clogged stomach means a clogged brain. The most precious words may be heard and not appreciated because the mind is confused by an improper diet. By overeating on the Sabbath, many do more than they think to unfit themselves for receiving the benefit of its sacred opportunities. Cooking on the Sabbath should be avoided; but it is not therefore necessary to eat cold food. In cold weather the food prepared the day before should be heated. And let the meals, however simple, be palatable and attractive. Especially in families where there are children, it is well, on the Sabbath, to provide something that will be regarded as a treat, something the family do not have every day."

As we have seen from the Bible, the

principle of preparation for the Sabbath is much broader than the mere preparation of food. "All through the week we are to have the Sabbath in mind and be making preparation to keep it according to the commandment. We are not merely to observe the Sabbath as a legal matter. We are to understand its spiritual bearing upon all the transactions of life."<sup>1</sup> If we are not growing in grace and in the experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ and bringing up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord every day of the week, we will not be prepared to keep the Sabbath holy. And, she continues, the daily preparation includes the preservation of our energies so that we "will not be so exhausted in temporal labor that on the day when the Lord rested and was refreshed we shall be too weary to engage in His service."<sup>2</sup>

Has Ellen White dismissed Friday as the day of preparation in favor of the daily, more comprehensive approach to preparation for the Sabbath? No. She says, "On Friday let the preparation for the Sabbath be completed."<sup>3</sup> Following this general statement is a list of specifics that we should care for before the setting

of the sun, remembering that we are to "jealously guard the edges of the Sabbath. Every moment is consecrated, holy time."<sup>4</sup> If there are children in the home, the purpose of our work of preparation should be explained to them and they should be allowed to share in it. The clothes we are planning to wear to church the following day should be checked for readiness and laid out for easy access. The shoes should be shined. The baths should be taken. † God is coming to visit us with very special blessings on His holy day. We need to prepare for His coming. And having our bodies feeling fresh and clean is a part of that preparation.

Ellen White's specific counsel includes the preparation of mind and heart. Secular papers should be put out of sight and the mind should be withdrawn from worldly business and set upon matters of the Spirit. It takes time to disengage the mind from the secular and to set it upon the sacred. We cannot make the switch in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Conscious, prayerful effort is required.

Included in the preparation of mind

and heart should be the settling of all differences between members of the family or church. "Let all bitterness and wrath and malice," she writes, "be expelled from the soul. In a humble spirit, 'confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed'. James 5:16 (KJV)."<sup>5</sup>

If this instruction is not followed and we carry differences between us and someone else into the Sabbath, there is no way that we can keep it holy. On the other hand, wouldn't it be wonderful if every Seventh-day Adventist practiced this principle of preparation for the Sabbath? If differences in the church or in the family were never more than a week old, would there be any divided churches? Any divided homes? Remember, as I heard a friend of mine say, "Christian forgiveness isn't based on a fair exchange. It is motivated by a love that doesn't ask for returns as a condition."

The last step in preparation for the Sabbath is to gather the members of the family before the setting of the sun "to read God's Word, to sing and pray."<sup>6</sup> This is heaven's appointed setting in which to welcome the arrival of the holy Sabbath with peace of mind and to begin to enjoy the sense of the presence of the Lord of the Sabbath as He "draws very nigh to His people on the day He has blessed and sanctified."<sup>7</sup>

In the Bible and in the writings of Ellen White the Lord has made it clear that there is a principle of preparation for the Sabbath. By being more aware of it and by putting it into practice we can be ready physically, mentally, and spiritually for the joy of the holy Sabbath day. ■

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

†In our day of modern plumbing, some might look upon this counsel as outdated. Taking a bath was quite a chore in Ellen White's day when water had to be heated on the stove and poured into the tub. Now hot water flows automatically at the turn of the faucet. One can be in and out of the shower in five minutes. It is no more trouble than washing one's hands and face. But think again. Remember the preparation principle.

<sup>1</sup> *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 354.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 355.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 356.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 137.

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# The gospel confronts the “me generation”

William McCall

**Our emphasis on individualism causes us to misread our Bibles. God is much more concerned with the church as the body of believers than most of us realize.**



*William McCall pastors the Blytheville company and the Jonesboro and Pocahontas Seventh-day Adventist churches in Arkansas.*

**M**any of the distinctive characteristics of Western society derive from its emphasis on the individual. Personal liberty, diversity of thought, and freedom of expression are fortunate results of this stress. In recent times, however, it seems that almost all forms of corporate identity are in the process of dissolution. We are reducing ourselves to the lowest common denominator of one. We are becoming a parody of ourselves, sometimes called the “me generation,” in which everyone is ultimately looking out for number one. Yet number one is becoming the loneliest number; and isolation, alienation, and cultural fragmentation are becoming our heritage.

Maybe our bias toward the individual has led to a distorted perception of the gospel. I am convinced that there is far more emphasis on community in the Word of God than most people recognize. Jesus is often marketed as some sort of cosmic cola under the banner of “personal Saviour” (a term curiously absent from the Bible), with an emphasis on such rewards as happiness and fulfillment—compensations aimed at appealing to our culture of narcissism.

But this approach stems from a distortion of the gospel. Although we must reach people where they are, we also have a responsibility to lead them to where God wants them to be. An overpersonalization of the gospel not only offers no cure for our ills but may itself be symptomatic of the problem—selfishness! It is true that God loves us as individuals and that the Good Shepherd

leaves the ninety and nine in order to rescue the one. Yet we have often neglected the biblical concept of the people of God.

To many people a relationship with Christ is an entirely personal matter, and a commitment to any congregation is an undesirable option. Although we recognize that the church triumphant is not synonymous with the church visible, we dare not imply that God’s salvation takes place apart from His body. The Bible knows nothing of this sort of ultra-individualism. A quick review of certain key teachings illustrates how we have tended to overpersonalize God’s word.

## **The too personal gospel**

Protestants often perceive justification by faith as a purely personal transaction with little reference to the church of God. It is interesting to note, however, the communal context of Romans and Galatians, the key New Testament works on this subject. The crisis that initiated these letters was not a personal one, but a corporate one; not Paul’s struggle to find peace with God, but Paul’s desire to bring harmony to the church; not even Paul’s struggle with personal guilt, but the relationship between Jew and Gentile.

Paul’s argument in Romans and Galatians probably has less to do with merit than with meritocracy. He argues that in spite of all the gifts, good works, and seniority of the Jews, God has chosen the Gentiles to be coheirs of Abraham: not through works, but by grace. The Gentiles stand as equal to the Jews before God. Circumcision, which had been the mark of national distinction, has become

meaningless because Christ has broken down every barrier between peoples. In Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).<sup>\*</sup> Gentiles are now heirs of Abraham through faith, and thus, through God's mercy, have been accepted into the covenant community.

I am not trying to deny the personal applications of Paul's gospel. But we need to recognize that Paul emphasizes that justification by faith is the basis of the covenant community, the foundation not only for our peace with God but for peace among believers.

Notice again the book of Romans. Though we often lose interest after chapter 8, feeling chapters 9 through 11 are just a curious appendage of mainly historical interest, these chapters concerning the nature of God's true Israel are really the climax of Paul's argument! Not until Paul fully explores the purpose of Israel is his gospel complete. The gospel is not simply our personal rebirth, but it is the birth of a new community—not just a new person, but the new people of God. Christ is the sufficiency not only of individuals but of communities as well. God's grace covers not only persons but the entire people of God.

The letter to the Ephesians is a rhapsody on God's grace and a psalm on our unity in Christ. It is a "togetherness" book: a "we-ness" cure for our "me-ness" ills. Paul carries over a theme hinted at in Romans: the purpose of the gospel is not simply our personal justification, but the vindication of God's character (Rom. 3:25, 26). Our salvation is "to the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:14; see also verses 6 and 12). God's mercy has been revealed in the church so that "in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7; see verses 4-7).

The salvation of the church glorifies God. This is not simply a private transaction; the process involves as well our incorporation into the family of God: "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household [family] of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you are also [being] built [together] into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (verses 19-22).

The temple in which God abides is not just our individual persons, but the people of God collectively. Our individual identity assumes meaning in relationship to the whole body (cf. Eph. 4).

In chapter 3 Paul tells us that the salvation of the church is a source of instruction to angels: "that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (verse 10). In chapter 4 he develops the metaphor of the church as Christ's body in connection with spiritual gifts. (Paul discusses gifts only in the context of Christ's body. If we see a poverty of gifts, it may be because we've forgotten the context in which they are to be revealed.)

We've tended to overpersonalize other teachings as well—for instance, prayer. The Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13) is a "we" prayer that we turn into a "me" prayer in our minds. Note:

"Our Father"—recognition of God among us

"Give us this day"—prayer for others

"Forgive us"—corporate confession

"Lead us"—prayer that God may guide the church

"Deliver us"—prayer for the salvation of souls

Once again, I am not denying the personal application of this prayer, but simply pointing out that we gain a whole new perspective when we take the literal words seriously.

Our "me" culture looks upon judgment as a personal matter. But the Bible speaks of it in corporate terms (e.g., Matt. 25:31-46). Popular opinion tends to personalize eschatology focusing on the "flight of the soul" to its heavenly reward. The Bible emphasizes resurrection, and corporate resurrection at that: "For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:15-17).

None of us will see the Lord before the other members of the church. God has ordained that even the resurrection be a festival of togetherness!

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**If we see a poverty of gifts, it may be because we've forgotten the context in which they are to be revealed.**

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### **Glorifying God**

Any talk of corporate destiny for Christ's church in general and the Adventist Church in particular sounds like manifest destiny and chauvinism to the modern mind. We are warned against pride and vanity, and certainly these are enemies of righteousness. Yet the Bible is clear that God desires to glorify Himself through His people. "The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them," Christ says (John 17:22).

New Testament ecclesiology derives directly from God's expressed purpose for Israel. "The people . . . I formed for myself that they might declare my praise" (Isa. 43:21). "He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (Ps. 23:3). A beautiful passage in Ezekiel 36:22-32 tells of how God will vindicate His holiness by saving Israel, giving them a new heart, and causing them to walk according to His laws. The New Testament doctrine of the church might be summarized by saying that the apostles saw God's promises and purposes for Israel being fulfilled through the church.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples" (John 15:8). Christ is glorified in us (John 17:10), and whatever we do we are to do to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). We are not exhorted to earn heaven—as if we were slaves—but to glorify God because we are His children.

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69; italics supplied).

(Continued on page 25)

# Laodicea: the church that will

James B. McLain

**The disease of Laodiceanism grips the church. But there is a cure.**



James B. McLain pastors the Otis Orchards, Washington, and Post Falls, Idaho, Seventh-day Adventist churches.

**L**aodicea! Does the word frighten you? Some people wield the message to this church like a battle-ax. Others consider it the description of a forsaken people who have fallen hopelessly into the lukewarm mire of apostasy. In the middle are those who are confused and bewildered and accept as the better part of valor willful ignorance of the existence of this message.

The description of the seven churches of Revelation that Uriah Smith penned for his book *Daniel and the Revelation* forms a significant part of Adventism's self-understanding. Our church has accepted Smith's suggestion that these churches represent seven epochs within the Christian church, ranging from apostolic purity and aggressiveness to the end-time quagmire of blindness and the lukewarm condition. Each church was given a special message for its particular time. The members of each church were commanded to be overcomers.

