

Minis

International Journal for Clergy

August 1993

**GOD'S
UNIVERSAL
REMNANT**



Adventist identity and Evangelical criticism

As a theologian committed to Evangelical theology, may I offer some reflections on Raymond Holmes's article "Adventist Identity and Evangelical Criticism" (February 1993)?

I am glad to note that Professor Holmes recognizes that the contemporary Evangelical movement has within it a wide diversity of views concerning the relation of justification to sanctification. Thus, to label all who are called Evangelical as advocates of "cheap grace" would be as unfair as to label all Adventists as advocates of "legalism." Because I feel that the article could be read by some as a blanket charge against all Evangelicals because of the criticism of Adventism by some, I would like to offer a perspective that might lessen the polarity between Adventists and Evangelicals. For Adventism to be divided between "Evangelicals" and "non-Evangelicals" would be to partake of the very confusion that exists within the broader movement of Evangelicalism today. I would urge us both to seek a more biblical and Christologically grounded concept of what it is to be "Evangelical."

It would indeed be unfortunate for Luther's insight of an Evangelical gospel, as contrasted with a sacramentally mediated grace, to be trivialized by some contemporary Evangelical exponents who emphasize justification while neglecting sanctification. As Professor Holmes rightly points out, both justification and sanctification are part of a whole. Jesus Christ as the resurrected Lord is the objective basis for justification; the Christian's unconditional obedience to Christ, who is the fulfillment of the law, constitutes the life of sanctification.

The reference to Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Professor Holmes is an apt one. The "costly grace" of Bonhoeffer is not the cost of obedience to a law or commandment as a means of grace, but the cost of following Christ as the means of

fulfilling the commandment. It is by "grace alone" that one follows Christ in "costly discipleship," argued Bonhoeffer. Without the ethical life of obedience to Christ, he wrote, the claim of justification through Christ is merely an empty concept, or cheap grace.

The issue is not, as Professor Holmes seemed to suggest, between obedience as a sign of sanctification, and nonobedience as the privilege of the justified by faith alone. Rather, the issue for a truly Evangelical theology is the nature of obedience: its motive and its demand.

To portray Adventists as legalists, because of the insistence upon obedience (sanctification), while portraying Evangelicals as advocates of cheap grace, because of reliance upon justification without sanctification, is unfair to both. I know many Evangelicals who are legalists, thinking that keeping the law merits salvation. I suspect that there may even be a few Adventists who think the same. Let us both repudiate that kind of legalism wherever it may be found.

The issue of the nature of obedience (sanctification), then, is what both Adventists and we so-called Evangelicals can seek agreement on. In Professor Holmes's article, having cited Bonhoeffer approvingly concerning obedience to Christ, he cites Daniells as saying that righteousness through faith results in obedience, that new believers "keep the commandments of God." Holmes goes on to cite the 1888 message: "justification by faith made possible by the grace of God in Christ, and empowering by that grace to obey all of God's commandments."

As one representing the Evangelical theology of the Reformation, Bonhoeffer sought to correct the tendency in his own Lutheran church toward justification without sanctification. But Bonhoeffer avoided the legalism inherent in "obedience to commandments" as a sign of justification. Rather, he insisted on obedience

to Christ as a sign of discipleship. The nature of obedience is very important to Evangelical theology. If obedience to commandments is taken as a sign of justifying faith producing sanctification, then it smacks of legalism, wherever it is found. And this is often found among Evangelicals. True obedience is to Christ, the source of both justification and sanctification.

Within the broad Evangelical movement, there can be found those who see obedience to rules, regulations, and commandments as necessary to salvation. At the same time there can be found those who see obedience to Christ as a sign of discipleship and a means of following Him as a contemporary Saviour and Lord. Obedience to Christ is a commitment to a life of discipleship that includes observance of the law of love for both God and neighbor which is the basis for all of God's commandments (Rom. 13:8-10). Paul did not contrast law and love, but saw that love as grounded in discipleship with Christ is the true motive and goal of the commandments.

I urge those who use the term *Evangelical*, both within Adventism and without, to respect this difference and avoid caricaturing Adventists as legalists and Evangelicals as advocates of cheap grace.—Ray S. Anderson, professor of theology and ministry, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.

■ While you have gone to great lengths to communicate your views and positions to non-Adventist clergy, and while you have presented yourself (corporately) as having an evangelical, conservative identity, why is it, then, that I have never sensed that Adventists, clergy or lay, have offered their hearts or hands in cooperation or support? In most of the communities where I have served as a pastor, there has been an Adventist church. I have never known their pastors to associate in any ministerial alliance, Evangelical or otherwise, nor have I ever

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Sifting through the rubble in Waco was an unpleasant duty for federal investigators, and it's no more enjoyable to do a spiritual autopsy of David Koresh and his cult followers. When we contacted Caleb Rosado, we had no idea that on very short notice we could get such a scholarly, in-depth analysis. Dr. Rosado's observations are compelling and challenging for Christians everywhere.

An explosion in our association happened when Adly Campos took charge as administrative assistant to Jim Cress. Adly is such an evangelistic ball of fire that we can hardly keep her in the office. In recent months she has won more than 100 souls to Jesus and this church. Adly uses to full advantage her graduate degree in family counseling as she conducts Family Life campaigns throughout the Americas. If you have ever wondered whether women can do evangelistic preaching, see page 22.

What are we? The remnant, or Laodicea, or both? Santo Calarco's article from "down under" takes us on a tour through the Bible that leaves us feeling both humble and confident as Seventh-day Adventists.

Evangelism is a priority for the ministerial association and this magazine. Every month this year we've brought you an article from our leading soul winners. On page eight, Lorenzo Grant shares secrets for success in seminar evangelism.

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Ministry is the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association.

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Ministry, (ISSN 0026-5314), the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association © 1993, is published monthly by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and printed by the Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740, U.S.A. Subscriptions: US\$22.00 for 12 issues worldwide, air mail US\$39.85. Single copy US\$2.25. Member Associated Church Press. Second-class postage paid at Hagerstown, MD. This publication is available in microfilm from University Microfilms International. Call toll-free 1-800-521-3044. Or mail inquiry to: University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Editorial Office: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904. Stamped, self-addressed envelope should accompany unsolicited manuscripts. Office telephone: 301-680-6510.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Ministry*, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740.



Grace: costly, free, but not cheap

John M. Fowler

Grace is God's unmerited favor to sinners. With that as a working definition, I once tried to give a Bible study to a Hindu friend on the Christian doctrine of salvation by grace. But I didn't get too far. My friend had too many questions about this business called unmerited favor. He extended that kind of favor every day to a number of people: the beggar on the street did not deserve the favor of his generosity; the accountant who swindled a large sum of money from his business received an unmerited forgiveness that kept him from jail; his mother-in-law, grouchy and complaining all week, got a new sari for no particular reason. My friend's argument was simple: the beggar, the crook, and his mother-in-law did not deserve any favor from him, but he did show them unmerited favors. Was he practicing grace?

Let's get one thing straight. When we speak of divine grace, we are not talking of human goodness, and we are not talking of humanistic noble-mindedness. We are referring to God's basis of redemption of us sinners. As sinners we deserve death; God offers us life. We are separated; He offers us reconciliation. We are under judgment; He provides us freedom. We are prodigals in swineland; He brings us home. All for free. And the basis of God's redemptive initiative and operation is grace. When Paul says "The grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men" (Titus 2:11),* he is not referring to any ethereal or abstract quality of God, but to the dynamic, concrete, historic event of Jesus Christ—more specifically, the act of Christ on the cross. God chose to deal with the problem of

sin through the cross, and because of that sovereign choice, forgiveness and freedom from sin are possible only through the cross. Thus grace is God's sovereign initiative and activity for the salvation of sinners who through faith accept that provision of divine grace.

Paul devotes the entire Epistle of Romans to the singular theme that salvation is by God's grace, and not by human works. The apostle lays down the summary principle: "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace" (Rom 11:6). To the apostle, so far as salvation is concerned, grace and works are mutually exclusive principles. Salvation is by grace through faith alone; there is no such thing as divine grace plus human something.

The Galatian heresy forced Paul to challenge the legalists: "If justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose" (Gal. 2:21). Very strong language, indeed. Any attempt to give any human element (call it what you will—circumcision, performance, standards, character development) a role in God's redemptive process is to make a mockery of the cross. Grace plus something of the Christian legalist (can there be a Christian legalist?) is just as dangerous a doctrine as the position of the humanist or the non-Christian that salvation can be attained by human striving and relational ethic. Both positions make the cross unnecessary. At least the humanist and the non-Christian are consistent in their approach to life: they either deny sin or affirm that it can be overcome by ethical will-to-be. But the Christian legalists are in a hopeless and inconsistent situation: they want to hold on to cross and at the same time add something of their own to it, as though God's

act on the cross were not sufficient. Paul would have no such thing: Christ need not have died at all if salvation required any human work.

Paul made it clear that divine grace needs no human addition; grace is all-sufficient: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

Free, but costly

But to speak of grace as free does not mean that it is not costly. It is free only so far as the recipient is concerned. To the Provider, the price was enormous. The cost is inestimable. God's choice of dealing with sin through the manifestation of His grace cost the life of His Son. Who can estimate the value of that act of divine love? Gethsemane and the cross, the dreadful wrath of God against sin witnessed there, show not only divine abhorrence of sin but also the divine cost to effect the plan of salvation. When Paul speaks of "God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself" (2 Cor. 5:18), He is putting the Father and the Son together in the act of salvation, and shows that Both paid a great price for making divine-human reconciliation possible. Ephesians 1:7, 8 spells out clearly the price paid: "In him [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us." God and His grace, Christ and His blood, and our sins and our forgiveness are all brought together in this one beautiful passage to show that we have nothing to do or to add to what has already been done by God. Ours is only to respond in faith and let the blood

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God's universal remnant

Santo Calarco

Exclusive parochialism or constant faithfulness? What is the essence of the remnant?



Santo Calarco is a pastor in the Greater Sydney Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Australia.

Does New Testament ecclesiology allow for the emergence of an eschatological remnant church? The question is discussed in all ranks of Adventism today. Some point out that the term *remnant church* does not appear in Scripture. They contend that only in the King James Version of Revelation 12:17 does the term *remnant* appear at all, and that a remnant concept is by nature parochial and implies that others are not truly Christian.

We will examine the question by developing a "remnant theology" as found in the Old Testament, the intertestamental period, the early New Testament church, and the church in the last days.

The term *remnant church* appears nowhere in Scripture. It grew out of nineteenth-century consciousness of apocalypticism. Yet the concept is scriptural, rooted in the Old Testament.

Remnant in the Old Testament

The remnant motif is a key theme in biblical eschatology.¹ From the experience of Israel, we see that apostasy always invited divine judgment. There is a clear connection between the remnant concept and the themes of apostasy and judgment.² God in His mercy preserved a faithful remnant in every crisis and vested them with the promises, privileges, and responsibilities of the covenant (see Isa. 10:20, 21). He purposed to send the Messiah to this remnant (Isa. 11:1, 10, 11; 4:2; 53:2; Jer. 23:3-6; Micah 5:2-9), to establish His kingdom (Isa. 4:2, 3; 11:11, 16 [cf. verses 1-9]; Jer. 23:3 [cf. verses 4-6]; Micah 4:7 [cf. verses 1-8]; 5:7, 8 [cf. verses 2-15];

Zeph. 3:12, 13), and to work through them to evangelize the heathen (Joel 3:1, 2).

In the days of Elijah, a remnant of 7,000 refused to bow to Baal and survived future destruction (see 1 Kings 19:17, 18). A similar remnant emerged in the Assyrian captivity of 721 B.C. (Isa. 10:5, 20, 22), and the Babylon captivity of 605 B.C. (Eze. 6:5-9). The Old Testament also clearly distinguishes between a national Israel and a spiritual Israel within that nation.³

The Old Testament reveals another important characteristic of the remnant. Amos 9:11, 12 points out that a remnant of Yahweh-believing Gentiles would join with the eschatological remnant of Israel. The passage affirms that by God's grace a remnant from Edom and all nations would share in the Davidic covenant promises. The purpose and mission of Israel was to draw in these Gentiles⁴ (which unfortunately they failed to do). Thus from the Old Testament itself we see that the eschatological remnant would transcend all national and ethnic barriers (see Isa. 66:19, 20; Zech. 9:6, 7; 14:16; Dan. 7:27; 12:1-3).

Remnant in intertestamental time

Postexilic Jews, reacting against the unfaithfulness that resulted in the captivity of 586 B. C., became exceedingly rigorous in their Torah observance. In time this legalism caused their remnant theology to reflect exclusivism and separatism. All who did not measure up to the prevailing interpretation of the law found themselves excluded from the community of faith. This principle of exclusivity manifested itself again in the time of the Essenes and Pharisees. Seeking to establish a sense of security before God, sectarian Judaic groups imposed on themselves the most rigorous observance of

priestly rituals. They wanted to identify themselves as the saved, the eschatological remnant.⁵ The Qumran community, for example, saw in themselves the holy remnant promised in the Old Testament.⁶ They considered themselves spared by God's mercy as the sole bearers of the covenant promises.⁷

The Dead Sea sect, in making remnant claims for itself, exhibited a sectarian attitude that set it against the rest of the nation. It taught that only a fraction of Israel had remained true to God and still qualified as Israel. The exclusiveness of this sect prevented it from taking interest in anyone outside Israel, believing that its mission was to preserve the national religion in its purity. The Pharisees held similar sentiments about the remnant.⁸

Remnant in the Gospels

The remnant motif also dominates in New Testament teaching. In contrast to the pharisaical exclusivism, an open universalism prevails. Because of this, some oppose a remnant theology marked by exclusiveness. They wish to preserve the accessibility of Jesus and the universalism of His message. Their concern is that if Jesus sought to gather a remnant, it must somehow correspond to that of Pharisaism and like movements. However, time and again Jesus rejected the views and practices of the Pharisees and other remnant groups (see Matt. 12:1-8; 15:2-9; 23:23-28).⁹ Is it possible, then, that Christ and His forerunner viewed themselves as calling forth a remnant?

