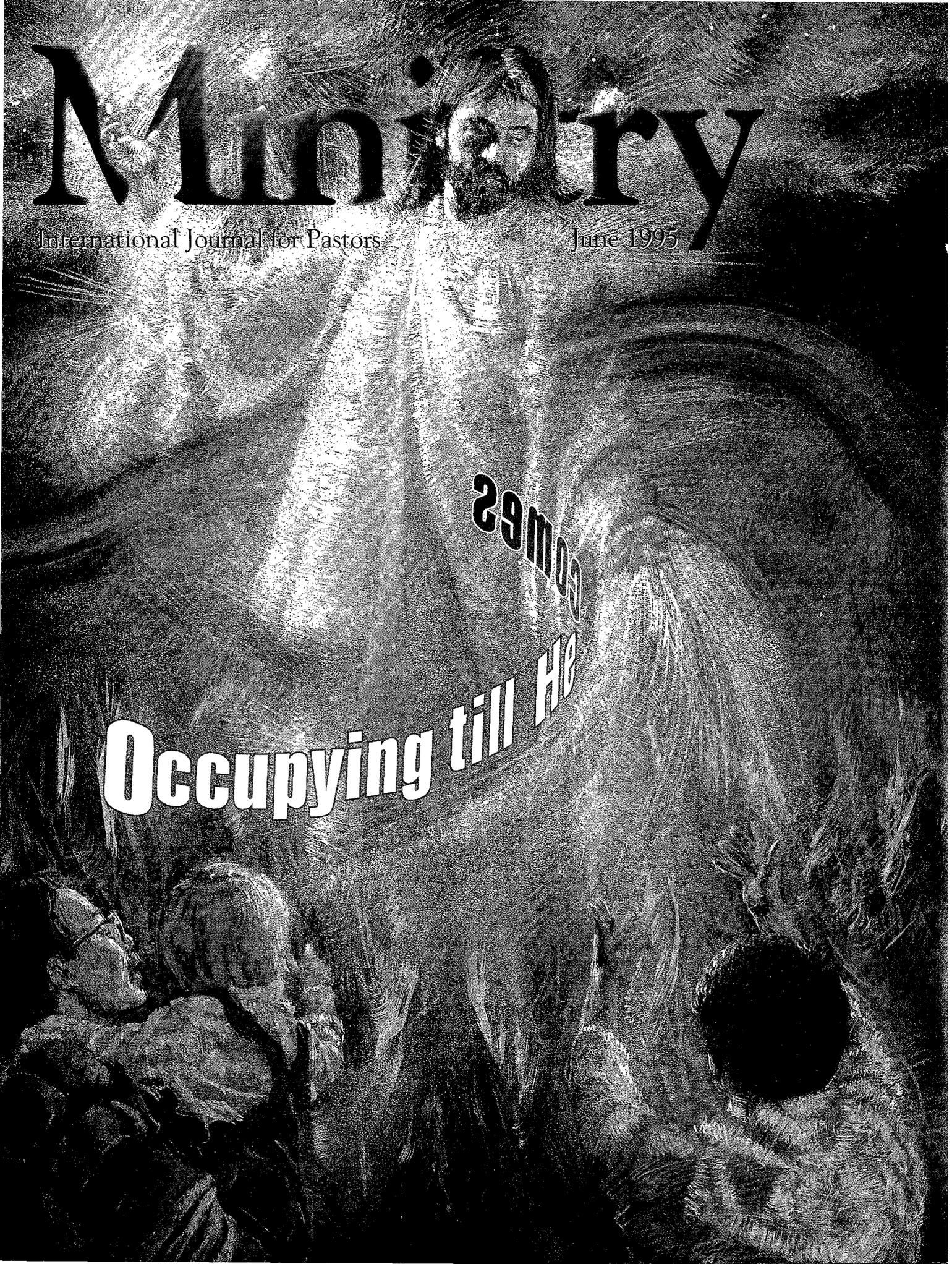


Ministry



International Journal for Pastors

June 1995

Occupying till HE

The vindication of God

Second Corinthians 3:18 linked with Matthew 5:16 answers affirmatively the question of whether character perfection is a core principle in the vindication of God. Whidden ("The Vindication of God and the Harvest Principle," October 1994) correctly observes that God was fully vindicated by the all-atoning sacrifice on the cross. But the great controversy didn't end there. The application of the objective facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the Head, must be revealed subjectively in His Church, His Body (see Eph. 4:11-15).

Just as the finished work of the cross saved all men (1 Tim. 4:10), thereby vindicating God, so will the perfected characters of those who have received fully the finished work of the cross into their lives vindicate/glorify God (Col. 1:26-29; Rev. 10:7).

The Bible speaks of two harvests at the end of time, a harvest of righteousness and a harvest of wickedness (see Gal. 6:7-9 and Rev. 14:14-20). A harvest is not gathered until it is ripe. Both harvests will reach maturity and God will be vindicated/glorified by the reaping of the righteous and the wicked at the Second Coming.—Dale Martin, Centre Hall, Pennsylvania.

■ Whidden's article seems to be based on a desire to avoid feelings of "anxiety" and "agonized looks within." His description of "harvest theology" was exaggerated and dwelt almost entirely in trying to destroy a straw man. What we need to realize is that "vindication" does not take place in a vacuum. It takes place in the minds of individuals. God did not vindicate Himself for His own sake but for the sake of those who had lost faith in Him. While God may have vindicated Himself at the cross to the on-looking universe, our neighbors were not there looking on. Therefore, for all practical purposes, as far

as our neighbors are concerned, God has not been vindicated. Therefore, God has chosen to use His church to bring the message of God's righteousness to every mind in our neighborhood. The closer our lives and words exemplify the life of Christ the more effective we will be in "vindicating" God to the *present day* onlookers. This is our motive for living Christlike lives. Let us hope that Adventist theology, like others, doesn't deteriorate completely to the point that all we are concerned with is how we can use the cross to get ourselves to heaven.—Owen J. Bandy, pastor, SDA church, Moab, Utah.

According to the pattern

Roy Adams' defense of the theological and functional correspondence between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries ("According to the Pattern," October 1994), in detriment to their spatial and physical connection, is based on a mixture of right and wrong concepts and comparisons. He does not realize that his "sanctified common sense" or "enlightened common sense" and "spiritual instinct" are invoked by many to deny, not only what remains in his view of the "real sanctuary," but also his theological and functional understanding of the heavenly pattern. On the other hand, the same kind of arguments he employs to support the functional correspondence, is also employed by many to support the material correspondence that he denies.

Today I find stronger arguments among non-Adventist theologians to keep our pioneers' view of the physical correspondence than in some who presume to remain in the steps of our spiritual predecessors. Further, Adams' reluctance to subject every scriptural symbolism to scientific analysis reflects his admitted frustration in finding "no fixed hermeneutical rules to follow." But surprisingly, this personal frustration does not hinder him from employing a scientific logic of his choice to adjust his view to his

"spiritual instinct."—Alberto R. Treiyer, Columbia, Maryland.

Literature evangelism

James Cress's article ("I Believe in Literature Evangelism," December 1994) is the first positive one I've read on the subject in years. I salute you for taking time to show support for the tremendous asset the church has in literature evangelism. We have thousands of names in our computer by zip codes that are begging for someone to follow through. What a great resource for our pastors. One pastor calls us regularly for these names, and year after year he has the most baptisms in his conference.—Harold F. Otis, president, Family Enrichment Resources Inc., Atlantic, Columbia, Pacific unions, Maryland/California.

■ In addition to what Cress has said, we are endeavoring to add another dimension: to cooperate with the conference and union outreach programs in NET '95. What we are doing is going into areas that have a specific desire to increase their soul winning endeavors with group canvassers.

Our district sales directors are working with pastors and churches by bringing into a district six to eight literature evangelists. Our goals are specific: one, sell our books; two, interact with the pastor and laypeople; and three, enroll people in Bible follow-up programs and then turn these interests over to the pastor for immediate follow-up. The literature evangelists will stay in church members' homes.

In Twin Falls, Idaho, Craig Bonson, our district sales director, organized the group canvass. In the week we were there, literature evangelists contacted 50 people who agreed to study the Bible with church members. To date, 40 of these contacts are still being followed up.—George Dronen, associate sales director, Home Health Education Service, Glencoe, Minnesota.

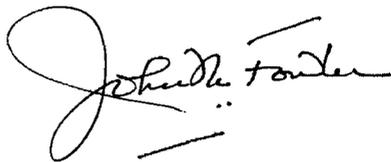
First Glance

What is the unfinished task left to Adventism by the survivors of October 1844? A very pertinent question indeed as representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church around the world meet in Utrecht, the Netherlands, later this month for the 56th General Conference session. George Knight, a foremost Adventist historian, finds the answer (p. 7) in learning to live, work, and hope "within the tension between the present and the future."

At the General Conference session, *Ministry* will release a special double issue, dated July-August, entirely devoted to emphasize that we have not been following cunningly devised fables. Our faith and our truth are rooted on the firm and unshakable foundation of the cross of Jesus. The staff of *Ministry* and Biblical Research Institute will present 14 sermons on the 27 fundamental beliefs of the church.

Meanwhile enjoy this issue. Don't miss the special insert on NET '95, perhaps the single most significant evangelistic event in North America in recent times. Read Mary Barrett's sparkling essay (p. 17) on returning love and joy to the Sabbath activities of a pastoral family. Edward Motschiedler (p. 20), Ohio conference president, directs all of us to stop playing the blame game, but start doing something to solve the problems and concerns of the church.

After all, the church is us, not they.



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Volume 68 Number 6



The mark of God's people

J. David Newman

A pastor arrived in a new church and soon convinced the church board to change the church sign and add a cross. A few weeks later this pastor was approached by an individual at one of their Rotary Club meetings.

"I really like your new sign," he said. "That cross makes it so clear. I could never figure out what the three bugs were that you had on it before." He was referring to the three angels.

People love symbols, signs, marks. Down through the ages Christians have used various symbols to identify themselves, such as the fish and the cross. They have worn them in their hair, on their lapels, around their necks, even tattooed on their bodies.

Seventh-day Adventists commonly use the three angels or the fourth commandment to identify themselves. Where I grew up, every self-respecting Adventist church made sure it had a picture of the ten commandments hanging somewhere on the premises. But what is the primary identifying mark of God's people?

Christ's identifying mark

Just before He died Jesus gave His disciples a mark that would clearly reveal who were His disciples, His children, His followers. At the Last Supper He said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34, 35).*

After the Resurrection the first major theological conflict erupted over the matter of signs, identifying marks. One group believed that circumcision must still be practiced, for this identified God's people.

Paul met this issue when he wrote to the Galatians: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (Gal. 5:6). Paul told the Corinthians that the supreme virtue concerned how they loved each other: "And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13).

When writing to the church members at Colosse he said: "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (Col. 3:13, 14).

Peter writing for believers in the end time reminds us: "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). This text is very hard for us to comprehend. We teach that we must eradicate sin, not cover it up. Many would much rather point out sin in the camp than serve each other in love. Many would much rather criticize and condemn each other than encourage and lift each other up.

Yes, the Bible is clear that the mark of the Christian is how he or she treats others. The Christian is considerate, compassionate, caring, courteous, and charitable. As Seventh-day Adventists we cannot afford to forget this and yet remain Christian.

Ellen White reminds us that "the badge of Christianity is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a crown, but it is that which reveals the union of man with God. . . . The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian."¹ "Love will gain the victory when argument and authority are powerless."²

"If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one."³

Love's power

Why is love so powerful? Everyone yearns to be accepted. Ever since Eden we fear rejection. Beginning with Cain we bring our offering hoping to be found worthy. We perform the duties that God requires hoping that He will accept us. If Christians reject each other, if we as a church fight among ourselves, why would the world want to become part of us? Why would anyone care to join those who do not seem to care? People are longing for acceptance. Love accepts people where they are. We know we should love people but we often do not like where they are.

We find it hard to separate our love for people from our love for the world. We are so afraid of being contaminated by the world that we isolate ourselves. We avoid dances, cocktail parties, dinner theaters, bingo halls, any social gathering at which people might be smoking or drinking. We want people to come to us on our terms but find it difficult to meet with them on their terms.

I remember a graphic example from my own family. My wife's parents are not Adventists. Every time we visited in their home they prepared vegetarian food for us. When we set up home in Scotland and they visited us we told them that if they wanted meat they would have to buy and prepare it themselves. The thought of having meat cooked in our pans made us feel sick. We never stopped to think that they had accommodated themselves to us but

we were unwilling to do the same for them.

In later years we came to realize this and now when they come we provide for their needs. But the negative impression that they received of Adventism because of this double standard has taken years to dispel. We believed that we were standing for truth when they saw us as obstinate and unloving. We can make the same mistake with the Sabbath. Which sundown do our young people look forward to the most? The first or the second? If love is not at the center of who we are, the Sabbath too is meaningless.

Love the last message

The strategic importance of love as a mark of God's people is further emphasized by Ellen White: "The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of [God's] character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them."⁴

This means loving the not so lovely and the definitely unlovely as well as the lovely. It means listening to and accepting others even when we do not agree with them. For if love is not at the center of our lives, then our religion has no value. We cannot fake love. We cannot put it on and take it off at will. We cannot veneer ourselves with love. People know if love permeates our being. After all, "this is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (1 John 3:16).

When the people of the world see us laying down our lives for them in loving service then we will see the same explosive growth that was seen in the first centuries of the Christian Era, when people remarked, "Those Christians—how they love each other." ■

* Scripture passages are from the New International Version.

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), p. 470.

² ———, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 2, p. 135.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 189.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1941), pp. 415, 416.

Choosing leaders

John M. Fowler

Choosing leaders from local to General Conference levels is an exciting passion for many and a boring occasion for some. Those elected attribute the working of the nominating committee to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and those disappointed would suggest that the whole process is political, pushed by influential lobbying. As we face another General Conference session that will elect leaders for the world field, it would be well to consider some principles from the book of Acts, which records the apostolic church's struggles with choosing leaders that would extend God's kingdom on earth even as it awaited the Parousia—objectives that drive our church as well.

Four instances from Acts give us the qualities to expect from leaders and the principles the church should follow in choosing its leadership. Those instances are: the replacement for Judas (Acts 1:21-26); the choosing of deacons (Acts 6:1-6); the mission to Antioch (Acts 11:19-25); the mission to the Gentiles (Acts 13:2).

The qualifications

Personal experience with Jesus is the first and foremost qualification expected of a leader. To fill the vacancy left by the tragedy of Judas, the disciples were convinced that they needed a person who knew the Lord as He "went in and out among us" (Acts 1:21).^{*} Theology, culture, erudition, management, personal charm, and persuasion were all skills that the church could have used in its administration, but none of these could have taken the place of knowing Jesus personally, heart to heart, mind to mind, one to one. A person had to be a compan-

ion of Jesus before he or she could become a leader of His flock. A potential leader should have been a witness to Jesus "from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up" (verse 22).

By witness we mean not simply spectators of the spectacular events in the life and the ministry of Jesus, but personal and unreserved identification with that ministry and that call: in Jordan to initiate a baptismal vow of obedience to the Father; in Nazareth to proclaim liberty to the poor and downtrodden; in Cana to extend a helping hand to an urgent need; with Nicodemus to speak of the new birth; with the woman at the Samaritan well to help break down a wall; with the lepers and the blind and the dead to show that God is the God of hope and the harbinger of new life; at the Communion to gird up the loins in servanthood; in Gethsemane to discover the cup of God's



will; at the cross to witness reconciliation and redemption; at the empty tomb to proclaim the living Lord; at the Ascension to accept a global mission, to experience the power of the heavenly high priest, and to await the Second Coming.

"A witness to his resurrection" (Acts 1:22) is another qualification that the church should seek in its leadership. Resurrection cannot be isolated from the cross. The cross vindicates God's redemptive plan for sin and the resurrection offers the hope of newness. One cannot be a Christian, let alone a Christian leader, without experiencing the

power of the cross and the empty tomb. Even as early as a few weeks after the Crucifixion weekend, the disciples insisted on this affirmation of the crucified and risen Lord as essential to Christian discipleship. Witnessing to the Resurrection, Paul held, was imperative to being a proclaimer of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:8).

To be such a witness does not mean theological veracity or doctrinal certainty. It includes these, but more so it demands that Christian leaders walk with Jesus daily, talk with Him, plead with Him for both themselves and others, and experience the mediating power of the heavenly high priest. Christian leaders cannot be any less.

“Good repute” (Acts 6:3, 5; 11:24) is a qualification that the apostolic church insisted on in their choice of leaders. We see this in the appointment of deacons to care for the routine needs of the Jerusalem church and in the selection of Barnabas to investigate the miraculous happenings in Antioch and to lead the church there. In both cases the church wanted good and trustworthy persons. The selection guidelines defined goodness in two ways that the church today can ignore only at its peril. First, goodness meant “good repute” as persons of integrity. Their work required the handling of money: the Jerusalem deacons were in charge of caring for the needy; Barnabas was to carry funds from Antioch for the poor in Jerusalem. Leaders cannot afford to be easy on their own integrity.

Second, goodness called for fairness, dealing with all segments of the church on an equal footing, recognizing neither race nor ethnicity, neither gender nor tribe, in Jerusalem as well as Antioch. Barnabas was so good at this that the Antioch church was perhaps the first corporate body to break down every wall of partition; as a result, it grew to great proportions. In fact, Antioch launched the Christian church’s first global mission. When we have leaders who are honest and fair, loving and compassionate, “prudent [in] management and . . . godly [in] example”¹ church growth can take care of itself (see Acts 6:7; 11:24).

