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Ministry

Ministry is the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association and has been published since 1928.

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Ministry Editorial Office

Subscriptions and Circulation
Jeannette Calbi

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Harry Knox

Resources

Catherine Payne

Tape of the Month

Donald Driver

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About the cover: The cover, prepared by Harry Knox, celebrates 70 years of publishing *Ministry*. Although our journal has changed in size and appearance over the years, our mission has remained constant: to strengthen and encourage pastors and local church elders and to provide resources for the essential aspects of their ministry.

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4 Editorials

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Homesick for a story

I especially wanted to tell you how touched I was by your editorial, "Homesick for a Story," in March's issue of *Ministry*.

It was a real breath of fresh air for me. I couldn't agree more. Your comment that "We are turning from the depth of Judeo-Christian meaning and story as we move to connect ourselves instead with the great horizontal networks that all but take the place of the divine mysteries inherent in the upward connection . . ." is so very true!—Carolyn G. Supensky, Dayton, Ohio.

Adventists and the Sabbath

I read with interest the May 1997 issue of *Ministry* highlighting various aspects of the Sabbath. What many of us would like to know is this: Do the Seventh-day Adventists still believe that other Christians who fail to observe the Sabbath will receive the mark of the beast and so be disqualified from heaven? Adventist literature seems to indicate this; for example, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, pages 167, 168.—Rev. John M. Cuthbert, Elim Christian Centre, Gloucester, England.

● *Seventh-day Adventists have believed and presently believe that no one has yet received the mark of the beast, whether they are Sabbath or Sunday keepers. We also believe that based upon our understanding of prophecy, there will be a final crisis that impacts the earth just prior to the coming of Christ. During that eschatological crossroad, conditions will prevail that will constrain everyone to decide whether or not they will be loyal to God. The issues of one's relationship to Jesus Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit are always central. But as essential matters are more dramatically defined during this final interval, the authenticity of one's relationship to the saving work of Christ will play*

itself out on the backdrop of the long-standing Sabbath-Sunday controversy, measuring the essence of loyalty and worship in every person.—Angel Rodriguez, associate director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Lashed to the mast

● The articles on the Sabbath were good (and I copied one of them for my files—my ultimate accolade!), but the article that really gripped me was the one by David VanDenburgh, "Lashed to the Mast" (May 1997). David accurately stated several important and painful moments in my own development. While I'm not sure that *I follow him in everything he said*, I was challenged by the article and very pleased you included it in *Ministry*.—Rob McIver, Avondale College, Australia.

● The entire article by David Vandenburg, "Lashed to the Mast," was excellent and thoroughly satisfying, comforting, and strengthening to one like himself who is committed to pastoring as a career and a profession. I commend him for making the courageous and true statement, "The great need is not for pastors who listen to the church or the culture . . . but who listen to God and shape a ministry accordingly."

This may spark some sharp reaction in the 'politically correct' world both within and without the church. But God still needs, after all these millennia, pastors willing to do this kind of ministry no matter what happens.

When I read *Ministry* these days I feel like I am in Psalm 23.—Ernest J. Stevenson, Pastor Deltona SDA Church, Florida.

The ministry of personal anguish

Your editorial "The Ministry of Personal Anguish" (July 1997) presents a much needed perspective on suffering.

We do have the tendency to equate evil with Satan and good with God. In the midst of suffering we often like Jacob equate our trouble with God. After my marriage broke up, I initially blamed God for bringing the woman into my life who became my wife and who was now gone. But it is amazing to see what He has done in my life. He is pruning me (see John 15:2) to make me fruitful, productive, and all He desires me to become in His service. To Him belongs all praise and glory for the miracle of His grace!—Vialo Weis, via E-mail.

Dynamic new computer resources for pastors

"Dynamic New Computer Resources for Pastors" by James Cress and Don Gray prompted me to think that the new way of communicating the gospel via Power Point and other technologies could necessitate an increase in ministers' salaries. Some of my younger colleagues in ministry have young children to educate, drive high-mileage cars, and struggle to make ends meet. They pastor small churches that can't afford to supply the technology for the pastor. Is it possible that these young pastors have the two most dynamic resources already in their ministry—the Bible and the Holy Spirit?—Larry Yeagley, Charlotte, Michigan.

Appreciation

I write to appreciate the staff and the editorial community of *Ministry*. The magazine is great. I thank God for each contributing writer. I feel the touch of the Holy Spirit as I read some of the inspiring articles.

I pray God's continued anointing on each writer. May God bless the old members and new members, including Sheila Draper introduced in the May issue.—James K. Obasi, Umuahia, Abia State, Nigeria. ■

Free Subscription

If you're receiving *Ministry* bimonthly and haven't paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928 *Ministry* has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers. We believe, however, that the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. We want to share our aspirations and faith in a way that will provide inspiration and help to you as clergy. We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulder, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you can't use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy. Requests should be on church letterhead and addressed to the editorial office.



There are those who say that after serving 21 years as General Conference president, A. G. Daniells needed to

be replaced. It is also said that finessing his replacement required the creation of something graceful but not necessarily needful for him to do. Whatever the actual motivations in May 1922, Daniells, one of the great leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, was asked to spearhead a new initiative that was known as the Ministerial Commission, the forerunner of our present Ministerial Association.

Two years later during a ministerial institute held in Nashville, Tennessee, a need was expressed to refine and enrich the subject matter presented at such convocations and to prepare more focused reading material for Seventh-day Adventist ministers. To accomplish this, L. E. Froom, then editor of *Watchman*, was called to assist Daniells.