If these seven churches represent the time from John's day until Christ's return, then every Christian is a part of the church that represents his or her time. So regardless of their geographic location, Christians living during the apostolic period belonged to the Ephesus church. Likewise, those living in the time of the end are part of Laodicea regardless of where they live. Laodicea represents today's Christianity generally, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church specifically.

Laodicea, which means "a judging of the people," is the church that finishes

the work of God. It must be, for there is no eighth church. No one should feel any stigma about being a part of Laodicea—it is impossible now to be anything else. The trouble we face does not lie in being Laodicean but rather in suffering from the disease of Laodiceanism.

What is Laodiceanism? Is it being lukewarm? Is it saying "I am rich . . . and have need of nothing"? Or is it the lack of the gold, eyesalve, and white raiment? I have news for you: it is none of the above. These are symptoms of Laodiceanism—very serious symptoms, but they are not the disease.

The essence of Laodiceanism is that the church does not now have the intimate relationship with Christ that He urges upon it (see Rev. 3:20). If it had such a relationship, why the invitation? This invitation is all-inclusive. No one can leave himself or herself out. If you claim to be a Christian, then you must grapple with Christ's challenge.

The message to the seventh church is twofold. Its primary focus reveals who is responsible for the condition of the church. Each message begins with the words "Unto the angel." According to Uriah Smith this angel represents the leadership of the church: its administrators, pastors, and ancillary workers. Historically, God has sought to lead His people through a "called ministry." As the leadership goes, so goes the church.

As a pastor I have taken this message very personally. It is unsettling, to say the least, to have my Saviour lay at my doorstep the responsibility for this most serious condition. But as I have examined my own life in the light of Revela-

tion 3:20, I must confess that I have been less than faithful.

The secondary focus, but with equal responsibility, is the church member. More often than not, church members are mirrors of their pastor rather than Jesus. But they do not have to be in that trap. They are free moral agents who are capable of understanding this message and bringing Christ into their lives even though their pastor may not be doing so.

### Treating Laodiceanism

Three years ago I learned a concrete way in which I can put Jesus in my life every day. Through Morris Venden's book *How to Make Christianity Real* I finally began to put together the pieces that revealed what a Christian experience consists of and how it can be maintained on the cutting edge. The idea was based on 2 Corinthians 3:18 and 1 John 2:6 as well as the following quotation: "It will do you good, and our ministers generally, to frequently review the closing scenes in the life of our Redeemer. Here, beset with temptations as He was, we may all learn lessons of the utmost importance to us. It would be well to spend a thoughtful hour each day reviewing the life of Christ from the manger to Calvary. We should take it point by point and let the imagination vividly grasp each scene, especially the closing ones of His earthly life. By thus contemplating His teachings and sufferings, and the infinite sacrifice made by Him for the redemption of the race, we may strengthen our faith, quicken our love, and become more deeply imbued with the spirit which sustained our Saviour. If we would be saved at last we must all learn the lesson of penitence and faith at the foot of the cross."<sup>\*</sup>

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**I have never before participated in a practice that is so powerful. The effect on my personal life has been revolutionary.**

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Here the recommendation is made that every Christian spend approximately one hour each day meditating upon the teachings and the sacrifice of our Lord. A devotional life developed in this way will yield a stronger faith, greater love for God and man, and a life imbued with more of the Spirit that sustained our Saviour. This practice is the perfect cure for Laodiceanism.

So how do I accomplish this end? That we may meet this need, God has provided for our use the most profound devotional tool known to man. This tool is the record of Christ's life contained in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Each morning I prayerfully meditate for approximately one hour on several chapters of the gospel story. I begin with Matthew, and when I complete John several weeks later, I return to the book of Matthew. Reading and meditating on portions of these Gospels is a simple way in which to interact with Christ. This is not the place for speed reading. I do not try either to memorize or to explain the text. I am not looking for some new proofs for doctrinal positions. In my reading I am simply seeking to understand what Christ's message means to me *personally*. I want to be changed into His image, His likeness.

It is by beholding the glory of the Lord that we are changed into His image (see 2 Cor. 3:18). I estimate that in the past three years I have read through the Gospels, casually, more than 50 times. I have never before participated in a practice that is so powerful. The repetition is absolutely a godsend. The effect on my personal life has been revolutionary.

Even though I have been following this plan for the past three years, it has not become boring or stale. On the contrary, the experience continues to grow. I have shared this plan with my churches and urged them to at least try it for three months. Some have accepted the challenge and are reaping the rewards. Recently I had the privilege of sharing this plan with a Methodist congregation in Oakland, California. They loved it. The plan transcends denominationalism.

When I became a Christian 16 years ago I gave priority to the proof-text method of study. I tended to regard Christ's words as just some among the many words of Scripture. Since centering my attention on the gospel narratives, I have begun to place Christ's words over *all* other words. His authority

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**People who have a daily devotional life focused on the person of Christ as seen in the Gospels are easier to organize for evangelism.**

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is supreme. All other words, whether from the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy, gain their authority from Him and must be in strict harmony with His. He Himself said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Luke 21:33, NKJV). It has become evident to me that all other Scripture is to be interpreted in the light of Christ's life and His teachings, and that the only way one can obtain an optimum understanding of Scripture is by approaching it with Christ's perspective firmly in mind. This devotional plan immerses the mind in His perspective.

Perhaps the most gratifying result of the past three years has been the spiritual growth of my two congregations, as evidenced by the outreach activities in which they have become involved. Member Bible studies have totaled up to 30 people. Of the 10 people baptized at a recent baptism, eight had taken that step as a direct result of studies given by the members. People who have a daily devotional life focused on the person of Christ as seen in the Gospels are easier to organize for evangelism and often organize themselves to carry out the gospel commission. They are motivated by the Spirit and the example of their Saviour.

Laodicea does not lack for organization or goals or plans. We will not fulfill our commission by finding a better method—we already possess adequate plans and methods. What Laodicea lacks is the power and motivation that come from a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

But ultimately Laodicea will complete the work of God. The real question is what part you will have in it. ■

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<sup>\*</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 374.

# Making youth baptisms memorable

Leo Ranzolin

**What you can do to make the most important event in the life of your people seem as important as it is.**



*At the time he wrote this article, Leo Ranzolin was the director of the General Conference Youth Department. Now he ministers in the General Conference Secretariat, serving the Inter-American and South American divisions. This article is adapted from one that appeared in the Africa-Indian Ocean Division's Ministry.*

**R**ecently I attended a bar mitzvah, a ceremony that initiates 13-year-old boys into the duties and responsibilities of the Jewish religion. The participants' anticipation and preparation for the program and the liturgy itself thrilled me. The parents and other relatives made this experience the most important event in the life of this young man. He was the center of attention of his family and synagogue. The entire ceremony impressed upon him that he was needed, that he belonged.

As I returned from this impressive ceremony, I thought about our own young people. When we baptize them into the church, how much special attention do we give them? Do we make this event the most memorable experience in their lives? Do we make them feel important?

Unfortunately, baptisms often don't seem to be very important to us. We list them casually in the bulletin and squeeze the ceremony itself in between the announcements and the beginning of the worship service. One minute the congregation is listening to an announcement about the church campout; the next, the curtains open and the minister and a youth are standing there, ready to begin without wasting any time. The pastor mentions the person's name, says some kind words, and immerses her. Then the curtains close, and the worship service continues as usual.

## **Celebration ideas**

With a little planning and effort we can make baptisms more meaningful

than that. If the baptism is held during a special service in the church, each family represented in the baptism can have a part in decorating the sanctuary. Flowers on the platform and pews will make the occasion more memorable. Have the youth walk to the foyer during the recessional at the end of the service to receive special greetings from the church members.

At a baptism I attended at one of our camps in Europe, the young people were baptized in a large water tank that was decorated with flowers, giving it the appearance of a beautiful garden. Before the baptism all the campers lined up in two long lines facing each other. As the campers sang, the ministers and the white-robed baptismal candidates marched between the lines to the place of baptism.

A band played several religious songs, and then the whole group sang a beautiful hymn. Those who were being baptized formed a circle, and a boy and girl prayed. A pastor, relative, or friend read a short biography of each of the baptismal candidates. Alternating with these biographies were music and the inspiring testimonies of those to be baptized. The baptisms followed the pastor's 10- or 15-minute sermonette, and the audience sang a cappella between the baptisms.

Like this baptismal service, baptisms held outdoors can be especially memorable. Many youth—and adults, for that matter—prefer an outdoor baptism even when the water is cold. There's something about the natural environment that reminds us of the baptism of Jesus Christ Himself. The Lord has counseled us: "Whenever possible, let baptism be

administered in a clear lake or running stream. And give to the occasion all the importance and solemnity that can be brought into it. At such a service angels of God are always present.”\*

Careful preparation is especially important when the baptism is to be held outdoors. Church members can decorate the site with flowers, palm trees, or easily movable plants. If the baptism is to be held in a lake, a heart made of flowers can surround the youth during the baptism.

As soon as the youth are baptized, give each one a bouquet of flowers. If it is a cold day, they should get dressed first; but if not, they can remain by the water and receive the flowers and congratulations from those in attendance. A certificate and book should be given or sent to each one as a memento of his decision for the Lord.

One word of caution: Be sure that the young people are properly dressed with clothes underneath their baptismal robes (especially if the robes are white), or that they are covered with a blanket or large towel as soon as they leave the water. Neglecting this precaution can result in embarrassment to the young people and can ruin the sacredness of the occasion for all.

If the young people being baptized are members of the Pathfinder Club, have the club conduct a special ceremony using candles. Welcome them to the circle of lights by saying: “Your light is now part of our light. Welcome to the circle of love and fellowship in Jesus Christ.” Assign each a prayer partner.

### **A weekend of celebration**

Several years ago Pastor Ademar Quint began holding a special spring baptism for the young people in his church. Soon the entire South American Division joined in holding an annual spring baptism. The idea spread, and today the churches of every division are invited to participate in the annual Youth Spiritual Commitment Celebration in April.

A Spiritual Commitment Celebration can take many forms. Some churches devote an entire weekend to this special event; others, only the Sabbath morning worship service. Some link the worship service to an afternoon service. A Spiritual Commitment Celebration can also be part of a youth congress, a campout, or a Pathfinder Camporee.

Involving your whole church family in

a weekend of celebration will make baptism a never-to-be-forgotten experience for your young people. A meaningful way to begin this special weekend is with a family Communion service. A unique setting can add much to the total impact of the service. If an auditorium or fellowship hall is available, set the tables up in the shape of a cross in the center of the room. Use white tablecloths, arrange the bread and grape juice in a pleasing way, and accent the tables with candles.

For the foot-washing service, have the families sit together around the perimeter of the room and serve each other. During the Lord’s Supper, fathers and husbands can serve the emblems to their family. To close the service in a meaningful way, each person around the room (including the children) can tell one thing for which he or she is most thankful.

Sabbath school is an ideal time for a special program presented by the Pathfinders and/or youth division. Be sure to allow the youth adequate time to prepare their program. The church service also should involve youth in as many ways as possible, and the sermon should relate to the weekend’s special emphasis.