“Full of the Spirit and of wisdom” and **“and of faith”** is another element that the early church sought in its leadership. These terms describe not a political pro-

cess but a spiritual maturity, not a longing for power but a submission to a higher calling, not a jockeying for positions in administration but a willingness to be used by the Spirit as mediators of His grace. A Christian leader is willing to be led by the Spirit all along the way and at every fork where the road divides. A Christian leader waits on bended knee for clarity of the task and for power to accomplish it. A Christian leader has the wisdom to distinguish between the essential and the peripheral, between the compulsions of the kingdom and the concerns of self, between people and things. A Christian leader is full of faith in God and fellow beings, and manifests the grace to forgive, the ability to empower others, and the generosity to be inclusive.

If these are the qualifications that the church should look for in prospective leaders, what are the principles the church should follow in appointing leaders?

The principles

The instances referred to in Acts also point to three principles the church should follow in the selection of its leaders.

Pray. Whether it was choosing a substitute for Judas or the selection of deacons or the sending of missionaries to the Gentiles, the early church placed the utmost emphasis on prayer. The disciples must have learned this process from their Lord who “was wholly dependent upon God, and in the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trial.”² Before the Antioch church sent Paul and Barnabas as missionaries to the unreached, the church fasted and prayed. When the church as a corporate body and as individual members fast and pray before leaders are elected, we can be sure that the Holy Spirit will thwart political ambitions and guide in the selection of persons “full of the Holy Spirit and of faith” (Acts 11:24).

Submit to God as the ultimate chooser. The prayer in Acts 1 has this dynamic opening: “Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two thou hast chosen” (verse 24). The prayer is preceded by a twofold recognition: the unity of the believers in seeking God’s will; the admission that the Lord knows the hearts of all and will

reveal His purposes. The history of the church tells us that whenever God’s people unitedly seek to know and do His will, God has never failed. The failure comes only when we, because of our selfish arrogance or our corporate strength or our Laodicean indifference, seek to become our own gods and pay mere lip service to God’s true will and purposes.

Recognize that we choose leaders to advance God’s purpose. Selection of leadership in the church at any level has no other significance. “Preaching the word” (Act 6:2-5) cannot be surrendered to administrative expediency. Global mission cannot be held back by the glorious achievements of Antioch. Nurture cannot be constrained by a costly structure. Evangelism is not to be held hostage to the feeling of “we have prospered and we lack nothing.”

The church we are a part of is a transcendent body, however frail and human it might be. It is not a political institution; it does have elections, not to prove democracy, not to convert the body into a perpetual political arena, but for choosing leaders. Once the process of election is over, the inadequacies of that process must be put aside. The body as a whole must turn to its main function: proclamation, evangelism, mission, nurture, healing, awaiting. These are the transcendental dimensions that we are called to serve.

History tells us that whenever church members or leaders are preoccupied with anything less, there begins a decay. Hence the call to a higher ground: power and pomp must give way to a passion for ministry and modeling; ecclesiastic positions must become instruments of compassion and service; institutions must become dispensers of love and grace to the communities in which they exist; a sense of stewardship and integrity must permeate dealings at personal and organizational levels.

When this happens the triumph of the church will not be far away. ■

*All Scripture passages are from the Revised Standard Version.

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 89.

² ———, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 363.

Occupying till He comes

George Knight

The tension between occupying the present and awaiting the Second Coming



George Knight is professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

“Surely I come quickly” (Rev. 22:20).

The early church expected to see its Lord returning in a relatively short time. Yet Jesus has not come after nearly 2,000 years.

What did Jesus mean by quickly? I don't know, but apparently His definitions are not the same as mine.

Of course, shortness of time was not the only chronological aspect of Jesus' teachings regarding the end of the world. The other was delay. Repeatedly in the last-day parables of Matthew 24 and 25 Jesus refers to the fact that His coming would be “delayed” (see Matt. 24:48; 25:5, 19).

Jesus was apparently well aware of the tensions that His followers would face in the interim between His ascension and second coming. His main point in the Olivet discourse seems to be that they should live in the interim in a state of expectancy and faithfulness. Thus several parables in Matthew 24 and 25 direct Christians not only to watchfulness but also to faithful service. In a related parable Jesus commanded His disciples: “Occupy till I come” (Luke 19:13).

That command is clear enough, but how is it to be implemented? This question, among others, will always face those who take the Second Coming seriously. It faced the early Adventists in the post-1844 period, and it faces us today.

Early Adventism and the tension

Post-disappointment Adventism was thrown into an identity crisis in the last two months of 1844 and in early 1845.¹ Two approaches to the problem of continuing time before the Second Advent

came to the fore. The first stressed an immediate coming, while the second emphasized occupying during the interim, even though none expected a long delay.

Those who emphasized immediacy continued to hold to the necessity of some sort of preaching and most of them continued gainful employment in order to maintain their families. On the other hand, they opposed institutional and contractual arrangements on the basis that such arrangements implied delay and were thus indicators of a lack of faith in the Second Coming. Among those holding to the immediacy pole of their Advent belief there arose the temptation to continue to set new dates for the Second Coming. Thus William Miller and Josiah Litch came to expect the Advent to take place by the spring of 1845.²

Early Sabbatarian Adventists were not immune to date-setting. Foremost among them was the influential Joseph Bates. In 1850 he sparked a time-setting excitement by interpreting “the seven spots of blood . . . before the Mercy Seat” as representing “the duration of the judicial proceedings on the living saints in the Most Holy.” Since each spot stood for a year, Christ's heavenly ministration would last seven years and He would come in October 1851.³

It was one of the other two founders of Sabbatarian Adventism who opposed Bates. The July 21, 1851, *Review* carried an important letter from Ellen White on the topic. “The Lord has shown me,” she penned, “that the message of the third angel must go, and be proclaimed to the scattered children of the Lord, and that it should not be hung on time; for time never will be a test again. I saw that

some were getting a false excitement arising from preaching time; that the third angel's message was stronger than time can be. I saw that this message can stand on its own foundation, and that it needs not time to strengthen it."⁴

This was not the first time that Ellen White had stood against time setting. She noted early on that "the time of trouble must come before the coming of Christ." Even her first vision hinted that the city might be a "great way off." Her reward for taking such a position on date setting was that some charged her "with being with the evil servant that said in his heart, 'My Lord delayeth His coming.'"⁵

Taken as a whole, Ellen White's 1851 anti-date-setting message is a powerful statement that she was among those Advent believers who were focusing on occupying rather than immediacy. It should also be noted that her emphasis on the preaching of the third angel's message implied a process rather than a point of time. James White stood with her on both the anti-time-setting issue and on the necessity of gathering in God's people who would stand on the platform of the third angel of Revelation 14.

But James hadn't always stood against the setting of new dates. In September 1845 he firmly believed that Jesus would return in October 1845. At

that time he held that marriage was "a wile of the devil" since it indicated a lack of faith in the nearness of the advent. Yet by the summer of 1846 he had married Ellen Harmon.⁶

Between October 1845 and August 1846 a major ground shift had taken place in the thinking of James and Ellen White. They had perceptively moved away from the immediacy perspective of the date setters and had more fully grasped the occupy-till-He-comes horn of the Adventist dilemma. Their marriage is an impressive symbol of that ground shift. They had a work to do, and Ellen couldn't travel alone. As a result, they took the first step toward the institutionalization of Adventism. If the end was not to come as soon as they first expected, they had to take adequate steps to prepare themselves for service in the interim.

But they had not given up their Advent faith. To the contrary, in the next few years they began to see that God had another message for His people to give before the Second Advent—that of the third angel of verses 9-14. Marriage for the Whites became a means to better accomplish the preaching of that message. But it also pointed to their acceptance of the continuity of time.

As it turned out, marriage was only the first step in their putting Adventism on a more permanent basis for the preach-

ing of the nearness of the end. Repeatedly the Whites led out in creating stability in Adventist ranks so that the sounding of the third angel's message would be supported by an adequate institutional base. Yet at every step they had to combat those fixated on the immediacy pole of the Advent hope.

Thus it was in the realm of education. As late as 1862 some believers wondered if it was displaying a lack of faith in the nearness of the Advent to send their children to school.

James White answered that "a well-disciplined and informed mind can best receive and cherish the sublime truths of the Second Advent." The same logic, he held, went for those who would preach the gospel. Thus the next decade saw James (with Ellen close beside him) as the leader in establishing Battle Creek College for the training of workers.⁷

The Whites also led out in church organization. By and large, the Millerite movement had been antiorganizational, first because of the belief that time was short and formal organization was not needed since Jesus would soon come. Beyond that, many followed George Storrs in his claim that a church "becomes Babylon the moment it is organized."⁸

Some of the Sabbatarian leaders held onto Storrs's Babylon logic into the early 1860s. In response to that position Ellen White penned: "I was shown that some have been fearing they should become Babylon if they organize; but the churches in central New York have been perfect Babylon, confusion. And now unless the churches are so organized that they can carry out and enforce order, they have nothing to hope for in the future."⁹ Organization, she concluded, would provide power for future work.

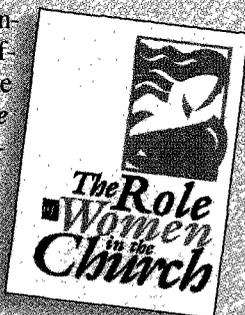
The Whites' struggle for an adequate organization came to fruition between 1861 and 1863. They led out also in such areas as the publishing and medical work. With each step they put the denomination on a firmer basis on this earth so that it could preach the nearness of the earth to come.

The success-is-failure dilemma

The Whites had faced the tension between the imminence of the Advent and occupying till He comes by

Another look at a sensitive issue.

Twenty-five years ago, a group of Bible teachers and church leaders met at Camp Mohaven, Ohio, to share the results of their study on women in ministry. Those study papers, long out-of-print, are now available in facsimile version in *The Role of Women in the Church*. Papers deal with the ordination of women, male-female relationships in ancient and modern times, the priesthood of all believers, etc. Paper, 196 pages. US\$9.95/Cdn\$14.45.



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manity. And in order to successfully work with outsiders, Kellogg had found it profitable to mute his Adventism.

Ellen White stood against Kellogg's bid for acceptance and his moves toward secularizing Adventism's medical missionary work. "The Lord," she penned in 1900, "has signified that the missionary, health-restorative gospel shall never be separated from the ministry of the word." Mrs. White also opposed the doctor's desire to develop the medical missionary cause disproportionately in relation to the other efforts of the denomination. The medical missionary work is to be the right arm of the third angel's message, "but the right arm is not to become the whole body." She expressed concern that many of the tasks that burdened Kellogg "the world would do largely, but the world will not do the work which God has committed to His people."¹²

In short, Ellen White was calling Kellogg back to his original misanthropic focus and to the balance between imminence and occupying that had prompted the institutionalization of Adventism in the first place. But the doctor had his own agenda by the turn of the century. Occupying had become the whole for him and imminence both a bother and an embarrassment. He would leave the denomination early in the new century so that he could operate his philanthropic work without the hindrances of Adventism.

The tension lives on

The Whites, Bates, and Kellogg are long gone, but Adventism continues to exist in the seemingly unending tension between imminence and occupying till He comes.

A glance at the General Conference's 1993 statistical report indicates that the church is doing exuberantly well in occupying. As of December 31, 1993, it had 539 union and local conferences/missions, 36,920 congregations, 4,492 primary schools, 953 secondary schools, 85 colleges and universities, 35 food industries, 148 hospitals and sanitariums, 92 retirement homes and orphanages, 354 clinics and dispensaries, 7 media centers, and 56 publishing houses. These institutions employed some 136,539 workers.¹³ The

denomination's extensive international development and relief work (ADRA) is in addition to these figures.

Adventism has indeed become good at occupying. But the nagging question arises as to the purpose of the occupation. And that question raises the issue of Adventist identity.

Adventist identity in relation to time and change

Identity is a central issue to all Christian bodies. Understandings of identity and a church's role in the scheme of history provide purpose and direction. Needless to say, perceptions of identity are not static. They change with time. Those changes can be good or bad.

Closely connected to identity is time. Time can have a corrosive effect on identity. That is especially true for groups expecting the soon coming of Christ. The passage of time raises questions and presents problems and challenges that never had to be faced by a movement's founders.

The corrosive effects of time transformed the early church from a premillennial to a postmillennial mentality. And the effects of time are operating within Adventism today. With Adventism, of course, the results are yet to be seen. But after 150 years the questions of what Adventism is and what it should be about are of crucial importance, and they are being asked with increasing frequency.

Intimately related to time in relation to identity is the issue of change. Change not only operates within the church, it is a major factor in the world in which the church seeks to minister. Change is certain, and the way a church relates to change is absolutely crucial to its identity.

Ways of relating to change

There are only so many ways to face change and history. One is to live in the past as if the past can somehow be personally preserved as a golden age. Such an approach disregards the reality of change. In the long run its proponents have nothing to say to the present generation, because they have lost contact with daily realities. Such an approach finds mission only among those who desire to live in a past-oriented intellec-

tual and/or social ghetto. Many Adventists continue to take this approach to change.

A second dysfunctional way of relating to change and history is to focus exclusively or almost exclusively on the future. Although having an opposite focus from those fixated on the past, this future-oriented focus has the same result. It loses contact with present needs and realities.

A third way of relating to change and history is to focus almost exclusively on the present, while emphasizing "relevance." And relevance is important. After all, irrelevance is a certain road to disaster. On the other hand, "mere" relevance is the road to nowhere. Relevance that has lost its biblical roots in the supernatural is one more way of getting lost. Lasting Christian relevance must be rooted in the transcendent and in God's great acts in the history of His people.

The Bible presents us with a fourth way of relating to change and history that is neither irrelevant nor merely relevant. This viewpoint is anchored in both God's leading in the past history of His people and in His bringing an end to earthly history at the Second Advent. But it does not neglect present circumstances and needs. Thus it sets forth a present orientation in the framework of the continuum of the past and the future. It presents a cosmic viewpoint that finds identity for the present in both history and prophecy. Thus its relevance, being rooted in the great continuum of history and change, is not transitory. Instead, the line running from the historical past to the prophetic future provides perspective, direction, and identity for the present. When Adventism or any other Christian body loses contact with either the historic past or the predicted future it will suffer disorientation in the present.

Modern Adventism and the immediacy/occupying tension

In 1995 Adventism stands in a place analogous to that of its Millerite founders in late 1844 and early 1845 as it relates to the continuum of history and change and to the tension between immediacy and occupying. From one sector of the Adventist world we find those bound up with almost a time-setting frenzy as they

seek to live in a constant state of excitement regarding the nearness of the end. Their faith is based upon world crisis rather than the promises of God. Even their behavior is motivated by the "feeling" of nearness.

This kind of Advent faith tends to be an "up and down" experience. It has failed to learn the lessons of Matthew 24:36-25:46. A healthy Adventist faith must be based on more than immediacy and excitement. A deep faith based on the promises of God and a life characterized by watchfulness and Christian service in the interim between Christ's ascension and second advent is what is called for.

A second issue that both post-1844 and current Adventists have had to wrestle with in relation to history and imminence is the reality of a literal coming-in-the-clouds Second Advent. In the mid-1840s some frustrated Millerites spiritualized away the literalness of the Advent and suggested that Christ comes individually into hearts and minds. It is all too easy for modern Adventists to follow a similar line of thinking by interpreting the promises of the Advent metaphorically, holding that the Second Advent takes place for each person at death, and so on.

Taking such a course is equivalent to surrendering the Advent hope that stimulated the rise of Adventism. It not only moves away from plain Bible teachings, but it negates the prophetic promise of the future. That line of thought leads to the abdication of belief in Adventism itself. It dissolves Adventist identity.

At the opposite extreme from those living on the frantic edge of apocalyptic excitement are those who are tempted in their frustration at the delay to turn away from apocalypticism altogether. That course of action was followed by many of the disappointed Millerites, and it is a live option in the 1990s.

But to follow that direction is to surrender the very core of Adventist identity. Millerite Adventism arose in response to a study of the prophecies of Daniel 7-9, and Sabbatarian Adventism enriched that perspective by emphasizing Revelation 12-14. The Sabbatarians saw themselves as the personification of the remnant message of Revelation 12:17 and of the third angel of Revelation

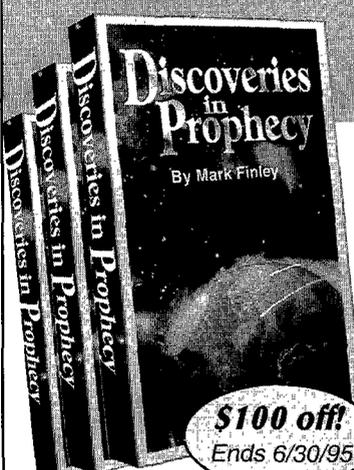
14:9-12. That understanding provided an end-time cosmic perspective that drove them to the ends of the earth with their peculiar message. They saw themselves as a prophetic people.¹⁴

Take away that apocalyptic understanding, and you have removed the living heart of Adventism. And yet the temptation is very real for Adventism as it nears the twenty-first century. The temptation will increasingly be to turn away from the preaching of Adventism's

apocalyptic message and toward "doing something useful" in the real world. After all, doesn't Matthew 25:31-46 plainly teach that social justice and mercy will be crucial elements among those who await the return of Jesus?

That is true but it is not the entire picture of the waiting church. There are two apocalyptic foci in the New Testament. The first emphasizes faithful ministry during the waiting and watching time (Matt. 24; 25; Mark 13; Luke 21).