The newly formed Ministerial Commission began to produce various leaflets and papers for the ministers of the church. This led quite naturally to the idea of a single journal, which would be distributed to the ministers on a monthly basis, giving them a regular resource for the enhancement of their work. Largely because of financial constraints, it was not without difficulty that this idea was approved by church leadership. But a new magazine was nevertheless launched 70 years ago this month. It was known then as *The Ministry*, and Leroy Edwin Froom was its first editor.

Froom's opening words in that first issue were, "With deep satisfaction we greet the workers of the advent movement, the world around, through the medium of *The Ministry* . . ." Under the title, "Our Apology and Our Authorization," Froom explained with admirable honesty that the "apology" was

Ministry: Its beginnings

W I L L E V A

necessary "because of the intrusion of the newcomer into the voluminous list of journals already in the field. There are secular magazines of every description, and . . . religious papers that range between good, bad, and indifferent. Apart from this . . . we have our excellent denominational journals already established and designed for the general information and instruction of our whole body of believers." If such things were true in 1928, how much truer they are today. How then was *The Ministry* justified? And how may *Ministry's* existence be vindicated today?

Froom went on, "But never until now, in the 83 years of this movement, have we had a designated medium of communication just between our world group of gospel workers, a vehicle wherein counsel could be given by strong, experienced leaders, where our special problems could be discussed with frankness and profit . . . and where methods of labor could be talked over apart from the full observation of our church membership. The need was patent. Clearly the hour had struck for this forward stride, for each passing year adds to the complexity of our world task." In the stream of this kind of visionary thinking, *Ministry* was born and continues to have its legitimate role.

Around the turn of the century, when such thinking was not particularly fashionable, some progressive thinkers within the Adventist Church began to say such things as "our ministers should seek to come near to the ministers of other denominations."¹

This kind of consciousness slowly began to take root. Consistent with it, in 1973 a survey of 217 articles published in

Ministry revealed that 136 of them could be said to relate to issues that would inform all Christian clergy, regardless of denominational affiliation.

Thus during the significant editorial leadership of Robert Spangler, a new inspiration was born at *Ministry*. Why not confine articles of a more parochial nature to six issues of *Ministry* each year and send the other six to clergy of other denominations? The program was given the acronym: PREACH—Project Reaching Every Active Clergy Home. In 1975 a two-year pilot circulation was inaugurated. *Ministry* was mailed to 25,000 clergy within a variety of Christian denominations. The response to this experiment was so overwhelmingly favorable that in 1981 it was voted to continue the program indefinitely. Today approximately 75,000 clergy from all over the globe receive *Ministry*.

Although the magazine has adjusted through the years, its fundamental mission has remained constant. In that first 1928 issue the "Authorization for *The Ministry*" is articulated by quoting the action of church leadership "that it [*The Ministry*] include in its scope the problems and needs of . . . ministers in their various capacities as evangelists, pastors, missionaries, executives, Bible teachers, chaplains, etc. . . . [That it] be truly the evangelical workers' own periodical with constructive articles, devotional and message studies and outlines by our world leaders, valuable historic and prophetic quotations, editorials, etc., thus dealing with specific problems and responsibilities of the evangelical workers."

Although these purposes have been expanded and adjusted through the years, they wholeheartedly remain the heartbeat of the *Ministry* of our time and in this issue particularly, we celebrate the leading of God throughout the history of this publication. ■

¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6 (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assoc., 1948), p. 78.



With deep satisfaction we greet the workers of the advent movement, the world around, through the medium of *The*

Ministry. It has long been the journalistic custom for a new periodical, in its initial issue, to present to its readers an "apology" for its appearance. This apologetic feature is deemed appropriate because of the intrusion of the newcomer into the voluminous list of journals already in the field. There are secular magazines of every description and religious papers that range between good, bad, and indifferent. Apart from this motley array, we have our excellent denominational journals, already established, designed for the general information and instruction of our whole body of believers.

But never until now, in the 83 years of this movement, have we had a designated medium of communication just between our world group of gospel workers, a vehicle wherein could be given by our strong, experienced leaders, where our special problems could be discussed with frankness and profit without becoming common property, and where methods of labor could be talked over apart from the full observation of our church membership. The need was patent. Clearly the hour had struck for this forward stride, for each passing year adds to the complexity of our world task.

Upon the faithful rank and file of the ministry rests the chief responsibility for world evangelization, for church leadership in spiritual life and gospel service, the winning and holding of our youth, the support of every branch of special or departmental endeavor, and for carrying the brunt of the financial support of our gigantic program. Plans initiated by our general leaders pass through the division, union, and local organizations, and come to rest with full pressure upon the loyal evangelists and pastors and their associates, included in the membership of

Our apology and our authorization

LEROY FROM

the Ministerial Association. We therefore conclude that if an apology is appropriate, it should rather be for tardiness in launching *The Ministry*. It might be added appropriately that this medium of inter-communication between the members of the Association will in no wise encroach upon the field of any existing journal of the denomination.

While the mimeographed bulletins heretofore used have exerted a pronounced influence and have proved a Godsend to our workers, as hundreds of grateful letters testify, they have never been satisfactory either to the field or to the Association officers who have prepared them. But they were a necessary stepping-stone to this ideal provision commensurate with the needs. Then, too, the mimeographed documents from headquarters have been confined virtually to the workers of North America. Of course copies have been sent to each divisional Association secretary. Some of these have been modified to meet the needs, duplicated and disbursed in certain divisions, notably by the African, Inter-American, and Far Eastern. Recent ventures along this line have also been made in Europe and South America, while Australia has for some time had a printed exchange for the ministers of that division. From now on the bonds of a world-embracing journal should draw us together in deeper spiritual fellowship, leading steadily toward increased effectiveness in our common task.