You can enhance the fellowship and unity of this special weekend with a church potluck. Encourage all members and visitors to attend. Arrange for extra food and table service so that there will be plenty for everyone and no one need stay away because he is unprepared.

The baptism and commitment celebration is best held on Sabbath afternoon after the potluck. To build the intergenerational bond, have some of the older members briefly tell how they became Seventh-day Adventists. Then have some committed youth give their testimony as to what the church means to them today. These presentations, interspersed with music by members of all ages, will make the baptism an event long to be remembered by the entire church family.

An all-church family social is a good way to end this special weekend of celebration. Your conference youth director has ideas on games all ages will enjoy. One meaningful way to conclude the social is to have all members—young and old—*join hands to form a circle around the room and sing together a song such as “I’m So Glad I’m a Part of the Family of God.”* The benediction should particularly mention those baptized earlier in the day.

In your planning for the baptism and the special service of celebration that will accompany it, be sure to include the church school teachers and Sabbath school and Pathfinder leaders. Very often it is at a school Week of Prayer or a Pathfinder Camporee that young people make their initial decision for baptism.

### **Preparing for baptism**

At the bar mitzvah I attended, I was impressed with the amount of time the parents had spent studying the Torah with their son. As they thanked God during the service, they mentioned how worthwhile it had been to spend those long hours studying together.

The General Conference Church Ministries Department has prepared a baptismal manual that parents can use to study the doctrines of the church with their children. It is based on the 27 fundamental beliefs and will be a blessing not only for the youth but for the whole family. It can be the basis for using family worship hours to strengthen faith in Jesus.

Many times we assume that because young people are born into the church they know everything the church teaches. Nothing could be further from the truth. Those who are responsible for the youth need to bring such topics as dress, modesty, hygiene, diet, recreation, social life, marriage, and music before them. And they should be careful to put Ellen White into a proper light—not as one who is always negative.

In the preparation of young people for baptism, a baptismal class is a must. Pastors typically hold such a class in the church or at the church school, often starting it right after the Week of Prayer or even at the beginning of the school year.

As you visit your young people in their homes, you will be able to ascertain their readiness for baptism. You will also have the opportunity to begin to build anticipation for the Spiritual Commitment Celebration.

Holding this annual event will take a little more planning than just squeezing a baptism in between the Sabbath school and church services. But for the young people you baptize, this will become the most memorable experience of their lives—as well it should. ■

\*Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, pp. 313, 314.

# Effective hospital ministry

E. Harold Roy

**Visiting hospital patients is an important ministry. Knowing what to do and say can make your visits more profitable.**



*E. Harold Roy served for four years as a hospital chaplain. Currently he is pastor of the Wooster Seventh-day Adventist Church in Wooster, Ohio.*

**M**ost of the illnesses you will encounter in your hospital visits do not have strictly physical causes. One study of 500 cases at the Ochsner Clinic in New Orleans found that 77 percent of the illnesses were psychosomatic.<sup>1</sup> Solomon put it this way: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

Often it is spiritual healing that the patient needs most. Since fear, stress, and anxiety cause so many people to become sick, helping them to deal with these will facilitate their recovery. And this is where you, the pastor, come in. As you visit the hospital patient, you are a most important part of the healing team. How should you go about this healing work?

## **Your visit is important**

Realize the importance of the hospital visit. Working with and for human beings is the greatest work in the world. When you go to the hospital to see the patient in the name of Him who said, "I was sick, and ye visited me" (Matt. 25:36), you are following in the footsteps of Jesus, who spent more time in ministering to the sick than He did in teaching or preaching.

Your church members will forgive you for almost anything except failing to visit them when they are sick. In the early days of my ministry a little boy from my church went to the hospital overnight for a tonsillectomy. He was terribly disappointed that his pastor did not come to the hospital to see him. Of course, the reason I did not go was that I did not

know he was there. But I had to do some quick explaining and peacemaking.

Usually your members will call to let you know when someone is ill, but sometimes they need to be reminded that the pastor is not all-seeing and all-knowing. Especially when you are assuming duties in a new church it is good to ask the members to let you know when someone is ill.

Remember that the individual is still important. In an age when we emphasize ministry to the masses, we must not forget the individual. In the hospital you have a one-soul audience. Often this is where you can do your best spiritual work. Much of the work of the Master was for the one-soul audience—Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the Syrophenician woman, Zachaeus, and many others. Much of His teaching and many of His parables concerned one person—the one lost sheep, the one lost coin, the one prodigal son.

## **Making visits effective**

Decide when is the best time to visit. I knew one young minister who made a routine hospital call at 11:00 p.m. Another made such a call at 10:00 p.m. It is hard to believe that a minister would be so inconsiderate of a patient. Visiting the sick should have first place in a minister's work, not last. Patients need their rest at night. Save late-night visits for emergency cases only.

Usually between 10:00 a.m. and noon is the best time to make hospital calls. By this time the patient has been fed, bathed, and visited by the physician. By avoiding the usual visiting hours you will be able to visit more privately with the

patient and to talk more confidentially. In the case of patients of the opposite sex in wards you may, of course, need to stick to regular visiting hours. Avoid visiting at mealtime. Patients often feel ill at ease eating in your presence when you cannot eat also.

A hospital call should not normally take more than about 10 minutes. Occasionally a member may have some spiritual matter or a problem that will take longer. If the patient is seriously ill, you may need to stay longer, strengthening and encouraging the family by your prayers and presence. On one hospital visit I made several years ago the young patient had taken a sudden turn for the worse. That day I stayed for three hours, praying for the patient and endeavoring to comfort the family until the crisis was past and the young man was out of danger.

A good time to visit surgical patients is the night before surgery. Try to be there at about the time regular visiting hours are over so you can talk privately with the patient. The problem with visiting on the morning of the surgery is that the patient has often already had his preoperative medication and is groggy before you arrive.

Sometimes a patient does not sleep well the night before surgery. Reassurance from the pastor that God will be present in the operating room can be a great help. A text such as Joshua 1:9 or Isaiah 41:10 can bring comfort.

Be informed when you visit. Know the nature of the patient's illness before you enter the room, either from the family or from the physician. Your visit with someone with a minor illness will certainly differ from a visit with a terminal cancer patient.

Introduce yourself at the nurses' station and tell the nurse in charge that you would like to see Mrs. Brown or Mr. Jones. If the patient's door is closed, it is usually for a purpose, so ask the nurse if the patient is busy. Never open the door and walk in without knocking. It can lead to embarrassing encounters. If a "No Visitors" sign is on the door, it usually does not apply to the minister, but check with the nurse to be sure.

### **Demeanor**

Be pleasant. Approach the patient with a smile and a friendly greeting. Don't be gloomy, and don't try to be a Jolly Jim. The patient takes his illness seriously, and you should too. You may

want to say something like "I hope you had a good night" or "I hope you are resting well."

A smile and a pleasant greeting will go a long way. As one author expressed it, "The most professional thing which any clergyman can do is to be his best self."<sup>2</sup>

Have a positive attitude. Speak in terms of health. One writer states, "The chaplain should be the harbinger of life, not of death. . . . One of the first duties of the chaplain is to diffuse round the patient's bedside a spirit of happiness, of joy through faith."<sup>3</sup> Another writes, "Let the pastor's emphasis fall on health rather than sickness. Whatever the reason, most patients recover. In short, think of disease as an enemy to be fought and overcome."<sup>4</sup>

Bring only good news to the patient. Don't discuss other cases of illness, except to tell how well someone has recovered. An aged saint where I was pastor several years ago went to the hospital for an operation. Just before her surgery someone told her of a fatal tonsillectomy. Needless to say, this type of thing can cause a patient a great deal of worry and undue alarm.

When you enter the room, don't shake hands unless the patient extends his hand first. Stand or sit where the patient can see you easily. Otherwise he will be uncomfortable.

Dress conservatively and neatly. I don't usually wear black clothes to make hospital calls. I find something lighter and brighter more appropriate. Some patients dread seeing the minister approach because his somber demeanor makes them think of the funeral director and judgment day.

Never discuss the case of an unconscious patient in his presence. He may be able to hear, but not to respond. One woman told me of being so ill that no one thought she could recover. The physicians had given her up to die. Her family and others stood around her bed discussing these facts. "I heard everything they said," she told me after her recovery, "but I couldn't respond."

Always speak well of the patient's physician. If the patient is to recover satisfactorily, he must have faith in his physician. This confidence is just as important as the medication. It can be especially reassuring to one who is undergoing surgery. Ministers should never meddle in things medical. Never suggest a change of physician or of medication. Stick to things spiritual.

### **Helpfulness**

Be kind and courteous. Ask the patient if there is anything you can do for him. Fulfilling a seemingly small request can mean a lot to the patient. Some patients may want you to bring a book, magazine, or some other item. Several have asked me to make telephone calls for them. One wanted a bottle of ginger ale. Before fulfilling a special request for food or drink, check with the nurse to see that it is all right.

Be a good listener. "Great religious leaders of all time have been those who listened to the voice of God on one side and to the voice of the people on the other."<sup>5</sup> The minister's listening serves two important ends. It helps the patient to express, and it helps the minister to understand.

By listening carefully you may detect that the patient is fearful. Many patients have guilt feelings. Some may feel they are receiving punishment for something they have done. One woman had had an affair with a young man when she was in her teens. She now feared that she was going to die and that God would not accept her. Such people need assurance that God loves them and forgives them, and that they are not being punished.

Use all your sources of help. One of the greatest means of comfort and healing is the reading of the Holy Scriptures. The patient's physical condition and spiritual experience, as well as the conversation and mood during the visit, will determine the scripture to be used. It is best to use a passage of from one to six verses containing a thought you would like the person to retain after you leave. You may want to leave a booklet of Bible promises in which you have marked the passage you read.

In *The Art of Ministering to the Sick*, Cabot and Dicks remind us that "prayer is the minister's greatest single method in work with the sick."<sup>6</sup> The question often arises: Should I offer prayer with every patient? Probably not. But if the patient is a member of your church, you will nearly always want to pray with him. With others, your relationship, their responsiveness, and the presence or absence of visitors will all influence your decision.

In most cases a one- or two-minute prayer is long enough. Pray in a voice loud enough for the patient to hear, but subdued enough that not everyone else does. If there are other patients in the room, they often appreciate being in-

(Continued on page 27)

# Corroboration of sanctuary positions

J. E. Fulton

**I**t is not proof for our positions on the sanctuary sources outside our ranks that we endeavor here to present. The Bible is the great sourcebook. However, it is most interesting to note how Bible expositors corroborate the conclusions set forth by Seventh-day Adventists in our publications on prophecy. And such statements do have weight with many. First, let us note a few statements on the 70 weeks of Daniel 9 from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's commentary, a Church of England authority: "Seventy weeks—viz., of years; literally, Seventy sevens; . . . 490 years."

This is good Seventh-day Adventist teaching. See Uriah Smith's volume *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*.

## Date of the seventy weeks

Again commenting on Daniel 9:24: "The 70 weeks date 13 years before the rebuilding of Jerusalem; for then the re-establishment of the theocracy began, viz., at the return of Ezra to Jerusalem, 457 B.C." Here again we have the date of Bible chronology upon which Seventh-day Adventists so confidently stand, likewise vouched for by this Anglican authority. This is no mean evidence by way of corroboration of a position so vital to the doctrines held by us as a people. Certainly no one would say the learned Anglican divines were in any way influenced by our teachings.