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The second, primarily found in Revelation, portrays God's last-day message and earth's final conflict between the forces of good and evil.

Biblical Adventism in both 1844 and 1995 and throughout its history has been challenged to integrate both New Testament apocalypses into its theology and mission. It is not a question of either/or but of both/and.

Unfortunately most church members, and even leaders, appear to be more comfortable with one half of the picture than with the whole. Thus those who are "turned off" by the immediacy wing of Adventism are tempted either to "play church" or adopt the Kelloggian vision.

Playing church and the Kelloggian vision

Playing church is a popular sport among both mainline Adventist members and leaders. In essence the game is based on counting and maintaining. It can be argued that the worst thing that ever happened to Adventism was its learning to count. Adventism counts institutions, members, converts, money, and everything else that can be digitized or quantified. Unfortunately, quantity and success are not necessarily related.

Among those who love to count things there is a danger of viewing Adventist identity in terms of the size, number, and variety of the denomination's institutions and the size of its membership rather than primarily in terms of mission. Playing church involves a great number of activities to keep the machinery running quietly and, of course, expanding.

Unfortunately, the machinery too often becomes an end in itself rather than a means to the end. As a result, it is difficult to modernize or replace it with more efficient models. The tendency in such situations is to progressively gain identity from the wrong things.

Somewhat related to those who are in some degree turned off by Adventism's immediacy/apocalyptic wing and like to play church are those who have a tendency to opt for the Kelloggian vision of Adventism. These often see work for humanity in medical and welfare lines as the focal point of what Adventism should be about during the period of occupation.

Michael Pearson suggests that Adventism is facing a replication of the dynamics it experienced under Kellogg's philosophy some 100 years ago. He points out, for example, that the finances of the massive Adventist Health System dwarf the expenditures of the General Conference.¹⁵ Beyond that, powerful forces operating in the marketplace have done much to secularize Adventism's extensive North American health-care system. Institutional prosperity and growth appear to be primary in the system as it now exists, while any distinctively Adventist mission appears to be an *extremely* weak "second."

Pearson also notes that the same dynamic may affect for the relatively young Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA).¹⁶ While in many cases ADRA is currently much more closely tied to the distinctive mission of Adventism than is the hospital system, age and continued growth could easily negate that relationship in an agency that has the potential eventually to overshadow the expenditures of even the hospital system. In the process, Adventism's primary focus could be *unintentionally* redirected as ADRA's influence strengthens within the denomination.

Now, lest I be misunderstood, I am in favor of the good done by the hospital system, ADRA, church organization, and other Adventist institutions. My point is that Adventism faces the same sort of problems and temptations from its current "successes" that Kellogg faced earlier. It is all too easy to mute Adventism's apocalyptic message in small increments in order to achieve wider and wider acceptance or to receive additional funding. Yet the third angel's message as portrayed in the heart of Revelation is still the focal point of Adventist mission.

The postmillennial temptation

Waiting for the Advent is a frustrating business. In frustration it is easy to disconnect from the premillennial Advent hope, except in name, and to emphasize doing good and even preaching social justice as Adventism's prophetic mission. In the process, Adventism's apocalyptic dualism and prophetic understanding gradually fade out of the picture.

As noted earlier, doing good and working for reformed social structures in the name of Christ are excellent in themselves, but they need to be seen and appreciated within Adventism's pre-millennial perspective. That perspective is rooted in the continuum of time that runs from the past and extends into the future.

Divorced from that continuum, such good works and excellent perspectives could evolve into a form of postmillennialism in which Adventism's primary focus becomes improving this world rather than the Second Advent. With that postmillennial vision, held implicitly if not explicitly, Adventism will have come full circle from the polar extreme of immediacy to the polar extreme of occupying. Thus Adventism could evolve into the ultimate eschatological contradiction—a religious body that has immensely succeeded in institutionalizing for the purpose of preaching the Advent near, but a church that has lost the meaning of the very name that originally provided its identity.

Learning to live successfully within the tension between the present and the future is the unfinished task left to Adventism by the survivors of October 1844. ■

This article is adapted from a chapter in *The Fat Lady and the Kingdom: Adventist Mission Confronts the Challenge of Institutionalism and Secularization* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1995).

¹ See George R. Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1993), pp. 231-325.

² See Richard W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1979), p. 54.

³ Joseph Bates, *An Explanation of the Typical and Anti-typical Sanctuary by the Scriptures* (New Bedford, Mass.: Benjamin Lindsey, 1850), pp. 10, 11.

⁴ Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald Extra*, July 21, 1851.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1945), pp. 14, 15, 22; cf., 75.

⁶ James White, "Watchman, What of the Night?" *The Day-Star*, Sept. 20, 1845, pp. 25, 26; James White, "Letter to Bro. Jacobs," *The Day-Star*, Oct. 11, 1845, p. 47; James White and Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1888), pp. 126, 238.

⁷ W. H. Ball and James White, "Questions and Answers," *Review and Herald*, Dec. 23, (Continued on page 28)

Being a multidistrict pastor

George Chama Mwansa

A pastor from a developing country shares the joys and concerns, lessons and challenges, of multidistrict ministry.



George Chama Mwansa wrote this article while serving as district pastor in Kitwe, Zambia. Currently he is a graduate student at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

I completed my bachelor's degree in theology in 1985. In the landscape of my mind flourished a constant stream of ideas that I intended to put to immediate practical use. I counted myself the luckiest among several fellow Zambian theology graduates: I was assigned a small urban town with only four churches and seven companies. With an arsenal of bright ideas I set out to make a difference.

Unfortunately (or was it fortunately?), I lasted only four months in that town. The union brethren placed a call for me to serve as a Bible instructor at the ministerial school. This came as a complete puzzle to me. A puzzle in the sense that there was simply nothing about me that could warrant such a choice. Not only was I single, but I lacked "ministerial seriousness" (whatever that means). And not only was my education scanty, but as far as teaching and pastoral experience were concerned, I was just a novice. However, I accepted the call and endeavored to do my best by God's grace.

In the fifth year of my stint at the ministerial school I felt an urge to return to pastoral work. When I could no longer contain the fire within, I made a formal request to the school board to be released to my former field. The brethren graciously accepted my request, and I found myself back in the ever challenging and difficult task of shepherding. I had mentioned to the board that among several things I intended to do was to run a radio ministry. Thus, I was not surprised when my field assigned me to the city of Kitwe, where I could make use of the national broadcasting studio facilities.

Kitwe consists of two districts, north and south. Kitwe South, where I was placed, had seven churches and 10 companies. Four of these companies had already acquired church status. They were waiting only to be formally organized. These churches and companies were strewn over a wide area, making it very difficult to move around. The problem of mobility was further heightened by lack of personal transport, owing to the high cost of automobiles.

Member expectations

I really don't know how and where members got the idea that ministers are superpersons—monarchs of the pulpit who will readily and ably rise to any occasion and deliver spiritual goodies to hungry souls. Not only are they to be accomplished pulpiteers, but they must be administrators, teachers, shepherds, and evangelists of each one of the churches and companies in the district. How ministers must fulfill all these diverse roles is not a problem of members. After all, did they not help send them to the seminary, where all this is supposed to be taught? And though it is true that as a result of not having church pastors our members have learned to run the affairs of the church by themselves it is nevertheless equally true that in most churches the pastor-driver syndrome runs high. There is all too often a tendency to wait to hear what the pastor has to say even on matters that seem straightforward. The problem of excelling in each of these expectations is very real. One simply has no time to concentrate even on one of these expectations without

running the risk of performing badly in other areas. The temptation to become a jack-of-all-trades and a master of none is overwhelmingly great.

Field expectations

As a representative of the field I am expected not only to make my district tick but also to run errands for those at headquarters. Each field department, however feeble and passive it may be, has to wage a war of survival through me.

I have to find some time from my busy schedule to promote each of the church ministries departments. As you may imagine, this is not all that my field expects of me. I have to collect and compile reports from the churches and send them to the field. And you know that these reports are numerous. There is that dreaded report known as the quarterly statistical report. As the name indicates, this report is submitted every quarter. It is probably the most important of all reports, as there have been instances when some ministers did not receive their salary checks because they had failed to submit the statistical report. The check was simply withheld until the report was submitted.

The quarterly statistical report is difficult to compile for several reasons. First, in some churches the clerks cannot submit legibly written reports. Second, if the report is indeed submitted, it comes late. Third, when report forms are out of stock, some church clerks will not use their initiative. They simply won't report. And moving from church to church chasing after that unsubmitted report is always a frustrating experience. I could go on telling you about reports, but that is not what this article is about.

The question is, in the midst of all these expectations and forbidding odds, what can pastors do to lighten the burden of their work? I had attended an American-affiliated college where a great deal of what I had learned had an American bias dealing with situations that were totally different. I had even taken a course in American history in which the American lecturer asked us to memorize the names of all the American presidents from Washington to Reagan! And so the United States scud missile of theoretical ideas I had hoped would de-

stroy the enemy fortifications was disintegrated by the Zambian patriot missile of reality!

Handling the multidistrict

Really, what do you do when you have seven churches (or more) and 10 companies (or more), with all the handicaps I have briefly outlined? If you are one of those ministers plagued with a situation of this kind, then this article is for you.

My hope is that you will get an idea or two from this article to help you out of your predicament. Out of my experience I share with you four ideas that have worked for me.

1. Divide the district into manageable blocks. The Holy Spirit impressed me to divide the district into two manageable zones. I sold the idea to the board of elders. Churches were grouped according to their physical proximity into zones A and B. I called a meeting of members in each of the zones and explained to them why I felt we needed to divide the area. As with every manner of change, there were those who raised objections. A few were skeptical. The majority, however, gave consent to the new setup, and we launched the program. In each of the two zones we chose a central meeting place.

How does this setup work? Let me give an example. In zone A we chose September for all members to come together at an agreed meeting place. During the first week we studied personal witnessing. In the second week we learned how to discover and develop one's spiritual gifts. The third was a revival week. In the fourth week I rested, but we designated the Sabbath of that fourth week as a guest day. The climax of that "high" Sabbath was the afternoon presentation, when we gave to all our visitors (and we had a big group) George Vandeman's *"What I Like About . . ."* and Ellen White's *Steps to Christ*.

My activities throughout that month were restricted to zone A.

A program of this nature cannot succeed without some important considerations. First, the time of daily meetings is important. Meetings have to be scheduled so as to be convenient for most members to attend. Second, elders must work out with their respective churches

a method for transporting members to the meeting center. Where transport is scarce or expensive members can be encouraged to move to and from the center in groups. The minister's own dedication, charisma, and ability to teach will also affect the success of the meetings.

Many big district pastors have a tendency to move from one church to another weekly. This method has several disadvantages. If you have no personal transport, mobility becomes a big problem. If you move from church to church each week, you really don't spend quality time with your members. And though it may appear that you will touch each church and company more frequently using this method, the truth is you won't.

Dividing your district into manageable blocks has several advantages. First, you get to meet with several churches (and companies) on the same occasion, and you meet a greater number of times. Second, you have a chance to assess the degree of failure or success of your work. Third, your traveling distance is reduced, and this helps your travel budget. Fourth, your area of operation is reduced, freeing you to think and plan in a more organized way.

2. Create a district planning executive. Coordinate the work at the district level by having an administrative structure similar to the one at the field. The district pastor becomes, as it were, the "president" of the district. A lay member, gifted in administration and preferably serving as an elder, should be elected as secretary of the district planning executive. In the absence of the pastor this person chairs the meetings. You will also need to elect a vice secretary, a treasurer, and an assistant treasurer. The vice secretary acts as secretary when the secretary chairs the meeting or is absent.

At the district level we have two types of ministries: inreach and outreach. Inreach ministries offer nurture-oriented programs to members, making them strong in faith and preparing them for outreach. Inreach ministries include Adventist youth, Adventist men's organization, women's ministry, community services, stewardship, education, and music.

Outreach ministries care for the needs

of the community, and include five departments: hospital, prison, radio, welfare, and evangelism (personal and public).

Elected leaders care for these departments. These departmental leaders, church elders, and company leaders comprise the district planning executive.

Here is how the district planning executive works. Each quarter on a designated weekend all the members of the district planning executive come together in a secluded place not to "rest awhile" but to learn the how-to of running churches and departments. During these meetings, we receive reports from the departments and work on evaluation and action of the existing programs.

My function primarily is that of a teacher and motivator of this small group of leaders. I help to tap their gifts and talents. They in turn go to their various churches and companies to interpret and implement the actions of the district planning executive. They plan with members what their programs will be. They also take responsibility to train members. Thus it is important to elect to these posts those who will not only organize, but teach.

Each church through its leaders submits written proposals of action. Such a proposal is more than just stating that "in the third week of June we will conduct a door-to-door campaign." The plan must be detailed and should include such items as personnel, finance, material, scheduled activities, targeted objectives, etc.

In addition to this written proposal, the leaders must also submit a brief quarterly "snapshot" of what's taking place at their church. This helps me to know what is taking place in different churches and which churches need my immediate attention. The district departmental leaders also submit reports on their work. Instead of running up and down doing what others can ably do, I "sit" and monitor the programs. Consequently, I have time even to work on a 30-minute weekly radio program that we run on the national broadcasting corporation.

3. Create a district council. The district council is the "highest" voice of the district. The district planning executive is a subcommittee of the district

council. The council comprises of all the current serving members of the respective church boards. The council elects all the district departmental leaders, approves actions of subcommittees, and receives reports from the churches. The council meets once every quarter on a Sunday. The secretary and treasurer of the council are the same as those of the district planning executive. The council's administrative machinery may be quite slow and boring, but it is quite powerful in preserving unity in the district.

4. Organize a communications center. In a district with so many churches and companies spread over such a wide area and with no well-designed system of information dissemination, the flow of information can be very slow. I am not referring to churches in the industrial countries with their excellent communication infrastructure. I am speaking about a place where the pastor has no car, no telephone, no office, no computer, not even a typewriter. Under these conditions, communication can be not only cumbersome but also frustrating.

What, then, do you do? To begin with, appoint a district communication director. Any information intended for all the churches must be sent to him/her at the beginning of each quarter. He/she may use this information in a newsletter and send it to all the churches.

Be free to minister

Thus freed from routine work, pastors can concentrate on other areas of their interest. I can think of three. First, be involved in training. While most ministers emphasize preaching, I contend that it will not do much in a large district. Ministers must impart the necessary skills to others who must do the work for them. That involves both training in methods and teaching the content.

Second, develop relationship and interpersonal skills. You can motivate your members by your exemplary life, your enthusiasm for the Lord and His people, and your vision and dream for the community of faith.

Third, be the best for God when you stand behind the pulpit. Your preaching must be Christ-centered, prayer-based, Bible-oriented, and Spirit-blessed. ■

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"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jer. 33:3, NKJV).

The Adventist Church also faces a crisis of spiritual need. Laodicean lethargy still paralyzes many of our members and entities. In some

areas divisive elements have caused perplexity and disunity. *How much we need the Holy Spirit to foster unity and fervency!*

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14, NKJV).

Intensive prayer units

Church leaders realize the need for unprecedented prayer in such a time as this. *They have officially designated June 29, the opening day of the General Conference session, as a worldwide day of prayer.* Before and afterward during the months of June and July, pastors everywhere are asked to organize local congregations in a prayer summit. We must supplicate the throne of grace for the promised Pentecost so that our work on earth finally will be finished.

Imagine the impact that such a season of corporate prayer will have on local congregations and the entire world church. Plan now to join fellow pastors in making each Seventh-day Adventist local church an intensive prayer unit.

Let it be said of your congregation: "The church was earnestly praying."

Please make your church an intensive prayer unit during June and July, and especially June 29.

Prayer

ADVENTIST EVANGELISTIC
ASSOCIATION presents

TOUCHED

BY THE

Spirit

A SPECIAL SOULWINNING REPORT

Shawn and Jean Boonstra's new-found
joy in the Lord is igniting a fire that is
changing the lives of those around them.

AEA evangelist Leo Schreven smiled real big as he watched Shawn and Jean Boonstra lowered in the waters of baptism during his crusade in Victoria, British Columbia. What an act of victory and faith! Shawn was stepping out to join the Adventist church without the complete understanding of his devoted Presbyterian parents. He was trusting God with his whole future. What vigor and potential this young man had!

That was two years ago. Schreven's smiling even bigger now (is that possible?), as he tells "the rest of the story!" Since his baptism, Boonstra has displayed so much interest and zeal in helping his pastor, Don Stoyanowski, that the British Columbia Conference officially decided to hire him as an associate pastor. Stoyanowski, one of the conference's top pastor-evangelists, has skillfully poured himself into this young man. "Shawn is eager, teachable, and called to the ministry," Stoyanowski reflected.

When the Victoria church recently prepared for another evangelist series, this time by AEA evangelist Dan Bentzinger, Boonstra was in the thick of it. Opening night came and Boonstra could hardly contain his excitement as he welcomed an overflow crowd.

During the days and weeks that followed, Boonstra was out visiting the interested people. Bentzinger, who has taught

—Continued on Page 2

FEATURING HIGHLIGHTS FROM NET '95!

AND

Resources



By Richard Halversen

Evangelist Adventist Evangelistic Association, Adventist Media Center

THE DROP-OUT DILEMMA (Its Causes and Cures)

CHILD NEGLECT AND CHILD ABUSE! The words echo throughout the Justice Building in Washington, and the courts of our cities. Senators, lawyers, churches and concerned parents are horrified and shocked with the child neglect and the child abuse in our land!