The advantage of a paper for our English-reading gospel workers is obvious. *The Ministry* will be compact, permanent, and will meet our purposes and needs. Each special group of evangelical workers will be enabled to know what the other

groups are discussing; and, best of all, it is designed to reach all the English-reading workers in our sisterhood of eight divisions. While there are 1,500 English-reading Association members in North America, a like number reside outside this continent. The British Isles, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and many other sections are almost wholly English speaking. And while there are 75 languages in Europe, for example, the number of those who read English there is remarkably large—83 in the Central European Union, 44 in the Scandinavian Union, and so forth. English is doubtless as nearly an international medium of expression as will ever be realized in this sin-tainted world. God speed the day when we shall all speak one language—the language of heaven!

Last spring the proposal of a printed medium was brought to the attention of the officers of the General Conference, who suggested that it be laid before the delegates of the Autumn Council at Chattanooga for decision, as representatives would be present from nearly every division and the whole of North America. This procedure was followed. Preliminary responses from letters to the foreign division fields are assembled under "Around the World Circle." Without a dissenting voice the authorization was recommended by the Finance Committee and formally passed by the Council. Thus it came into being. The action appears under "For Your Information."

We are persuaded that *The Ministry* has been established in the providence of God at a time when it is most needed to aid the world ministry of this movement in these rapidly advancing hours of earth's twilight.

Workers for Christ and His last message to men let us unitedly renew our vows of allegiance to Him, redoubling our efforts for greater efficiency in service, seeking our God and the power of His Spirit. Let us march forward in solid phalanx for the finishing of our God-given task. ■

Reprinted from the first edition of *The Ministry*, January 1928.

Establishment and Charter

The founding charter of the Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, created at the General Conference of 1922 by the world delegation assembled, was introduced by the following preamble and its contingent specifications:

“Whereas, The obvious need of the hour is an effective ministry to challenge the sinful conscience of a judgment-bound world: and,

“Whereas, Our experience as a church has proved that great advantages result from the specific study of each phase of activity, thus effectively fostering and promoting special lines of work; and,

“Whereas, We believe that the time has come, in the providence of God, for the establishment of a medium for the interchange of plans, methods, and information, and for the definite strengthening of the gospel ministry; and,

“Whereas, We believe further that this can be accomplished without the creation of additional machinery in either union or local conferences, but would function through existing leadership; we therefore respectfully—

“Recommend, The establishment of a Ministerial Commission [changed by Council action to Association], . . . working under the direction of the General Conference Committee, and whose duty it shall be,

“1. To collect valuable facts and information relating to the work of ministers and Bible workers, both at home and abroad, and in rural and urban spheres, and to gather information on the problems of the minister’s work for the church and the world, co-operating with the General, union, and local conferences as a counselor.

“2. Also to form the medium for the interchange of ideas, methods, and information between ministers on problems pertaining to their sacred calling.

“3. Further, to give special attention to the encouragement of the desire on the part of young men in training for the gospel ministry in our educational institutions, that the material drawn upon to meet our ever-growing demands shall be charged with a burning passion of souls.”—*General Conference Bulletin, 1922, p. 292.*

The Membership Defined

The constituent membership of the Association by groups, as defined by the Autumn Council of 1923, is recorded thus:

“We recommend, 1. That the membership of the Ministerial Association be: Ministers, licentiates, Bible workers, editors of denominational papers, medical heads of sanitariums and superintendents of nurses’ training schools, heads of senior and junior colleges and academies.”—*Action of Autumn Council, 1923, p. 6.*

Authorization for “The Ministry”

“Voted, That we adopt the following relative to the establishment of a printed monthly medium for the use of the Ministerial Association:

“Whereas, The evangelical workers of the advent movement upon whom rest the responsibility of evangelizing the world and the support of our great mission enterprise, together with the leadership and perfecting of the church for her coming Lord, should have every possible aid in attaining the maximum of technical efficiency and spiritual power, with convenient access to dependable information and suggestions designed to this end; and,

“Whereas, The members of the Ministerial Association have only had access to mimeograph bulletins through the Association, unsatisfactory alike to field and officers, and now inadequate for our needs as the channel of communication; therefore the delegates in the 1927 Autumn Council assembled—

“Authorize, 1. The Ministerial Association to issue a printed monthly medium as the official organ of the Association for prosecuting the founding purposes of the Association, as indicated in its initial charter.

“2. That it be known as ‘*The Ministry.*’

“3. That a nominal subscription price be charged therefor.

“4. That it include in its scope the problems and needs of Bible workers, as well as ministers in their various capacities as evangelists, pastors, missionaries, executives, Bible teachers, chaplains, etc.

“5. That this largely supplant the special leaflets and mimeograph documents.

“6. That it be made truly the evangelical workers’ own periodical, with constructive articles, devotional and message studies and outlines by our world leaders, valuable historic and prophetic quotations editorials, etc., thus dealing with specific problems and responsibilities of the evangelical workers.”—*Actions of Autumn Council, 1927, pp. 414, 415.* ■

Reprinted from *The Ministry*, a medium of communication between the members of the Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, January 1928, vol. 1, no. 1.

Leroy E. Froom was the first editor of *The Ministry.*

MINISTRY'S COMMITMENT TO SERVE MINISTERS

Four years after the death of John Loughborough, the last of the early pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism, a brand new journal entered the Adventist scene. Loughborough would have loved it, for its perspective addressed precisely the issues, dilemmas, methods, and trials he faced during his early ministry.



Bert Haloviak is assistant director of Archives and Statistics, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The initial appearance of this 32-page, digest-sized publication in 1928 was by no means an easily accepted idea. Skillful “manipulation” and planning over a period of years preceded the establishment of *The Ministry*.