## Termination of the 70 weeks

These same authors in endeavoring to explain Daniel 9:27 say: "In the midst of

the week. The 70 weeks extend to A.D. 33." Thus again we find our position confirmed. The usual date given for the termination of the 70 weeks is A.D. 34; but this, be it remembered, is arrived at in reckoning that the decree of Ezra 7 did not come till past midyear, thus running each succeeding epochal date of the series over into the following year. Thus A.D. 26 extends to A.D. 27, A.D. 33 to A.D. 34, and 1843 to 1844.

## Emphasis on Ezra, chapter 7

Seventh-day Adventists point the reader of Daniel 9 to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, especially emphasizing the decree referred to in Ezra 6:14, and the time in Ezra 7, namely 457 B.C. The decree or commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem is the decree Daniel refers to. In the same commentary before mentioned, the following striking statement is made: "Ezra's placing of Daniel in the canon immediately before his own book and Nehemiah's was perhaps owing to his feeling that he himself brought about the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecy, Daniel 9."

## Seventy weeks "determined"

Perhaps there is no more vital fact of agreement between this commentary and Seventh-day Adventist teaching than the following note on Daniel 9:24: "Determined. Literally, cut out, namely, from the whole course of time, for God to deal in a particular manner with Jerusalem."

Two important points in this short comment should be noticed. First, these authorities say *determined* means "cut out." For three quarters of a century, Seventh-day Adventists have never swerved from this interpretation. In fact, this was the view held by William Miller and his associates. Second, this commentary says that the 70 weeks were cut out of the whole course of time. The orig-

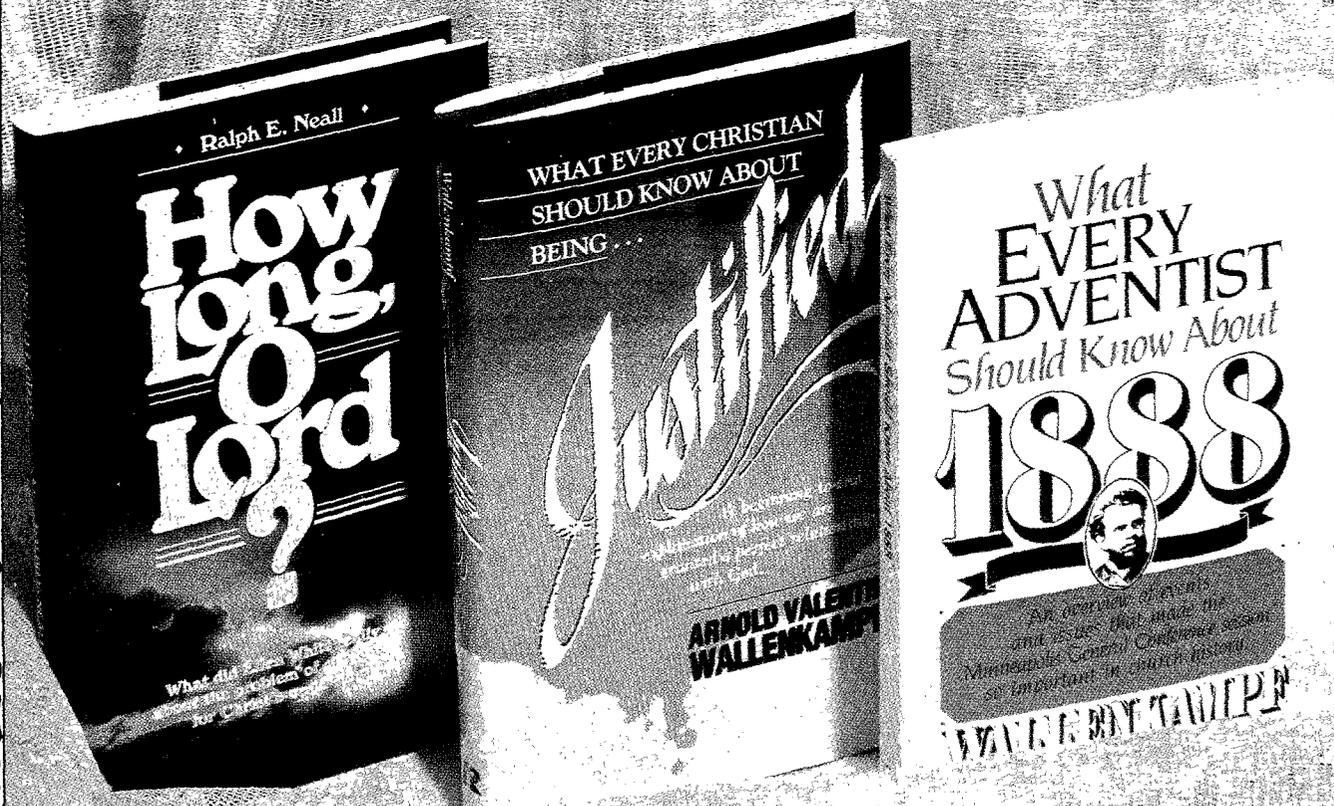
inal, it is stated, indicates that the 70 weeks were cut out of a longer period. The relationship of the 70 weeks and the 2300 days as Seventh-day Adventists understand it, was not, of course, seen; but it is a striking confirmation of our position that this commentary recognizes that the 70 weeks were so cut out.

Albert Barnes (Presbyterian), another noted authority, in his *Notes on Daniel*, says on this same text: "Are determined. The meaning would seem to be that this portion of time—the 70 weeks—was cut off from the whole of duration, or cut out of it, as it were, and set by itself for a definite purpose." How remarkable is the correspondence of prophetic interpretation between the learned authorities quoted and our early pioneers in this message! On the Hebrew word rendered "determined" in Daniel 9:24, Hengstenberg says that in "the very fact that, although Daniel might easily have found other, and much more common words, if he had merely wished to express the notion of determination—words which he actually does employ on other occasions and even in this section—he employs a word not used elsewhere, we have an apparent proof that the word is used here with some reference to its primary meaning, and is intended to represent the 70 weeks as a period accurately defined and sharply 'cut off,' in distinction from a mere determination of time."

The renowned Sir Isaac Newton, noted philosopher and mathematician who died in 1727, wrote much on the prophecies of Daniel. The clearness with which he wrote is remarkable. Of the 70 weeks and their beginning he declared: "Seventy weeks are cut out upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression.

"Here, by putting a week for seven years, are reckoned 490 years from the  
(Continued on page 27)

J. E. Fulton was the field secretary for the Pacific Union Conference when he wrote this article. Reprinted from *The Ministry*, June 1938.



• C E L E B R A T I N G • 1 8 8 8 •

**How Long, O Lord?**

For 140 years Seventh-day Adventists have expected the return of Jesus. Young believers who didn't think they had time to get married eventually became great-grandparents.

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# Justification, perfection, and the real gospel

**F**ace to Face With the Real Gospel, Dennis E. Priebe, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Boise, Idaho, 1985, \$6.95, paper, 96 pages; Perfect in Christ, Helmut Ott, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Md., 1987, \$14.95, 208 pages.

Two significant books produced in the past three years focus on the gospel: Dennis Priebe's *Face to Face With the Real Gospel* and Helmut Ott's *Perfect in Christ*. Written in a polemical style, these two books approach salvation from practically opposite poles. Priebe's ultimate focus is on sanctification, while Ott's is on justification.

An in-depth review of these two books would require the entire magazine and more. Consequently we must content ourselves with only a brief look at each.

## *Face to Face With the Real Gospel*, by Dennis Priebe

Priebe begins by saying that two gospels are being preached in the church today (p. 8). He claims that the reason for this is that the church has "never formally defined our beliefs in these three critical areas—sin, Christ, and perfection" (p. 9).

To him, "sin is not basically the way man is, but the way man chooses" (p. 17). It follows that "if sin is not nature but choice, then Christ could inherit our fallen, sinful nature without thereby becoming a sinner" (*ibid.*). While maintaining that Christ inherited just what we inherit, he favors the concept that "Christ . . . was born much as we are reborn" (p. 55).

Finally, "biblical perfection is total victory over sin, when, through total submission to Christ's power, sin becomes so repulsive that we have no desire to transgress God's will. . . . The purpose of biblical perfection is not primarily to save us but to honor Christ. It is not the eradication of our sinful nature, but the restoration of that nature through a relationship with Christ" (pp. 19, 20).

Priebe's final chapter, "Man's Impossibility—God's Possibility," contains some excellent material that gives a person courage in fighting the good fight of faith. He ends up on the positive note that God has promised to give us victory over all sin—God can keep us from falling. This is a glorious prospect!

But while the content of Priebe's book, generally speaking, adheres to traditional Adventist thinking, it has several major problems. The main problem is the lack of balance. On the definition of sin, Priebe offers readers only two choices: they must understand sin either as nature or as choice. He omits the third option, to which many Adventists subscribe, that man is sinful both in nature (inherited) and by choice (cultivated). An emphasis on one over the other distorts the truth.

Priebe uses his sin-as-choice definition as an argument supporting his view that Christ took a sinful nature. Are people unable to gain victory over sin unless they accept this definition of sin and this view of Christ's human nature? Unfortunately, rigid theological equations such as this produce confusion and confrontation.

Another imbalance is seen in the book's major thrust. In his efforts to make sanctification prominent, the author has virtually ignored justification, or im-

puted righteousness. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to depict Christian perfection accurately without considering Christ's imputed righteousness.

We cannot minutely define every aspect of the plan of salvation—the Bible does not lay out every detail. For instance, in no place does Scripture offer a complete, systematic, theological definition of sin, the human nature of Christ, or perfection. Jesus taught the way of life mainly through parables, not in theological propositions. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to lead each person into an understanding of the gospel.

I want to make it clear, however, that Priebe has given an emphasis needed in our pulpits today. In 1890 Ellen G. White wrote: "We hear a great deal about faith, but we need to hear a great deal more about works. Many are deceiving their own souls by living an easy-going, accommodating, crossless religion. But Jesus says 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me'" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 382). If we preach obedience in a caring, loving way, surely our people will respond, lifting their sights to obeying God's will with His help.

## *Perfect in Christ*, by Helmut Ott

Readers who long for the assurance of salvation will find comfort in the pages of this book—it carries throughout, as a major theme, the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Undoubtedly, this work gives an emphasis that needs to be set forth loud and clear throughout our movement.

Ott states that his objectives in writing this book were: "First, to restore Christ's high-priestly ministry to the forefront of our attention and refine our understand-

ing of what Jesus . . . is presently doing. Second, to enhance our relationship with Christ as our mediator and remind us that His atoning death, redemptive victory, and saving righteousness are the only basis of our acceptance with God, our only hope of salvation. And third, to provide a fairly systematic and reasonably comprehensive structure to the many teachings we find on this subject in Ellen White's writings" (pp. 13, 14).

Many will judge him successful in meeting the first two objectives. However, some will feel that he failed to accomplish the third.

Ott's summary gives an overview of the points he makes in each chapter. In the first chapter, he brings out that "the believer totally depends upon Christ for a right standing with the Father because God requires perfect righteousness, and man is incapable of producing it" (p. 158).