However, what is being done to prevent child abuse and child neglect of the newborn babes that are brought into the Adventist Church? Those precious babies who have recently joined the wonderful Adventist Church Family through personal Bible studies and evangelistic meetings need special care.

Let me share with you from a pastor-evangelist viewpoint the causes of this child neglect and abuse—the drop-out dilemma in the Adventist Church. God has a fantastic remedy for the layman, pastor, and evangelist in the area of retention and follow-up!

Notice what Paul the Apostle tells us in 1 Thessalonians 2:7-11: “But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to

be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God... Just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children.” Did you catch the prescription for taking care of the newborn babes? Gentle, caring like a nursing mother, tenderness, exhorting, encouraging, like a father, affectionate, dear! God gives us the perfect remedy for child abuse and child neglect in these verses of scripture.

SEVEN WAYS TO ABORT THE NEW BABY (New converts)

1. Express a negative, careless word or sly remark to the motives, and the knowledge and conversion of a new convert! It can hurt, damage, and abort the new baby in Christ. And maybe lose them for eternity!!
2. Making pop visits without prior notice.
3. Criticizing new converts for the way they dress, eat and worship the Lord. Remember it is not a check-list religion!
4. Overload the new convert with a list of do's and don'ts. (Maybe pushing your own individual set of standards).
5. Making negative comments about the new convert's last church, what they have in their home or what they don't have!
6. Unfriendliness. (Never speaking to them. Never including them. Treating them as if they don't belong.)
7. Self-righteousness. (Making them feel that you are a better Christian and they will never be able to measure up.)

TEN REMEDIES FOR THE DROP-OUT DILEMMA

1. Be friendly!! Always introduce the new converts to other members of the church family. It is good to get them acquainted with as many church members as possible. Invite them to dinner.
2. Assign spiritual friends.

Plan a sit-down dinner for all the new converts shortly after their baptism. Introduce the new convert to their “Spiritual Friend” at this special dinner. The spiritual friend must be willing to stay very close to the new convert. Be a friend and not a detective! Be an encourager and not a discourager! At the banquet share Mission Spotlight, give short history of the church and its various organizations: General Conference, Union, Conference, the Adventist Media Center and its services, evangelistic teams, television and radio programs, etc. Go over the tithe envelope and what the various offerings are for.

Give a special gift package! It should include a church directory and ministries offered by the church and conference.

It is important to have the banquet decorated nicely. Perhaps hang a big banner saying: “WELCOME TO THE FAMILY OF GOD.”

3. Set up small group ministries (Friendship Circles) and place the new converts in the Friendship Circles.
4. Start a class on Sabbath morning for the new converts only!
5. Make sure all new converts are given a list of various areas in the church which they may have an interest working in: Sabbath School, children's departments, youth, Pathfinders, music, repairs, etc.
6. Put new converts to work right away! Give them a job! Repairs at church, community service, Pathfinders, greeters, special music, church newsletter, social committee, etc. It is vital the new converts feel needed!
7. Train the new converts on “how to share their faith” (discipling).
8. Visitation! It is important for the church family to visit the new converts on a regular basis! Always call on the telephone before you visit.
9. Plan to have a mid-week service on the power of prayer; have a series on prayer and witnessing.
10. Plan to have various social functions for the new members to interact with the church at large.

We must get to know these newborn babies, love them, care for them, and pray for them. If the pressure of the world is not equaled by the love of the church family, the new babies will be aborted—they will die! It is our responsibility to be kind, courteous, and tender-hearted to these new converts.

NET '95: RESULTS

OF THE

Spirit

A Pictorial Story
by Gloria Bentzinger
Adventist Evangelistic
Association

"This series changed my own life.

It helped me to see that the Spirit

desires to do something more

through us than we can ever

imagine. Evangelism drives you to

your knees. It deepens your prayer

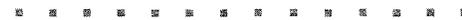
life, enhances your own Bible

study, and gives you a greater

passion for lost people."

—MARK FINLEY

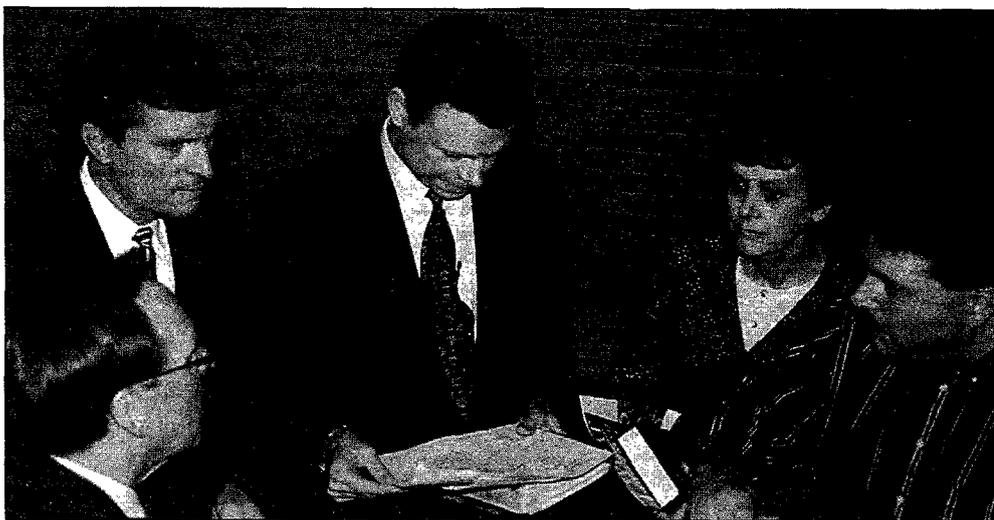
Director/Speaker, It Is Written



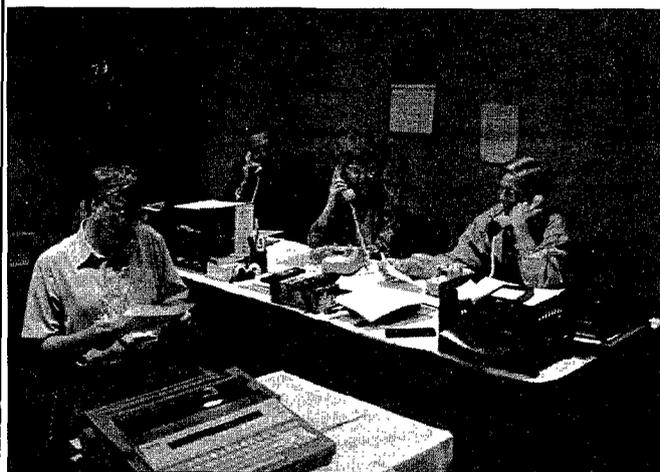


"When the NET '95 planning committee met we scarcely had the faith to ask God for a response as great as the one He has given us. The thousands who have found Christ and been drawn to this Movement, our members whose hearts have been revived, the change in attitude toward evangelism in many of our churches, and the uncounted seeds that have been sown for later reaping are just a few of the tangible gifts for which we praise Him."

—Alfred C. McClure, President
Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America



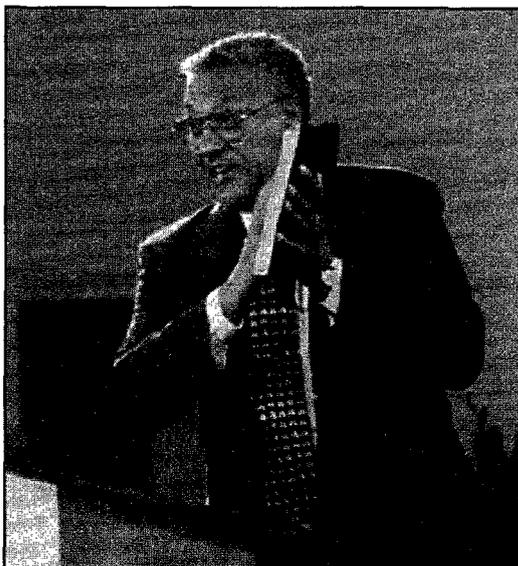
NET '95 was a marvelous blend of talents. Lonnie Melashenko, Voice of Prophecy speaker and host of the Adventist Communication Network, is pictured with Mark and Teenie Finley and team. His voice was heard each evening as he gave the welcome and introduction. Teenie Finley was in charge of the record committee, ushers, and a host of other details. She gave untiringly of her time and talents.



"It is very exciting and moving to see that God has taken our combined efforts and done something so big!" exclaimed Warren Judd, (left) producer for NET '95. When the cameras rolled, it took only 6/10 of a second to send the message 48,000 miles to 800 locations throughout North America.



Countless hours with phones and faxes were spent by Marjorie Gray, head of the information center, and Doug Jansen. Don Gray, (top, rear) coordinator for NET '95 said, "I saw how we were pulled together as a united group working toward one great goal. I have never witnessed such unity in the church during my entire ministry! There is only one explanation, it was the pronounced work of God!"



Drawing on a wealth of evangelistic experience, C.D. Brooks, speaker of the Breath of Life telecast, had a captive audience as he used his gifted approach in leading the question and answer period during the crusade.



NET '95: RESULTS



Mickey, (left) who lives on the East Coast, phoned her sister, Brenda, (right) who lives on the West Coast. "I'm going to some meetings listening to a man named Mark Finley. Have you ever heard of him?" There was an explosion of excitement over the long distance lines as they discovered that each had been attending the meetings and both were being baptized! Mickey has been unable to have a baby. For nine years she had been told she could never become pregnant, and had just come back from the doctor again confirming the bad news. After attending the meetings, accepting Christ and the invitation to follow Him, she went to the doctor again and was told she WAS expecting! After her baptism she went in for an ultrasound and discovered SHE'S EXPECTING TWINS!

"You don't know me because I haven't been turning in my name, but I want to be baptized!" Pastor Derrick Nichols (pictured) of the West Toronto Church in Canada received five such phone calls during NET '95. When he visited them, they had a clear understanding of the truth from Finley's preaching. "NET '95 revived me," Nichols reflected. "There were 500 attending each evening. We've had many baptisms, and there was a tremendous renewal among our members."



A contagious evangelistic spirit fills the Altamonte Springs Church in Florida. The congregation is opening with another evangelistic crusade three months after closing NET '95! This family represents many that were baptized by Pastor Ron Bentzinger as a result of NET '95.



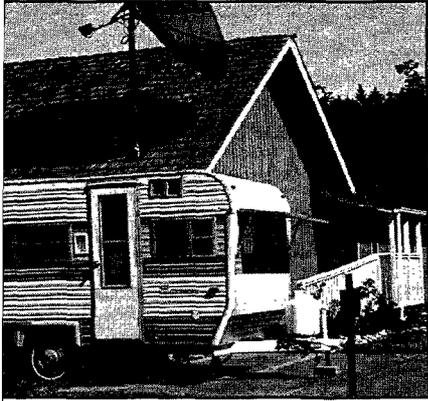
The truth about Jesus must be so great that people will do anything to come! When NET '95 began, this guest from the community came on his motorcycle. Later, members noticed that he was riding his bicycle. Don Howell lived five miles away and was riding his bike because his motorcycle had broken down and he had no car. Later, he came with roller skates on! He rode the bus as far as it would take him, then skated the one and a half miles to the church so that he could take in the meeting!

Richard and Vicki Jones' marriage had fizzled to the point they were leading separate lives, yet living on the same property. Richard lived in a cabin on their land, while Vicki lived in the house, and they each drove separate vehicles. They started attending NET '95 coincidentally on different nights, so neither knew the other was going. Then one night they appeared in the lobby of the little church almost at the same time and the greeter introduced them to one another. "Yeah, I know her," Richard muttered, "she's my wife!" The Holy Spirit used NET '95 to renew their marriage and they were happily baptized together.



David Jones, Jr., son of the It Is Written telecast producer David Jones, Sr. was baptized by Pastor Rob Randall at the Finleys home church in Southern California.

Spirit



Tucked away in the San Juan Islands off the coast of Washington is this little church with a satellite dish almost bigger than the church! Lay pastor, Christopher Donovan (who lives in the trailer parked by the church) reports that four interests came every night, along with three members. Pastor Hal Gates already baptized several during his monthly visits to the Friday Harbor church and more are scheduled.



Roses in a Pamper! Harold and Marlene Schmidt are proud grandparents that kept their baptismal roses fresh Sabbath afternoon until returning home by moistening a Pamper from their daughter's diaper bag! The handbill for NET '95 showed up the day they had spent all morning praying that God would lead them to a church. The church in Vernon, British Columbia had baptisms eight Sabbaths in a row! Five of these people had no previous contact with Adventists and were praying to find a church family when the brochure arrived.

"I had my name taken off the church books over 20 years ago," recalls Martha Quirk,

switchboard operator of Jellico Community Hospital in Tennessee. "I heard every one of Mark Finley's messages. The ones I couldn't attend my Dad taped for me." Her dad, Jack King, was an assistant administrator of the Adventist hospital 20 years ago. Now he, along with the hospital staff and the loving little church family are glowing with pride. Martha's come home! "I knew it was time—I couldn't wait any longer," Martha cried in a recent interview. At her baptism Pastor John Jehle lovingly told her, "God never stopped loving you all these years."



Ed Compton is a traveling salesman who watched Mark Finley in eight different locations!

He phoned one church and asked, "Are you having a meeting tonight?" He arrived to find people sitting in a circle on the stage doing a family planning seminar. "I want to hear Mark Finley!" he exclaimed. They pointed to the balcony. There was a man sitting with headphones on recording that night's message to be shown the following night. Ed raced up the stairs, wanting to hear that night's message on recognizing cults. Since there was only one set of headphones, the deacon handed them to Ed and said, "When you're all done just make sure you turn off the power and lock the church door." Ed and his wife Erlena would talk long distance every night after she got home from the Chattanooga crusade. He would pack his Bible with him every week as he headed out for his trips. They were submersed together in baptism the last night of Finley's crusade in Chattanooga. "We feel so happy to have this relationship with Jesus Christ," they shared. "And I'm totally amazed by the attitude of people from church to church," Ed continued. "They were all so friendly!" The Comptons were among the 275 baptized in the Chattanooga area.



Sylvester Case, pastor of the Aurora Adventist Church east of Denver, Colorado has created a corps of nurturing couples in his congregation that keep

contact with the people who have been baptized. Comments from new members include "I can't believe how welcomed I feel in the Adventist church," "I don't detect any phoniness," "I love the sense of belonging and how special I'm made to feel." He reports strong church support during NET '95 and many baptisms. "This message hasn't lost any of its power," Case stated. "Public evangelism proves it every time. Evangelists make people proud of our heritage and beliefs!"

LOVE
CLOSES
THE
BACK
DOOR

Families who united with the Adventist church share how they accepted the Message and what prompted them to become active, growing and contributing members.

**STAN & BARBIE
SILVA**
Baptized Feb. 13, 1994



Our marriage ceremony was preformed in the baptistry! I had been going to a Christian Fellowship church and Barbie had previously been an Adventist, but had fallen away. We were living together, and many times Barbie and I had argued about Saturday being the Sabbath. I could see the texts, but it just wasn't clear. Then we got a brochure in the mail with a large King Tut that caught my attention. We started attending Dan Bentzinger's lectures and enjoyed it so much we kept coming every night. When Dan talked about the Sabbath, it suddenly became very clear to me. I knew I must follow Jesus' example. Barbie and I were convicted that we should follow Jesus in all areas of our lives,

and that it was wrong for us to be living together. We committed our lives to each other and the Lord by a wedding and baptism preformed at the same time. The church decorated the baptistry with flowers and candles. After Dan presented the lecture that evening, the church surprised us with a wedding reception. Every Sabbath people would come up to us and greet us by name. Families started inviting us to their homes. There were different meals and social outings like hikes that really made us feel a part of the church family. Barbie had wanted to move our membership to another nearby Adventist church after our baptism because the services there were more contemporary. But after all the love displayed by our new church family, I told her, "I'm not moving my membership from here! This is my family!" She agreed. Now, after giving Bible studies and seeing two baptized as a result, I want to help expand God's kingdom as much as I can. I'm now in training with a conference program doing Bible work and soon will be a Bible worker for my conference in this program. Recently we moved our membership to the church where Barbie and I are doing Bible work but last week we went back to our home church for a visit. There was the baptistry with all of its memories. There was our church family with hugs of welcome. I leaned over to Barbie and said, "It's great to be back home!"

KENNETH & DORIS LEIRD

Profession of Faith
Oct. 1, 1994



We heard about Richard Halvorsen's crusade in the mail and on TV. We were very strong Baptists. I (Doris) took my little boys to Sunday School and church faithfully, and raised them in the large Baptist church where all my family and friends were. I had been a member of that church for 37 years when we started attending Richard Halvorsen's meetings. It was a big step for us to leave the Baptist church and join this small Adventist church. My niece is the secretary for the pastor at the

Baptist church—but all of our relatives have given us respect for our convictions. One thing that made the transition easier for us was all of the love and caring we felt from our new Adventist family. One couple called and said 'We want to take you out to eat.' Different ones would give us a hug and say 'We're glad to have you here.' We really enjoyed the dinners each Sabbath when the visitors and new members were always invited to stay by. Everyone has been so warm and friendly.

When my sister died last week, I called our Adventist pastor to go down to the funeral home with us. My sister was a member of the Baptist church longer than I, and there were hundreds of people from my former congregation at her funeral. Yet, I was so grateful that my new Adventist pastor was with me, along with the Baptist pastor and all my friends and relatives from my former congregation. We're thankful God gave us the courage to change denominations when we saw the truth. The loving and caring really helped draw us in."