The process began in 1922 when Arthur Daniells, General Conference president from 1901 to 1922, was not reelected to the presidency. Chastened by his defeat, Daniells experienced a spiritual reawakening and when asked to guide the newly established Ministerial Commission (later called Association), he worked to instill within the ministry that which he believed he neglected as an administrator.

By 1926 Daniells was joined by Meade MacGuire, Mrs J. W. Mace, and LeRoy Froom. With his previous experience as editor of *Watchman*, Froom was the prime mover in establishing a separate periodical for minis-

ters—a move that resulted in its first issue in 1928. Until then the *Review and Herald* had been the chief medium of communication between the Association and the ministers.

Not long after the 1926 Session, Froom actively began to pursue plans for a ministerial periodical. Daniells seemed skeptical that General Conference officers would allow such a project: “I appreciate all you say about the need of a little paper, but LeRoy I have never gathered enough courage yet to half believe the GC Officers would consider the proposal with any favor.”¹

Not until his retirement editorial in 1950 did Froom reveal to a general audience how *Ministry* came into existence. The question of expense initially seemed a formidable argument. After all, did a church with only 5,000 ministers need a separate journal for its pastors? Why not continue to communicate through the *Review*? And why risk

lessening the circulation of the venerable church paper? Froom wrote:

“Clearly the moment was not propitious for such a journal. We said no more, but began to issue a comprehensive group of mimeograph exchanges—one for evangelists, another for pastors, and still others for Bible teachers, gospel musicians, and sanitarium chaplains. These modest exchanges were well received. But as members of the several groups heard of the other exchanges, they requested to be listed for those as well. The supplying of these various groups with the different exchanges soon became such a large task—*just as we had hoped*—that the brethren agreed to a small printed exchange to take their place, available for all groups.”²

In May and June of 1927 requests arrived from the Far Eastern and South American divisions for all the available mimeographed and printed leaflets produced by the Association. It became clear to the General Conference officers that publishing a monthly paper would save money. The question of a new periodical, perhaps to be named *The Ministry*, found its way onto the agenda for the 1927 Autumn Council.³

The new periodical

Delegates to the Autumn Council authorized the Ministerial Association “to issue a printed monthly medium” to be known as *The Ministry*. It should address “the problems and needs of Bible workers, as well as ministers in their various capacities as evangelists, pastors, missionaries, executives, Bible teachers, chaplains, etc.” Delegates made sure that the publication would “supplant the special leaflets and mimeographed documents” published by the Association. It was to be “the evangelical workers’ own periodical.”⁴

Besides a column focusing upon the minister’s wife, *Ministry* published a column for women in full-time Bible worker ministry. In North America alone there were over 300 such conference-paid workers. After graduating from college, women received additional training to qualify for that branch of ministry. From 1941 until her retirement in 1958, Miss Louise Kleuser (the only woman to hold an associate position within the Association) guided the Bible instructors through *Ministry*. She elaborated upon the major role of women within the Seventh-day

Adventist concept of ministry: “The Bible Instructor Credential certifies the highest recognition given the Bible instructor. *It ranks higher than the Ministerial License*. . . . While we are not at present ordaining our sisters to the ministry, their service for Christ may well be publicly recognized by consecrating them to this holy office.”⁵

Watson

reported to General Conference officers, September 30, 1931, that he had admonished Froom “about certain articles recently appearing in The Ministry which seemed to reflect upon the leadership.”

Handling controversy and disagreement

Early issues of *Ministry* tackled traditional yet questionable theological positions. The August 1928 issue challenged the KJV reading of Revelation 22:14: “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.” Instead, the editor preferred the Revised Version rendering: “Blessed are they that wash their robes.” While Froom knew this position would generate controversy (this particular contention lasted for over a decade), he editorialized: “If any argument used is unsound, it is time we found it out, for truth has nothing to fear and truth can never be overthrown.”⁶

By October of 1928, Froom was preparing to address a very real dilemma faced by the ministers. Pastors were supervised by conference and departmental officials who were extremely goal oriented. It was customary during this period for a major portion of Sabbath School and church time to be absorbed by promotional matters. While the Association “has of course been cautioned very definitely” about discussing issues of “policy and

executive features,” he hoped that a reform would allow the “evangelical” ministry to “come to the forefront in its proper place.”

In May of 1931 the Ministerial Association became more closely aligned with the General Conference administration when, upon the retirement of A. G. Daniells, C. H. Watson, the General Conference president, became chairman of the Association. Vice president I. H. Evans became secretary and joint editor of *The Ministry* with Froom. The work of the Association, including publication of *The Ministry*, was to occur “in closest conjunction with the President of the General Conference and his executive staff.” All GC officers were appointed as special contributors to *Ministry*.⁸

Watson reported to General Conference officers, September 30, 1931, that he had admonished Froom “about certain articles recently appearing in *The Ministry* which seemed to reflect upon the leadership.” No doubt one such was Froom’s “To Creedalize or Not to Creedalize,” in the October *The Ministry*, just off the press. Froom decried the administrative move toward “an official statement of belief, a confession of faith, or creed, as variously phrased, though in the ultimate these expressions mean but one and the same thing.” He looked back to pioneer days when “there was no hesitancy about candidly examining the positions submitted by a brother believer.” Early periodicals published divergent views, and “there did not seem to be a haunting fear, in those days, of disintegration through frank, honest discussion of differences.” Why was there such a “creedal” push today? asked Froom. Because we have abandoned the earnest research and study habits of the pioneers. What has caused this to happen? “In the development and expansion of our work a deepening financial and quota pressure has come upon men, with an accumulation of detail and a draft upon time which have unavoidably altered the study life of the ministry.”