John the Baptist's message was a cry of judgment and a demand for repentance. He sought to assemble an Israel of the truly converted, who alone would escape the coming judgment and wrath (see Matt. 3:1-12). But in contrast to the rigid particularism of contemporary remnant groups, John's preaching was universal.

Jeremias notes: "John the Baptist towers alone above the numerous founders of remnant communities. He, too, gathers the holy remnant . . . that is the meaning of his preaching of judgment, his call to repentance, his baptism. But his remnant is not like that of the Pharisees or the Essenes. Both the Pharisees and Essenes gathered a 'closed' remnant."¹⁰

John's appeal was to all strata of Israelite society. Here we find the phenomenon of an open remnant that in-

cluded all who would "bear fruit that befits repentance" (Matt. 3:8, RSV).¹¹ Jesus, by accepting baptism from John, allied Himself with this remnant. In fact, He regarded both John and Himself as fulfilling a divinely appointed role, announcing the coming Messiah and the kingdom of God.

The point is this: in the scheme of biblical eschatology, *judgment* and *remnant* are correlatives. According to both biblical and extrabiblical literature, "the remnant is defined by judgment, either a judgment already accomplished or a judgment to come."¹² Hence a message of judgment calls forth a remnant.

Jesus proclaimed an impending judgment when He warned, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Matt. 4:17, NRSV). It was the eschatology of judgment and restoration that led to the formation of Judaic remnant groups, and Christ's message corresponded to this framework "point for point."¹³ Then, "if the mission of Jesus relates to the judgment of Israel, the question of the remnant is *ipso facto* posed."¹⁴

Jesus, who offered salvation to all who repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15), never intended to create a remnant that was exclusive and particularist.¹⁵ He conceived of His mission as the salvation of an open universal remnant, conscious that His work was for the "lost sheep" (Matt. 10:6) and that only "few" (Matt. 7:14) would accept the invitation. Although the term *remnant* in this context never appears in the Gospels, closely interrelated words do: the "little flock" (Luke 12:32; cf. Luke 12:32; Isa. 40:11; Mark 14:27; John 10:11), the "lost" (Luke 19:10; cf. Eze. 34:15-19), the "poor" (Matt. 5:3; Luke 6:20), the "little ones" (Matt. 18:6), and the "few" (Matt. 20:16). These Gospel terms reflect the remnant vocabulary of the Old Testament prophets.

A relationship also exists between the prophetic theme of the eschatological Shepherd, His remnant flock, and the corresponding Gospels. For example, the prophet Micah unites the promise of a "remnant of Israel" (Micah 2:12, RSV) with the promise of the Messiah who, born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), would gather them "like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture" (Micah 2:12, RSV). As previously mentioned, this eschatological remnant would emerge from both Jews and Gentiles (see Micah 4:11-13). Hence nationalism gives way

to universalism. The Gospels, then, present Jesus as the eschatological Good Shepherd who came to gather the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24) and the Gentiles (John 10:16; Mark 13:10; see Matt. 15:22-28).

For this universal mission Jesus called from Israel His twelve apostles, representing the twelve tribes. By ordaining His twelve, Jesus instituted the faithful remnant of Israel and called it His church (see Mark 3:14, 15; Matt. 16:18).

Remnant in the book of Acts

In the book of Acts, the earliest Christian community viewed itself as a remnant within Israel. Peter's Pentecost sermon in chapter 2 was addressed primarily to Jews. He drew heavily on Joel 2:28-32. Peter invited his hearers to join not a new religion but Israel (see Acts 2:40). Hence these Christians saw themselves as a remnant within Israel awaiting the imminent reign of God (see Acts 1:6). They understood the promise of the Messiah as applying only to themselves (see Acts 2:39; 3:20-23).

Not until Acts 5:11 do we see the word "church" (*ekklesia*) appear. From chapter 6 onward we note a development in the believers' concept of themselves as an *ekklesia*, church. The early Christians came to understand themselves, not as an exclusive remnant, but as an open universal remnant, no longer confined to the boundaries of Israel, but scattered all over the world. With Gentiles accepted as fellow heirs of the new community without any prerequisite of circumcision, we see a shift from separatism to universalism, from a closed remnant to an open remnant. The Jerusalem Council bears witness to this open remnant concept.

In Acts 15:1, 2, 5 a controversy emerges between Paul and Jewish Christians. The bone of contention involved Gentiles joining the church. Was it necessary for these former pagans to be circumcised first and become Jews before they could become Christians? James' reply is both interesting and significant. He settles the matter in Acts 15:13-21 by referring to Amos 9:11, 12, maintaining that the prophets foresaw an eschatological remnant of Israel including both Jews and Gentiles (see Acts 15:16, 17). Hence the church should not place upon Gentiles any specifically Jewish conditions of entry. Evidently, the remnant now became the church.

Remnant in the Epistles

Paul's chief treatment of the remnant motif is found in Romans 9-11, where he interweaves the theme into his argument about Israel's rejection of Christ. Citing Isaiah 10:22, 23 and Isaiah 1:9, Paul maintains that a remnant, *hypoleimma*, of Israel will be saved (Rom. 9:27). This combination of Old Testament citations displays Paul's application of the remnant.¹⁶

In Romans 9, Paul develops a distinction between the Israel of the "flesh" (verse 8) and the Israel of the "promise" (verse 8), the latter not being restricted to physical lineage (verses 26, 27). The remnant now includes all who have faith in Christ (Rom. 10:4, 9-13), including Jews and Gentiles (9:24; 10:12).¹⁷

In Romans 11:1-5 the concept of the remnant accompanies a reference to Elijah's complaint and God's reply (1 Kings 19:14, 18). Paul's purpose is to show that God has not totally cast off His people, but that a remnant has indeed remained faithful to Him as in the days of Elijah. Paul takes up the concept of remnant and weaves it through these chapters "to show that the Old Testament prophecy of the remnant is fulfilled in a community consisting of Jews and Gentiles."¹⁸

An element of the remnant motif also springs from Paul's idea of the seed.¹⁹ In Galatians 3:16 Christ is the seed (*sperma*) of Abraham, God's remnant. Utterly faithful and holy, the Messiah can assure our survival amid the catastrophe of sin. As God's seed (remnant), Christ has broken down human barriers and called His people out of the world into the church (*ekklesia*, those called out). In Christ's body there is no Jew or Greek; all are one in Him (verse 28); all are children of God. Those who are baptized into Christ form His *ekklesia*, the community of the Seed (remnant).

A question confronts us here. If the remnant has become the church, how can there be a remnant church? The answer is simple. Just as the Old Testament foresaw a faithful remnant within Israel after a time of apostasy and impending judgment, the Apocalypse portrays a faithful remnant within the church after its time of apostasy and judgment.

Remnant in Revelation

In the book of Revelation the remnant theme may be studied lexically, contextually, and theologically. Lexi-

cally, Revelation employs the adjective *loipos* eight times. Although the word is translated "remnant" only in the King James Version, it can have "a meaning reminiscent of the remnant idea."²⁰ Sweet correctly asserts, "The Greek suggests the concept of the faithful remnant, the nucleus of restoration after disaster (cf. Isa. 6:13, RSV; Rom. 9:27-29)."²¹ *Loipos* is a derivative of *leimma*,²² "remnant." *Loipos* occurs 120 times in the LXX and together with its related *kataloipos* occupies more than 37 percent of remnant terminology in the Old Testament. Hence, translating *loipos* as remnant is not only permissible but proper.²³

The remnant, *loipos*, in the Church of Thyatira (Rev. 2:24) are those who have remained faithful (verse 19) in the midst of apostasy, namely spiritual immorality with the impure woman Jezebel (verse 20). This has a remarkable parallel with Revelation 12-17. The church in Sardis is dead, but "the things which remain" (Rev. 3:2) are to be strengthened because there are still "a few" (verse 4) who are faithful, unsoiled, and worthy.

What remain are the final remnants of earth's history: the remnant that is saved (Rev. 12:17) and the remnant that is lost (Rev. 19:21). But note the following first.

Judgment and the final remnant

We have already seen that judgment and remnant are correlatives in the scheme of biblical eschatology. The New Testament picks up the Old Testament construct and places them in a now/not-yet framework. So the judgment is seen as both a present and a future concept. That is, judgment is inaugurated with the ushering in of the new age with the coming of the Messiah ("Now is the judgment of this world [John 12:31]"). At the same time, judgment is awaiting a consummation at the end of time. The Apocalypse reveals this clearly.

Revelation 12 and following chapters depict the last and climactic battle between good and evil. John records the battle between the dragon and the woman.²⁴ The woman is "the church, but only in so far as the church is continuous with God's people from the beginning."²⁵ The serpent, having pursued the woman with no effect, turns against "the rest of her offspring" (Rev. 12:17, RSV), "and this turns out to be the earth-dwellers'

The remnant are those who have remained faithful in the midst of apostasy.

crowning disaster."²⁶ As surely as the dragon was not able to destroy the Man child, Jesus the Messiah, "so he will be unable to destroy the church."²⁷ The rest of the church's offspring find their proper place just prior to the harvest (Rev. 14:12-20), the return of our Lord.

Satan, in attempting to destroy the remnant, conspires with the last day Babylon, that harlot woman who becomes drunk with the blood of the saints (Rev. 17:1, 5, 6). The saints are God's remnant, keeping His commandments and having the testimony and faith of Jesus (Rev. 12:17; 14:12).

A number of considerations indicate end-time Babylon as apostate Christianity in the last days. First, Paul indicates that before our Lord returns there must first be a "falling away" ([Greek *apostasia*] 2 Thess. 2:1-3). Second, in Revelation 17 the image of a harlot woman from the Old Testament is used to describe God's people as apostate, as committing spiritual adultery, that is idolatry (Eze. 16:3, 15, 28, 32; 23:29, 30; Hosea 2:1, 2, 5, 13). Third, the garments that the wicked woman wears are those of the high priest symbolic of a religious system posing to represent God (Rev. 17:4, cf. Ex. 28:5, 6, 9, 14). And fourth, the fate of the harlot is burning by fire (Rev. 18:8). This is significant because the death of a harlot in the Old Testament was generally by stoning (see Deut. 22:21), except in one case—when the harlot was the daughter of a priest (see Lev. 21:9).

In the end-time religious crisis, God's people obey His commandments rather than yield to counterfeit worship (see Rev. 14:12; 13:10). These faithful ones constitute the final remnant. They proclaim the eschatological message of judgment (Rev. 14:7) and call forth from Babylon (Rev. 18:2-4), into the remnant, refugees from "every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6, NKJV).

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Seminar evangelism

Lorenzo H. Grant

Simple and straightforward, seminar evangelism makes proclamation small group-oriented.



Lorenzo H. Grant is the pastor of the University Seventh-day Adventist Church, south central Los Angeles.

Six-fifteen, Sunday evening. People are starting to arrive already. But no one is orchestrating the parking lot. Where is my associate? And all those helpers to care for the ushering, the seating, the offering? Only one dear saint is in the foyer to handle the greeting!

It's opening night of the Revelation Seminar I've planned for at least six months. Now I can't think of praying and I can't pray for thinking. From the offering plates to the slide projector, a dozen things to do and no one around yet! Most of what makes an evangelistic seminar successful has already been done, or will happen during and after the meetings. But no one needs this kind of last-minute jitters.

Ironically, I fell in love with this method of evangelism five or six years ago because it was so "easy." Compared to pitching a tent, as I had been accustomed to doing, it was a piece of cake. No more divorcing my wife and kids for eight weeks while I married that huge, fragile, and insanely jealous hunk of canvas. No more courting and pampering a team of "show people," musicians, quiz captain, and the like for half the summer. And no more fasting and praying (usually in vain) for a big budget to pay for a team. There were Bible instructors, tent managers, and all kinds of odd

jobs associated with high-impact public reaping meetings.

No, prophecy seminars are fairly simple, straightforward, and prepackaged. Besides, in a seminar people study their way into the truth. There would surely be a lot less attrition going this route, as opposed to the tearstained sawdust trail.

I conducted my first seminar while I was pastoring a delightful suburban church with adequate resources and a perfect location. The members were enthusiastic, and the neutral site we rented was only a short distance from the church. It was ideal in every way. Three hundred fifty people showed up opening night—150 nonmembers. We baptized more than 50!

I've not had quite such good results since. I've tried to recall the formula that made that meeting so successful, and compared it with other meetings that I've conducted since then. I've isolated a few factors that made the difference.

Personal preparation

My rule No. 1 is "Never communicate anxiety or discomfort. Who needs it?" The confidence that must pervade your planning and conducting of a good meeting is related to your own self-concept. This is an essential condition of Spirit-filled leadership. Fast and pray until you know God is leading you in this direction. Give fair hearing to every legitimate objection to your plans, but

then as God places the burden on your heart, go forth in His name and His power. Visualize the results you want, and act like you're going to get them. Your efforts will never end on a note higher than you begin with. In golf there are two kinds of putts: there is the "lag," which you hope will wind up somewhere near the cup; and there is the "real," which you must aim right at the center of the cup, expecting it will end with that sweet *plop* of success. Don't aim for "lag" evangelism. Go for success.