The second chapter expands this theme. In this chapter Ott repeatedly emphasizes that any obedience the Christian renders is defiled because people are sinners. "Nothing that sinful beings can render to God is acceptable on its own merits" (p. 159).

In the third chapter he points out that "no fallen being has ever reached the goal of unblemished spiritual perfection outside of Christ" (p. 160).

In the fourth chapter he emphasizes an important concept that a true, humble, obedient believer never forgets: "Those who live nearest to Jesus have at least the following characteristics: 1. They have come to appreciate the beauty of Christ's holy character, and therefore see their own sinfulness. 2. They have a clear understanding of the far-reaching nature of God's requirements, and therefore realize how far they really are from meeting the standard He requires for salvation. 3. They adequately sense the terrible-ness of sin and . . . the frailty and sinfulness of humanity, and therefore know their total dependence on Christ. 4. They live in a state of 'continual repentance and faith in the blood of Christ,' fully aware that their salvation depends, not on their own goodness, but on God's infinite grace" (p. 161).

Every Christian needs to have these four points written bold and large on his or her heart. I have often said to my wife, "If I am saved, it won't be my fault!"

Ott deals a telling blow to the fanatical arguments of some proponents of perfectionism. He is to be commended for his

emphasis on salvation through Christ and His merits alone—that must not be controverted.

However, as with all books, this one has certain weaknesses. Again, the word *imbalance* is most appropriate in describing the thrust of the book. The way the author expresses certain points may lead readers to conclude that sanctification is relatively unimportant in the individual Christian's life. Ott virtually ignores imparted righteousness. He veers away from, or at least minimizes, any victory over sin the believer may experience—even though the victory comes through the power of Christ. I wish he would not have left us with the impression that Christ-centered sanctification and Christ-centered justification are mutually exclusive. In short, Ott deals a serious blow to the fanatical pressure of some proponents of perfectionism, yet he fails to deal an equally telling blow to the fanatical proponents of an extreme justification that ultimately leads to antinomianism.

The author seems to have an aversion to obedience, even when it comes through Christ's help. He claims that obedience is seriously flawed. The repeated emphasis of this point could lead one who is struggling with sin to come to the conclusion that victory really isn't necessary, or at best is low on the scale of priorities. But contrary to what Ott says, while man of himself can do nothing and his works are never meritorious, a thrilling part of the Christian's experience is that one can be an overcomer through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the life. The virtual omission of this concept in Ott's work is a serious error and gives a warped, one-sided view of the plan of salvation.

His description of repentance includes the believer's recognition of "both his guilt and the inadequacy of what he is, what he has, and what he does to secure God's approval" (p. 158). But Ott does not specify that repentance includes a turning away from sin.

Under the heading "Perfect Obedience through *Substitution*" Ott introduces a quotation from *Steps to Christ* that indicates that man cannot perfectly obey God's holy law (*Perfect in Christ*, p. 42, citing *Steps to Christ*, p. 62). The part quoted ends with the statement "Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned."

The statement quoted undoubtedly re-

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## Again, the word *imbalance* is most appropriate in describing the thrust of this book.

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fers to justification. However, characteristically, Ott leaves out the next paragraph in *Steps to Christ*, which gives balance by describing imparted righteousness, or sanctification: "More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. . . . Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works—works of righteousness, obedience" (pp. 62, 63).

The thrust of this latter statement is virtually unexpressed throughout Ott's entire book. His selective use of quotations leaves the impression that imparted righteousness is insignificant and that one is saved regardless of his response to God's love.

Ott mixes statements from the chapter on the wedding garment in *Christ's Object Lessons* (pp. 307-319) with other Ellen White statements in such a way as to imply that, like the other statements he quotes, this chapter speaks only of Christ's imputed righteousness, that the wedding garment represents only Christ's imputed righteousness (see *Perfect in Christ*, pp. 17ff). But this implication runs counter to what Ellen White actually says in that chapter. When one reads her entire discussion there, it becomes abundantly clear that she centers her explanation of the parable on the guests' characters. The first paragraph of the chapter declares: "By the marriage is represented the union of humanity with divinity; the wedding garment represents the character which all must possess who shall be accounted fit guests for the wedding" (p. 307).

And Ellen White makes clear that, in her thinking, imparted righteousness enters into the composition of the wedding garment. Though she says that "this

robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising," she continues: "Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. . . . By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah" (*ibid.*, pp. 311, 312).

Ott repeatedly makes statements that can be taken the wrong way. He says, for instance, that "the believer's obedience has no value with God, first, because it is partial and imperfect and therefore deserves not divine approval but condemnation, and second, because the believer's sinful nature defiles everything he does and thus renders it unacceptable to God" (p. 159).

If he simply means that the believer's works in no way merit salvation, he is correct. But when he uses the phrase "believer's obedience," one assumes that he is referring to the surrendered, obedient Christian to whom Christ imparts His righteousness. Certainly what God performs in Christians meets His approval, is pleasing to Him, and does not deserve condemnation. Didn't God commend the faith and obedience of Abraham, Noah, Elijah, Mary Magdalene, and a host of others? If Christians were in a constant state of condemnation because of their tainted obedience, they would be of all people most unhappy. God forbid!

Finally, Ott's attempt to explain Ellen White's use of the biblical expression "partakers of the divine nature" seems problematic to me. Ott rightly claims that this divine nature is not "something belonging to the dimension of concrete physical reality" (p. 67). But his further explanation of what it means to be a partaker of the divine nature is unsatisfactory. He says: "The believer 'becomes a partaker of the divine nature' when—and by reason of the fact that—he exercises 'faith in Christ, his atoning sacrifice.' Clearly, the righteousness of Christ is not a spiritual substance or a moral

***What Every Christian Should Know About Being Justified*, Arnold V. Wallenkampf, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Md., 1988, \$14.95, 152 pages.**

A. V. Wallenkampf reminds us (on p. 103) that Ellen White once wrote: "Many commit the error of trying to define minutely the fine points of distinction between justification and sanctification. . . . Why try to be more minute than is Inspiration on the vital question of righteousness by faith?" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1072).

In the 18 short chapters his book contains, Wallenkampf seems to have followed this advice, presenting the gospel in a beautifully well-balanced way. Chapter 17 alone—on Christian perfection—is worth the price of the book and should be read and digested by every Seventh-day Adventist.

The abundance of references, illustrations, and quotations he uses will enrich many a sermon on the subject of salvation. This book is a must for every minister's library and should be recommended to our members. It can and should also be used as a missionary book.

element that somehow gets infused into the believer. Instead, it is an intrinsic quality of Christ's own holy character—a merit, a value, a virtue—that He, as man's representative and substitute, can share with or impute to those who by faith accept Him as personal Saviour" (p. 68).

If I understand the author correctly, he is saying that the Christian's experience of the divine nature is never subjective. Christ experiences it for the Christian and imputes—never imparts—it to us. In this section Ott neglects to say anything about the operation of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life.

We agree that no Christian becomes physically divine. But in my opinion Ott's approach robs a person of the joyful experience of a Spirit-inspired, victorious life. How much would the Christian life be impoverished if Christ did not offer His saints, here and now, a literal,

tangible, spiritual experience of peace and joy! The Holy Spirit *does* bring a definite subjective, literal, spiritual experience of happiness into the victorious believer's heart. It is certainly true that the justification imputed to my account because of Christ's victory over sin is supremely wonderful. Yet I want and must have the shackles of sin broken in order to fully experience what it means to be a partaker of the divine nature.

Just after the 1888 General Conference session, E. R. Jones wrote several articles for the *Review* that presented some extreme concepts regarding salvation. In chapter 6 of his book, Ott deals fairly extensively with this incident, drawing particularly from a letter Ellen White wrote to Jones in response to these articles. There she spoke of the danger of "those who pick out from the Word of God, and also from the Testimonies, detached paragraphs or sentences that may be interpreted to suit their ideas, and they dwell upon these, and build themselves up in their own positions, when God is not leading them" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 179). Ironically, this counsel seems as apropos to Ott as it was to Jones.

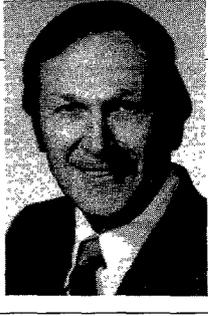
### **Striking a balance**

Adventists seem to fall into three groups. Those carrying the perfectionist/works flag will be attracted to Priebe's book, while those carrying the antiperfectionist/faith-alone flag will rally around Ott's. Those who favor a more balanced approach comprise the third group. (They would appreciate Arnold Wallenkampf's just-published *What Every Christian Should Know About Being Justified*—see box.)

Although readers would probably have to be schizophrenic to agree with every concept in both Priebe's and Ott's books, they would obtain a more balanced view of imputed and imparted righteousness if they read these two books together. Unfortunately, too many read with one eye and hear with one ear. Division, conflict, and confusion are the result.

For instance, people whose consciences are extremely sensitive, who—loving the Lord—attempt to obey Him to the best of their ability, may be overwhelmed and discouraged by an imbalanced perfectionistic presentation of the gospel. On the other hand, free-spirited, liberal Christians may find in an

(Continued on page 27)



# Ministering to ministers

Floyd Bresee

**W**ho pastors the pastor? One of the most consistent concerns coming to the Ministerial Association from both pastors and their spouses

goes something like this: "We're all the time ministering to others; yet when our cup is drained and we need spiritual help or counsel regarding our ministry, we've no place to turn."

The problem is not unique with Adventists. United Methodists surveyed 1,900 of their pastors and learned that 46 percent didn't feel free to seek counseling. Only 5 percent said they would turn to their bishop for help. We would like to think that our pastors feel freer than that in seeking out their conference president. Unfortunately, many don't.

The Ministerial Association encourages the ministerial secretary to be the pastor's pastor, friend, advocate, and, when necessary, liaison with the president. The ministerial secretary should not represent the pastor *against* his president and defend the pastor's mistakes, but he should represent the pastor to his president so that together they can address the pastor's needs. The ministerial secretary should stand with one foot in the president's office and one in the pastor's study. He represents the president's program to the pastor, but also the pastor's needs to the president.

Typically, our presidents are outstandingly capable and compassionate men. They want to feel close to their pastors. The president, however, faces at least three big obstacles in filling the role of pastor's pastor:

1. **Presidency isolates.** The conference president is a powerful person, not

necessarily because he chooses to be, but because the office thrusts considerable power upon him. The president's problem is that he must lead so many workers that it is terribly difficult for him to make himself as available to any one group as he would like to be.

He usually finds it easy to let the education director represent the teachers to him, and the publishing director represent the literature evangelists. But he may find it hard to let the ministerial secretary represent the pastors.

The president's pastoral concern for his pastors should be applauded, not discouraged. After all, he was ordained to the gospel ministry and he doesn't want his presidency separating him from his pastoral ministry. Usually he can't pastor a church, so he may feel his ministry is pastoring his pastors and their families. His frustration is that he hasn't the time to do it adequately.

One of the secrets to success in the South American Division is that so many of the ministerial secretaries visit and pray with pastors and wives in their homes. Wherever presidents find time to do this, it seems greatly appreciated, but most presidents feel it is terribly difficult to find the time.