We had been searching for Bible truth in a number of Protestant churches and were reading through the Book of Revelation for the first time together. As we made our way through, we had no idea what most of the book was saying; in fact Denise was starting to have nightmares about weird and wild beasts! We got discouraged, but God had a plan in His perfect timing! Denise's mom had been studying here and there with some Adventists she knew. When she found out that we were attempting to read Revelation she exclaimed that she knew the right people to help us understand.

A pamphlet arrived in the mail inviting us to a prophecy seminar at the local Seventh-day Adventist Academy about that same time. We decided to go and check it out and never missed a night! We had decided before all this that the Bible would be our guide. During Leo Schreven's seminar we were convicted and were baptized shortly after. Denise's parents were baptized with us. After all of the excitement of the seminar and baptism was over, we were accepted by the Seventh-day Adventist church with open arms. Never before had we felt more comfortable and loved by

a church. The hospitality of the members was outstanding! We were invited to Sabbath dinners/afternoons almost every week for the first couple of months. This helped us to get to know the members and feel truly a part of the family of God. A Sabbath morning class designed for the newly baptized helped us continue to settle into the Bible truth. Now God has called me to share. I am a theology student and will be going through Dan Bentzinger's field school of evangelism. I am excited about doing evangelism as a profession after I finish my education!"

SHAWN & DENISE BRUMMUND

Baptized Dec. 10, 1993



We got a circular in the mail advertising Lyle Albrecht's meetings, and went almost every night. We sat there like a sponge, soaking up everything! It was captivating, fascinating, and convicting. When we heard about the Sabbath we thought, 'How are we going to do this?' Jim had recently started his own business doing replacement windows, and almost all of his estimates were on Friday evenings and Saturdays. We made the big decision to be baptized and follow the Bible. We left our Baptist church of 1,500 members where we were active, to join a much smaller

JIM & DIANA VENABLE

Baptized Feb. 14, 1993



Adventist church. What happened was remarkable! There were consistent requests to work on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays! That was two years ago. Last year was the best financial year for our new business! We have such peace within ourselves, because we now belong to a church that is striving to follow the Bible. I (Diana) come from a Catholic background, and the pastor has been wonderful taking it step by step, inch by inch and breaking it down. He has continued to study Revelation and Daniel, and more people are coming into the church. When we were first baptized different members would invite us to their homes. Being new,

this meant a lot. We now think of our Adventist church as a family. They've put us to work greeting, teaching in vacation Bible schools, and Jim on the Junior Academy board. When Richard Halvorsen came last year to hold meetings, we were delighted to be his head greeters each night. When other families made the decision to step out in faith and keep the Sabbath, we wanted to be there with a hug or a word of encouragement. We are so happy that we became Seventh-day Adventists! We are thrilled that we have been able to bring four new people to this message through baptism, and we are still studying with more!"

BY THE

Spirit



FEATURING Lyle & Peggy Albrecht

Evangelistic Team, Adventist Evangelistic Association, Adventist Media Center

Ed Hofkins was a policeman who served on the same force over twenty years in Anchorage, Alaska. Every day his wife prayed that he would love the same Jesus she did and become a part of God's family. When they moved to Nampa, Idaho, he continued to do some work for the force there. He didn't have to work on Saturday anymore. Then Ed started attending Lyle Albrecht's evangelistic meetings. His heart was stirred and he was convicted to accept Jesus and wanted to join the SDA Church. Suddenly, a week before his scheduled baptism, the police force told him he would have to work on Sabbaths. "If that's the way it is, I am finished," he exclaimed! He was so respected for his convictions that arrangements were made for him to have Sabbaths off. He is one of the 41 people who were baptized in Eagle, Idaho during the crusade.

Rhonda Mathiot, a young adult had recently moved to Idaho from California and was looking for a church family. Previously, she had been a Mormon, but was disillusioned with their teachings. One day she "happened" to stop at the Adventist Book Center to buy a Bible. As she paid for the Bible at the register, she saw a stack of handbills advertising Albrecht's crusade. She ended up attending every night, and was baptized with her son by Pastor Keith Hansen at the end of the series in Eagle, Idaho.

The Albrechts' next series took them

to the Tri-cities Pasco-Kennewick Crusade in Washington. "My heart was so refreshed with the way God worked through a beautiful Adventist widow," Albrecht reflected. Pastor Irwin Kurtz, a retired minister, was studying with several interests at the time of his untimely death. His widow, Millie, continued the studies and brought these people to the crusade. She worked so faithfully every night during the meetings. What a joy it was for Millie to see six people baptized as a result of the studies she had continued after her husband's death! Pastors Darrell Larson and Don Kindig were the host pastors.

Two years ago, Mary Warren called the Moses Lake Adventist church asking, "What do Adventists believe?" She started attending church, but moved to Yakima, Washington. Just prior to Albrecht's series, she moved back to Moses Lake and decided to attend the meetings, never missing one. Excitedly,



"I am so grateful to Jesus for His wonderful love and leading," Mary Warren happily shared. She is pictured with her son, Guy, who was baptized with her, and a granddaughter.

she told her son about the things she was learning and he started attending. It was a thrilling moment when Mary and her son Guy were baptized together in April. Albrecht attributes the many baptisms and church revival to the untiring efforts of Pastor Neil Matson and his wife Diane.



Jasper Sossong (center left) was Lyle Albrecht's sixth grade teacher. He invited these three Bible study interests to come and hear his former student preach and they were baptized in Moses Lake, Washington.

LIVES TOUCHED
BY THE

Spirit



FEATURING Dan & Gloria Bentzinger

Evangelistic Team, Adventist Evangelistic Association, Adventist Media Center

Pat hadn't washed her face in 30 years! As a little girl someone grabbed her around the neck and held her under water nearly to the point of drowning. As a result of this experience Pat has an extreme fear of water to the point for 30 years she would not let water touch her face! She washed her face with a washcloth and her hair standing over a sink. When Pat's teenage daughter witnessed her mom's courage in being baptized, and the peace that she radiated afterward, she asked Gloria Bentzinger to personally catch her up on the truths she had missed, so she could be baptized too. A week later she also was baptized into the Waldorf, Maryland church.

When he was 18 years old, James Wydick, a Methodist, formed a friendship with an Adventist literature evangelist.



"It took more courage for Pat to be immersed for baptism than some of our Russian converts afraid of underground KGB," marveled Bentzinger, at the baptism of Pat and Paul Chase.

He would go with him house to house, just listening, as his friend gave Bible studies. However, James never made any commitment to Jesus or the church. Since that time as a teenager he has journeyed through many denominations, without making a commitment to any because deep in his heart he knew what the Bible taught. Wydick, who works



James Wydick, an official with the Mexican Embassy in Washington D.C. was invited by Dr. Chris Neibauer to the lectures. "I am so happy", said Dr. Neibauer after James was baptized. "Even on the jogging trail God can do His work of bringing people together with a Divine appointment!"

with the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C., is an avid runner. He runs the New York marathon, and many miles weekly in his Washington suburb town of Waldorf, Maryland. In one of his daily runs he met up with another runner, Dr. Chris Neibauer, head elder of the Waldorf Adventist church. A good friendship was born and together they would jog week after week. Neibauer was praying for God to provide a Divine appointment so he could invite James to Bentzinger's crusade. That opportunity came while they were running together. A few weeks later Wydick was baptized during the crusade.

When the Bentzingers went to their next crusade in Victoria, British Columbia, they were welcomed by a group of workers in the church that had done some phenomenal things, previously unheard of in North America. There

had been 250 phone calls for reserved seating tickets and the members, under the lay leadership of Dr. Jim Girard, didn't trust the Canadian postal system to deliver the tickets in time for opening night. In two days they hand delivered all 250 tickets to homes all across the city.

In addition to those that reserved seats, many more came in response to radio, brochure, and personal invitations. Opening night found an overflow crowd of 500 in the Crystal Garden behind the famous Empress Hotel. Fifty people had to stand, and many were turned away because of the crowd. They were told to come back at 9:00 and Bentzinger would preach it again—so he did!

The miracles of Victoria are many. A fashion designer recently moved from London, made her decision and was baptized. A highly successful real estate woman who learned her skills in sales many years ago as a literature evangelist came back to the Adventist church through baptism. Gloria Bentzinger sprained her ankle, but was totally pain-free only when she did her daily visitation. A group of six young adult Adventists came to the Bentzingers asking for information so they could start sharing and giving Bible studies. Dr. Herbe and Carol Domke mailed out personal invitations to hundreds of patients and friends, and were happy to see some baptized. The crusade overflowed with miracle after miracle, and the stories of baptisms and blessings continue under the pastoral leadership of the Stoyanowskis and the Boonstras.



Dr. Jim Girard and his wife, Valerie, were so committed to the crusade that he arranged his schedule to visit interests daily. Girard was also responsible for the prework before the campaign. After being trained in visitation by Bentzinger, and preparing people for baptism on his own, he is even more excited about public evangelism. Since Victoria, he has donated his time and travel to preach in preparation for Bentzinger's opening night.

BY THE

Spirit



F E A T U R I N G
Richard & Mary Halversen
Evangelistic Team, Adventist Evangelistic Association, Adventist Media Center

It all began six months before opening night of the crusade. From the very start of the preparation the key ingredient was "prayer". The Valley View Adventist Church in East Wenatchee, Washington unitedly bathed itself in the ministry of prayer. There were "Prayer Warriors" who spent quality time in prayer six months before the meeting began. They also gathered together before each of the evangelistic meetings, spending 30 minutes praying for the Holy Spirit to be poured out in a marvelous way!

Indeed the Holy Spirit fell upon the church and community in the Upper Columbia Conference. It was seen upon the warm and friendly faces of the greeters who met the visitors at the door each night. It was seen in the fantastic child care, ushering, record-keeping and committees. Miracle after miracle took place because Pastor Joseph Kidder and his church were committed to fulfilling the Gospel Commission.

Twila Spangler was not even a member of the Adventist Church, but was attending. When the meetings started, she volunteered to be a "Prayer Warrior" and to work with the record committee. She came every night and decided to become part of the church family by profession of faith.

Chris and Julie were miracles! They came to the Prophecy Seminar faithfully, even though they lived over

forty-five miles away. There were some nights they couldn't arrange car transportation so they took a bus.

Rick Schultz listened to the message on the cross. He felt the Holy Spirit speaking to him, however he didn't respond when the invitation was given. As he was driving home that evening he could not deny that God's Spirit was still speaking to him. About halfway home, he turned his car around and went back to the church. Finding Halversen still there he said, "I made a mistake! I should have come forward in the call. Can I please be baptized along with my son?"

Another miracle was a whole family who were baptized, consisting of sisters, sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews, daughter and granddaughter, mother and even cousins. All were baptized together.

Byron Allison said he never listens to the radio, but one day he just "happened" to turn it on and hear the ad for Halversen's seminar. "I have to

go to that!" he thought, even though he lived outside of the East Wenatchee area. At the conclusion of the series he decided to be baptized. This was a big step of faith, alone, without the rest of his Catholic family. As a result of his courageous stand, his wife is now attending the follow-up meetings the pastor is conducting on Wednesday nights.

How did so many miracles take place in a small town in Washington State? Halversen feels it's because the pastor and members of the church bathed themselves in prayer. They asked, believed, and expected God to answer their prayers. They prayed long before the crusade, and each night during the series. They pleaded for the Holy Spirit to be poured out. And it was, in a marvelous way!



Byron Allison is one of the 76 baptized into the Valley View Adventist Church. He never listens to the radio, but happened to turn it on just as Halversen's ad was playing.



Chris and Julie Sullivan were married and baptized during Halversen's seminar. Their two children were also dedicated to the Lord.

BY THE

Spirit



FEATURING Leo & Tamara Schreven

Evangelistic Team, Adventist Evangelistic Association, Adventist Media Center

There IS such a place as North Pole, Alaska where civilized homosapiens actually do live, way up North, twelve miles east of Fairbanks, Alaska," report the Schrevens. They described the Fairbanks crusade as incredibly fun and enjoyable with its wilderness, wildlife, rivers and awesome mountains. Petite Tamara shivered as she walked through snow over her head!

Before opening night, flood waters had destroyed several native villages from the north, and flood victims were being housed by the Red Cross in the

auditorium where the Schrevens were to begin! They were basically cancelled out of the hall. Through much prayer and Pastor Jim Kincaid's hard work, God opened a way so the meetings progressed on schedule. The hall was full opening night and all rejoiced!

It was a special joy for the Schrevens to see the hunger for truth. The



Joe Barren, a postal carrier who delivered handbills, attended in Westminster. He got so excited, he called his mom in Ontario, and told her to go to the NET '95 crusade with Mark Finley. They both learned the same truth 3,000 miles apart and were both baptized!



Many young couples were baptized in Westminster. Mike and Jeanne Graham were baptized by Pastor David Ellis. Graham is the manager of the "Tip Top" clothing chain in Canada.

Christensen family drove three hours a night to each meeting. Their children sacrificed a lot to take their stand with mom and dad in the waters of baptism. "I will always treasure the memory of visiting them in their mountain cabin," Leo reflects. "We enjoyed an evening of talking, beautiful scenery, and fellowship together."

Mike and Elizabeth Quinn were also baptized during the crusade in Fairbanks. Mike is one of the few F-16 fighter pilots in the world. Now he wants to set the world on fire with his enthusiasm for Jesus!

Pastor Kincaid reports a strong follow-up program is in place to train and equip new members for service, and to continue to reap more souls.

A few years ago the Westminster Church in Vancouver, British Columbia, burned to the ground. The new building was completed and the opening night had many visitors eager to hear the truth.

Vancouver is proverbial for its European secular culture and is probably one of the most difficult cities to evangelize in North America. Yet with the members utilizing their gifts, making friends for God, and dedicating time to follow up Adventist Media Center interests, the audience grew and God blessed.

There was a young lady who was terribly abused as a child. She had become a prostitute and drug dealer. A caring Christian shared God's love and power. The years of guilt and sin had left a few marks, but the assurance of God's love and forgiveness now makes her face shine!

A former Satanist with tatoos covering his body was led to the crusade. Now he rejoices in the truth!



After driving three hours each night to each meeting, the Christensen family were baptized by Jim Kincaid during the crusade in Fairbanks, Alaska.

NET '95: RESULTS



One windy night in Miami the satellite dish on top of the church was moving so much the view was hardly visible.

Three men spent the evening on the roof holding the dish still and the signal came through perfectly! It was a high day when Finley's Spanish Interpreter, Jaime Castrejon (pictured left), came to witness 50 Miami area baptisms at the Hialeah Spanish Church. Suddenly, the imaginary crowd he had been preaching to each night was a joyful throng! Pastor Orlando Lopez reports that 120 of the 400 attending each night were visitors.



Ray Selvig (center with certificate) remembers going to church with Barbara Aufderhar (left of Ray), her brother Gary, and her folks, Bob and Ruth Salter, when he was just a boy. Their care and concern for him has remained in his memory. When his wife was suddenly disabled from an accident, Barbara reached out to her cousin, Ray, through the mail and over the phone. She encouraged him to take the Voice of Prophecy Bible Lessons, and he eagerly completed two courses. Barbara phoned the pastor, Phil White, and Ray was invited to church. When NET '95 started, Ray attended and was so eager that he managed to get all the future nights' scripts. He read them all in two days, continued coming and would comment, "He's saying exactly what is on his script!" When Ray decided to be baptized he said, "I really have no family. I want Glenn and Barbara Aufderhar and the Salter family to be there." Many of the extended family arranged their schedules to share in his joy. In his last letter to the VOP, Ray shared that he never could have made it through many difficulties without the loving support of his cousin, Barbara. He praises God that she sent the first VOP Bible lesson to him. "It's more than the courses," he wrote. "It's what they are—the key to open the door to Christ."



NET '95 was an electronic maze of technical skills and talent. Yet satellites and technology alone are not enough.

Video tape and transponders can never replace the warmth of live and loving Christians."

—Glenn Aufderhar, Chairman

Executive Committee, NET '95

Spirit



"Let's go back, PLEASE!" Francisco and Jason Olivera begged their mom to keep bringing them to the meetings because they enjoyed Marge Gray's Good News Kid's Lessons. The whole family came out each night because of these two boys—they loved the printed activities at the end of each lesson. Bob Folkenburg, Jr., pastor of the Orlando Central church in Florida, reports that all four in the family decided to be baptized. Associate pastor David Stunkard ran the program for kids ages 10-15.



Dear daddy,

I have decided to give my life to Jesus and be baptised and that sermon that Mark Finley preached Saturday night really touched my heart.

Love
Magen

Marjorie Read was an exhausted pastor's wife at the conclusion of the crusade. Not only had the family attended nightly but she also was the crusade treasurer. In her heart she wondered if all the energy expended and the money spent on NET '95 was really worth it. When she found this note on her husband's desk the day after the campaign ended, her eyes filled with tears. "It brought it to a very personal level," she acknowledged. "It made everything worthwhile."



Their church hadn't had a baptism in five years! The little congregation of less than 30 members had just about given up hope of growing their church. NET '95 was a test of whether to continue the work in Thomasville, North Carolina, or sell the church and join with several nearby congregations. On opening night 107 non-members showed up at the small conference room rented for four nights at a local motel. The members were so excited, there wasn't even room for everyone! While Finley preached, an elder went to his print shop and printed directions for the crowd to move the next night to the church fellowship hall, which could accommodate the crowd. The following evening 90 interests showed up at the new location. Decisions for baptism have been made and a baptistry installed in the church! Tom Hall, lay businessman from Greensboro, North Carolina, conducted a Breathe Free Plan for those planning baptism. "Surely God has answered the prayers of this church!" exclaimed C.L. White, interim pastor (pictured).