There's no such thing as a flop unsuccessful seminar. No earnest effort to proclaim the message is ever a flop. Do your job well. Work with your church. Encourage the "friends of the church," those nonmembers who regularly attend Sabbath school and church services and may be in your prebaptismal classes, to come to the seminar. The Holy Spirit will provide the results. And every seminar is a learning experience; you get practice and probably learn some things not to do next time.

Let me assure you, if God be for you, who or what can stand against you? When you get up off your knees, put on "Holy Ghost glasses," and they will reveal the true nature of every obstacle and make plain every opportunity. Evangelism demands an extraordinary kind of thinking: You are doing Jesus' business. Never can we be more sure that He is on our side, parting waters and building bridges for us, than when we're advancing the kingdom through evangelism. This essential mind-set not only is exhilarating and vitalizing to body, mind, and spirit but is contagious! It will spill over into your preaching.

Oops! Did I say preaching? Aren't we talking seminar? *My rule No. 2 is "Never forget who you are and what you're doing."* Don't let the term *seminar* or the format deprive you of your passion for the gospel and the precious souls seated before you. We don't need the trappings of a church building or a tent to communicate our love for Jesus and His sacrifice, or to demonstrate our excitement over the fulfilling of Bible prophecy right before our eyes! What we believe is marvelous!

So, in my meetings I try to establish a certain comfort level, and do my best to let the people know what a warm, friendly, and simply wonderful human being I am, even if I have to tell them! It is important to maintain a balance be-

tween a serious structured format and a relaxed informal atmosphere conducive to learning and reflection. Acceptance comes on more than the intellectual level.

Then I approach each subject as it should be: good news. It is! God still likes, loves us. He's planning to take us home, and His plans are unfolding right on time. We bear a message of supreme importance and urgency from the King of the universe. How to do it without sounding authoritarian or manipulative is the challenge.

We can meet the challenge if we remember that personal preparation must be followed by effective communication. Gospel communication involves sharing in three dimensions—teaching, proclamation, and witnessing or demonstration. The evangelistic seminar affords opportunity to do all three.

Teaching

Good teaching begins with good learning. Spiritual learning begins with prayer. I have found that a healthy set of internal butterflies about six months before opening night forces me to order my whole life around the seminar. I realize that I will be handling the "dynamite" of God! I am driven to my knees to seek purity of motive and clarity of discernment with respect to the will and Word of God. Then I begin living with the subject I will be teaching, gathering illustrations and fresh ways of presenting familiar truths. I've learned that I can be more successful at this if I set up an open file system where each lesson of the seminar is in its own file folder and kept in open view of my study area. Every time I come across a good idea it's easy to drop it into the appropriate folder. The challenge is to step out of our own relationship with a certain doctrine or Bible story and to view it from the perspective of a first-time hearer. What makes it worth listening to? Is it important? Does it mesh with anything significant in my life? When I can answer these questions positively, I feel confident that my presentation will be clear and compelling.

Then I try to build into my presentations an ebb and flow of awe and joy. The timely truths of the Seventh-day Adventist message claim the most serious consideration of our listeners. But the everlasting gospel is always full of hope and cause for rejoicing. This is where proclamation and witnessing have their place

Coming to Christ for the first time or coming closer to Him in conformity to His Word should always be a warm experience.

along with teaching.

Nothing of a frivolous or trifling nature should ever be allowed to break the spell with which God surrounds the truth seeker. People come to our meetings out of great soul longing. Some have waited all their lives to hear answers to eternal questions and to find help and healing from the Word of God. Now they sit before us as babes waiting for the sincere milk of the Word. The Holy Spirit has led them to the brink of salvation. Their whole worldview is being reshaped. We dare not trivialize this moment of truth for them. But neither should we make it difficult for them. These fragile souls ought not to be made to bear the burden of so much guilt and responsibility that they are overwhelmed by it. Coming to Christ for the first time or coming closer to Him in conformity to His Word should always be a warm experience. Our teaching must communicate this in content as well as in our manner of presentation.

One way I make my presentations come alive and have greater heart appeal is through the use of slides. Yes, my old evangelistic slides. I select a few appropriate frames to illustrate my subject, usually those with scriptures. Then I include two or three frames of gospel appeal to conclude each presentation. I make sure the screen is large enough to impact the viewers—a point I learned years ago from George Vandeman. You are not merely trying to "show slides." Your aim is to embrace the group with the poignancy and warmth of your message.

Another important teaching device is the question-and-answer period just before the lecture. I insist that all questions be submitted in writing, and I answer these at the next meeting. This gives me time to prepare Bible answers, and gives

Every preacher has the right and the responsibility to stand before the people with authority, after he or she has knelt before the cross.

the learners an incentive to come back. I also invite written prayer requests, and I get to know the people a little more personally this way. At times I take up questions that would help clarify a subject, without pretending that they came from the audience.

Proclamation

Proclamation complements teaching. It is that spiritual elan that drives the messenger beyond the canons and restrictions of logic and convention into the realm of heavenly authority. It was said of Jesus that "he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (Matt. 7:29, NIV).

It was this confidence-building aura of Jesus that amazed people and drew them to Him. Can we too seek such influence? Do we have the right to assume such? Notice other biblical treatments of authority. Mark says that Jesus had authority, not only in teaching but also over "evil spirits" (see Mark 1:22-27, NIV). Luke points out that Jesus gave such authority to His disciples—even over demons (see Luke 9:1, 2). So every preacher has the right and the responsibility to stand before the people with authority, after he or she has knelt before the cross. To be sure, authority does not mean we become arrogant or overbearing. No one needs another personality cult. But it does mean that our proclamation carries confidence and assurance with it.

Witnessing

It is better to do nothing than to have precious souls warmed by the prophecy seminar and then be frozen by the church. If your church is not ready for growth,

why force it? Better spend your time preparing your congregation to assume its nurturing responsibilities before you launch any serious outreach efforts. A seminar format requires several elements in church preparation.

1. *Organize your congregation into small groups* long before the seminar opening. A year is not too long to get your church ready for its part in the witness. Start with Sabbath school classes. These groups are already cohesive enough. They form a natural portal of entry into church fellowship. Challenge them to plan and prepare for mission activities as ministry teams. The suggestion may seem simple enough, but watch out for turf battles and congregational gridlock between departments, ending up with nothing getting done that is the least bit out of routine. Such obstacles can be overcome only by the workings of the Holy Spirit. Whether you elect to work through department leaders, Sabbath school classes, or congregational groupings, make sure you have gotten your plans for the Lord.

2. *Select the best leaders.* These leaders must become your personal discipling group. Spend time with them, sharing the vision the Lord has given you for the seminar. Model all that you would have these leaders bring to their groups. Share with the leaders your pilgrimage and growth experiences. Don't hesitate to move to deeper levels of love and affection with these people. Trust them to be your friends and supporters. Pray for them and with them and watch the difference it makes. Extend your fellowship to a meal or two together. As you come together weekly or monthly you will find that your burdens become theirs.

3. *Plan together.* The small group leaders can become a "mission board" for strategic planning of your evangelization and assimilation. They may provide information and support to your church board when it considers the total outreach plans.

4. *Train your members for their role.* Adventism is caught, as well as taught. Nothing is more contagious or eloquent for the message than a sweet, friendly Christian.

Several weeks before the seminar, I begin orienting my group leaders about the role I expect church members to play in the meetings. Some will be asked to make a commitment to support the meetings by regular attendance. Others will

serve as greeters, ushers, parking attendants, or clerical helpers on a rotating basis.

The transportation pool is especially effective in developing friendship bonds that lead to church involvement. Perhaps because of the quiet time for reflection and questioning that occurs on the drive back home, we have had several families come into church fellowship via the transportation pool.

5. *Encourage groups to adopt goals.* Challenge them to pray, plan, and be involved on a personal level. Let each group focus on bringing a definite number into its fellowship. As people come in, let group members greet them, sit next to them, and perhaps help them locate texts. Often at the end of the meeting I invite everybody to stop by and meet Little Debbie on the way out. During the lecture the greeters have converted the registration tables into serving tables. Fruit punch or hot chocolate is served along with some of my favorite cookies. This affords a few minutes of fellowship, encourages comments about the seminar, and provides an opportunity for inviting attendees into your small group or Sabbath school class.

The real test

And now comes the real test of the church's spiritual health. When the gospel has done its work, and the cross has drawn all kinds of people to Christ, how will the church receive them? If your small group experiences have been good and have spread to a significant degree throughout the church, you'll have no problem. The church's dynamic will be felt: its loving skills will provide the transition, acceptance, and support new members need as they are embraced by group members and welcomed into their inner circles. Those who labor are never unmindful of how precious the fruit is. They will be examples of courtesy, tact, and acceptance. The same small groups become the focal point for assimilating activities such as potlucks, picnics, and classes for particular interests that new converts have. Soon you will have a request for another seminar! ■

I am indebted to the following authors for some of the ideas expressed in this article: Elmer L. Towns, Ten of Today's Most Innovative Churches (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1990); Charles Swindoll, The Grace Awakening (Irving, Tex.: Word, Inc., 1992); Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946).

Baptism and conversion

Rex D. Edwards

Should we baptize the unconverted? Does faith precede or follow baptism?



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The scene is like a clip from a horror movie! A huge oil painting hangs in the well-lighted exhibit hall. It portrays a man standing in the middle of a dingy room, staring vacantly ahead; on the bed next to him lies his wife, dead. Blood drips from the blanket form a red pool on the floor. On the table to the right lies a Bible. The painting carries the inscription: "A Baptist kills his wife." A blowup of a newspaper clipping tells where and when the alleged event took place.

I am staring at the anti-religious exhibit in the Museum of the History of Religion, in Leningrad. The Bible and the murderer are there to show the discrepancy between faith and practice in some who profess to believe the Christian gospel.

Another scene—and quite different. At the close of an evangelistic campaign a young couple step into the font of a Seventh-day Adventist church to seek membership by baptism. Before the pastor pronounces the baptismal formula, he greets them by saying, "How wonderful it is to see a young, upstanding couple join the church. We are so happy that you have chosen to cast your lot with our friendly church." All is hearty goodwill unspoiled by any reference to repentance of sin or the obligations of a regenerate life. One wonders how John the Baptist or the apostle Paul would have addressed them!

We would have little difficulty in deciding that the murderer in the Leningrad picture is an unregenerate church member. But what about the "upstanding" young couple? Have they not sinned and fallen short of the glory of God? Did they come to faith before

baptism or had they merely given assent to a doctrinal formula? Were they converted and had they experienced regeneration before being buried in the watery grave? Did they come by the One "who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace" (2 Tim. 1:9, NIV)? Or did they come by some other way?

Conversion before baptism

Baptism is the death of the old man, and the birth of the new. The New Testament refers to salvation as birth or beginning of a new life (John 1:12, 13; 3:3, 5; Rom. 6:4; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; Titus 3:5; James 1:18, 21; 1 Peter 1:3; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:9). Terms like *redemption* and *justification* supplement the description of the salvation experience, in which a person by faith in Jesus Christ passes from darkness to light, from death to life. We are baptized into His death and are like Him separated from sin. Baptism gathers into dramatic focus the passing from the old sinful life to the newness of life in Christ Jesus (see Rom. 6:4). Ellen White writes: "In receiving baptism, the human agent, inspired with new purposes, pledges himself to die to the world and live in obedience to Christ. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost supply the power that makes him victorious in every conflict with the prince of darkness."¹

Rites of passage

The pathway of faith could be indicated by a series of theological terms like the following: (1) kerygma, (2) faith, (3) repentance, (4) baptism, (5) Communion, (6) witnessing, (7) sanctification. These are not to be considered as so many pre-cut steps that can be neatly separated and stacked upon each other.

These are not steps in a do-it-yourself plan of salvation. They simply indicate the rites of passage found throughout the New Testament—hearing, faith, baptism, church membership. “Repentance, faith, and baptism are the requisite steps in conversion,” wrote Ellen White.²

As a church we proclaim that through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ a person is born again through the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the dramatic picture of the believer’s faith and participation in the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:4, 5). The outward (baptism) is based on the inward (conversion).

Faith appropriates the act of God’s mighty power in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. The power in raising Christ is the guarantee and assurance of the power that regenerates the believer. Faith is necessary to baptism as it is to salvation. Personal faith and baptism are prerequisites of church membership (see Acts 2:37-42). In New Testament times faith preceded baptism—a proof that baptism is not regeneration.

The hallmark of a genuine church

The hallmark of the church is this Spirit-given newness of life, sharing the quality of Christ’s character in a spiritual fellowship. “It is a fellowship of redemption—a fellowship that grows out of an experience of being regenerated in Christ Jesus by the power of the Spirit.”³

Without regenerate church members a church lacks the hallmark of genuineness. The members must be in a living relationship with Jesus Christ (see 2 Cor. 3:18). How do we prove our connection with Him? By “conformity to the will of God in our words, our deportment, our character.”⁴ We are speaking here of the need for inner spiritual change. “The New Testament church is essentially a fellowship. It possesses the marks of true life—spontaneity, growth, experiment, warmth, vitality. The apostles, understanding the nature of the church as a fellowship, [were] careful to keep a personal confession of Christ as the only condition of membership. Inner spiritual changes were implied in confessing Christ, but when these had occurred the believer belonged to the fellowship of the church.”⁵

But the church is in the workaday world. It is made up of ordinary men and women who have an extraordinary guide and helper in the Holy Spirit. These ordinary people are called to the extraor-

dinary vocation of being saints, people who are available exclusively to their Lord. “At our baptism we pledged ourselves to break all connection with Satan and his agencies, and to put heart and mind and soul into the work of extending the kingdom of God.”⁶

Teaching precedes baptism

Some may argue, Doesn’t Jesus in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19, 20) propose that baptism should precede teaching? Hardly so. Neither theology nor exegesis can support such a stand. The Great Commission posits the going, the baptizing, and the teaching in a present continuous tense, and all three are involved in the gospel task. How can discipling take place without teaching and baptizing? Obviously instruction must precede initiation. But teaching does not stop with baptism. It continues in order to build up the convert in the faith. Without subsequent nurture we fall into the unholy trap of “dipping” and “dumping.” A disciple is a learner. The church, to which baptism introduces us, is a school in which the children of God are educated for heaven. Discipleship continues to the end of life, so that the Christian can proceed “in all virtue and godliness of living.”