2. **Presidency insulates.** Again, the problem is not with the president, but with his position. Most presidents have been outstanding pastors and continue to

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**"When our cup is drained, we've no place to turn."**

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be caring people. The problem is the hat. Putting on the presidential hat creates a degree of separation between the president and his workers no matter how much he may wish it did not.

3. **Presidency intimidates.** Successful and aggressive pastors will come to the president for counsel—and that's good. The trouble is that the less successful and less aggressive may need help more and be less likely to come.

For these reasons we do not feel it is ideal for the president to be the ministerial secretary. It is very difficult for the employer to be the liaison between employer and employee. It is usually better for another minister to serve as the ministerial secretary and to make himself available as the pastor's pastor. Chances are, however, that no one person is adequate to meet everyone's needs. Some will choose their president or some other conference leader; others will choose a fellow pastor. Pastors' wives often look to another pastor's wife for spiritual guidance.

The ministerial secretary is responsible to sit down with his president and develop a program to help every pastoral family find someone to whom they can look as their pastor.

Such a program might consider the creation of peer groups or special advisors—possibly retired pastors. Conferences have been urged to designate professional counselors from whom they will accept billing without being told counselees' names.

The ministerial secretary needs to publicize this program so that every pastor knows where to look for help before pressures build up, problems become unsolvable, and someone is lost to the ministry. Every pastoral family has both the need and the right to be pastored. ■



# Quality church potlucks

Alesa Fisher Michalek

**F**ood has long been a common ground for bringing family and friends together. The holidays of Christmas, Thanksgiving, and even the Fourth of July are social celebrations involving friends, family, and food. The home, office, or outdoors are the gathering grounds to renew old relationships and to initiate new ones.

The church potluck brings the church family together and enables them to show hospitality to new members and visitors. It can also be a means of evangelizing non-Adventists, who may accompany a friend or family member to the Sabbath feast.

These meals provide not only a social get-together, but an opportune means of nutrition education as well. Members enjoy the chance to taste one another's cooking and to share recipes. Many receive their first exposure to vegetarian cooking at these meals.

Unfortunately, at these feasts the tables are often laden with the richest casseroles, salads, and desserts. Many church cooks want to bring their tastiest dishes to the dinner—usually those highest in fat and calories.

Dieters may give up in despair when they see the multitude of temptations. Others may find in the dinner an excuse to overindulge. Members and visitors are

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*Alesa Fisher Michalek, a registered dietitian, teaches nutrition and weight management classes at Hinsdale Hospital's Center for Health Promotion. This article is provided by the Department of Health and Temperance of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*

urged to help themselves to seconds and thirds so that no food will be left. After these willing participants have over-eaten, the dessert table is unveiled, with an array of delectables that can at times be as extensive as the rest of the meal. It is not uncommon to see plates heaped with second helpings of desserts finding their way back to the table.

After this overconsumption, members and visitors often sit and talk. Becoming sleepy in a very short time, many go home to engage in "lay activities."

To overcome these problems, churches need a planning committee that will turn these potlucks into the exemplary meals they can be. Their potential for nutrition education is enormous. Participants can learn good nutrition and tasty cooking that they can make part of their practice at home. Members who have only bits of nutritional knowledge will learn how to apply this knowledge to prepare well-balanced meals for their families. Their palate may soon convince them that eating nutritious vegetarian meals at home can be a delicious proposition.

## Planning the potluck

A committee consisting of new and longtime church members and a tactful chairperson should tailor for the potluck a plan that meets the needs of the church. The menu should comprise three or four main items, including an entrée, vegetable, and salad, complemented by bread, a beverage, and a simple dessert. The meal should have a variety of colors and textures to make it visually appealing.

The recipes chosen should be tasty, easily prepared, inexpensive, attractive, and nutritious. They should use readily

available ingredients, and should have a low proportion of the following:

*Fats*—nuts, cream cheese, cheese, whole milk, eggs, sour cream, margarine, butter, oil, coconut, shortening, olives, avocados, mayonnaise, and salad dressing. Many recipes can cut sources of fat in half and still be tasty. Or lower-fat ingredients can be substituted for those the recipe calls for; use instead "lite" cream cheese, sour cream, and margarine; part-skim-milk cheese; two egg whites for every egg called for; 2 percent or skim milk; low-fat yogurt in place of sour cream; and "lite" salad dressings and mayonnaise.

*Salty ingredients*—salt, baking powder, baking soda, MSG, soy sauce, vegetable broth or chicken-style seasoning, pickles, olives, sauerkraut, processed cheese, garlic and onion salt, seasoned salt, canned soup and vegetables, and other processed foods. You may be able to substitute saltless commercial herb mixes; low-sodium soy sauce, soups, and vegetables; garlic and onion powder; lemon juice; and herbs. The salt in a recipe can often be reduced or eliminated.

*Sugars*—white sugar, brown sugar, turbinado sugar, honey, molasses, maple syrup, corn syrup, fructose, and dates and other dried fruits. The sugar content in many recipes can be halved, or, depending on the dish, replaced with fresh fruit or unsweetened frozen fruit. In a banana bread recipe, for example, the sugar can be cut in half and the bananas doubled. This makes for a superior, moister bread.

Keep in mind that dried fruits have very concentrated sugar and contain the same simple sugars as white sugar or honey. Use them in moderation. And do not replace sugar with sugar substitutes.

A dessert can be tantalizing and yet low in sugar. Some suggestions are oat-

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## A little planning can make your church potlucks a time not only for fellowship but for teaching a healthful lifestyle.

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meal cookies, nut breads, fruit muffins, fruit cobblers or crisps, frozen fruit salad with a few nuts for crunch, and the many variations of these desserts. Using vanilla or a *small* amount of cinnamon, honey, or brown sugar along with fruit makes a recipe taste sweeter than it actually is.

The potluck planning committee can supervise the assigning of cooking duties in the church, making assignments by Sabbath school class, age group, or letter of the alphabet. A very effective way to organize this is to print the planned menu and recipes on the back of the church bulletin or in a bulletin insert. These recipes not only form the basis for the potluck; they introduce members to nutritious vegetarian meals they can serve in their own homes. The planning committee may decide to compile these and other recipes, as well as nutrition guidelines into a church cookbook.

To avoid stereotyped meals, the committee could occasionally plan a potluck around a theme: Christmas, Esther's feast, or a variety of ethnic themes. Or they might try a soup-and-salad bar meal for variety.

If your church does not want their potlucks to be quite so structured, the coordinator could suggest the type of entrée to be featured at the potluck—for example, vegetarian patties with gravy—allowing the members to use their own recipes. Sabbath morning the members would deliver the food they had prepared to the kitchen, where the hostess would sort the food into categories. Before the potluck begins, the food would be set on two tables and placed according to category—entrée, vegetable, salad, etc.—on each table, with not more than four dishes from a category set out at a time. The hostess would then replace the dishes as needed. (It might be necessary to rotate the dishes on the table with those in the kitchen so that all dishes are

placed on the buffet tables at one time or another, and no dish is left untouched.)

With a little more planning we can reduce the liabilities our potlucks pose, while retaining the fellowship they afford. We can enhance our union with our friends—and not the size of our bodies! ■

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## The gospel confronts

*From page 11*

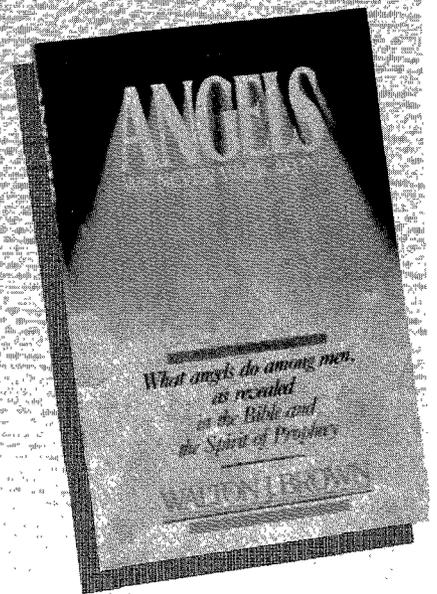
What a difference it makes to see this statement in the light of the New Testament teaching of God's glorification through His people! Our perfection is in the context of our connection with Christ's body. We are in Christ, in His body, a part of the whole that is working out God's purposes on the earth. I have a gift and you have another, and together we help complete each other. And lest we become proud, the Scriptures remind us that our glorification of God is always in the context of God's love and mercy, "that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7).

No doctrine can be taught adequately without reference to the biblical doctrine of the church. Whether it be in the realm of ethics, in which people must be taught that our consciences are not fully educated unless we can discern the effect of our lives upon the lives of others, or whether it be in the Christian life in general, in which we must teach people that the struggle against sin is not purely personal, we must constantly be aware of our relationship to one another. We need to hear more preaching on being a part of God's army, and on how we are to bear one another's burdens and pray for one another. Our lack of victory may be because we have gone too far into our closets; we need to "confess [our] sins to one another, and pray for one another," so that we may be healed (James 5:16). We will not be filled with God's Spirit while we neglect to gather with the saints and pray fervently with one accord for God to use us (see Acts 1:13, 14). Let us call forth the "we" of the gospel as an antidote for the selfishness that is poisoning the "me generation." ■

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\*All Bible texts in this article are from the Revised Standard Version.

# WHAT DO ANGELS DO FOR US?



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## Letters

From page 2

*themselves, they became partakers of the parents' sins, and filled up the measure of their iniquity."*

*As I pointed out in the article in Ministry, if the later generation do not perpetuate or join in the sin of the parents, the children remove themselves from shared guilt, although they may participate in shared punishment. —George E. Rice, Associate Secretary, Ellen G. White Estate, Washington, D.C.*

■ Your article "1888—Issues, Outcomes, Lessons," in the February 1988 *Ministry*, elicited from me amens all the way through, and I rejoice that Ellen G. White's true position about 1888 is now being published to our people.

I have a problem only with the two or three sentences that unmistakably refer to Donald Short and myself: "Some have wondered whether the Seventh-day Adventist Church today should, in a General Conference action, make a formal apology to the Lord for the sins of our brethren at Minneapolis. . . . [Ellen White] never once suggested that we should pass an official action. . . ." etc. (pp. 7, 8).

While it is true that you did not mention us by name (neither did Dr. Froom!), yet all knowledgeable readers will immediately know you are discussing us, for I think it is safe to say that no one else during the past 38 years has (notoriously) articulated the need for corporate and denominational repentance.

You seriously misrepresent our true position. You cannot find a line in our writings for 38 years that says that "an official action" or a "General Conference action" or a "formal apology to the Lord" would do an iota of good, or that we have ever "wondered whether" such should be done. Not only does this completely miss our point, but it holds us up to ridicule as being so naïve that we could ever entertain such an idea.

We have protested this distortion for years, yet our dear brethren continue to represent us as calling for "corporate confession," a phrase we have never employed. And when we protest, we are usually put down as quibbling over semantics, that this is the impression they obtained from what we have said, and

therefore we must be guilty of saying that, even though we have never said it or believed it. They have read into what we have said a misconception they have entertained.

We are most unworthy to say anything to the church; it is the Lord Jesus Himself, not we, who says "unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans" in Revelation 3:19, "Repent." What does He mean? I would suggest that this is far too serious a matter for us to be willing to go on in confusion, misunderstanding and misrepresenting one another publicly. —Robert J. Wieland, Meadow Vista, California.