THE
RESULTS
OF THE
SPIRIT...

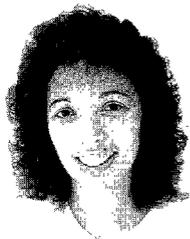
EVERLASTING
JOY
AND
UNEQUALED
HAPPINESS!



Scatter His love and enjoy it!

Mary Barrett

How should pastoral spouses deal with physical and spiritual weariness?



Mary Barrett, a
pastor's wife, writes
from Cambridgeshire,
England.

It's Sabbath. What a marvelous opportunity for a minister's wife to scatter His love. Let's see how she does it.

She awakes at 6:00 a.m. and drags herself out of bed. She had stayed up till midnight finishing her Sabbath School program for the children's department.

She hurries to the kitchen. It's a bring-and-share lunch today, and she needs to put the finishing touches to her contributions. She also needs to thumb through several storybooks and find a children's story for the divine service. She knows she should have done it before, but this week has been so busy.

It's now 8:00 a.m. The family needs to leave in a half hour, as their church is quite a distance from their home.

She is stressed. The soup she took out of the freezer last night didn't defrost properly, so she struggled with blending pieces of ice. On the kitchen counter she stacks the six dishes she has made and wonders why she does most of the "bringing-and-sharing."

She grabs a bowl of cereal and a hot drink to take to her bedroom. She'll gobble them down while getting dressed and fixing her children's hair.

It's now 8:20 a.m. Her breakfast is sitting on the dressing table. Her hair is a total mess, and the children are arguing.

She is nearly ready, only her stockings to put on. Just then her husband walks in. He tells her of the article he has read in *Ministry* dealing with the importance of "in-depth" conversations in the pastoral marriage. Since

he is ready and has seven minutes to spare, he wonders if there is anything she would like to share?

She glares at him—all week long she has been trying to have an "in-depth" conversation with her husband. But every time she tried, he was either immersed in a thick theological book or on the phone or out! In annoyance she tugs extra hard at one of her stockings and puts a run in them! They were the only ones that match her dress.

In a frenzy of panic she rips off her clothes and rummages through her wardrobe. Her other two Sabbath outfits are at the cleaners. She has no choice but to wear what she wore last week and hope no one will notice. She can't find the shoes to match her outfit. The children used them several days earlier to play hide-and-seek and have forgotten where they hid them!

At 8:45 a.m. they are finally in the car. Her husband, who hates to be late for church, is no longer in the mood for an "in-depth" conversation; the children are arguing yet again. Her breakfast is still sitting on the dressing table.

It's 11:15, Sabbath School is over, and she is exhausted! Twenty-five children to battle with on her own, and they won the battle! Just as she is about to tell the children to go to divine service, a concerned mother takes her aside. She is worried that the pastor's wife is teaching the children "new theology" when she asks them to pretend that they are part of the Bible story. While the pastor's wife affirms her belief in the "old theology," the kids run riot.

Divine service becomes yet another fight. She and her four children sit in the front row. All eyes watch as her eldest daughter suddenly develops a runny nose, and, of course, has no tissues. The middle children erupt into a fit of giggles, and the youngest starts to cry because he has left his favorite Sabbath book at home. She has a headache and thinks of her breakfast sitting on the dressing table.

During the service the organist suddenly declares she cannot play the second hymn. Not to be daunted, her husband volunteers her expertise on the organ. Struggling with the four sharps and three different time signatures, she thinks of the “in-depth” conversation she will have with her husband at the first possible opportunity.

Lunch is a whirlwind of noise and confusion. Her youngest declares in the loudest voice he can muster that the elder’s wife’s food is “disgusting” (his favorite phrase at the moment!); her eldest is still blowing her nose; and the middle children have now progressed to a fighting match. Ten church members come to have “in-depth” conversations with her, and all she wants to do is eat.

It is now 3:30 p.m., time for AYS. Her children are restless, and her head stills hurts. She decides to take refuge in the vestry before going to the program. However, the other parents think she is holding a separate program for the younger children. Before she can protest, 12 youngsters are left with her.

It is now time to go home. She and the children pile into the car for the long journey home. However, they all scramble out again when her husband appears with two church members who need a lift home. Of course, they live in opposite directions. Squeezed into the back seat with two children balancing on her knees (one with an elbow stuck in her ear and the other tugging on her neck), she wonders if this is what “scattering His love” is all about?

Finally at 11:00 p.m. she crawls into bed. Just as she is about to greet the “land of oblivion” her husband stomps into the bedroom and thumps on the light. He has just had an “in-

depth” conversation with the elder who questions his calling to the ministry! Knowing that the peace of sleep has been swiped out of her grasp, she pulls herself up into a sitting position and acts as counselor to an agitated husband! Some time later her head touches the pillow once again. Closing her eyes, she spies her breakfast still sitting on the dressing table!

Is that what “scattering His love” represents to you—endless giving? If so, you are on the road to spiritual weariness, resentment, and bitterness.

Jesus shows the way

Jesus spent every day of His life scattering His Father’s love. He too struggled with endless giving, and yet He handled it a lot better than we do. Jesus put three principles into action from which we too can benefit.

1. *Find rest in God’s love.* Matthew 14 describes a typical day in the

We pray and dash off before the Lord has a chance to say anything.

life of Jesus. Read it and jot down the stresses and strains He contended with. Note in particular verse 23, where it says Jesus sent everyone away and spent time alone with God. That was Jesus’ first place of rest—quiet time with His Father. “No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer! How constant was His communion with God.”¹

Repeatedly the Bible tells us that Jesus retired to quiet, solitary places. There He found rest in sharing the burdens that emotionally drained Him, and there He let God minister to Him by listening to His voice.

Do we? For many of us our “quiet” times are far from silent. Amid the hustle and bustle of our noisy homes we skim over verses in our Bible, pray at the speed of an electric typewriter,

and dash off before the Lord has a chance to say anything to us!

Rather, spend some quality time with God. Find a little “nook” in your home where you will be undisturbed. Open yourself to the voice of God. “Be still” and absorb the presence, the peace, the tranquility, and the strength of God.

If you cannot do that in your home, seek out other places where you will be able to listen to God’s voice. One of our church members always leaves for work earlier than she needs to. On the way she parks her car in a parking lot and sits with God in quietness. Listening to God as Jesus did will revitalize your life and soothe your weariness and tiredness.

2. *Find rest with each other.* Finding rest or refreshment in our relationships with each other will also help us to scatter His love more effectively.

We all know how Jesus loved to go to the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. They represented a group of people with whom He could shake off His sandals, curl up in an easy chair, and be Himself. As ministers’ wives we too need a place where we do not fulfill any role or demands, but where we can be ourselves. We need to nurture a group of friends with whom we can laugh, share positive and negative experiences, be enriched and challenged spiritually.

In his book *Restoring Your Spiritual Passion*, Gordon Macdonald² tells us that a spiritual support group is vital to keep afresh our desire to share Christ.

In the district where my husband and I minister now, the pastoral families come together on a regular basis, and it is great! Not only do we (including our children) enjoy the socializing, but we uplift one another in prayer. This is a great source of strength. If perhaps there is no one in your area whom you can relate to in this way, then ask God to provide for your need. He truly will!

3. *Find rest within yourself.* Jesus also showed us how to “scatter His love” by taking time out for Himself.

In Matthew 14 we see Jesus dismissing the crowds. When I first read

this I was shocked. Here Jesus had a group of people to whom He could have continued to minister and perhaps made more converts, but He sent them home! This teaches me that at times we need to learn to say No! Jesus did not urge upon us the necessity of ceaseless toil. "It is not wise to be always under the strain of work and excitement, even in ministering to men's spiritual needs; for in this way personal piety is neglected, and the powers of mind and soul and body are overtaxed."³

We cannot control many things in life, but we can control what we say yes and no to. It is probably the hardest thing for us as pastoral wives to do because we feel we "ought" to do so much. But it is essential to prevent spiritual weariness.

Because we as women tend to assume the role of nurturing, to give of ourselves to others, we need to learn how to be kind to ourselves. We should have a time each day when we can do something that we want—read, sew, exercise, learn a new craft, or meet a friend. I find that when I take time to do something I want for myself, I am better able to meet the needs of others.

Putting it into practice

It's Sabbath. What a marvelous opportunity for a typical minister's wife to scatter His love. Let's see how she does it using the principles we have talked about.

She awakes at 6:00 a.m. feeling refreshed because she went to bed at a reasonable hour. She goes to her "special place" and spends time with God. In the quietness of the early hours she listens for God to speak with her. She shares with Him all her responsibilities as a pastor's wife. It has been a hectic week, but the Lord helped her find the materials she needed to make her Sabbath school class interesting. Her children helped with the preparations for the bring-and-share lunch. Yesterday they had fun together as one mixed a salad dip and the other chopped vegetables. During the week she had asked someone else to do the children's story.

By 7:45 a.m. her hair is washed and dried and she has eaten her breakfast. By

8:30 a.m. they are in the car and drive to church without the usual stress and strain.

Church is not such a drain on her emotionally and physically. She is learning to express her needs and kindly asks the church members to help with her responsibilities. Some do not like it, but in her quiet times with God she listens to the love and acceptance that He has for her and is less concerned about others' opinion of her.

She and her husband no longer try to squeeze in "in-depth" conversations. Knowing the importance of their relationship to each other and their children, one evening a week is set aside for them.

In church they sit in the front seat, but as she does not feel "drained," she can deal with the usual problems without too much hassle! At lunch she happily listens to the church members' problems. Regular "time-out" in the week means that she is better able to be responsive to the needs of others.

In the afternoon she takes her children for a walk. She finds it restful, and her youngsters enjoy it. Yes, there are some who criticize her for not being at the afternoon programs, but she is now confident enough to say no. Her spiritual group has been praying that she will be strong enough to do what is best for her family.

She and the children have a picnic supper in the park. When it's time to go home, her husband has only one church member in the car. After the last dissembler they have discussed how impractical it is to chauffeur two extra people.

On reaching home, they all eat together. After the pressure of a busy Sabbath, they try to have some fun together. She also phones a member of her spiritual support group. She has decided to phone a member once a month. As they share the day's events, laugh, and promise to pray for each another, she feels refreshed and rested.

She puts the children to bed. As usual, there is the late-night call from the elder, and she provides the "listening ear" for her husband. But she doesn't resent it as much as she used to. She has found "rest" in her friendship with God, she has found "rest" with her special friends, and she has found "rest" within herself. As she switches off the light to go to sleep she notices there is no breakfast sitting on the dressing table! ■

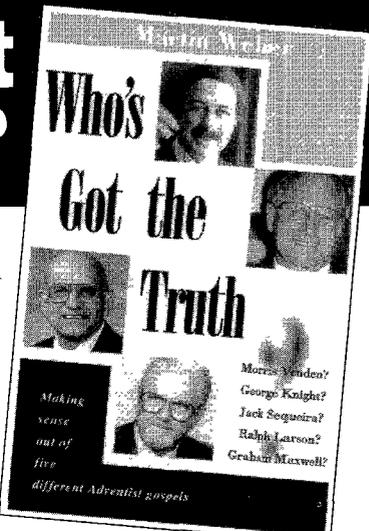
¹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 362.

² Nashville: Oliver-Nelson Books, 1986.

³ White, p. 362.

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The circle of blame

**Edward
Motschiedler**

**Instead of playing
the blame game, try
solving the problem.**



Edward Motschiedler, D.Min., is the president of the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Mount Vernon, Ohio.

When an organization is struggling, people look for someone to blame. This is true whether the organization is the automobile industry, the government, your favorite sports team, or the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The need to blame someone usually creates a *circle of blame*. In this circle of blame everyone blames someone else for the problem.

Consider your favorite sports team. If the team is not winning, the fans blame the owner for being more concerned with making money than having a winning team. The owner blames the manager for not getting the best performance from the players. The manager blames the players for collecting big salaries and then not hustling on the field. The players blame the owner for not paying high enough salaries to keep talented players on the team. The owner then blames the city for not building a new stadium that would attract more fans and provide more money to hire better players. The circle of blame is now complete. The team is still losing, but at least everyone has picked someone to blame.

A circle of blame is present in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

Areas of concern

The church in North America is struggling. It has some key areas of concern:

1. *Growth.* Anglo-American churches are not growing.
2. *Stewardship.* In an increasing

number of conferences, tithes are not keeping up with inflation.

3. *Youth.* Our teenagers have an unacceptably low level of denominational loyalty and faith maturity.¹

4. *Church attendance.* On an average Sabbath only about 30 to 40 percent of members attend worship services. Many Adventist churches face a "missing generation" problem, with few 18-35-year-olds in attendance.

5. *"Laodicean" condition.* It is difficult to find people who will assume church leadership positions, become involved in personal evangelism, attend prayer meeting, or even arrive at Sabbath school on time.

6. *Vision.* Church leaders seem unable to communicate clearly their vision for the church, thus allowing "independent ministries" to project their vision and mission and draw support from church members.

These and other concerns have set in motion within the Adventist Church the circle of blame. After all, someone must be responsible for the problems so visible in the church. Who is to blame?

Who is to blame?

Church members often blame the pastors for the problems in their church. They complain that pastors visit members too infrequently, baptize people before they are ready, and preach boring sermons or, even worse, "new theology." They also gripe that pastors lack organization, manipulate the board, and do not listen. Members also blame denominational leaders.

The conference wastes money, and there are too many layers of church organization. Church administrators are not "spiritual" and not caring about small struggling churches. Members of a church in a multichurch district often complain, "If the conference would make us a one-church district, we would then grow."

Pastors can also become involved in the circle of blame. They might blame members for not giving adequate time or money in the support of the local church. Some may feel that members are more secular than spiritual, and that the local church cannot change until members change their hearts and attitudes. Many pastors believe that the denomination's tithing system takes so much money out of the local church that there is little money for the church's local mission. Some feel that the conference's boarding academy and the union's college require so much money that there is no adequate support for the local church school. They believe that increased funds at the local level would make stronger churches and church schools. If members and denominational leaders would only change, the pastor could then be successful.

Conference leaders may also find it easy to cast blame. "If pastors would boldly teach and preach stewardship, tithes would increase." "If pastors would spend less time coddling members and more time giving Bible studies, baptisms would increase." "If pastors visited members more often and preached better sermons, spirituality and church attendance would increase." Conference leaders may also blame higher levels of organization: tithes percentages sent to the union and General Conference do not leave adequate resources for a strong conference program.

The General Conference can blame local conferences and members in North America for being self-centered and not having a worldview. The union conference can blame local conference leadership for not having strong programs of evangelism that would increase membership and tithes.

And the circle of blame keeps going.

Breaking the circle

But the circle needs to be broken if the church is to grow numerically, spiritually, and financially. There is a difference between blame casting and problem solving. In the circle of blame there is far more blame casting than problem solving. When church members, pastors, or administrators complain among themselves as to who is at fault for their problems, they are casting blame. When they discuss their concerns with those who can do something about them, problem solving can begin. Here are seven principles that can help break the circle.

1. *The problem needs to be recognized for what it is.* The circle of blame destroys morale. When church members tell each other that the pastor is to blame for the church's problems, should they be surprised when people become discouraged and stop attending? How can pastors, at a board meet-

What part of the problem am I responsible for? What can I do to help bring change?

ing, criticize conference leadership and policy and at the same time expect board members to be supportive of the conference? Statements of blame build distrust and cause people to become discouraged about their church. Blaming also builds hopelessness. It seems as though nothing can change. The problem is someone else's fault and beyond one's power to change.

The problem of blaming others is not new. Adam blamed Eve and God. Eve blamed the serpent. Ellen White states: "The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies; it was indulged by our first parents as soon as they yielded to the influence of Satan, and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Instead of humbly confessing their sins, they try to shield themselves by casting the blame upon others."²

2. *Assuming responsibility helps greatly.* In the circle of blame, no one is willing to assume responsibility, because the problem is seen as someone else's fault. For example, many churches have few 18-35-year-olds in attendance. Several reasons are given:

a. The pastor's sermons are not interesting to this age group.

b. The church members are too judgmental.

c. The conference does not hire enough youth pastors.

d. The church schools and academies do not adequately teach commitment to the doctrines of the church.

e. The youth and young adult publications are too worldly and secular.

Searching this list for someone to blame does not solve the problem. The questions that need asking are: What part of the problem am I responsible for? What can I do to help bring change? Local church leaders could discuss at church board meetings what would attract more young people. Pastors could prayerfully consider how they might better relate to this age group. Conferences could endeavor to strengthen conference-wide youth and young adult programs. Educators could reexamine the role schools play in faith development of young people. The editors of the youth and young adult publications could review their policies.

People may need to confess their sins. They need to assume responsibility for the portion of the problem they can change. The local member cannot change the percentage of tithes sent to the General Conference, and the General Conference president cannot change the amount of time spent by members in personal evangelism. However, individuals can bring about change in their own area of influence.

3. *Local members can change the local church.* One thing they can do is assume more administrative and nurturing responsibilities of the church. This would free the pastor to spend more time in evangelism, lay training, sermon preparation, and crisis intervention. Members who believe that administration and nurture are roles of

the pastor need to realize that there is a denomination about our size that has no paid pastors. In the Mormon Church all pastors are nonpaid laymembers. These members do all the visiting, preaching, and evangelism, as well as handling the administrative functions of the church. The preaching pastors, the youth pastors, the visiting pastors, the administrative pastors are all laypeople.