But we need to remember that teaching alone does not bring about conversion; conversion is effected by God’s grace. We need to be aware of the danger that the catechism process can become so propositional that the individual does not see Christ, or experience Him, by faith.

Baptism and regenerate church membership

The earliest Anabaptist declaration of faith (1527) presents a clear connection between the believer’s baptism and regenerate church membership: “Baptism shall be given to all those who have learned repentance and amendment of life, and who believe truly that their sins are taken away by Christ, and to all those who walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and wish to be buried with Him in death, so that they may be resurrected with Him, and to all those who with this significance request it of us and demand it for themselves. . . . A separation shall be made from the evil and from the wickedness which the devil planted in the world; in this manner, simply that we shall not have fellowship with them and

not run with them in the multitude of their abominations.”⁷

In 1887, more than 350 years later, Ellen White urged a similar standard: “[None] should be buried with Christ by baptism unless they are critically examined whether they have ceased to sin, whether they have fixed moral principles, whether they know what sin is, whether they have moral defilement, which God abhors.”⁸ In 1889 she cautioned ministers “not to lead down into the water souls who are not converted. The church is becoming composed of men and women who have never realized how sinful sin is.”⁹

Regenerate church membership is a safeguard to the church against the intrusion of unregenerate lives. Ellen White warns: “The accession of members who have not been renewed in heart and reformed in life is a source of weakness to the church. . . . Some ministers and churches are so desirous of securing an increase of numbers that they do not bear faithful testimony against unchristian habits and practices. Those who accept the truth are not taught that they cannot safely be worldlings in conduct while they are Christians in name. Heretofore they were Satan’s subjects; henceforth they are to be subjects of Christ. The life must testify to the change of leaders. Public opinion favors a profession of Christianity. Little self-denial or self-sacrifice is required in order to put on a form of godliness and to have one’s name enrolled upon the church book. Hence many join the church without first becoming united to Christ.”¹⁰

How shall we then judge baptismal candidacy?

Are we then to judge the candidacy of those who request baptism and church membership? Ellen White states: “There is one thing that we have no right to do, and that is to judge another man’s heart or impugn his motives.” Then she cautions: “But when a person presents himself as a candidate for church membership, we are to examine the fruit of his life, and leave the responsibility of his motive with himself. But great care should be exercised in accepting members into the church; for Satan has his specious devices through which he proposes to crowd false brethren into the church, through whom he can work more successfully to weaken the cause of God.”¹¹

Faith follows baptism?

It is argued, "Since there will always be a gap between profession and practice, should we not set aside the principle of regenerate membership in the interest of bringing as many as possible to baptism so that their attendance at church services and participation in the life and work of the church will produce Christian faith?" Ellen White makes a stern reply: "Too much hasty work is done in adding names to the church roll. Serious defects are seen in the characters of some who join the church. Those who admit them say, We will first get them into the church, and then reform them. But this is a mistake. The very first work to be done is the work of reform. Pray with them, talk with them, but do not allow them to unite with God's people in church relationship until they give decided evidence that the Spirit of God is working on their hearts."¹²

Those who defend the notion that faith follows baptism are actually using the same argument as those who defend infant baptism. Witness Oscar Cullmann, for example: "The affirmation of faith that precedes baptism is thus not a constitutive element of the baptismal event incorporating a man into the church of Christ. It is necessarily present only when, as in the earliest times was naturally far more frequent, the situation is one where the person to be baptized is an adult coming over from heathenism or Judaism. Faith *after* baptism is demanded of *all* persons baptized; from those adults just named it is demanded *also* before."¹³

Cullmann continues: "Baptism is the starting point of faith. What applies to all must be regarded as fundamental. In the class of individual adults who come over from Judaism or heathenism, we deal with the reverse operation: faith brings them to baptism, and baptism, by which they are received into the community of Christ, leads them to faith. The church into which the baptized person is incorporated in the baptismal act is not only the place where the Holy Spirit completes the miracle but where He awakes faith."¹⁴

Donald M. Baillie, on the other hand, recognizes the difficulty of harmonizing a postbaptism faith with the New Testament: "In the New Testament baptism seems regularly to mean the baptism of grown men and women who have heard the gospel and have received it with personal faith and now take the deliber-

ate conscious step of entering the church of Christ. Whereas in all our churches except in the Baptist tradition the baptism of adults is the exception, and we normally think of baptism as a rite administered to the infant children of Christian parents at an age when they are quite unconscious of themselves. Moreover it may well seem that the deepest New Testament interpretation of the meaning of baptism is relevant only to adult or believer's baptism, and could never have been worked out at all if the writers had been thinking mainly of a rite administered to unconscious infants. Such considerations as these have led the world's most famous living Protestant theologian to raise again the question whether the baptizing of infants can be justified at all, and whether the Baptists are not after all in the right."¹⁵ In spite of this insight, Baillie goes on to propound views similar to Cullmann's.

Baillie's reference to Karl Barth concerns the latter's argument against ascribing to baptism itself the power of regeneration. Barth argues that if the Roman Catholic Church had held the power of baptism to be the efficacy of the work of Jesus Christ they would have been in the right, but that they unfortunately speak of the efficacy of a correctly performed baptism. "The power of this act cannot in its effect be an independent, self-generating power."¹⁶

Notice what Barth says would happen to a state church if they were to give up acquiring members by infant baptism: "The folk church could not very well remain as state church or mass church if it were to break with infant baptism. Would not the concern which arises at this point unconsciously then and there take the quite primitive form which Luther at times openly admitted? There would probably no longer be too many baptized persons if they, instead of being brought to baptism, would have to come to baptism. . . . If things were to be done right the baptismal candidate would cease to be the passive object of baptism and again become the real partner of Jesus Christ, that is, one who freely decides and freely confesses, and on his own behalf testifies to his willingness and readiness."¹⁷

All church bodies agree that members ought to be personal believers. That is, all churches accept the principle of regenerate church membership. But they differ on how and when regeneration

takes place.

The churches with sacramentarian views usually hold that regeneration takes place at baptism. They commonly cite Matthew 19:14; John 3:5; and Titus 3:5 in support of their view. An infant is brought into the channel of prevenient divine grace through baptism, and the Christian parents are solemnly committed to raise the baptized child "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). The church on its part will endeavor to lead the child into conscious acceptance of its baptismal heritage through teaching, worship, confirmation, Communion, and other means.

Other infant-baptist churches maintain that baptism requires an implied or incipient faith by the infant and a postbaptismal nurture of that faith until it becomes a conscious possession by the baptized person either through education or conversion, or both.

A church that builds on the principle of believer's baptism normally will not preempt the individual's right to personal decision in the matter of faith and baptism. But the church is under obligation to address the gospel to every creature. "For 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?" (Rom. 10:13-15, NIV). When people respond in faith to the proclaimed Word of God and profess it before the church they have met the New Testament prerequisite for baptism. There is nothing in the New Testament to justify the assumption that children born to Christian parents are exempt from responding in like manner.

Individuality versus individualism

An argument put forth against individual believer's baptism is that the church as a collective body cannot allow individuals to decide for themselves. Joachim Jeremias argues that in order to understand the New Testament "we must radically free ourselves from modern individualistic thinking."¹⁸ He bases his argument on the passages in the New Testament that record that adult baptisms were accompanied by household baptisms (Acts 16:15, 33; 18:8; 1 Cor.

(Continued on page 27)

Lessons from Waco II

Caleb Rosado

Why some Adventists were vulnerable to fatal fanaticism.



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As law enforcement investigators sifted through the rubble of David Koresh's charred kingdom, Christians—Adventists in particular—began their own autopsy of the tragedy. Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church had no connection whatever with the fanatical Davidian cult, the inescapable reality is that most members of the group came from an Adventist background, including Koresh himself.

What made these Adventists vulnerable to the fatal fire of fanaticism? Are there lessons some of our people need to learn to be protected from future deceptions? Let us search for answers as we continue this two-part analysis of sects and cults.

Who joins cults

The Branch Davidians were unique among cultists in that they emerged from a sect that had previously emerged from another sect. Some aspects of the group were *sectlike*: strong Bible teaching, a sense that they alone had the "truth," and the belief that only they were God's true followers. Other aspects were *cultlike*: Koresh believing himself to be Jesus, having multiple wives, and having an obsession with sex and weapons.

Because sects and cults differ in how they respond to the secularization process, they do not attract the same kinds of members. Sects tend to draw disproportionately from the lower socioeconomic classes, from among the powerless, the socially and spiritually deprived, and new converts. Successful cults, how-

ever, draw their members from the more privileged members of society, the educated, the unchurched, and those uninterested in organized religion.

Because of its sect-cult status, the Branch Davidians drew from both groups. Evidence from former members and cult research provides an interesting picture.

1. *Previous connections to Adventism.* The Branch Davidians were an offshoot of the original Davidians, who came out of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1930. This historical connection is important because the mission of the group was not to save the world but to reform the Adventist Church. They perceived the church to be Babylon, and they targeted most of their prophecies against it, including the slaughter in Ezekiel 9.

2. *A strong focus on apocalyptic prophecies.* From their beginning Seventh-day Adventists have put a strong emphasis on the prophetic message. This emphasis is found not only in the person of a prophet, Ellen G. White, but in the Adventist self-concept of being commissioned by God to proclaim the end-time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

When a church gets too involved in organizational or mundane matters to the neglect of its message, reformers will arise, seeking to get it back on track. An increasing number of "independent ministries" currently challenge the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Many are beneficial, but some are deviant in their attempts to reform the church.¹ A few offshoot groups focus on what they perceive is a correct interpretation of the prophecies.

Because the Adventist Church emphasizes prophecy, particularly the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, it should not surprise us that most converts to the Branch Davidians and Adventist fringe groups are persons with Adventist backgrounds.

3. *Persons marginal to the church and to society.* Many who are drawn to new sects and cults are disgruntled ultra-conservatives. They may have a gripe with the system and view church leadership negatively and even with hostility. Some of them experience a sense of social and spiritual powerlessness. The ones with the least invested in the organization can be critical of it; they have the least to lose by leaving it since the system has invested so little in them. This is why women, youth, persons of color, and recent converts become attracted to new sects and cults. They feel the old organization does not meet their needs. Most sect and cult converts are also reacting against complacency, worldliness, and liberal views and lifestyles they see in the church. They believe church standards have been lowered and want the secularization process to be reversed.

Christians should be concerned that the gospel demands not be lowered. What differentiates sect and cult members from healthy believers is a recalcitrant, inflexible belief in their own rightness and that all who do not agree with them are wrong. Thus they focus on sin and its exposure rather than love. The spiritual and social marginal status of these people in the church often results in a negative aura that engulfs them because they focus on perfectionism. When a new sect forms, perfectionism leads to additional schisms, since perfect people cannot tolerate people they perceive as imperfect (not like them). They remind one of new converts childlike in their spiritual and moral growth. They become stuck in an arrested stage of spiritual development, immature, and susceptible to every wind of doctrine (see Eph. 4:14).

4. *Persons who lack strong personal attachments.* Sociological research on cults concludes that "the crucial factor leading to membership in a novel religion is the development of social bonds with persons who already are members" of the novel religion.² We often think that doctrine is the primary attraction to these converts, but research shows that more often than not social attachments

are the primary basis of conversion.³ "Rather than being drawn to the group mainly because of the appeal of its doctrines, people [are] drawn to the doctrines because of their ties to the group."⁴

Persons who lack strong friendships and bonds of interpersonal affection with members of a religious organization are vulnerable to recruitment by persons from a deviant group. This does not mean they are abnormal. The brainwashing theory behind cult recruitment does not hold up under objective research.⁵ People who join cults as well as sects do so primarily because of spiritual needs not being met by existing organizations. They find the warmth and friendship of sect and cult members attractive to their social and spiritual needs.⁶ According to Stark and Bainbridge, brainwashing stories are popular in the media because they excuse people from having made bad judgments in joining a deviant group.⁷ People who don't receive support for their ideas, and who especially lack strong interpersonal bonds, can be drawn away by deviant attachments.

5. *Persons who suspend critical thinking by turning authority over to a single person, usually a charismatic figure.* We live in a confusing age which is also largely biblically illiterate—even while Bibles abound as never before. Perception of prophecy is often misaligned by distorted portrayals from Hollywood. In such a time of great social change, with spiritual and moral values up for grabs, people are searching for stability. This requires sound thinking. But television, movies, videos, and advertisements tend to suffocate individual thought. Others offer answers for situations that seem too complex for us personally to solve.