“Beware of the adoption of a creed,” Froom warned. “Crystallizing and codifying the truth received, it drives its stakes. It becomes static, rigid, orthodox, and looks askance, if not with hostility, upon any advance study by men as loyal and true as the ultraconservatives who ultimately control in a situation of that kind. This leads to repression and a kind of odium, if not actual

persecution, of those in whose being burns the spirit that animated the pioneers in their search for ever increasing light and truth.”⁹ There seemed strong consternation about such a warning at the time the initial *Church Manual* and a 22-point statement of Fundamental Beliefs were on the horizon.

Surviving the Depression

Troubles for *The Ministry* were just beginning. By 1932 the worldwide economic depression created severe cutbacks throughout the denomination, and a survey commission recommended cuts at General Conference headquarters. This commission recommended *The Ministry* be issued quarterly rather than monthly and that in content it focus more upon “the spiritual life of the worker,” “promote active evangelism and encourage all of our workers to preach earnestly the old fundamental doctrines.” In addition, it should become more active in supporting the financial programs of the church as tithing, offerings, Christian tem-

perance, laymen’s missionary work such as Harvest Ingathering and Big Week undertakings and a more general literature ministry. *The Ministry* should “entirely avoid the discussion of debatable questions of doctrine and theology.”¹⁰

Discussion of the report at the Spring Meeting brought an even more restrictive position: the discontinuance of *The Ministry*. A suggestive line appears in the May 1, 1932, minutes of the General Conference officers: “Agreed that C. H. Watson and I. H. Evans talk with L. E. Froom concerning his future work.” Apparently after this meeting, the officers agreed to continue *The Ministry* “at least until the world representatives at the [forthcoming] Autumn Council may finally determine its future.”

Charles Watson, in the December 1932 *The Ministry*, informed readers of the precipice that the publication had faced. He joyfully headed his center-spread article, “*The Ministry* continues as a Monthly.” He discussed the economic cutbacks and the ear-

lier Spring Meeting: “At first it was thought that this publication should not be continued. Word to that effect reached some of our ministers, from many of whom earnest protests against discontinuance were received.”

As reaction from the field continued, the proposal to eliminate *The Ministry* was not even presented to the Autumn Council. “Instead,” said Watson, the idea of a quarterly publication was brought forward. And then, “at a wider representative gathering of the committee, action was finally taken to continue the monthly publication of this valuable periodical.” “Many of our leaders expressed high appreciation of the service which this journal has rendered within the ministry of our church, and made strong appeal for the continuance of its regular monthly issue.”¹¹

Continuing the heritage

Editors would continue to be called on the carpet for such reasons as publishing



LeRoy Froom
1928-1950



I. H. Evans
1931-1936



Roy Allan Anderson
1950-1967

Ministry Editors



J. Robert Spangler
1967-1990



J. David Newman
1990-1995



Willmore D. Eva
1995-present

that the German political situation in 1935 was a "German madhouse." In 1938 the editor moaned: "Pressure is put upon us periodically to open this unique medium of direct access to all workers for propaganda. We could very easily—and fatally—fill its pages with plans and urges for this campaign and that, various worthy enterprises and programs."¹²

In 1942, *Ministry* criticized the music training offered ministerial students as in-

adequate for evangelistic programs and received a reprimand from the General Conference officers. In 1944 the General Conference officers instructed the editor to print no further articles on biblical chronology until the "research committee" investigated the subject.¹³

In 1948, the officer group, because of a protest from the GC treasurer, sent a few officers to reprimand the editor for an article that calculated how much time was

taken up during the Sabbath School and church service (including sermon) of a particular church on promotional items rather than worship.¹⁴

In the mid-1970s, inauguration of the PREACH project brought another series of issues to the forefront: how to appeal to ministers of other denominations and still retain the confidence of the most conservative readers of *Ministry*. By this period, *Ministry* was more widely read by laypeople. Introduction of the letters to the editor section meant *Ministry* assumed accountability to all its readers as well as to administration.

Readers reacted strongly when *Ministry* published on such topics as revelation/inspiration, "homosexual healing," ordination of women, abortion, church standards, and the sanctuary. Editors wondered "Does the Church Need a Loyal Opposition?" and "How Candid Should *Ministry* Be?"¹⁵

Issues faced by the first editor of *The Ministry* would indeed resurface throughout its 70-year history and will no doubt continue to emerge. Yet none can question that the Seventh-day Adventist Church and perhaps other churches are better off because of the publication of *Ministry*. ■

¹ Froom to Daniells, Jan. 7, 1927, and Daniells to Froom, undated.

² "Farewell From Your Long-Time Editor," *Ministry*, Sept. 1950, emphasis supplied.

³ Froom to Daniells, May 31 and June 9, 1927.

⁴ Actions of the Autumn Council, Sept. 28-Oct 4, 1927.

⁵ Louise Kleuser, "Dignifying the Bible Work," *Ministry*, July 1946 Extra.

⁶ Froom, "Our Obligation to Truth and Accuracy," *Ministry*, Aug. 1928.

⁷ Froom to Vice President for North America, J. L. McElhany, Oct. 29, 1928.

⁸ Ministerial Association Advisory Council Meeting, May 19, 1931.

⁹ Froom, "To Creedalize or Not to Creedalize," *Ministry*, Oct. 1931.

¹⁰ Report of Commission to Survey General Conference Staff at Spring Meeting, April 27, 1932.

¹¹ *Ministry*, Dec. 1932.

¹² Froom, "The Ministry's Editorial Policy," Dec. 1938.

¹³ GC Officers' Minutes, April 26, 1942, and May 3, 1944.

¹⁴ GC Officers' Minutes, May 6, 1948.

¹⁵ J. David Newman, *Ministry*, May 1986 and Dec. 1991.