Laypeople should also recognize that the local church is no stronger than the spiritual condition of its members. Each member might ask, "If all members spent as much time in Bible study and prayer as I do, what kind of church would we have? If every member gave of their time, money, and talent as I do, how strong would the church be?" Examining our shortcomings and recognizing God's power to strengthen us could lead to a mighty revival in our hearts. Seeking to find the shortcomings of others leads only to church conflict and bitter feelings.

4. *A rediscovered vision of the world church and its mission would strengthen the denomination.* Criticism of denominational leaders has caused some to decrease their support of the tithing fund and mission offerings. Many members have little information about the world church and may not have a clear vision of its global work. If each family would invest in a subscription to the *Adventist Review* they could keep current on world church news as well as faith and doctrine.

The world church is heavily dependent upon the tithing and liberal giving of the North American division members. The early Adventist pioneers had a vision of a world church, and that dream has become reality because of strong financial support from the North American church in years past. This support is dwindling. When members stop returning tithing or divert their tithing for other projects, the ability to take God's last warning message to the "uttermost part of the earth" is decreased.

Every local church has problems. The problems can be solved only as laity and pastors become partners together in prayer and ministry.

5. *Pastors can play a major role in breaking the circle of blame.* The pas-

tor has great power in the pulpit. Preaching can change the church. Preparing a powerful message from the Lord must become a top priority for pastors. Pastors should also be involved in training laypersons in visitation, preaching, administration, and other aspects of the local ministry. Ellen White counsels: "The ministers are hovering over churches which know the truth while thousands are perishing out of Christ. If the proper instruction were given, if the proper methods were followed, every church member would do his work as a member of the body. . . . They should be taught that unless they can stand alone, without a minister, they need to be converted anew, and baptized anew. They need to be born again."³

Pastors can influence the giving patterns of their members and thus the financial strength of the denomination. They can educate members about God's call to return tithing and offerings, and why these funds should be sent to the conference. They are not responsible for whether members give or not, but they are responsible for teaching principles of giving. Some members are so heavily in debt that they feel they cannot give tithing or offerings. Teaching classes in financial management or giving personal financial counseling could be time well spent by the pastor.

6. *Administrators constantly need to evaluate the role of structure and mission.* Administrators should honestly scrutinize the contribution their level of organization is actually making to the mission of the church. In every organization there is the temptation for top administrators to devote their time to the preservation of the institution. Often anyone questioning the "institution" is seen as being disloyal and a troublemaker. Administrators must not only allow but encourage questions about the "institution." No institution or level of organization should be seen as untouchable.

Administrators must recognize that money spent for administrative costs is money that cannot be spent at the local church. Every salary, trip, perk, and meeting is taking funds from the place where ministry and evangelism

take place. Money spent to maintain conference or union institutions cannot be spent again.

Each conference president needs to ask whether every employee in the conference office is essential for carrying out the mission of the church. Conference administrators and lay leaders must be brave enough to examine whether every conference needs a boarding academy. Union presidents should be willing to discuss openly whether the North America Division really needs 9 colleges and two universities, and whether operating all these institutions is good stewardship of our limited resources. And do we need nine union and/or more than 50 conference offices and staffs to serve North America?

Conference and union presidents could also review the time they spend on issues relating to other levels of church organization. Looking at my 1994 calendar, I discovered that I scheduled 17 days for the two hospital boards I serve on, 28 days for various union meetings, and 18 days for North American Division, General Conference, and ASI meetings. This makes a total of 63 days that I am not directly working on advancing the mission of Ohio Conference churches. Some pastors spend many hours serving on committees of the conference. Union presidents spend much of their time serving on institutional boards and other committees of the North American Division. Certainly organizations would be better served if its leaders had more time to spend on local problems.

7. *Dialogue with each other is essential.* The circle of blame cannot be broken by talking about each other. However, talking with each other can break this vicious circle. We must kindly dialogue with those we have previously seen as causing the problem. Together we can break the cycle of blame and bring revival and new confidence in God's church. ■

¹ Janet Leigh Kangas and Roger L. Dudley, "How Adventist Teenagers Perceive Their Church," *Ministry*, October 1989, pp. 4-7.

² Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1958), p. 58.

³ ———, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 381.

Jewish Christians and Jewish culture

S. R. Howard

Are Jewish Christians and Jewish culture incompatible?



S. R. Howard, a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, is the president of Sabbath House Ministries, Thorsby, Alabama.

In its haste to convert the world, the church has not had too much success with the Jews. At various times Christians have sought to save the Jews by embracing them, forcing them, or even killing them. Even when they are converted, the Jews are expected to conform to, and blend with, the standards of the church.

This raises some basic questions: Can Jews retain their culture and customs and at the same time be Christian? Should the Christian message be culture bound, or should it be all things to all people? How can Christian missions transfer the Christian message to other cultural forms?

Ideally, the Christian message should be culture-free. Jesus asks us to come as we are, but often the missionary seems to say, "You can come, if you talk like me, dress like me, sing like me, and pray like me. If you will accept my value system as yours, then you will receive salvation."

"Christianity," says Samuel Garcia, "is frequently presented in missionary religions by foreigners . . . often in a language foreign to the one being addressed and, what is worse, in a Western dress which has very little in common with the person to whom the message is directed."¹

This situation is particularly untenable when we know that the Bible presents God as one who communicates Himself to humanity within the context of its varied cultures. God's revelation to Israel was within her culture. Christ ministered in a manner that people understood. Likewise we must allow God

to speak today in our culture and language, and this implies every culture and language, not just the Western or American.

God works through all cultures

Without consulting the Western believer, God can reach so as to work through any culture any place in the world. Charles Kraft defines the issue well: "If God can work in the milieu he finds man in and uses his culture bounds to communicate his message, then why can we not as God's messengers do the same thing? Many Western missionaries fail to recognize that Western culture is but one of the many usable by God."² That means "non-Western converts must be allowed to develop their own type of cultural Christianity," just as Western Christians have adopted the message that originally came in Hebrew garb.³

If we are committed to Scriptures, then the only important change we need to accept is the one that comes by accepting Jesus as the Christ. If we insist on changing our culture as well, then should we not all be bound by the cultural setting of the Hebrews/Jews? Absurd, of course! Then why expect other cultures to conform with what we have established as cultural norms?

Consider Kraft again: "The message of the Judaizers was repudiated in the first century. Its twentieth-century counterpart must be repudiated by the twentieth-century church. The same freedom must be allowed to Africans and other non-Western converts to Christianity, to develop non-Western styles of Christianity, as were allowed our Roman and

Greek forebears to develop non-Jewish types.”⁴

I agree with Kraft on the need to disown our archaic thoughts and develop more on the lines that Christ Himself was not only willing to, but able to work with. Our spiritual roots are not in Greco-Roman world, but in Jesus Christ and the Hebrew heritage. Let us not forget that the Gentile Christians are grafted into the Vine. This is not to insinuate that Gentile Christians are not partakers with Christ in all things, for all that accept Him “are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29, NIV).

A Christian synagogue

But the real issue today is this: Can the Gentile church that is the dominant force in Christianity today feel secure enough to allow the development within it of a strong Hebrew-Christian church/synagogue? Or should a person or group be forced to march lockstep to heaven according to White Anglo-Saxon Protestant customs and culture?

Ellen White states: “The work Christ came to do in our world was not to create separating barriers and constantly thrust upon the people the fact that they were wrong. . . . Nor does Paul proclaim to the Jews a Messiah whose work is to destroy the old dispensation, but a Messiah who came to develop the Jewish economy in accordance with the truth.”⁵

I once asked Gottfried Oosterwal, the foremost Adventist missiologist, why Jews are expected to surrender their culture when they become Christians. Dr. Oosterwal felt that the Christian church has not played its role sufficiently well, and there is the tendency to blame the Jews for the death of Christ. Moreover, the church has not really done anything meaningful for the Jews. “I do not see,” said Dr. Oosterwal, “any reason for the Jews to give up their culture.”

To believe that Christ came to do away with a culture that He established and developed is to deny the validity of the Scriptures. Yet the church for 2,000 years would have every Jew silently dissolve into the massive ocean of Gentile Christianity in which there could not be any identification of their Jewishness. Is this a punishment handed down by the church for the charge of deicide? Ellen White has so eloquently rejected this position. “Those who live in this day are not accountable for the deeds of those who crucified the Son of God.”⁶ Let us not forget that it was sin that caused the death of Christ. It was sin that was defeated by the death of Christ. Not the Sabbath. Not circumcision. Not Judaism. Not culture.

Would the absorption of the Jews into this milieu be a strengthening of the church, or would the church today expect Jews to denounce their Jewishness? Does

God want Jews to capitulate by accepting Gentile norms as their own, and view everything Jewish as bad? Or would He want them to be a strong viable force—a living witness—that would be self-perpetuating in working for the salvation of their people?

“We have yet to learn that the whole Jewish economy is a compacted prophecy of the gospel. It is the gospel in figures; for from the pillar of cloud Christ Himself presented the duty of man to his fellow man. In Christ’s words to His appointed agencies, both in the Old Testament and in the New, the Christian virtues are plainly brought out. Christ scattered the precious grains of truth through all His teachings. All will find them to be as precious pearls, rich in value, if they will practice the principles plainly laid down. The Old Testament is the ground where practical godliness was first sown. This was represented in Christ’s words to His disciples.”⁷

Can we, should we, dare establish a Hebrew-Christian church/synagogue, a house of worship for Jews, without encumbrances imposed by a Gentile majority? Can we give them freedom to develop a liturgy that would be their own? Can we allow Jewish Christians to witness to other Jews, unhampered and unrestricted by local control? Can we develop a living, working congregation restricted in membership to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel”?

“We are to preach the gospel to the Jews, as well as to the Gentiles. The glorious message of the power of God unto salvation is to be made known to all men. We are to bring far more simplicity and Bible goodness into our work for the Lord. There is to be no erecting of barriers, no depending on human agencies for wisdom. Our work is to be given freely to the Jews as to the Gentiles.”⁸

Salvation changes what?

Christianity is incompatible with any customs, practices, ideology, belief, habit, or anything else that may come between a person and the Saviour. All Jewish customs that do not come between Jews and their Saviour are either neutral or beneficial.

The desire to retain one’s customs and to preserve one’s culture is not wrong. In fact, it is proper, and it benefits society

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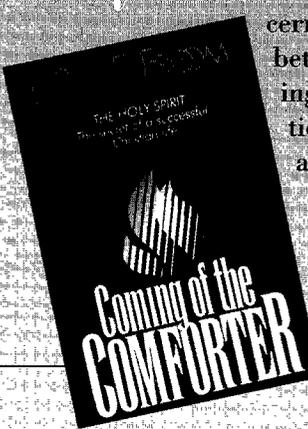
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by creating stability between generations. To label this desire on the part of Jewish Christians as "Judaizing or Ebionizing" is unjust.

Perhaps it's time to examine our pre-conceived ideas in the light of our past heritage. It's time to remember that the original branches were broken off by unbelief; but not all were stripped from the Vine. The grafted branches are able to draw life and sustenance from the same Vine. The original branches (Jews) and the grafted branches (Gentiles) are sustained by the same life-giving force, and enabled to grow, mature, and bear fruit. A gradual change took place, the graft becoming dominant and the original hardly noticeable until it was not noticed at all.

The thought that all must conform to a set pattern is a distortion of the original plan. "There seems to be an urge among some Christians to denationalize the Jew as soon as he is saved. They seem to find pleasure in stamping out every bit of Jewishness in him as though Jewishness were synonymous with sin. Many Christians fail to distinguish the fact that when God saves us, He removes the differences which separate us in love from each other, but He does not remove the distinctions with which we are born and will retain until the day of our death."⁹

The church needs to ask itself whether Christ has demanded that Jews relinquish their culture so rich and steeped in history that to abandon it would mean a loss of identity. Would not the church benefit from a retention of Jewish culture by Jewish Christians? They would then be able to share the riches and treasures of Christ with their Jewish brethren, and the riches and treasures of Judaism with the church in a way that would be rewarding to all involved.

Where Jewish Christianity has been allowed to develop and flourish, it has produced a large harvest. Ellison cites an example. "Joseph Rabinowitz (1837-1899), the grandson and great-grandson of rabbis, was baptized. . . . [He] organized a Jewish/Christian synagogue in Kishineff; his group numbered a thousand. They kept the seventh-day Sabbath, practiced circumcision, celebrated the Pascal feast as a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt. He was in short practicing Judaism. And was accepted as

a Christian throughout Europe by leading theologians."¹⁰

Jewish Christianity desires and needs to develop its own forms and practices that would strengthen its outreach and witness in Jewish communities. The problem is not with the Jews, but with the church as an institution. Until such time that the church moves to change its position, it will continue to cause much anguish to a people whose only need is to worship their Lord within their cultural milieu.

A flexible approach

In the United States there are some Pentecostal and Baptist Jewish churches/synagogues. They are not autonomous, but controlled and directed by boards that are mostly non-Jewish. Some are funded by their denomination (Jews for Jesus, Baptist). While this may be desirable for the church's structure, it is not ideal. I do not expect a total hands-off policy, but there should be more willingness to allow the Jewish churches/synagogues the final decision on how to work for their people.

If we as Seventh-day Adventists want to succeed in our work for the Jews, we need to adopt ways that would extend both the good news of Jesus and the opportunity to practice it within their cultural settings. We need to be flexible enough to attract Jews to become a worshiping and witnessing congregation within their national and community heritage. A Jewish church/synagogue can never be viable if forced to function under an alien cultural or structural setting. ■

¹ Samuel Ruiz Garcia, "The Incarnation of the Church in Indigenous Cultures," *Missiology*, April 1973, p. 23.

² Charles H. Kraft, "Christian Conversion or Cultural Conversion," *Practical Anthropology* 10 (1963): pp. 179, 183.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁵ Ellen G. White letter 87, 1907, in *Ellen G. White Manuscript Releases*, vol. 2, pp. 137, 138.

⁶ ———, "Address to the Church," *Review and Herald*, Apr. 11, 1893, p. 226.

⁷ Ellen G. White manuscript 130, 1897, in *Ellen G. White Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, pp. 210, 211.

⁸ Ellen G. White, manuscript 1, 1908, in *Ellen G. White Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, p. 213.

⁹ Fred G. Kendal, "Why a Hebrew Christian Church?" (Detroit: Israel's Remnant, n.d.), pp. 3, 4.

¹⁰ Henry Leopold Ellison, *The Church and the Jewish People* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1951).

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Getting straight the “straight testimony”

Randy Barlow

**Hurting the body
of Christ evokes
the “straight
testimony.”**



Randy Barlow is the pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Hamilton, Montana.

One Friday evening a stranger walked into the church to share his concerns with me. The church, he said, was in a state of apostasy, because we no longer preached the “straight testimony.” He charged that pastors did not even know what it was. I told him, “The straight testimony is calling wrong wrong.” He was surprised I passed his test.

“The straight testimony,” Ellen White wrote, “must be revived, and it will separate those from Israel who have ever been at war with the means that God has ordained to keep corruptions out of the church. Wrongs must be called wrongs. Grievous sins must be called by their right name.”¹ “The plain, straight testimony must live in the church, or the curse of God will rest upon His people as surely as it did upon ancient Israel because of their sins. God holds His people, as a body, responsible for the sins existing in individuals among them. If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins.”²

I gave him only the answer he wanted to hear. There is much more to the “straight testimony,” some of which would have surprised my visitor. Many Adventists know that the “straight,” “pointed,” or “living” testimony is pointing out sins in the church, and that it brings the shaking among God’s people.³ Yet few seem to realize that among the sins the “straight testimony” refers to are those of criticizing church leaders and faultfinding.

Hurting the body of Christ

Some assume that the “straight testi-

mony” is condemning church members for not practicing Christianity in their daily lives. In support they quote this statement: “There is still another class who have had great light and special conviction, and a genuine experience in the workings of the Spirit of God; but the manifold temptations of Satan have overcome them. They do not appreciate the light that God has given them. They do not heed the warnings and reproofs from the Spirit of God. They are under condemnation. These will ever be at variance with the straight testimony because it condemns them.”⁴

But the context of this statement provides a different picture. The context is a discussion about “the rebellion” of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Ellen White deals with dissension in the church, murmuring against God’s appointed leaders, and sympathizing with those who take an independent course of action. The failure to practice Christianity that evokes the “straight testimony” includes a failure to work in harmony with the body! “It is hardly possible for men to offer a greater insult to God than to despise and reject the instrumentalities that He has appointed to lead them.”⁵

The “straight testimony” exhorts individuals within the church to desist from taking their own course of action independent of the body! But many miss this point when they read the “straight testimony” with someone else’s address on the envelope. Consider the following message, for example: “According to the light that God has given me in vision, wickedness and deception are increasing among God’s people who profess to keep His commandments. Spiritual discernment to see sin as it exists, and then

to put it out of the camp, is decreasing among God's people; and spiritual blindness is fast coming upon them. The straight testimony must be revived, and it will separate those from Israel who have ever been at war with the means that God has ordained to keep corruptions out of the church. Wrongs must be called wrongs. Grievous sins must be called by their right name. All of God's people should come nearer to Him and wash their robes of character in the blood of the Lamb. Then will they see sin in the true light and will realize how offensive it is in the sight of God."⁶

This passage is found in a testimony addressed "to a young minister and his wife," and how easy it is for some to direct this message at the church as a whole. The context reveals that the problem was the independent spirit of this particular ministerial couple. They wanted to do what they pleased. They did not want to yield to others. Soon this young pastor was murmuring, suspicious and jealous of other church workers. The entire chapter deals with murmuring, faultfinding, distrust, suspicions and jealousies against church leaders. Ellen White felt it necessary to point out the failings of this couple who were not in harmony with the church body. She gave them a "straight testimony."