In times of great confusion and change, people feel a need for strong moral leadership. This explains why conservative churches and not liberal ones are growing. Dean Kelly says that "strong organizations are strict . . . the stricter the stronger."⁸ In a market economy, like in anything else, people value religion in terms of how much it costs—that which costs little is little valued, while that which costs a great deal (in terms of time, effort, investment, sacrifice) is greatly valued. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke spell it out clearly in the following proposition. "Religious organizations are stronger to the degree that they impose significant costs in terms of sacrifice and even stigma upon

People who lack strong interpersonal bonds can be drawn away by deviant attachments.

their members."⁹

What this means is that in times of great confusion, people want others to do the thinking for them. This spares them the risk of making wrong decisions. It also takes away personal responsibility for their actions. They merely do what they are told. This also explains why when people defect from a cult they claim brainwashing, because again the sense of responsibility for one's actions is removed. People don't like to admit they made mistakes.

In the movie *The Wave*, a filmed experiment of how to make a fascist society, the leader declares to a friend: "It's amazing how much they like you when you make decisions for them." When a strong, persuasive leader such as Adolf Hitler, Jim Jones, or David Koresh, comes along, whom do they attract? The gullible, the nonthinkers, those searching for easy solutions to complex problems, and those desiring quick fixes. Their decision to join is reinforced when they are led to believe they now belong to a movement that will have significance in world history. Belonging to that which transcends the mundane is a most seductive force. People will die for that! This is witnessed in martyrdom, not only in the history of Christianity, but also in the final conflagration of the Branch Davidians.

6. *Level of education.* Most persons who join new sects tend to have low levels of education, come from a low socioeconomic status, and a working class background. These persons believe one does not need much education, especially from worldly schools, to understand the Lord's message. They suppose the less one is influenced by worldly philosophies and humanistic views, the readier they are for true education by the Holy Spirit.

Human hearts need the warm love of Christ so that from the moment either seekers or members drive into the parking lot they feel welcome.

Those who join cults, however, have different characteristics. Since cults espouse a new religious view, they often attract people from the margins of organized religions who have given up on the church. Many of these are educated, come from professional backgrounds, and are even financially well-off. Some cult converts turn to religion after science failed to answer their basic questions about life, the most fundamental being about immortality and eternity. As Rodney Stark observed: "In the face of some of life's greatest questions, all human beings are deprived."¹⁰ Both rich and poor need religion to find a meaningful existence.

When people give up on the church, religious innovation through cult formation steps on the stage of opportunity to meet their needs. Thus the socially comfortable who want more in life than material abundance turn to cults for innovative ideas to explain the mysteries of life. They often exchange profit for prophecies and prophets. To find someone who can specifically give a time and date for the end of the world when most of us don't even know what tomorrow will bring is important to some people. We should not be surprised then to have found that a Harvard Law School graduate, a lawyer, a computer programmer, and medical personnel were among Koresh's followers.¹¹ All this lines up with the types of persons attracted to cults.

7. *An appeal to authority other than Scripture.* Persons concerned with reforming the church and straightening out the lives of others want a clear "Thus says the Lord" voice of authority in their lives. However, they do not find the

straight testimony of the Word of God in the Bible sufficient. To them, the Bible is not specific enough and too open to interpretation. Thus such people want something more detailed, unambiguous, clearly spelled out, and less confusing. The Jews of Jesus' day had the Mishnah, the Mormons have the *Book of Mormon*, and Seventh-day Adventists have the writings of Ellen G. White.

Adventists attracted by the teachings of sects and independent ministries find more comfort in the writings of Ellen G. White than the Bible. They regard her writings as less open to misinterpretation and easier to understand. But that is because they pursue a selective reading of her writings—those that go along with their chosen interpretations. When a sect evolves into a cult, as it did with the Branch Davidians, even those writings become open to misunderstanding. They now feel they need the *live* word of a true prophet—the cult leader—whose words and teachings they can hold to be of value equal to or even greater than those of the Bible. The cult leader's interpretation of the Bible now becomes the new standard of behavior and doctrine. The leaders discourage all others from investigating the Scriptures on their own.¹² This happened to Roman Catholicism during the Middle Ages until Martin Luther translated the Bible into the German vernacular.

8. *A desire for power.* Persons who lack social and moral power in a respectable organization often see in a sect or cult an opportunity to exploit the spiritual naivete and hunger of others for personal material and social gain. These persons can be potential leaders that unite themselves with a cult and shift the leadership of the group over to themselves. They are the spiritual hustlers and con artists. Jim Jones, the Roden family, and David Koresh lacked recognition and respectability in the organizations from which they came, so they turned to cults for their few minutes of earthly glory.

9. *Small groups with no official leadership.* One place where subversive doctrines and teachings find a receptive audience is in a small church that has no official spiritual leader; or if a leader exists, the members have little confidence in him. Long ago Solomon declared that where there is not vision a people perish (Prov. 29:18). The phenomenon of no official leader opens the

way for spiritual opportunists and religious con artists to step into the gap and fill the void. The apostle Paul speaks of a crop of spiritual "infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming" (Eph. 4:14, NIV).

In view of these dynamics in people's lives that make them susceptible to cults, what can churches do to dissuade persons from blindly following spiritual pied pipers?

Preventing chaos

A clear statement of the problem as we have discussed it uncovers steps of action that a church must take to prevent spiritual chaos. Unfortunately, it is easier to talk about these steps than to take them. The steps are simple, but opposition can make them difficult:

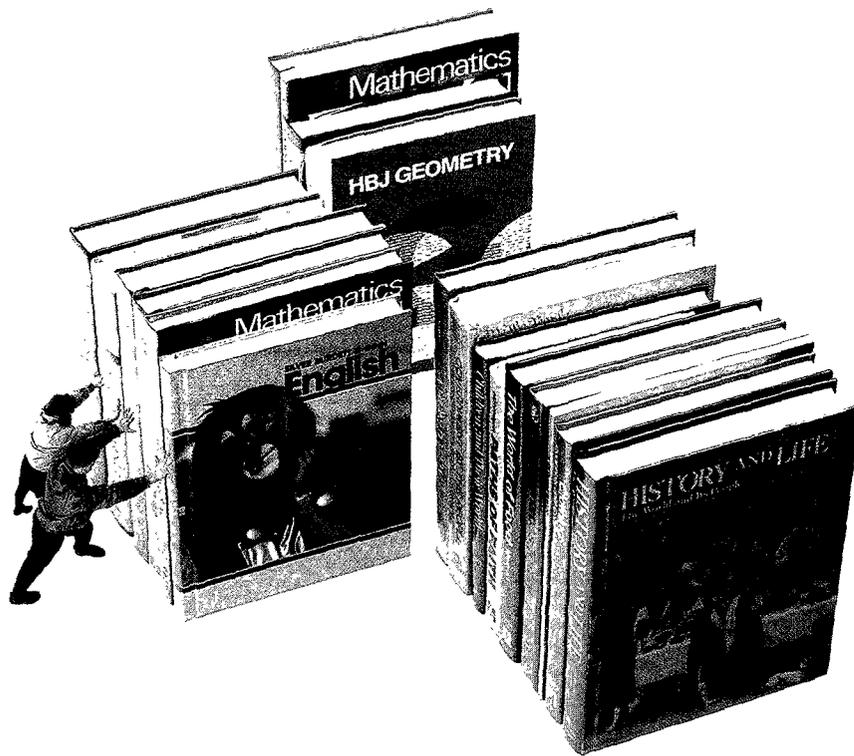
1. *Turn up the heat in the local congregation.* Coldness characterizes too many local churches. H.M.S. Richards, the late founder of the Voice of Prophecy, suggested years ago that many churches are so cold one could skate down the center aisle. I don't think our churches are any warmer today. Human hearts need the warm love of Christ so that from the moment either seekers or members drive into the parking lot they feel welcome. They can be welcomed by a parking attendant, a door greeter, a bulletin/register person, a pastor and loving church members reminiscent of the father in the Luke 15 parable of the prodigal son.

Walter Douglas, my former first elder and now a pastor at All Nations Church, Michigan, calls that "riotous loving!" Cult members term it "love bombing." And I find nothing wrong with that, so long as it is sincere and from the heart. Has your church ever thrown a party for return prodigals? Could that be why so few return?

In this year of reclaiming former members, why not make it a party year? Our God loves to throw parties, and the biggest one is yet to come. He has already sent out the invitations. You can read the notice in Revelation 22:17.

2. *Teach members how to form strong social attachments.* If developing social bonds is the most crucial factor in the conversion process, why should we let the cults become more adroit at this than

(Continued on page 18)



How do I fill the gaps in my education when courses are not available at my high school or college?

You have made some very wise choices for your future! A Christian education, individualized attention, and the small classes and caring teachers found in a small private college offer the greatest opportunities for quality in education and life. Missing a course or a semester can make for a rough experience though. The lower student-teacher ratio at your school is an excellent way to learn, but if you cannot get the course, where do you turn?

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Do we dam up the ocean, or do we teach our young people how to swim?

our churches? Friendship was Christ's method and the only one that will succeed. "Christ's method *alone* will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour *mingled* with [people] as one who desired their good. He showed His *sympathy* for them, *ministered* to their needs, and won their *confidence*. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'" ¹³ The "formula for success" is a simple four-step one:

- a. Socialize—"The Saviour mingled with [people]."
- b. Sympathize—"He showed His sympathy for them."
- c. Serve—He "ministered to their needs."
- d. Salvation—"Then He bade them, 'Follow.'"

The combination of the first three steps results in confidence. Once a person's confidence is gained, then salvation can be extended. Unfortunately, we usually begin with the fourth step without building friendships and bonds of attachment. Then we wonder why people don't respond. The truth is that they are moved more by our methods than our message. Once the method has arrested their attention with friendship, they will listen to what we have to say. Isn't this what Ellen White meant by being tenderhearted, courteous, and kind?

Many sit in our churches lonely, marginal, hungry for affection and personal attention. In an age of high tech, people need high touch! Who said AT&T should control the market on "reaching out and touching someone"? Christians need to make the world a warmer place.

3. *Preach a strong, spiritually balanced message.* Preach the gospel along with strong Christ-centered prophetic preaching. This requires that we remember that the book of Revelation is

the Revelation of *Jesus Christ*. People must walk away from our prophetic preaching with an understanding of Christ as the center of the message and not some negative, depressing imagery that leaves them hopeless and discouraged.

4. *Preach the Bible.* The church does not have two authorities, but one—the Bible. The writings of Ellen G. White exist to guide us to the Bible, not to take its place. In too many Adventist pulpits and Sabbath school classes visitors may hear the name of Ellen G. White more often than the name of Jesus Christ. Her writings are often cited more than the Bible. We are to be foremost preachers of Jesus, not Ellen! Her writings are available to promote Christ.

On Sabbath mornings Christ must be the central focus of all the church does. During midweek services we can hold classes on the Spirit of Prophecy and its importance to the well-being of the church. But when we make Ellen G. White the main authority in the church, we become guilty of abusing her gift. Adventist youth don't know the Bible, and few even bring it to church. Why should they? God's Word is seldom used in many churches, and its study is not often encouraged. We need solid, relevant, timely, expository preaching that teaches people the beauty of the gospel. The centrality of the Scriptures must return to our pulpits. If it does not return, numerous David Koreshes may be waiting in the wings of our church foyers preparing to entice a generation of young people with their "new" understandings of the Bible.

5. *Teach people to think for themselves.* These changing, confusing times not only call for people "who will not be bought or sold," ¹⁴ but also for people who are thinkers. Long ago Ellen White gave the following charge: "Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. . . . It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth *to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought.*" ¹⁵ Unfortunately, this counsel has not always been followed. Creator power, "power to think and to do," is not a priority in our curriculum. More often than not, products of Christian schools have been more programmed in crucial regurgitation than in critical reflection. Youth are most often not taught to think

for themselves and make independent choices but to follow carefully prescribed rules and regulations. Thus, merely by obeying and going along with all the rules, young men and women are perceived to be decent Christians—when in reality they may just be afraid to step out of line.

Blind conformity does not necessarily lead to strong leadership. What it does lead to is to strong followers following blind leadership. This may explain why so many of David Koresh's followers were Adventist youth, recruited from Adventist colleges. What are we doing in our academic institutions that create minds receptive to deception? To be fair, let me affirm that the majority of our young people are not being led astray, but remain solid in their commitment to Christ and to the church. Nevertheless, is the potential there? Do we dam up the ocean, or do we teach our young people how to swim?

In summary, we must teach our young people to be individual thinkers, capable of constructive critical reflection and wise decisions.

6. *Develop a strong mission statement.* Every church must develop a strong mission statement arising out of the needs of the community the church serves (both in and out of the church). The statement needs to be the work of the entire congregation, not just the pastor or church board. People will take ownership of only that to which they have given input. This statement must become a working document, not a museum piece for display. All aspects of the church program must reflect the working out of the mission statement.

The importance of developing a mission statement lies in the reality that some churches have become incubators for disgruntled, potential cult members. These congregations do not have a mission or purpose for existence. They have no strong program of witness, evangelism, and ministry in their community. Lacking a sense of direction in the spiritual energy of the membership, that energy will spend itself in other directions: dissipate into the spiritual blahs of inactivity and noncommitment; turn inward in criticism, division, and factions; or worse—leave members open to influences of persuasive outside agitators with their own agenda of "new light." The best way to avoid these derailing influences is to engage the church in a

wholistic ministry that emerges from a grasp of its mission.

7. *Create a worship style that arises out of the needs of the church.* Most Adventist worship styles, whether traditional or celebration, merely borrow from other churches or denominations. This eclectic approach does not address the needs of all members. The worship style for each local congregation must be unique to that congregation and its mission rather than borrowed because somebody saw it in another church and liked it. We need to become thinkers and doers rather than copiers.