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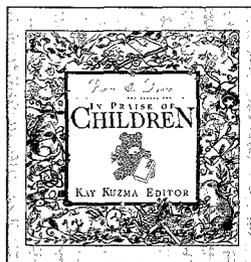


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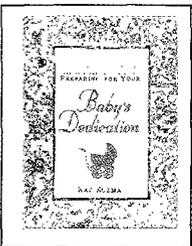
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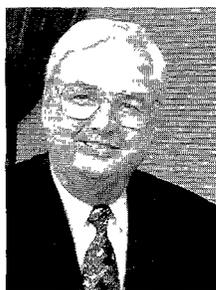
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QUESTIONS FROM THE WELL

As part of the celebration of 70 years of Ministry, the world president of the Seventh-day Adventist church declares his most telling convictions and concerns about the ministry of the church today.



Robert S. Folkenberg is the president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

At the close of a long day of labor, three seminarians and an aging pastor were gathered around the village well. As they peered into the stone-lined shaft, the conversation turned to how to measure water in the well.

"It's not hard to figure out," said one seminarian. "I'd simply calculate the volume of the bucket, lower it into the well, and count how many trips it took to drain the shaft."

"Leaving us a dry well," murmured the old pastor.

"No," said the second. "That's not the method I'd use. I'd fill the well with small stones, displacing the water to the top, and measure it as it poured over the lip."

"Leaving us no well at all," muttered the old pastor.

"Be reasonable," said the third. "I'd calculate the diameter of the well and lower a weighted rope to the bottom. By measuring the depth of the water, I could ascertain the volume of water in the well."

"Leaving us no mystery at all," mumbled the pastor.

"Well, then how would you do it?" the three cried. "Do you have a better method for measuring the water in the well?"

"As for me," said the old pastor slowly,

"I, too, would lower the bucket into the well but only once. And when I pulled it up, I would take a long, cold draft.

"And in the refreshment of that drink, I would measure the water in the well: *Did it slake my thirst? Did it brighten my eye? Did it cool my brow? Did it clear my thoughts?*

"If it did those things, then we would know it is good water—great water—and all the water that I or any person in this village needs.

"Measuring the depth of water in the well is only done by those who never thirst."

There's a special kind of humor in asking a church administrator to share his thoughts about the future of pastoral ministry. As a group, administrators are frequently criticized for caring only about what can be identified, objectified, and quantified—caring only about the volume of water in the well. Far from the real world, the old saw goes, administrators can't know the lot of those who "stand and deliver" before the people of God week in and week out. In our rarefied, bureaucratic world, some suggest that nothing "real" ever happens.

But the fact remains that I still get thirsty—and not just for the cold, clear stuff that bubbles from the fountain in the hall-

ROBERT S. FOLKENBERG

way. As I watch a world spinning madly out of control, as I wrestle with situations even Solomon might shun, I find myself more thirsty every day for the water of life drawn from the wells of salvation. More insistent than the alarm clock at 5:00 a.m. or the telephone ringing at night is the growing sense that I must drink each day that water that Jesus offered to the woman at the well. Without that water, ministry is a dry and dusty chore.

Are we quenching our thirst?

So come with me again to the well. Whether pastor or administrator, Bible worker or evangelist, every minister drinks from a common well. The indispensable first question about the future of ministry is to ask if we are finding our own thirst quenched by the living water Jesus offers His servants. If we are, then there will be joy in the journey. If we aren't, then there will be nothing to cut the taste of dust and ashes in the mouth.

There are some who simply assume that every pastor experiences a dynamic connection with Jesus Christ and move on to other topics, but I no longer do. In my own story, and in the stories of many pastors close to me, I know too much about the dry seasons, the difficult days when we are tempted to build pipelines and aqueducts for the water we have rarely tasted. The unique demands of serving people urge us to "put others first," by which we mean giving greater precedence to their thirst than to our own. But as laudable as that sounds, it's the beginning of an inward spiritual dehydration.

The living water can't be dammed or stored in reservoirs; it can't be caught in Evian bottles, awaiting dry tomorrows. As one author puts it, "You do not *have* what you once *had* with God. You only have what today you received from Him."

The future of Adventist ministry is being shaped right now by whether or not each of us is devoting personal time each day with Jesus Christ for prayer, for study, for worship. From one end of the church to the other, it's time that we announce to each other the requirement that every Adventist pastor be a deeply consecrated person of God. We must say it so often that we come to believe it: A prayerless pastor is a false shepherd, and a minister not grounded in

the Word is a blind guide, regardless of rhetorical talent, sensitivity to people, or administrative skill.

Look deeply in the well, pastor. Are you enjoying a daily conversation with your Saviour that quenches your thirst? Are you finding new insights and deeper meanings from your study of His Word? Have you rejoiced today because of the salvation purchased for you by the blood of Jesus Christ? Is your own life—your marriage, your family, your attitudes, your habits—being transformed by the power Jesus promised to give all who follow Him? (John 1:12).

The indispensable first question about the future of ministry is to ask if we are finding our own thirst quenched by the living water Jesus offers His servants. If we are, there will be joy in the journey. If we aren't, then there will be nothing to cut the taste of dust and ashes in the mouth.

I'm describing a kind of personal spiritual inventory for the pastor and by the pastor that is far more searching and direct than any instrument the church could ever develop. I'm dreaming of pastors who hold themselves accountable before God, just as God holds each of us accountable before Him.

Many pastors tell me they have found personal assessment to be one of the most beneficial things they've done in ministry. To ask myself several times a year a series of honest questions about my spiritual life (or to cultivate a spiritual partner whom I've encouraged to ask such questions) is to face life as every believer must face it—with honesty, with humility, and with hope.

Ministering the gospel to others must never be an excuse for not enjoying the goodness of God myself or experiencing His transforming power in my own life.