*The author was not intending to represent directly Wieland and Short's position in that statement. Rather, he was repeating and answering a question other people have raised in consequence of Wieland and Short's presentations. —Editors.*

■ Thank you for the extra service you provided us in the February issue of *Ministry* on 1888. This is material that the workers can find useful to study. It is long overdue. I really appreciate your aim to present a picture of Jesus and His righteousness.

I have a question regarding Elder Olson's good article. On page 8 he quotes from letter 24, 1889 (see footnote 53). Could this not be the same as *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 468? The wording is practically the same until the end of the first sentence, then *Testimonies to Ministers* adds "and rejected." —Ben Wheeler, Salem, South Carolina.

*Olson quoted his source correctly. Though the quotation from the letter is otherwise identical to the wording in Testimonies to Ministers, letter 24 does not contain the words and rejected. The material in Testimonies to Ministers is drawn from a pamphlet that Ellen White prepared around 1892, three years after she wrote letter 24. In that pamphlet she used several paragraphs from letter 24, adding the words and rejected to the paragraph in question. —Editors.*

■ At the beginning of his article "Corporate Repentance" in the February issue, George Rice asked two questions: "Do church leaders today need to repent for the sins of their predecessors?" and "Does the church as a whole need to repent for what happened in 1888?" His answers may have given the wrong impression. He states correctly and clearly, "The later generation becomes

partakers of the parents' sin only when they perpetuate the sins of the former generation" (p. 36—see Eze. 18:20; Deut. 24:16).

But what does he mean by this sentence: "As partakers of these sins, they share the guilt but do not become responsible for the sins of the former generation" (*ibid.*)? Jesus said, "Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world. . . . Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all" (Luke 11:50, 51, NIV).

Again Rice states correctly, "If we do not adopt these wrong attitudes, we remove ourselves from shared guilt" (*ibid.*). But he does not quote the words of Jesus about the attitude of that generation: "You say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets' " (Matt. 23:30, NIV). The Jewish leaders felt that they were better than their forefathers, so they believed they would not share in their guilt and did not need to repent. It was not just the shedding of the blood of the Son of God, but this attitude of being more righteous than their predecessors, that set them up for the Crucifixion. That wrong attitude made them hypocrites (see verse 29). It was guilt-producing in and of itself.

Every generation must be repentant of the deeds of the previous generation in order not to have a superior attitude that reproduces the sins of the previous generation. The generation at the time of Christ not only was guilty of the blood of Jesus but, because of this attitude, became guilty of the blood of Abel and Zechariah as well. Since we do not know the extent of the evil of our hearts (Jer. 17:9), we see displayed in the deeds of the previous generations the sinfulness of our hearts—which sinfulness demands our repentance.

The Laodicean generation, which thinks it can see and has no need of eyesalve, is by its attitude guilty of not only the blood of Abel, Zechariah, and Jesus, but also the rejection of the 1888 message. When Laodicea repents as described in Zechariah 12:10, their repentance will include a repentance of the rejection of the 1888 message. The concept that we repent only to the extent of our recognized sins is the sin of the Laodicean church. —Vincent E. Gardner, M.D., Manhasset, New York.



## **The Christian's Attitude Toward World Religions**

Ajith Fernando, Tyndale House, Wheaton, Illinois, 1987, 192 pages, \$5.95, paper. Reviewed by James Zachary, Ministerial Association secretary, Far Eastern Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

What can one say to a non-Christian about Christ? How do we relate to Acts 4:12: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (NIV)? Can we be faithful to this singular dynamic of salvation and yet be tender to the cultural and religious richness of the non-Christian community? This book is written for those who want to understand the challenges of preaching across cultural lines.

Ajith Fernando is qualified to speak to this issue. His mother was raised a Buddhist, and he has worked many years as an evangelist in his non-Christian homeland.

The book is based upon the apostle Paul's experience preaching in Athens. While recognizing gems of truth in pagan thought, Paul makes no compromise concerning the role of Jesus as Saviour of mankind. The author uses Acts 17 as an introduction to the issues involved in communicating the gospel to a non-Christian community.

Fernando notes the dangers in the trend to make Christianity merely another path to eternity. But while clearly showing Christ as the only way to eternal life, he is careful to respect the thinking and lifestyle of the non-Christian. He supports his views with thorough research and personal experience, presenting them in an easy-to-read style. It is his burden to have all people know Jesus as a personal Friend and Saviour in a world where few honor Him. With tact and love he develops an understanding that will break down cultural and religious barriers. All those praying and working for the gospel to go to every tribe and nation need to read this volume.

## **The Anatomy of a Church**

John MacArthur, Jr., Moody Press, Chicago, 1986, 151 pages, \$3.95, paper. Reviewed by Patrick J. Boyle, director of the

Sabbath School and Stewardship Department, South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Pastoring a church is one of the most difficult occupations in the contemporary world, but to the outside observer and the critic it often appears easy. If it is an easy task, why do so many find it difficult? Could it be that both the pastor and congregation need to study, understand, and practice unity and cooperation?

The cover claims that "this book is one of the most in-depth studies you will find on church life." An excessive assumption, but the book does have merit on two counts: 1. It discusses matters relevant to the pastor and congregation. These include spiritual authority, Christian obedience, servanthood, self-discipline, the responsibility of the church toward the believer and the unsaved, the obligation for Christians to be examples, and the church's obedience to Christ as its head. 2. The book has a structured, systematic approach to church life. It is my experience that a great deal of frustration, failure, and dissatisfaction in ministry can be attributed to misdirected effort on the part of the pastor and congregation.

No church can do everything. It is vital to avoid striving for omnicompetence. Each church should concentrate on fewer things, making sure that they are the really important ones. The author helps the pastor and congregation to discriminate between the urgent and the important, the latter being frequently neglected because it appears mundane; the former pursued because it appears necessary, but it usually proves to be of only passing interest.

In eight Bible studies MacArthur discusses the church on an anatomical model—the skeleton, the internal system, the muscles, and the Head of the church. The studies reflect the author's successful ministry in Grace Community Church, Panorama City, California.

This book is relatively short, easy to read, and inexpensive. It could be used profitably as the basis for a midweek prayer meeting series. This good advice, if followed, will certainly deepen the

spirituality of any church and make its ministry more meaningful and effective.

## **Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life**

Donald P. McNeill, Douglas Morrison, and Henri Nouwen, Image Books, Garden City, New York, 1983, 141 pages, \$5.95, paper. Reviewed by Jerry Connell, pastor of the University Adventist Church, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

"All-pervasive competition reaches into the smallest corners of our relationship and prevents us from being truly compassionate." To the authors, compassion is the ultimate sign of the grace of God working in us. In a society where self-worth is derived from comparing ourselves with others, we take a critical look and recognize that competition and not compassion is often our main motivation in life.

The reader senses the challenge from Jesus to abandon our fearful clinging to the fake identity based on our competitive lifestyle. We are pointed to Christ, who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality something to be grasped, but took on the form of a slave. God's form of compassion is in serving as Christ served. Based mainly on Philippians 2:6-8, this book is divided into three sections—(1) the compassionate God who came to serve; (2) the compassionate life that places believers where God wants them; and (3) the compassionate way of patience and prayer that leads to action. This compassion is a by-product of a deep prayer life and the test of one's genuineness.

Those who desire to grow in their Christian experience will appreciate this book—and it is an excellent source for sermon material. It will change both its reader and those with whom the reader shares it.

## **How to Get Along With Difficult People**

Florence Littauer, Harvest House, Eugene, Oregon, 1984, 166 pages, \$4.95, paper. Reviewed by Sally Streib, a pastor's wife who works with Shepherdess International.

Difficult people come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. They rush about city

streets and scuffle along dusty country roads, peep out from behind the morning paper and huddle against the cold on street corners. They live in mansions, hovels, and suburban homes. A difficult person may live next door to you or even inside your own house. Perhaps you are one of them!

As you travel through this helpful and entertaining book, you meet such people as Bob Bossy, Gloria Gossip, and Harriet Hurry. You discover why they behave as they do, what they need, and how to get along with them. Littauer describes the four basic human temperaments and their combinations, along with their strengths and weaknesses in working, forming friendships, and showing emotions.

In describing how to use healing interpersonal skills, the author refers to Paul's dealings with Onesimus, the runaway slave. She suggests giving honest compliments, showing concern, celebrating others' accomplishments, giving people choices, and helping them reach goals.

This is a book for those who want to understand others, take a realistic look at themselves, and put new relating skills to work.

### Leading Bible Discussions

James F. Nyquist and Jack Kuhatschek, *Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1985, 64 pages, \$2.95, paper.* Reviewed by Linda Gallimore, a pastor's wife in Lansing, Michigan.

Structured for studying Bible passages or entire books of the Bible, this volume is designed for use in small groups in the church.

It offers excellent guidance on getting groups started and keeping them going, and deciding what to study in the Bible and how to study it. (The chapter "How to Study the Bible" is beneficial for personal use as well.) It instructs the reader on how to prepare a study and lead out, making it actually seem easy.

The authors recommend using study guides available on the market, but they also provide information for writing individualized study questions. A sample study is included in the appendix. There are questions to evaluate leadership and group participation, as well as suggestions for outreach projects and fellowship activities.

### Pilgrim's Prayer Book

John Bunyan, edited by Louis Gifford Parkhurst, Jr., *Tyndale House, Wheaton,*

*Illinois, 1986, 151 pages, \$5.95, paper.* Reviewed by Dennis Smith, pastor of the Kirkland, Washington, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Prayer is always an important subject for Christians, and especially so when discussed by that great Christian, John Bunyan. Written while the author was in prison for public preaching and calling for religious freedom in England, the book is partly a reaction to Stuart King Charles II's efforts to legislate conformity in English churches of the era.

Parkhurst has updated the language and edited Bunyan's writings on prayer into 31 daily meditations. Following each meditation the editor has written a prayer focusing on that particular meditation. The many facets of prayer are presented in a clear, concise way, making the text particularly uplifting and insightful. Examples of some meditation titles are "Prayer in the Holy Spirit," "When You Try but Cannot Pray," "Prayer That Assures No Answer," and "A Word of Encouragement."

### Celebration of Discipline

Richard J. Foster, *Harper and Row, San Francisco, California, 1978, \$12.95, 184 pages.* Reviewed by David L. Reynolds, a church lay leader in Canby, Oregon.

Richard Foster presents a refreshing look at the Christian disciplines of meditation, prayer, fasting, study, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession, worship, guidance, and celebration. As we read, we learn how central these disciplines are to experiential Christianity. The resulting zest for living the Christian life is truly uplifting. Foster draws from a wide range of Christian thought and does not restrict his writings to a particular sectarian view, giving us material of rare depth and breadth.

### Your Friend the Holy Spirit

Morris L. Venden, *Pacific Press Publishing Association, Boise, Idaho, 1986, \$6.95, paper, 95 pages.* Reviewed by Lillian Guild, Bible counselor, Voice of Prophecy radio-broadcast.