8. *Develop an inclusive model of ministry.* For too long the church has been operating with exclusive models of ministry. Exclusive models divide, separate, and move people away from the center, which is Christ. When we focus more on exclusion than inclusion, we drive people toward the open arms of spiritual deviants interested more in separating than in uniting. An inclusive model unites, builds on diversity, moves people toward the center—Jesus Christ. Our goal is not uniformity, since not even God aspires to that. We want unity in diversity in Christ, collectively learning from what each can contribute. That challenge we must face in rapidly changing times.

Near the turn of the century, an era also marked by dynamic change, the great Spanish-American philosopher George Santayana declared: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." As we approach the year 2000, more apocalyptic cults will emerge, claiming to be anchors amid social storms. David Koresh was simply the 1993 model. What will the 1994 model look like? Will it also have Adventist connections? Let us learn the lessons of Waco and be on guard ■

¹ *Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries* (Silver Spring, Md.: North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992).

² Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 1985), p. 424.

³ John Lofland and Rodney Stark, "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective," *American Sociology Review* 30 (1965), pp. 862-875.

⁴ Rodney Stark, *Sociology*, 4th ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Pub. Co., 1992), p. 86.

⁵ Eileen Barker, *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1989); Stark and Bainbridge.

⁶ See the experience of Jeannie Mills, a former Seventh-day Adventist, who was led to join the Peoples' Temple. Jeannie Mills, *Six Years With God: Life Inside Jim Jones's Peoples' Temple* (New York: A&W Publishers, Inc., 1979). Her story is retold in the book by Caleb Rosado, *Broken Walls* (Boise, Id.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1990).

⁷ Stark and Bainbridge, pp. 417-423.

⁸ See Dean Kelly, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

⁹ Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 238. (Italic supplied.)

¹⁰ Stark, p. 430.

¹¹ Marc Breault, "Some Background on the Branch Davidian Seventh-day Adventist Movement From 1955 to the Early Part of 1991" (unpublished manuscript, Apr. 17, 1991, revised May 27, 1991), pp. 14, 22.

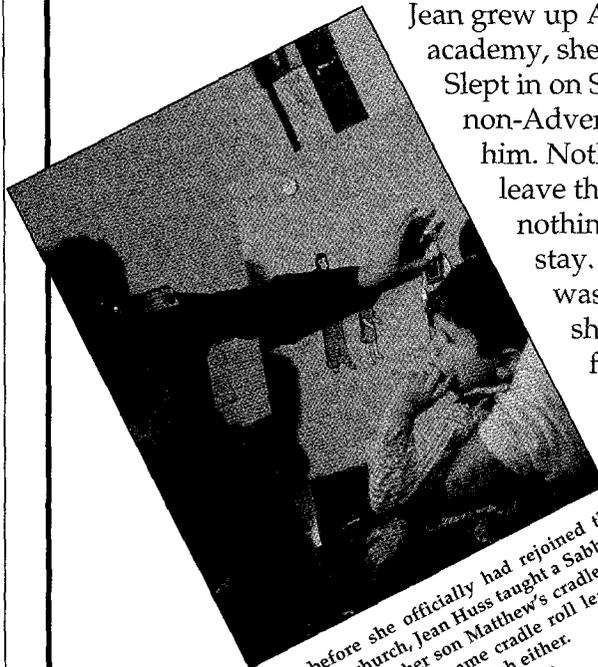
¹² See Breault for a discussion of this profession among the Branch Davidians.

¹³ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1942), p. 143. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁴ White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903), p. 57.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27. (Italics supplied.)

When the baby was born, Jean and Al Huss returned to the Adventist church!



Jean grew up Adventist. But after academy, she drifted away.

Slept in on Sabbath. Met a non-Adventist and married him. Nothing made her leave the church, but nothing compelled her to stay. Then Matthew was born. Al said they should find a church for the baby. They went to Sabbath school. And stayed. "Love won me

over," Jean said. "If anyone had pressured me, I'd have rebelled. But people just accepted me."

Even before she officially had rejoined the Adventist church, Jean Huss taught a Sabbath school class in her son Matthew's cradle roll. Her husband Al became cradle roll leader before he joined the church either.



Project Reclaim

Visit former members to recreate the good feelings. Plan a "Welcome Home Sabbath" for November 20.



Recruiting the best and the brightest

James Cress

Jesus called them one by one—Peter, Andrew, James, and John. These disciples in turn called others to ministry. Recruitment to the gospel ministry was one of the earliest tasks of the Christian church.

How is a person called to ministry? We reflect on Martin Luther's dramatic lightning-storm commitment and often mystify the process of being "called." Young people raised within the culture of the church may not feel called because they have not experienced an overwhelming emotional encounter. At the same time, a new convert may confuse the general call to discipleship with the specific call to ministry. Consequently, some who would make an exceptional contribution in ministry never even consider the possibility of pursuing training for pastoral work.

In view of this, one of the greatest privileges of a pastor is the general duty to call all members to minister and the specific duty to guide some members into pastoral ministry. Recruitment is not a mundane word; it is not machination; it is a divine mandate. If you sense an opportunity to multiply your own pastoral effectiveness by extending Christ's call to others, I would urge you to do so. Here are some suggestions:

Magnify the mission by viewing the world through God's eyes. Heaven gave its greatest Gift in order that all the world might be saved. Can we do less than to find our best and brightest, and then encourage, lead, call, motivate, and train them to give their best for the Saviour's mission of reaching the world?

Clarify the call to ministry. See how Jesus and His apostles involved themselves in recruiting others for ministry. What outward criteria recommended Christ's recruits? Only a willingness to respond. Therefore, we must constantly remind ourselves that while we may tend to look on the outward appearance God looks on the heart. The greatest qualification for ministry remains a mind for God and a desire to do His will! So take ministry beyond the mysterious.

Target talent in your church—especially among the youth. Catch them doing something well, recognize their contribution, and mention their potential for wider service. Look for ways to motivate them toward spiritual service and to develop and utilize their talents for God's work. Enlist early. If you recruit an adult, you have won a worker. If you recruit a youth, you have won a multiplication table.

Suggest service to persons with potential. Write a letter suggesting that they consider whether God could be calling them to ministry and ask them to pray for the working of His will in their lives. Pray with them individually for God to guide in their choice of life vocation and for them to be open to His providential leading.

Open options in the minds of your youth and their parents by making your ministry appear pleasant, fulfilling, and successful. Of course, ministry has its challenges and discouragements, but dwell on the rewards of service and the joys and satisfaction in ministry. By your words and your example, encour-

age a desire to "follow you as you follow Christ."

Prompt parents to pray for and with their children. Encourage them to think beyond finances when planning career choices for children.

Provide partnership by taking potential pastors with you on pastoral visits, Bible studies, hospital calls, and board meetings. Appoint youth to your important committees. Designate them as "elders in training." Hire them to do evangelism, children's ministries, and literature evangelism during summer vacations. Employ their talents in worship, leadership, and volunteer ministries. Motivate them for ministry by utilizing them in pastoral functions.

Model motivation. Your example as a pastor is powerful. Consider these words from John Fowler's editorial "A Salute to Pastors" (*Ministry*, May 1993): "When my father asked what I planned to choose, I answered without any hesitation, 'I want to be like my pastor.'" He also noted the words of James E. Means: "Good spiritual leaders have enormous ethical power as models, instructors, and guides."

Accept recruitment as an extension of Christ's own activity. Plan now to duplicate your effectiveness in the lives of those persons whom you have recruited for pastoral ministry. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you. As in New Testament times, recruitment to gospel ministry involves the cooperative efforts of the Holy Spirit and His ministers. ■

Family counseling soul winning

Adly Campos

M

aking his way through the crowd, Alfred approached me and confided: "I urgently need to speak with you."

"Of course," I re-

plied. "See my secretary and make an appointment." The next day Alfred came in with his wife, Lucy, for counseling.

"Our marriage has been destroyed," he lamented. "Lucy has been unfaithful, and I've failed her, too. But I still love her. Besides, we have a 4-year-old daughter, and for her sake I'd like to save our marriage. On the other hand, I feel that there's nothing left for us and we should get a divorce."

Alfred believed Adventist doctrine, but during his six years of marriage he had never come to know Jesus. Lucy, the daughter of an Adventist pastor, had married Alfred against her parents' advice. Both were now alienated from each other and from God.

At the end of the third counseling session, Alfred and Lucy signed their personal "contract," outlining mutual commitments regarding their marriage relationship. They also dedicated their lives to be baptized and bring a new Christ-centered perspective to their home.

A woman's agony

"I want to die," a woman tearfully confided. "I've never felt like I was loved. When I was 4 years old, my mother gave me to an orphanage. When I grew up, I found a man who wanted me to marry me, but now he hates me. Even my children reject me. What can I do? I'm afraid to talk with my pastor—I'd feel embarrassed and could never face him again."

It became apparent in my two-hour session with this woman that her problem involved the entire family. I offered to visit them the next Sunday, only to find that the husband had left the house to avoid me. I waited a couple hours until he returned. Then we had a family session in which they all expe-



Adly Campos conducting a family evangelistic campaign.



Adly Campos is administrative assistant of the General Conference Ministerial Association. She has conducted evangelistic campaigns in North and South America and has a graduate degree in family counseling.

rienced acceptance and reconciliation. I also had the opportunity to provide emotional therapy to the whole family. By the time I left the home, Jesus was enthroned and the whole family was rejoicing in His forgiveness.

Raymond's quest

"I've tried twice to commit suicide," young Raymond reported, showing me the scars on his wrists as proof. "I'm totally confused and disoriented."

Raised in an Adventist family, Raymond had recently moved to the United States. His parents had imposed on him religious perfectionism, because of which he hated the church. I told him I was a mother of four children in his age group and understood what he was going through. This encouraged him to pour out all of the frustrations of his childhood.

At our second session I presented Christ as the key to solving personal problems. I explained how He loves us and is interested in our happiness. His sacrifice on the cross won our freedom from sin, and the salvation He offers is real.

When Raymond grasped that, a new horizon opened for him. He requested baptism and has started a new life in Jesus Christ, filled with grateful joy.

God uses women, too

Ellen White wrote, "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"¹

Family ministry fosters this type of soul-winning. Private counseling and home visitation has been my method of reaching people in need through listening to their problems, winning their trust, and finally leading them to Jesus and His plan for their lives. By God's grace, during the past 12 months I've seen 155 souls baptized as a result of six family evangelistic campaigns. In addition, 523 persons have graduated from our Family Life Seminar Bible course, and 238 have en-

rolled in local church baptismal classes.

Ellen White has well said: "Women can be the instrument of righteousness, rendering holy service. . . . The refining, softening influence of Christian women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth."²

Helping families make Christ the

center of their lives wins souls for heaven while bringing practical benefits to homes on earth. ■

¹ *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 143.

² *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), pp. 471, 472.

Elements of a family life campaign

1. *Preliminary studies.* Preceding my campaign in a local church, all members are invited to lead their relatives, coworkers, friends, and neighbors in studying the Family Life course. All 20 lessons center on the family while covering the basic Bible doctrines. For example, "Family Origin" presents Christ as Creator. "Why Did the First Home Fail?" explains the entrance of sin. "Who Came to Save the Home?" introduces the plan of salvation. "Rules of the Home" teaches the Ten Commandments. "When Death Arrives in the Home" addresses the state of the dead. "Health in the Family" promotes temperance and a healthful diet.

2. *Evangelistic lectures.* In a series of seven, 14, or 21 presentations lasting for one to three weeks, the church members, Bible course students, and visitors have an opportunity to attend a series of lectures beginning with "The Husband, Head of the Family," "The Wife, Heart of the Family," and "The Children, Crown of the Family." Then follows "Family Violence," "Child Abuse," "Broken Innocence," "Incest," etc.

Such practical topics lead people to a change of life that makes Jesus the center of the family. They also present the Adventist way of life in a happy and joyful context, fostering spiritual, mental, and physical health in those waiting for the coming of the Lord.

3. *Individual therapy.* We offer private consultation as a free service for individuals, couples, or families. The philosophy behind counseling is that the basic needs of the soul must be met, through Christian family techniques, before that person can be led to Jesus. Emotional and spiritual therapy results in renewal, healing, and conversion to Christ.

Consultations usually take place in a church office, scheduled daily from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. So many request counseling that often there are insufficient time slots available.

4. *Visitation.* Visitation is generally done in homes in which people have studied the Family Life Seminar Bible course, or with those who have problems or who are attending the meetings. This is where the best decisions are obtained. Home visitation is extremely important in leading a person to a decision for Christ.

5. *Special programs.* A sacred concert is presented near the beginning of the public series, and a renewal of marital vows comes at the end. Also climaxing the lectures is a graduation from the Family Life Seminar Bible course, during which we present certificates.

6. *Follow-up.* After the campaign ends, the pastor receives the names of graduates and a list of interests, highlighting those who responded to an altar call. This facilitates follow-up.

Servants or Friends? Another Look at God

Graham Maxwell, illustrated by Susan Kelley, Pineknoll Publications, Redlands, California, 1992, 205 pages, \$9.95, paper, US\$15.95, Cdn\$20.95, hardcover. Reviewed by Jonathan Gallagher, executive secretary, South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Watford, Hertfordshire, England.

"Would you be afraid to meet God?"

Graham Maxwell advances his thesis of divinely offered friendship in the very first chapter of *Servants or Friends?* Taking examples of the human response to God from numerous sources (in particular those people he interviewed in Britain during the making of his video *One of the Lads*), Maxwell seeks to examine the meaning of Jesus' words in John 15:15: "I no longer call you servants. . . . Instead, I have called you my friends" (NIV).