Are our members growing in grace?

A second question emerges as I peer into the depths of the well: "Are the members of my church experiencing the joy of the gospel and the power of transformation as a result of my ministry?" Here we are tempted to get wobbly and to start worrying aloud about those who want to count everything and put it on some chart. We fear that in asking the relevant question—"Are my members growing in grace?"—we will be diverted to a set of less-than-relevant answers—to pie charts, baptismal statistics, goals achieved, and targets reached.

But there can be no more candid mirror of my own experience with God and my profession of ministry than the spiritual condition of the people who receive that ministry week after week. This doesn't mean that every member will be spiritually responsive or that sin hasn't case-hardened some believers. Yet it remains true that a praying pastor inevitably produces a praying congregation. A pastor rejoicing in grace cultivates a people who shout aloud the goodness of the Lord. A minister finding victory over personal habits and attitudes models before the church the truth that we serve a transforming Lord. If my ministry is authentic, if it is being blessed by God, then I should welcome the task of replicating in others my personal experience of salvation and teaching them to drink at the same well.

It's far easier to blame the church for spiritual immaturity than to recognize that I may be partly responsible for creating or maintaining that immaturity through a life of busy but prayerless ministry. When I summon whatever professional objectivity I possess and candidly assess the spiritual condition of my people, chances are I will see there at least a dim reflection of my own spiritual struggles. Looking honestly at the spiritual condition of those I serve is the surest way to propel me to my knees, pleading with God for a power beyond myself and a message not my own.

Put candidly, the questions are: "How many of my members are experiencing the

joy and transforming power of the gospel? Are growing numbers of them rejoicing in the assurance of salvation through the atoning blood of Jesus? Is my flock digging deeper into God's Word as a consequence of my ministry to them? How many of them are facing difficult life circumstances with prayer rather than solely with their wits? Are these numbers any greater than they were six months or a year ago?"

No one is better equipped both to ask and answer these questions than the pastor. Administrators and those who serve the church in specialized ministries can't know the matrix of family dynamics, historical considerations, and gift clusters that make up the unique character of each local congregation. Those of us who serve the church in nonpastoral roles have a special obligation to create a climate of candor and encouragement in each region so that no pastor is ever deterred from asking and answering these crucial questions.

If it's true that the church can't achieve what God expects of it without accountability—and I believe it is—then we must be certain nothing hinders us from that task. No pastor should ever fear that honest assessment of the church he or she serves will ever be anything but praised and appreciated.

How do we relate to the great commission?

A third question emerges from our look into the well: "Do those who receive my ministry give evidence that they understand their unique role in the great commission?"

For 135 years, *Seventh-day Adventism* has rightly emphasized the task of disciple-making, and we've done so with a vigor and enthusiasm that has carried us into almost every nation on the globe. To be an Adventist—with our special commitment to God's Sabbath, with our unique understanding of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, with our prophetic insights into the future of this world—is to have a passion for those who will go into a Christless eternity unless we share with them the truth as it is in Jesus.

As a spiritual leader charged with making disciples, I must hear the questions: "Am I building people who exhibit a passion for souls? Do those who hear me preach and teach the good news of the gospel also hear the gospel call to go and make disciples? Is

my passion for lost people becoming their passion?"

To think and speak this way requires a different paradigm of pastoral care than many of us have grown up with. The pastor simply as a quiet shepherd, content if only the flock experiences biological growth, cannot be a satisfactory model for ministry. But the pastor as a trainer-equipper, model, coach, guide, and fellow missionary gives him or her a motivational and spiritual power that grows directly from the authority of the Word of God.

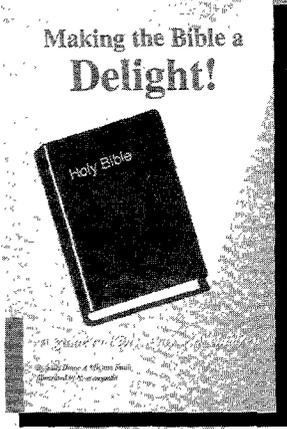
I heard recently of a group of laypersons who were upset because their pastor had roundly scolded them. It was his business and not theirs, he told them, to give the Bible studies and prepare people for baptism. They felt the frustration so many of God's people feel when they hear the call of Jesus and yet confront the reality of a church unprepared to harness their energies. Those of us called to professional ministry need to overcome whatever insecurities we may feel when mission "gets away from us." Demographic trends in our world movement and the reliable counsel we hold dear point us to a future in which both the quantitative and qualitative growth of God's church will be so explosive and so rapid that all our minister-centered visions will be useless or next to useless.

In conclusion

Reading this, some cynic might conclude that I see the future of Adventist ministry as a series of question marks. That leaves the impression that I have doubts about the future of the church or Christ's ultimate triumph in this world. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

But it's true that the power of the right questions—well-asked and well-answered—will shape our destiny more than any other element I know.

A refreshing breeze is blowing through our faith and our profession just now, allowing us to dream new dreams and cast a different vision for serving the people of God. I want to be part of God's emerging plan for His people, whatever the cost to my old paradigms and cherished opinions. And if questions—godly, biblical questions—help that happen, then I welcome them. I hope you do as well. ■



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OBSERVATIONS OF A THERAPIST

Years ago, while I was doing my internship in psychotherapy, a veteran therapist said to me, “Your best clients are likely to be clergy. They are usually highly motivated, have considerable insight into their own behavior, and are deeply grateful for any help you are able to offer.



William E. Rabior, ACSW, is in private practice in Saginaw, Michigan.

You'll thoroughly enjoy working with them. I know I have."

His words have been prophetic. As a pastor and a psychotherapist, I have been in a unique position not only to help fellow clergy but also to learn from them.