As Ellen White says elsewhere, "Satan has his work to accomplish, and he brings his power to bear most strongly at the great heart of the work. He seizes men and women who are selfish and unconsecrated, and makes of them sentinels to watch the faithful servants of God, to question their words, their actions, and their motives, and to find fault and murmur at their reproofs and warnings. Through them he creates suspicion and jealousy, and seeks to weaken the courage of the faithful, to please the un sanctified, and to bring to nought the labors of God's servants."⁷

It is easier to find fault with others than to correct our own. If we must find fault, we would do well to find it within ourselves. God is not pleased with those in the church who nurse their pet peeves, seek sympathizers, and pull away from the body. If we are inclined to point critical fingers at the church or its leaders, we might do well to look closer to home!

How to present the "straight testimony"

What does it mean to preach the "straight testimony"? Are we not being hard enough on sinners in the church today? Should our preaching include condemnation of specific sins of individual members within the church?

Ellen White speaks of certain principles involved in giving the "straight testimony." Here are some of them:

1. *Be aware of the effect of sin on the*

church. "The plain, straight testimony must live in the church. . . . God holds His people, as a body, responsible for the sins existing in individuals among them. If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins."⁸

2. *Mingle reproof with love and compassion.* The objective of dealing with sin is to destroy the sin, not the sinner.

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Any surgical operation to remove sin must attempt to save the individual. "All are not fitted to correct the erring. They have not wisdom to deal justly, while loving mercy. They are not inclined to see the necessity of mingling love and tender compassion with faithful reproofs. Some are ever needlessly severe."⁹

3. *Make plain the truth with patience, and kindness.* God requires that we show the same love, patience, and kindness toward those we reprove as God does toward us when we err. The truth needs to be made plain, but always in an atmosphere and spirit of love. The pulpit is an appropriate forum for dealing with corporate sins, but it is not the place to start with personal sins. God has ordained a method for dealing with personal sins in Matthew 18. As ministers, we would do well to remember that we too are sinners before we deal with sin among our members.

"We should ever bear in mind that we are all erring mortals, and that Christ exercises much pity for our weakness, and loves us although we err. If God should deal with us as we often deal with one another, we should be consumed. While ministers preach the plain, cutting truth, they must let the truth do the cutting and hewing, not do it themselves."¹⁰

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 3, p. 324.

² *Ibid.*, p. 269.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 181.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 361.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 194.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 269.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 269, 270.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 383.

Occupying till He comes

From page 12

1862, p. 29; Roy E. Graham, "James White: Initiator," in *Early Adventist Educators*, ed. George R. Knight (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1983), pp. 18-25.

⁸ George Storrs, "Come Out of Her, My People," *Midnight Cry*, Feb. 15, 1844, p. 238.

⁹ R. F. Cottrell, "Making Us a Name," *Review and Herald*, Mar. 22, 1860, pp. 140, 141; Ellen G. White, "Communication From Sister White," *Review and Herald*, Aug. 27, 1861, p. 101.

¹⁰ Richard W. Schwarz, "Adventism's Social Gospel Advocate: John Harvey Kellogg," *Spec-*

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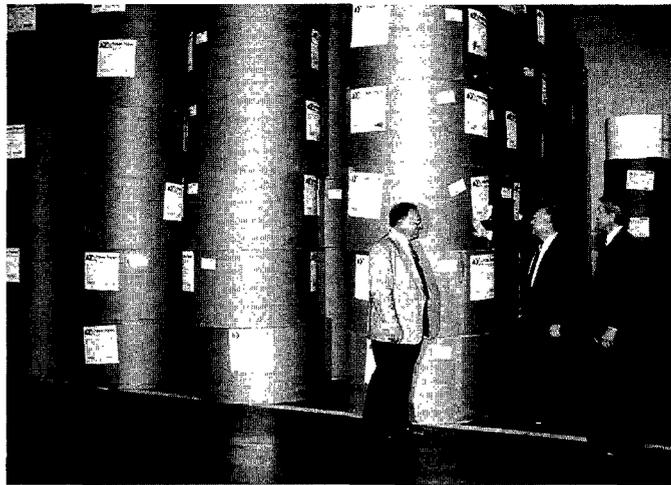
James A. Cress

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trum, Spring 1969, pp. 15-28; "John Harvey Kellogg: American Health Reformer" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1964), p. 347.

¹¹ ———, "Adventism's Social Gospel Advocate," p. 18; Dudley S. Reynolds to Robert Levy, Jan. 6, 1899; Dudley S. Reynolds to J. H. Kellogg, Jan. 17, 24, 1899; *Memo from the Council of the Association of Medical Colleges*, June 2, 1897; J. H. Kellogg to Dudley S. Reynolds, Jan. 19, 26, 1899.

¹² E. G. White to Brother and Sister Irwin, Jan. 1, 1900, in *Ellen G. White Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, Md.: E. G. White Estate, 1990), vol. 4, pp. 427-429; Ellen G. White, "The Work for This Time" (*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, Mar. 2, 1899); White, *Testimonies for the*

Church (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 8, p. 185.

¹³ *131st Annual Statistical Report—1993* (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1994), pp. 2, 3, 31.

¹⁴ P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977); Knight, pp. 327-342; *Anticipating the Advent: A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1993).

¹⁵ Michael Pearson, *Millennial Dreams and Moral Dilemmas: Seventh-day Adventists and Contemporary Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 28, 29.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*



Worship is a verb

James A. Cress

"And worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water" (Rev. 14:7, RSV).

As a people who understand the importance of worship in the prophetic context of last-day issues, it is disturbing to note the casual, humdrum manner with which too many congregations approach worshipful interaction with the Creator. Can we really commemorate Christ's creative and redemptive activity with services that stifle participation, perpetuate the ordinary, and elevate repetition to the level of dogma?

Uninvolved and lacking experiential participation, our members vote with their feet to such an extent that in some countries we feel fortunate if more than half manage to attend one weekly service. Even the angels must struggle to stay awake.

Is it possible that we have spent so much time identifying the correct day and proclaiming the appropriate theology of worship that we have missed actual worshipping? Have we become so concerned with the correctness of when we go to church that what we do there no longer matters?

Flexible patterns

Many congregations are not flexible enough in their worship services to attract those who do not attend; as a

result, they continue to decline. Others rush to judgment against those who do things differently. In fact, too often we confuse form with function and conclude that if others don't enjoy the same things we enjoy, then something is wrong with them.

Some congregations have split over worship style. Members who once fellowshipped together will hardly speak to those who hold a different opinion. Some invest such terror into a good biblical word, such as "*celebrate*" that others fear even to appear joyful. This need not be.

So how do we deal with a topic that is so potentially explosive? Should there be a uniquely Adventist experience when we worship? Does our theology impact our corporate expression of adoration and praise, or are we lethargically repeating traditions?

The early Christians typically worshipped in homes. The worship style of early Advent believers was quite expressive, nearly Pentecostal in nature. Our typical order of worship today is neither biblical nor Adventist. Instead we follow a nineteenth-century style that relegates worship roles to platform leaders and spectator roles to the congregation. There is little active, participatory involvement of each worshiper with the Creator. The dynamic and vital encounter between Creator-God and worshipping penitent is too often absent.

Worship and church growth

Renewal of experiential worship can positively affect church growth as well as community outreach. Our previous congregation doubled its attendance in a relatively short period of time. Revitalized worship was an important contributing factor.

Believing that worship is a verb, we combined two words, "creative" and "active" to form our approach—"creative"! Rather than a radically different format, our services became dynamically traditional. Attendees immediately recognized a typical Adventist service, but with a participative vitality.

We focused on attracting non-attenders. We included familiar and easy-to-sing hymns as well as more special musical presentations, even adding 15 minutes. We limited announcements. We increased audience participation in Scripture reading, prayer requests, and testimonies. We provided sermon outlines in which hearers could "fill in the blanks." We turned routine events such as child dedication, graduations, or service recognition into features.

Yes, worship is a verb. We as pastors must lead our congregations into creatively experiencing worship rather than merely observing! For spiritual growth, *doing* is more important than *watching*! ■

When God Sheds Tears. A Christian Look at the Mystery of Suffering

Richard W. Coffen, *Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1994, 128 pages, paper, US\$8.95. Reviewed by Hugh I. Dunton, former director, Ellen G. White—SDA Research Centre, Newbold College, England.*

Richard Coffen's work is for the average reader. At the outset he rejects the simplistic notion that everything that occurs is God's will. He distinguishes between punishment, discipline, and consequences. Both punishment and discipline are arbitrary and volitional. They depend on the decision of an authority. Consequences are neither arbitrary nor volitional. They are the inevitable result of previous actions. Disasters are neither punishment nor discipline.

Coffen also rejects the glib idea that God honors special people by demonstrating His grace through their pain. We do not suffer "for Jesus' sake."

The Old Testament has many ex-

amples attributing terrible things to Yahweh. He is described as short-tempered and revengeful. Yet there is one Lord of both Testaments. Coffen believes that Yahweh accepted responsibility for evil. This position is more to emphasize monotheism than to confuse Israelite minds with an evil being they might be tempted to worship.

If the world is a laboratory in which Satan's theories are being put to the test, haven't enough dreadful things happened to prove the point? Suffering results from evil (Matt. 13:24-30), but we should not seek demons as causative agents of every disease and suffering.

God is not impassible, argues Coffen. He is not the unmoved mover of Aristotle or even the Westminster Confession. Jesus wept, and He will wipe away all tears.

By not offering a simple answer, the book does not satisfy every reader. But there is no simple answer. If Coffen forces us to think again, to be more sensitive in our approach to the suffering of others, to our own troubles, or to

dialogue freely with our Lord, he will have achieved his purpose.

A Reason to Believe: What Being an Adventist Is All About

Chris Blake, editor, *Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1993, 48 pages, \$4.95. Reviewed by Steve Case, president of Piece of the Pie Ministries, Carmichael, California.*

For pastors frustrated with lack of materials for teen baptismal preparation—here's the answer! The book is a collection of 10 articles that originally appeared in *Insight* magazine on what Seventh-day Adventists believe. There is no systematic theology here, but an easy-to-follow discussion on divinity, rebellion, humanity, revelation, Jesus, response, love, joy, future, and purpose.

Each four-page study contains several down-to-earth components. "Where I'm At" asks the participant to take a personal inventory on the subject. "More or Less" presents a series of either-or pairs, such as Revelation is more like: dream/book, Arizona desert/South Central Los Angeles, etc. "Book Look" is a Bible study outline with key thoughts and scriptural support. "Q 4 U" (Questions for You) is another exercise for the participant to move from analysis of the Bible study to personal application. "Check It Out" calls for commitment from a set of options related to the subject. "Total Texture" presents a major passage of Scripture for a relational-style Bible study—still on the same topic. "What Others Believe" makes some comparisons with what other major world religions teach, with a concluding paragraph on the Christian, and specifically, Seventh-day Adventist perspective.

At the back of the book is the most understandable baptismal vows I've ever come across, plus another series of things the editor wishes were on baptismal certificates. A big thank-you to Chris Blake and *Insight* for spearheading this long-overdue resource!

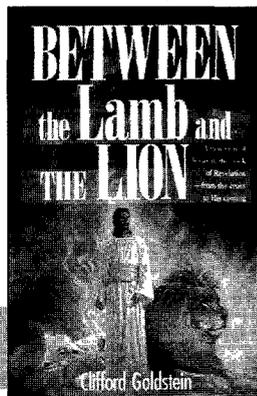
Between the Lamb and the Lion

by Clifford Goldstein

Most Christians, even Adventists, deal with Christ either as the Lamb at His first coming, the Lion at His second, or both, but they miss His crucial role in between.

Between the Lamb and the Lion answers the question "What is Jesus doing now?" It looks at Christ's role as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary as depicted in Revelation and proves that His ministry there is the very means by which the Lamb applies salvation and prepares us to meet the Lion when He comes again.

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Helping the homeless

At our local shelter for the homeless, the residents' needs are many, their spirits low and their problems great. I help relieve their stress by teaching them arts and crafts one evening a week. At first I used materials from my own craft supplies, then I asked for donations from my church's women's group. After more and more residents enrolled, I finally arranged a small stipend from the shelter. An old file cabinet holds supplies. Donated materials, such as a sewing machine, enable us to make a wide variety of crafts. Three volunteers from church assist me.

Through creating crafts the residents relax and enjoy a little stress-free time, while our volunteers engage them in meaningful conversation.—Della D. May, Kingstowne, Virginia.

New theological bibliography

The James White Library at Andrews University, in conjunction with the Adventist Theological Seminary, has produced a *Basic Theological Bibliography: An Annotated Research and Selection Guide* (BTB). Adventists have not published a similar work since Kubo's 1977 *Theological Bibliography: Basic Books for the Minister's Library*, and this new bibliography will help pastors select from the many books published since then.

The inclusion of classification and Library of Congress subject

headings will enable researchers with access to an academic library to go directly to the stacks or to begin a computer search, saving precious time at the OPAC (On-line Public Access Catalog). Cost of *The Basic Theological Bibliography* is US\$6 received in advance. Surface postage included for anywhere in the world. Write the James White Library, Attn. Wolfhard Touchard, Reference Librarian, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104.

Ordaining elders and deacons

It's a beautiful and impressive occasion whenever a pastor is ordained to the ministry. Ordination services for elders and deacons also can be memorable. Among the things we do at the West Palm Beach church is have the head elder or head deacon present the candidate with a special "Charge to Elders" or "Charge to Deacons" and then hand them a certificate of ordination.—Quinton M. Burks, West Palm Beach, Florida.

Field departmental directors

Here in the Tasmanian Conference, we have no full-time departmental directors in the office. Local church pastors who have particular interests and expertise are departmental leaders. This creates a situation in which pastors are running departments, and departmental directors are not running churches. A weekly departmental

directors' meeting keeps everything coordinated. In our small, financially strapped conference, the arrangement has worked reasonably well, with very few complaints.—Cedric R. Wallace, Battery Point, Australia.

One day at a time

After explaining the benefits of "hiding God's Word in our hearts" and illustrating the parts of memory (interest, concentration, and repetition), I shared with the congregation my family's commitment to memorize one Bible verse every day this year, based on the following report in *Reader's Digest*:

A judge sentenced a man to 10 years in prison. The man protested, "I can't spend 10 years in prison!"

The judge replied, "Can you spend one day in prison?"

"Sure!"

"Then I can sentence you to 10 years in prison, one day at a time."

I apply that lesson to memorizing Scripture: one verse each day for 10 years amounts to a lot. I also invite the congregation to open their Bibles to a passage, follow along and coach my family as we recite a portion of Scripture. We do this every few weeks.—Mark Heisey, Banner Elk, North Carolina.

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cyberspace by enrolling in CompuServe's SDA Forum. Since its introduction last July (refer to July 1994 *Ministry*), hundreds of your fellow pastors around the world have joined. They are enjoying live fellowship with other on-line Adventists and gaining instant access to vital resources to help make ministry fruitful and relevant. You can be among them. Wherever you are in the world, if you have a computer with a modem and a standard phone line, you have an uplink to celestial cyberspace on the CompuServe SDA Forum. Local phone numbers for CompuServe are offered in 130 countries.

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A Chronological Study by
Woodrow W. Whidden II

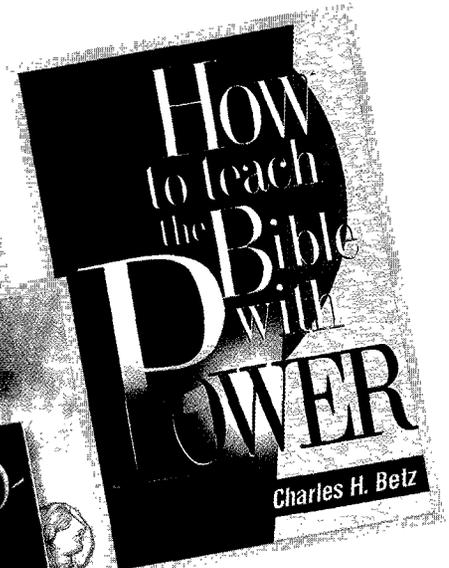
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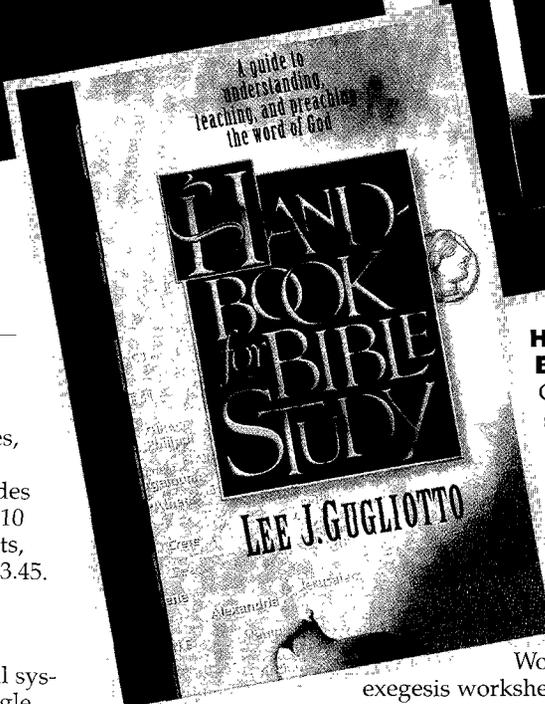


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