Maxwell, professor emeritus of New Testament theology at Loma Linda University, writes as comfortably as he speaks. In his easy style the author coaxes the reader to consider what is surely one of the most fundamental of theological questions: "What is God really like?" He asks: Is God some kind of divine Nebuchadnezzar threatening to burn us to death if we disobey? Is He the heavenly equivalent of Garfield the cartoon cat saying on the outside of the Valentine card "Love or leave me," but on the inside of the card "Make the wrong choice and I'll break your arm!"?

Such a discussion must examine the whole biblical perspective, which Maxwell does, though not in an exhaustive and encyclopedic fashion. Yet his anecdotal evidence is impressive, derived from 135 "trips" through the Bible in classrooms and churches over the years. The author's evidence gives careful thought to difficult passages that seem to contradict his "understanding friendship" thesis. Such passages include: Moses at Sinai; Saul on the Damascus road; Nebuchadnezzar; Korah, Dathan, and Abiram's fate; the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt; the Flood; Achan's death; and the everlasting burning.

In spite of these stories, Maxwell believes that God is not arbitrary, hostile, unforgiving, and severe, but rather a God to be trusted. To back up his belief the author looks afresh at some of the more legalistic views of God, specifically God's

use of law, our concept of sin, and the atonement. He covers these concepts in three separate chapters, making a good case for his medical analogy of God as a doctor who does not condemn his struggling patients.

Maxwell concludes that "we've camped around this mountain [Sinai] long enough." Instead of using the approach of "here a little and there a little," he wants us to consider all the rest of the biblical

corpus in the light of Jesus' plain statement that we are His friends.

Servants or Friends? is not an obscure treatise but a readable and well-illustrated presentation book designed for wide appeal. The chapter notes at the end of the book assist readers in further study without breaking the flow of the main text. Susan Kelley's illustrations add to rather than detract from the message, underlining the concepts, often in humorous ways.

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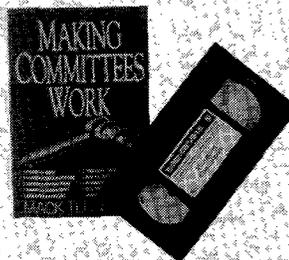
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The suffering aren't asking, "Is God harmless?" They are asking, "Is God able to defend me?"

Ever concerned to rightly represent God, Maxwell ends his contribution to a personal relationship with God by writing: "Like Abraham and Moses—the ones God spoke of as His trusted friends—God's friends today want to speak well and truly of our heavenly Father. They covet as the highest commendation the words of God about Job: 'He has said of Me what is right' (see Job 42:7).

Servants or Friends? Another Look at God

Reviewed by John McLarty, recently a pastor in Ohio and now writer and assistant producer of the Voice of Prophecy radiobroadcast, Thousand Oaks, California.

Hardly any Christian would disagree with Graham Maxwell's introductory statement: "God's clearly stated preference [is] for something more than submissive service." God wants open, intimate friendship. In developing the model of Christ as friend of God, Maxwell presents engaging, winsome insights on divine/human relationships. His mission is to help honest, questioning people discover there really is Someone they can trust: a God whose actions make good sense.

Despite this noble purpose, I find several problems with the book. Maxwell writes: "There is one passage that stands out ever more clearly as revealing the most important truth about God—a key to understanding the rest of Scripture and God's plan to restore peace in His universe. His offer of friendship is recorded in John 15:15."

Human friendship is a rich metaphor for understanding the divine/human relationship but insufficient for describing the complexity of God or humanity in their interrelationships.

Maxwell diminishes his friendship model by focusing on friendship as egalitarian camaraderie between peers. Friendship can describe a warm, personal rela-

tionship between nonpeers. Friendship does not erase the wonder and mystery of our differences, but rather it exults in them. Friendship with one who is extraordinary in spiritual excellence, musical genius, or social responsibility highlights the truth that we can never fully comprehend another. In reading *Servants or Friends?*, I sometimes felt that God had been robbed of His mystery. He had been reduced to the comprehensible.

Occasionally Maxwell slights the biblical data in order to maintain his model. For example, he asks: "What would have happened when you were a child in school if you had walked up to a fellow student and said, 'You can be my friend as long as you do what I say'?" Because he cannot imagine ordinary peer relationships structured this way, he dismisses Jesus' declaration, "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:14, RSV). Rather than denigrating Jesus' statement because it does not fit his friendship model, Maxwell should adapt his model or acknowledge its limited applicability.

Another conceptual flaw in the book is Maxwell's model of sin. He writes: "To the servant, what makes sin most dangerous is that it angers God. To the friend, what makes sin most dangerous is what it does to the sinner. To persist in sin is to destroy oneself."

Offending God and destroying ourselves are to be avoided, but what about sin as harm to others? Sin destroys not only sinner, but others as well.

Maxwell sounds eloquent in his declarations of God as a nice guy. But my suffering friends are not asking, "Is God harmless?" They are asking, "Is God able to defend me? Is God tough enough and good enough to balance the cosmic scales of justice?" I found nothing in this book to give courage to the oppressed and broken.

While pastoring an inner-city church, I saw numerous demonstrations of self-destructive sin such as alcoholism, promiscuity, and criminality. But more disturbing were sins that devastated others. I heard wrenching tales of child abuse. I remember 80-year-old Emily, who was knocked down the stairs of her apartment house by two teenage girls who wanted her purse. Emily went to the hospital with a broken hip, never again to come home to her beloved cat. She died of a broken spirit in a nursing home.

The sinful behavior of those teenagers expressed a self-poisoning attitude. But a

theology that focuses only on the impact of sin on the teenagers and ignores the cruelty they inflicted on another remains irrelevant.

Another problem for me is Maxwell's attempt to make God attractive to the fearful and guilt-ridden. He does it in such a way as to devalue the appropriate fear that flawed human beings inevitably experience as they contemplate an omnipotent, holy God. Even worse, he trivializes nearly two millennia of theological enterprise by dismissing historic and biblical models of the significance of the Crucifixion, presenting his own idea as the one true way of understanding this complex reality. Finally Maxwell performs a curious semantic inversion. The word "servant" is used in the New Testament as a badge of honor for both Christians and their Lord (Phil. 1:1; 1 Peter 2:16; Acts 4:27). The author makes it a label of immaturity at best and perverse spirituality at worst.

Maxwell wants us to know that God can be trusted, that God is reasonable and loving. All followers of Jesus can only wish him well in this endeavor. But it seems to me that in attempting this, he describes only one aspect of the reality of God, implying that there is no other.

God wants us to experience all we can of Him. He invites us to explore the truths of a relationship with Him hidden in these words: child, bride, ambassadors, disciples, heirs, body, holy nation, flock, soldiers, household of God, servants, and friends. No one model is sufficient.

God is eager to have us as friends who really know Him. For that to happen, we need to let go of our preconceptions and allow Him to continually surprise us with new, unanticipated revelations of His justice, His love, and Himself.

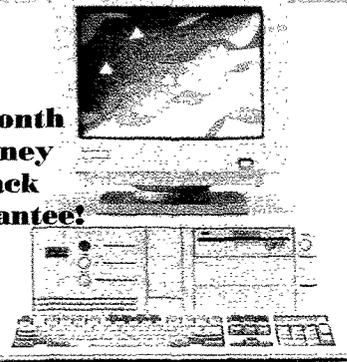
Practical Exercises for Teaching Values

Roland and Doris Larson, V. Bailey Gillespie, editor, La Sierra University Press, Riverside, California, 1992, \$12.95, paper. Reviewed by Stuart Tyner, director of the John Hancock Center for Youth Ministry, La Sierra University.

"Once you've determined what your values are," says psychologist Roland Larson, "the next challenge you're faced with is transmitting those values to the people you love."

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(Continued on page 26)

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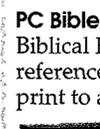
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Biblio File

From page 24

by Roland and Doris Larson, husband and wife psychologists in Minneapolis. This book is a collection of nearly 300 practical exercises to help people think about the values they hold or are forming. The valuing activities are built on eight basic methods: voting, ranking, continuum, either/or choices, listening, solving dilemmas, interviewing, and goal setting. An early chapter explains each method in detail. The exercises are then applied to values situations about faith, ourselves, others, change, and family. Each exercise encourages discussion and facilitates further thinking about the topic. The exercises work well in classroom or family worship settings, or as discussion starters at school or Sabbath school.

Here are examples from the book:

An either/or exercise in the chapter "Valuing My Faith" asks the reader to weigh concepts about prayer.

Praying is more like:

- stumbling in the dark/walking in the light
- God within us/God around us
- thanking/asking

In the chapter "Valuing My Family," the reader is asked to rank the responses to the question What do youth want most from adults?

They want respect.

They want to be heard.

They want to participate in decisions.

They want honesty.

They want love and security.

The reviews of this collection of creative valuing activities have been unanimously positive. After reading the book manuscript, Gil Plubell, director of the North American Division Office of Education, wrote that *Practical Exercises for Teaching Values* was "a must for every religious educator." Ted Bancarz, religion teacher at La Sierra Adventist Academy, calls it "one of the most creative resources to help youth analyze and focus on Christian values I've ever seen." Richard DuBose, associate pastor of the Azure Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church, found the exercises "extremely helpful in helping youth understand what they believe."

Practical Exercises for Teaching Values can be ordered from the John Hancock Center by calling (909) 785-2091.

Recently noted

Immortality: The Other Side of Death, Gary R. Habermas and J. P. Moreland, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1992, 275 pages, \$12.95, paper.

Many years ago an Adventist book appeared entitled *The Other Side of Death* (C. B. Haynes, 1916). It did not, however, take the same side of the issue as this volume. The authors of this "Side" take their stand for immortality of the soul, and then go on to make the evidence fit their belief. Though many footnotes are used, the material does not cover any of

the related subjects in depth. Though the authors frequently say that their evidence is "clear," this is rarely the case. Of interest is their use of NDEs (near-death experiences) to prove immediate life after death. In doing so, however, they neglect to explain adequately similar experiences by those who have not been near death. Concerning NDEs, better information is obtainable from *Christian Research Journal* San Juan Capistrano, California.

This book could be useful for pastors giving Bible studies on the soul or answering questions on the subject.

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Grace: costly, free, but not cheap

From page 4

of Jesus free us from our sins (Rev. 1:5).

Free, but not cheap

Grace is free. Grace is costly. But grace is not cheap. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian who ministered against formidable odds and bore witness to his faith at considerable cost, coined the term *cheap grace*. Coined during the tumultuous days of the Nazi era, in the face of a passive church that spoke of redemption but knew little of its meaning and its impact on daily life, cheap grace denotes not only corporate indifference to the demands of discipleship but also personal blindness and deafness to the call of Jesus to follow Him. "Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."¹

Cheap grace has nothing to do with the call of Jesus. When Jesus calls a person, He offers him a cross to carry. As Luther defined, a Christian is a crucian, a person of the cross. To be a disciple is to be a follower, and being a follower of Jesus is no cheap trick. To the Corinthians Paul twice wrote of the obligations of grace. First, he speaks of his own experience: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them [the apostles], though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me" (1 Cor. 15:10). See how Paul acknowledges the supremacy of God's grace in his life? And immediately he adds that this grace was not given to him in vain. The Greek *eis kenon* literally translates "for emptiness." That is to say, Paul did not receive grace in order to lead a vain, empty life—but rather a life filled with the fruits of the Spirit, and even that not in his own strength but by the power of the indwelling grace. Similarly he pleads with the believers "not to accept the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6:1).

The grace of God has not come to redeem us from one kind of emptiness to place us in another kind of emptiness. God's grace is His activity to reconcile us to Himself, to make us a part of the family of God. We come into that family, not because of any good works that we have done, but because we have accepted through faith what God has done through the cross of Jesus. Having come into the family, we live in the family, bearing fruits of God's love through the power of His amazing grace. Thank God for that reality. ■

* All Scripture texts in this editorial are from the Revised Standard Version.

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 47.

Baptism and conversion

From page 13

1:16; see Acts 11:14), and upon the Hebrew conception of the family as the unit of religious and social life. "The children were not regarded by the primitive church as isolated units; the household was regarded as a unity in the sight of God. The faith of the father represents the household and the faith of the mother embraces also the children."¹⁹

If this were to be made the basis of church membership, would not also the wrong faith or no faith at all on the part of the father make his children unacceptable as members on an individual basis?

The warning of Joachim Jeremias against "modern individualistic thinking" and in favor of family and group conceptions may have at least partial reference to the danger in the emphasis of evangelicalism upon the individualistic experience of salvation. This emphasis may often lead to individualism and separatist movements. But on the other hand a collective experience of salvation appears incongruous from the very nature of the gospel which addresses all persons as sinners, awakens their conscience to a sense of guilt, and invites them to accept the forgiveness of God on the basis of Christ's atonement for sin. The Holy Spirit alone can help believers to lay hold on that for which Christ laid hold on them. The purpose of God is the

new persons set into the spiritual fellowship of the church. To this end Christ died and rose again.

We must, therefore, distinguish between individuality and individualism. Individuality contributes distinct values to the whole, while individualism disregards collective relationships. We must also distinguish between personal faith and private faith. While faith in Jesus Christ is always personal, it is never private. Beyond the believers' concern for their own life, there must be concern for others.

By regarding baptism from the perspective of personal faith and holy living, we stress its positive meaning. "Those who receive the ordinance of baptism . . . have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King."²⁰ Through baptism we see the amazing grace of God portrayed in the symbolic participation of the believer in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let us neither reduce the dignity of the baptismal event to a liturgical interruption nor parade with narcissistic pride our evangelistic successes. ■

¹ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, Md., E. G. White Estate, 1990), vol. 6, p. 167.

² ———, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 306.

³ Walter Thomas Conner, *The Work of the Spirit* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959), p. 135.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 6, p. 92.