Have you ever wished that Jesus lived on earth today and that you could have Him as a close friend and adviser? Venden brings the good news that another person of the Godhead is dwelling among us. And because the Holy Spirit is not limited by humanity, He can be present everywhere at once. Constantly close to each of us, He is the best friend we could have. He stands beside us as

comforter and guide, imparting a power that nothing earthly can equal.

Noncharismatics have a tendency to shy away from talking about the baptism of the Holy Spirit because of a misconception of what that baptism involves. Venden encourages us to understand what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is, why it is necessary, and how to receive it.

Written for Adventist laity, pastors will also be inspired by *Your Friend, the Holy Spirit*. It gives practical answers to the questions people ask concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit and their relationship to this third person of the Godhead.

### Recently noted

The Story of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Eugene F. Durand, *Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1986, 75 cents, paper, 31 pages.*

The author of this tract presents a concise and detailed history of various aspects of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and a summary of its activities. However, the subtitle, "Does the SDA Church Have Something That Will Transform Your Life?" is misleading, since the booklet is more informational than inspirational. It provides excellent material to help new members understand their church.

Why I Am a Seventh-day Adventist, William G. Johnsson, *Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1986, 75 cents, paper, 31 pages.*

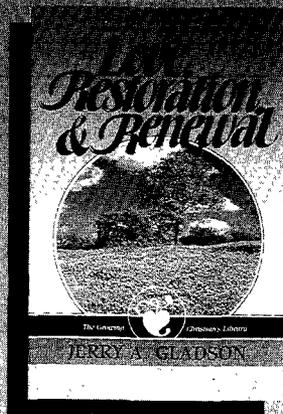
A well-known Christian editor gives 11 reasons that he is a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This tract provides a thoughtful summary of the Adventist belief system, way of life, and mission.

Love in Three Words, John C. Brunt, *Pacific Press, Boise, Idaho, 1987, 30 pages.*

In a simple, uncomplicated style, the author writes about a concept that has resulted in theological quarreling for centuries—that of the Trinity. Brunt is dean of the School of Theology at Walla Walla College and well qualified for this task.

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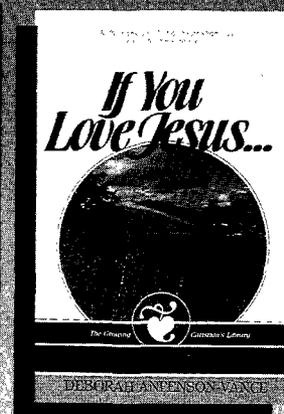
"Although I have found the biblical evidence in favor of the seventh-day Sabbath to be persuasive, the crowning demonstration of its abiding value has been 'tasting' its joy," says the author of *A Love Song for the Sabbath*. Richard Davidson reveals how we can experience the exquisite joy that God intends for us on His holy day.



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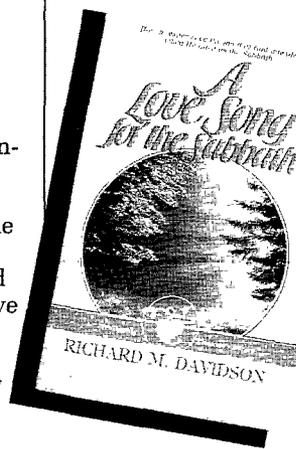
God will act to restore our planet to the condition He wanted from the



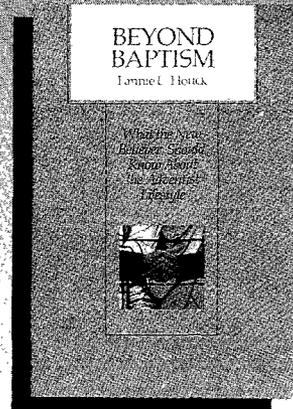
beginning. It will happen when Jesus returns. This book strengthens your faith and brightens your hope in that expected event.

### Recognizing Things of Value

Deborah Anfenson-Vance's first book, *If You Love Jesus . . .*, is filled with sparkling sentences and touches of humor. She lets us share in her personal experiences in order to show us what "things" in life greatly deserve our care and attention. These things may not be tangible. They may be small, simple, and ordinary. But they are pieces of eternity.



An *I Chose Adventism* is the answer for those who have you left uncertain about how to relate to non-Adventist friends and family members. *I Chose Adventism* helps you graciously survive those awkward moments over the Christmas ham. It is liberally sprinkled with stories that demonstrate that you can maintain loving relationships without compromising your convictions.



Have you faced the culture shock of being surrounded by Adventists for the first time? *Beyond Baptism* acquaints you with the Adventist lifestyle and the unique expressions Adventists use when they write and speak. It alerts you to vegetarianism, stewardship, the Spirit of Prophecy, and the church's educational system.



Paperback, US \$6.95, Cdn \$9.40 each.  
Order these titles from your Adventist Book Center.

## **A North American Division Hispanic evangelism council is planned for this summer.**

It will convene at La Sierra College, Riverside, California, from Monday, August 8, through Sunday, August 14.

The program will focus on instruction in various forms of evangelism, inspiring spiritual messages, and fellowship. While at the time this is being written, the organizers have not yet finalized on all the speakers, they did say that representatives from La Voz de la Esperanza and Ayer, Hoy y Mañana would be there.

All Hispanic pastors are invited to attend. Those who during the year beginning April 1, 1987, and ending March 31, 1988, have baptized the equivalent of 15 percent of what their membership was on December 31, 1986, will have their way to this council paid.

For more information, contact Elder Joseph Espinosa, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012; telephone (202) 722-6563.

**Have you ever wished you had a good way to follow up baptisms in your church?** What can you do to ensure that those who have just been baptized continue to grow in the Lord and become acquainted with people in the church?

Churches in the Oregon Conference have used with success the *Discipleship Training Manual* developed there over the past two years. The manual consists of a guide for understanding

spiritual gifts, a spiritual gifts test, and 16 lessons directed toward spiritual growth.

When someone has been baptized, he or she is assigned to a discipling partner who leads the newly baptized person through the discipleship manual. By the time the partner and the student finish the manual, they have developed a close bond with God and with each other. The lessons ground newly baptized members in Christian growth principles, and the friendships developed help keep them in the church.

You can obtain the manuals through the Ministerial Association of the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 13400 SE. Ninety-seventh Ave., Clackamas, OR 97015. The partner's manual is US\$1.50 and the student manual is 75 cents. You will be billed for postage.

**Help your members learn new hymns from the new hymnal.** Now you can get audio cassette tapes that give the background of a hymn and a choir's rendition of that hymn to piano accompaniment. You can use the tape to introduce your congregation to the hymn and then have them sing along with the choir as you replay that portion of the tape.

Available quarterly through the Hymn of the Month Club begun recently by the Office of Church Music of the General Conference Department of Church Ministries, each cassette contains three hymns. To obtain a year's membership in the club, send a check or money or-

der for US\$20 to Hymn of the Month Club, c/o Charles L. Brooks, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

**Do you send greeting cards as a part of your ministry?** Or do you want to encourage some of your members to use them, either for outreach or for staying in touch with other members?

The Color Press of College Place, Washington, has a line of greeting cards with messages appropriate for weddings, births, illnesses, and deaths. These cards have a beautiful four-color cover, appropriate messages, room for the user to personalize them, and the words "Your friends, the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

The cards come in packs of 50. Each pack, which contains only one type of card, includes envelopes and sells for US\$12.50. The press will pay the postage and handling on orders of 200 or more. (Residents of Washington State must add 7.8 percent sales tax.)

Order from Color Press, P.O. Box 578, College Place, WA 99324.

**The Bible Sabbath Association (BSA) is dedicated to promoting the Sabbath and to encouraging communication and understanding among all Christians who observe the seventh day.**

This association publishes a monthly magazine, *The Sabbath Sentinel*; the *Directory of Sabbath-Observing Groups*, the current edition of which contains 231

pages filled with information about more than 180 groups who observe the seventh day, 100 periodicals, and a geographical index; and Sabbath calendars, tracts, booklets, and promotional aids. A nonsectarian and interdenominational organization, the BSA does not take a position on matters of Christian doctrine or practice other than the Sabbath.

For membership information, a sample copy of the magazine (free), or to obtain the directory (US\$7), write the Bible Sabbath Association, RD 1, Box 222A, Fairview, OK 73737.

**The seventh annual convocation of retired Adventist workers will be held at Pacific Union College, Angwin, California, June 15-20, 1988.** Those who are

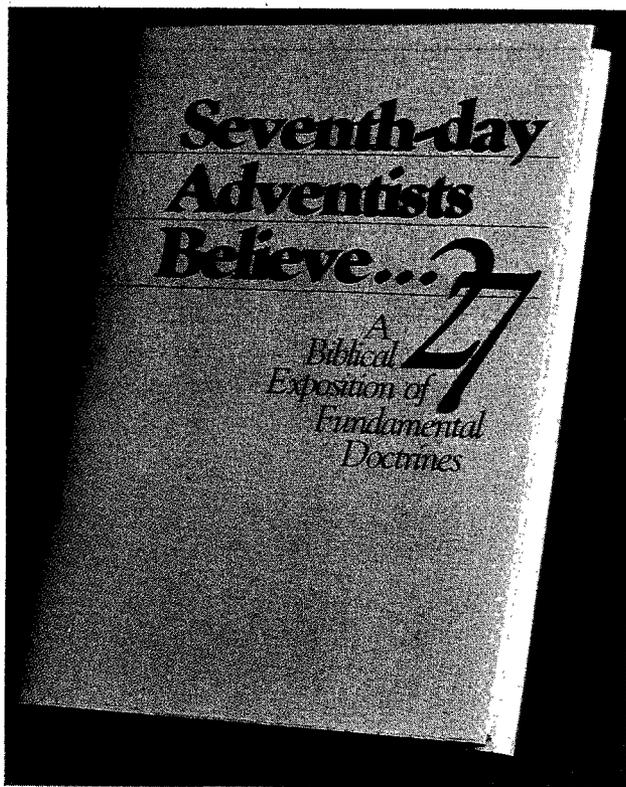
organizing this convocation are expecting that between 1,500 and 2,000 retired ministers and other former employees of the church will gather to meet friends, renew acquaintanceships, and enjoy fellowship.

Meals and lodging—including some facilities suitable for the handicapped—are available at the college, as is parking for self-contained recreational vehicles. Rates are very reasonable.

In addition to the program on campus and the fellowship a bus tour of Adventist historical sites in northern California is offered.

For more information, call the Office of Student Services at Pacific Union College, (707) 965-7362, or D. A. Delafield's office at the General Conference, (202) 722-6696.

# At last, a book that reveals the basis for each SDA doctrine.



**R**esponding to a strangely empty spot on Adventist bookshelves, the GC Ministerial Association has published a Biblical, Christ-centered explanation for all 27 fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists.

A total of 230 pastors, evangelists, administrators, and scholars from the world field added their insight to the project. They plumbed the depths of Adventist doctrine and demonstrated its relevance to modern man. They wrote simply and clearly with an intellectual integrity that confirms faith.

At last, we have a representative and authoritative work on what we believe and why we believe it.

US\$4.95, Cdn\$6.70.

A 400-page hardcover book usually costs \$15 to \$20. But because we share a need to rediscover the reason for our faith, the price has been subsidized. Call your Adventist Book Center to order.

Selected as the Sabbath school lesson help for third and fourth quarter 1988.