⁵ L. G. Campion, *The Church in the New Testament* (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1951), p. 90.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, May 17, 1906.

⁷ W. L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1959), pp. 25, 26.

⁸ White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, p. 165.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

¹⁰ ———, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 172.

¹¹ ———, in *Review and Herald*, Jan. 10, 1893.

¹² *Ibid.*, May 21, 1901.

¹³ Oscar Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1958), p. 52.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁵ Donald M. Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 74.

¹⁶ Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Lehre von der Taufe* (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag Aug., 1953), p. 13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 40.

¹⁸ Joachim Jeremias, *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁰ Ellen G. White manuscript 27a, 1900.

Letters

From page 2

known an Adventist pastor or church to give support to some joint community enterprise that is church-sponsored. Each Adventist church has its own ministry to its constituency, and ministers to those needs, but the public, visible image of any local Adventist church seems to be in offering quit-smoking seminars. I have never known an Adventist church to support any evangelistic effort by any other local church or groups of churches, nor to invite any other local church to participate in any activity that they have.

As a pastor in troubled America, I feel that Evangelical believers need to join their hearts, hands, and prayers in addressing critical concerns. But, Adventists keep to themselves, asking nothing and giving nothing. My only conclusion is that non-Adventists are flawed, and will pollute Adventists and their endeavors. Am I wrong?—J. A. Blaine, Tilghman, Maryland.

Laodicea and corporate repentance

For years I have listened, waited, and prayed for the "keynote." We are told that "when the true keynote is

struck, God will reveal Himself as a God of mercy and love" (*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 154). The question is: Will I recognize it when I hear it? Your editorials and articles may be just such a keynote. Lifting up Jesus, righteousness by faith, and the call to repentance and discipleship sound like the right note to me. I agree with you that Laodicea needs desperately to repent, and this certainly includes corporate repentance. Perhaps pastors should lead in the pastoral prayer, or teach the elders the components of an appropriate prayer, on behalf of the congregation.—Charles H. Betz, Portland, Oregon.

■ We have no greater need today than to listen to Christ's warning in Revelation 3:14-22 and act upon it, both individually and corporately. I don't know how this will take place, but I know that it eventually will. In 1973 the then General Conference president, Robert H. Pierson, sensed and understood the great need of his worldwide church. He asked these questions: "Why are we still here? Where are we going? What are our priorities? The love of Christ somehow has slipped out." The time has come that we give proper attention to Jesus' warning for His remnant church. May God awaken us, transform us, and fill us with His Spirit so

that we may be a light in this dark world and that others may know God's true character.—Rafael Fernandez, Fennimore, Wisconsin.

■ Our church "knows" that Revelation 3:14-17 is applicable to it in these last days. Our leaders "know" that the rebuke applies to the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Even most of our members "know" this. But some of us have been individually and collectively unwilling to accept the counsel. Some of us have acted as though we had no ears to hear what the Spirit says to the church.

I am amazed and shocked to think that leaders would prefer that we preach messages other than Christ crucified. There is no message of worth without Christ crucified. We are not saved by a system of doctrines. It matters not how true, how closely reasoned, how logical doctrines are—if they are not centered in, founded on, and uplifting of our blessed Saviour, there is no gospel, no power of God unto salvation.

What God did for us on the cross we can only accept. On the other hand, God does not do in us without our consent, nor does He do in us without our cooperation. Unfortunately cooperation is often distorted to mean "I-operation." I am distressed that there are those among us who speak of character development, even of perfection, as though it were something that we weak human beings accomplish.—Freburn L. James, Zillah, Washington.

■ You will never know the joy your editorial in the February 1993 issue of *Ministry* gave me ("Laodicea and Corporate Repentance"). I believe God used your pen. It was evident that you counted yourself with the church leaders in focusing on the need for corporate repentance. This is consistent with the prophet Daniel, who prayed, "We and our fathers have sinned."

Please be assured of my prayers that we all might get our priorities straight and focus on Jesus. When this is done among our people, we would not be able to stop them from witnessing and winning souls. I count myself as chief in this need.—Gordon A. Frase, Elberta, Michigan.

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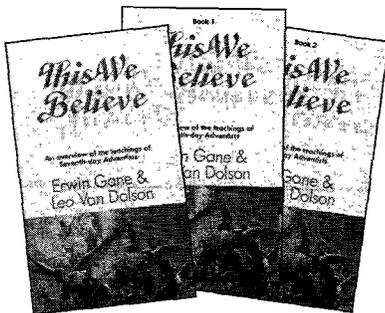
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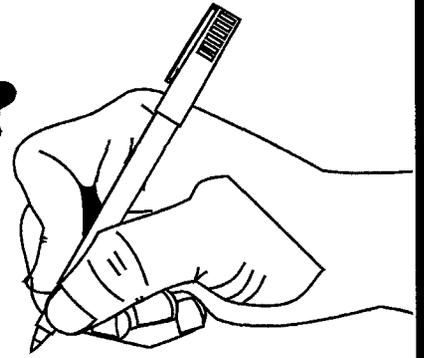
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God's universal remnant

From page 7

Here we see an open, universal remnant within the apostate people!

Conclusion

In summary, the New Testament not only allows for a remnant theology but explicitly expounds one. However, remnancy defined in a narrow and exclusive framework is not only untenable but condemned in the Bible.

The reality of an eschatological remnant church finds its roots in both Old and New Testaments. Even though true remnancy was thwarted during the intertestamental period, the message of universalism emerged with the coming of John the Baptist and Jesus. The book of Acts shows how remnancy carried forth into early Christianity. In the Apocalypse we find an added eschatological dimension to remnancy.

The Adventist Church has been en-

trusted by God to preach and teach the remnant message. We must beware, however, lest our remnant theology become parochial. Bearing the remnant message is not only a privilege but a responsibility. That message is ever to be the everlasting gospel, calling forth God's remnant from "every nation, tribe, tongue, and people." ■

*Unless otherwise stated, all Bible texts are from the New King James Version.

¹ G. F. Hasel, "Remnant," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), supplementary vol., p. 735.

² See G. F. Hasel, "Remnant," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), vol. 4, p. 133.

³ C. C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p. 138.

⁴ V. Hertrich, "The 'Remnant' in the Old Testament," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), vol. 4, p. 208.

⁵ B. F. Meyer, "Remnant of Israel," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), Vol. XII, p. 343.

⁶ W. Gunther and H. Krienke, "Remnant," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), vol. 3, p. 250.

⁷ Hasel, *Interpreter's Dictionary*, p. 736.

⁸ Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*

(London: S.C.M. Press, 1971), pp. 171, 172.

⁹ B. F. Meyer, "Jesus and the Remnant of Israel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84 (1965): 126, 127.

¹⁰ Jeremias, p. 173.

¹¹ Hasel, *Interpreter's Dictionary*, p. 736.

¹² Meyer, "Jesus and the Remnant of Israel," p. 127. (See Isa. 10:5, 20-22; Eze. 6:5-9.)

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Hasel, *Interpreter's Dictionary*, p. 736.

¹⁶ Gunther and Krienke, p. 251.

¹⁷ Hasel, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 134.

¹⁸ Gunther and Krienke, p. 252.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

²¹ John Sweet, *Revelation* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1979), p. 205.

²² Gunther and Krienke, pp. 247-254.

²³ In the New Testament the noun *leimma*, "remnant," occurs only once (Rom. 11:5). The adjective *loipos* occurs 55 times. The most common compound is *kataleipo* (Matt. 4:13; 19:5). The following appear once: *dialeipo*, "to leave off" (see Luke 7:45); *hypoleipomai*, "to be left remaining." The "remnant," specifically, is denoted by *kataloipoi*, *leimma*, and *hypoleimma* (see Gunther and Krienke, p. 251; Acts 15:17; Rom. 11:5; 9:27).

²⁴ J. Massyngberde Ford, ed., *Revelation* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975), p. 200.

²⁵ Sweet, p. 195.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

²⁷ G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (London: Oliphants, 1974), p. 206.

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1992 index

Anyone wanting an index of the 1992 *Ministry* articles can send a self-addressed manila envelope to *Ministry*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904.

Rejuvenating Sabbath school

Many years ago Sabbath school involved the family as a unit. Unfortunately, over the years families were asked to separate upon coming to church. We determined to change that and return to a focus on our families.

We have a Sabbath school planning committee whose sole function is to design and implement the weekly program. It is composed of nine members plus the chairperson, Sabbath school superintendent, and both pastors. They meet in planning session one evening at least once every two weeks during the year, planning six weeks in advance.

Here's our Sabbath morning format:

9:25—A host welcomes the families present and offers prayer.

9:27—Song service is accompanied by one or more guitars. Sometimes we use the hymnal, but usually an overhead projector. The selection of happy contemporary songs lasts about 15 minutes and includes special children's songs.

9:42—Our children's feature may be a skit, a story, or a Thirteenth Sabbath-style presentation. One recent Sabbath we featured the primary department, which has an outstanding program

everyone enjoyed hearing about. The primaries showcased a large control panel, NASA-style, with a computer that gave print-out messages of memory verses.

9:52—The children are dismissed to go to their divisions, and the adult feature begins. This may be *Mission Spotlight*, *OnLine Edition*, an interview, or a mini-concert by a children's choir from Africa. Other recent programs were a student missionary presentation, a talk on the New Age movement, an archaeology report on excavations outside ancient Nineveh, and an interview with a local Episcopal priest regarding his substance-abuse ministry.

10:12—The adult feature ends and we divide for the lesson study.

10:55—Closing prayer ends Sabbath school.

Our new format has made Sabbath school alive, interesting, and well attended. Though a few express their desire to return to the days of yesteryear, one word we have not heard in four years is "boring!"—Jerry Sorensen, Ukiah, California.

Video worship services

The Mid-America Union has developed a series of entire church services on video for use by local churches on Sabbaths the pastor may not be able to fill the pulpit. The tapes are also useful for sharing with those hospitalized or shut in, and also as an outreach tool. For information contact Roger W. Morton, Mid-America Union, P.O. Box 6128, Lincoln, NE 68506; fax 402-483-4453.

Ingathering made simple

I have the perfect solution for painless and successful Ingathering. I learned the method long ago from Lowell Fritz in Ohio. He marked out a territory of six blocks, near his home, that had houses close together. Several times a year he took *Signs* to those homes, noting where he was well received. He followed up with "sick calls," Bible studies, and general visitation. During his autumn visit he brought *Signs* with an Ingathering brochure, asking for a donation to his church. He raised \$1,000 each year.

Ingathering isn't what it used to be. In previous churches we used to raise \$12,000 to \$15,000 through caroling, but now through that means it's difficult to raise \$4,000. Perhaps the time has come to rediscover the original method of Ingathering, when Jasper Wayne raised money from friends for missions.—Peter Read, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Nominating committee idea

In the process of electing the nominating committee, I distribute to all church members an "office description and preference folder." It includes a brief explanation of each officer's duties. The job descriptions of a paragraph or two are in harmony with the North

American Division church officers' handbook, *Responsibilities in the Local Congregation*, adapted to local church plans. Also included is a form listing all church offices, with instructions for members to check the offices they are interested in. They pass the completed form to a nominating committee member and keep the job descriptions for their own information.

Our new plan makes the work of nominating committee members more efficient. They have a much better idea of who is willing to serve where. And when people are asked to serve, they already have their job description to refer to.

Storing the above data on a computer makes for easy adaptation to the changing plans of the church.—Bill Peterson, Silver Spring, Maryland.

\$25 for your ideas

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Give the Holy Spirit a Chance

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A REMNANT



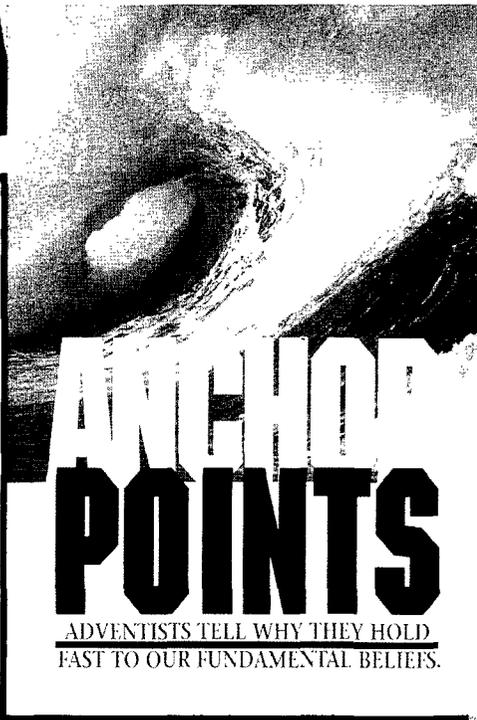
JACK W. PROVONSHA

Provonsha on a Church CRISIS

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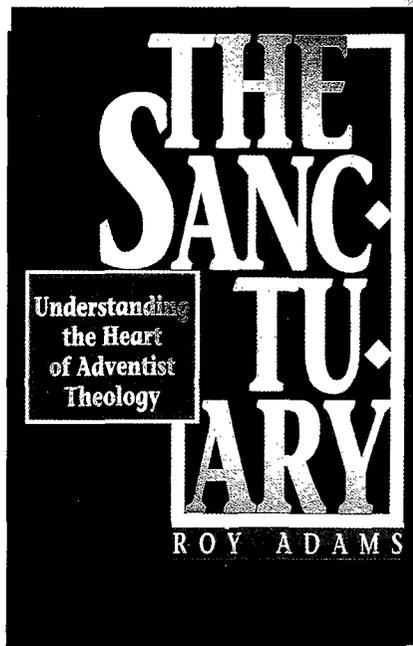
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