Clergy have many of the same concerns that other clients bring to therapy, but because the clerical lifestyle is unique, some of these concerns can possess significantly different features. Over the years I have detected a number of issues that manifest themselves frequently in clerical counseling. Here are 10 most common ones.

Someone to talk to

Perhaps the most basic need of the clergy is to be able to talk with someone they trust and someone who will listen. Although clergy can and do turn to colleagues in ministry, there are those who would rather talk with a therapist. For two reasons: (1) to have someone outside their profession listen objectively and provide feedback, and (2) confidentiality. Clergy sometimes feel safer in disclosing their deepest selves and most personal issues to a psychotherapist.

Stress

Many clergy feel overwhelmed by stress—the stress of ministry combined with stress from personal issues and relationships, such as marital problems, children, and others. In therapy, they frequently talk about the frustrations of too much to do and too little time in which to do it. Some clergy still try to be all things to all people, and that attempt can prove to be exhausting and debilitating.

Some clergy are simply overworked. The demands made on their time and energy exacerbate the stress they already feel. They suffer burnout. Many tend to feel inadequate and are convinced that they are not doing enough. Typically, clergy have difficulty delegating responsibility and have an even harder time believing that less can be more in ministry. Pastors turn to therapy and ask for help with stress management when they recognize that the price they have been paying is much too high.

Authority

Frequently, clergy are at odds with their church leadership—conference presidents,

W I L L I A M E . R A B I O R

elders, district superintendents, church deacons—and sometimes with the authority of the church itself. Many clergy feel that at one time or another they have been treated unfairly by church authorities. This in turn can generate feelings of anger and resentment. Clerical anger is often acted out in passive-aggressive ways: avoiding meetings where an authority figure will be present, failing to return telephone calls, not opening official mail, and, in general, having minimal contact with the persons who hold church offices. Clergy who engage in such avoidance behavior may thus become more distant from other colleagues in ministry as well as church authority figures. They bring to therapy such issues as the paradoxical tension between not wanting to be bothered by church authorities and yet feeling frustrated at being ignored, left out, and having little or no influence in denominational matters because of their lack of interaction.

Finances

Clergy talk a great deal about money, both in therapy and outside of therapy. They resent an inadequate salary and are concerned about retirement. Many times their financial concerns compel them or their spouses to take on additional jobs. This in turn may lead to more fatigue, additional family stresses, and, in general, heightened frustration over not being adequately paid by the church.

Even when their salaries are adequate, clergy, like others, can have difficulty with effectively managing their money. Sometimes I find it necessary to refer the clergy to a professional financial planner so that they may order their chaotic financial situation.

Sexuality

Clergy, like most human beings, struggle with issues associated with sexuality. Some struggle with confusion about their sexual orientation, with guilt issues related to past sexual experiences, with sexual temptations, and, if they are married, sometimes with sexual dysfunctions with their spouses. Some were sexually abused as children. Others have been disciplined by church authorities and perhaps even civil authorities.

Like most professionals today, clergy are becoming more sensitive to boundary is-

suues and the need to exercise good judgment and self-control when it comes to their sexuality. Some have confused sexual expression with the desire for intimacy and have paid a high price for their mistake.

Clergy teach that human sexuality is one of God's greatest gifts that must be used lovingly, responsibly, and morally. While pastors believe this teaching, they may find themselves doing the very opposite of what they know to be right and true. This gives rise to the kinds of moral and psychological trauma related to human sexuality that they sometimes bring to therapy.

Anger management

Often clergy lack the necessary skills to face their anger and successfully dissipate it. Some clergy believe that anger is always a sin that must be confessed and suppressed. They fail to understand that anger can be a valuable tool for change both in ministry and personal lives and for both self-protection and self-preservation.

Clergy generally have difficulty in managing and expressing their anger in a healthy, even positive, fashion. Because they

are viewed as peacemakers, healers, and reconcilers, communicating their anger can not only be hard but also guilt-producing, even when it is regarded as justified and righteous.

Relationship issues

When clergy bring relationship issues to therapy, they want to be shown ways to relate better and in a healthier, more positive fashion. There is the wish to focus upon relationships that are codependent, immature, or even damaging—sometimes with the intention of cutting their losses and leaving the relationship.

If the clergy person is married, this sometimes includes the issue of divorce. The prospect of a divorce to many clergy is akin to crossing a field filled with emotional, spiritual, and professional landmines capable of great destructive power. In therapy, I seek to assess the viability of the marriage and try to assist the couple in healing their damaged marital relationship.

Emotional disorders and substance abuse

Clergy are not immune to mental ill-

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nesses, alcoholism, and other forms of substance abuse. Clergy are not even immune to suicidal thinking and suicide attempts.

Strong religious faith is always a valuable ally when it comes to healing, but at certain times even the strongest faith may need a boost. For clergy this may include not only psychotherapy but also special medications and sometimes hospitalization.

The more understanding church officials bring to the struggles of their clergy with mental illness and substance abuse, the better the prognosis for a complete recovery and resumption of active ministry.

Empowerment issues

One major purpose of therapy is to help clients discover or rediscover a sense of personal power, so that they can then begin to take charge of their own lives, address critical life issues, and do whatever needs to be done to bring about greater integration and wholeness.

My work with clergy also has this focus. Frequently, clergy come into therapy with a sense of learned helplessness. They are convinced that nothing they do will make

a significant difference either in their ministry or in their personal lives. They have conditioned themselves to believe they have no power.

Part of therapy, then, is to help them unlearn their sense of helplessness and show them ways where differences can be made in their lives. For some this may mean requesting a new pastoral assignment. For others it may mean reestablishing authority and leadership in a ministerial or personal setting, where a sense of power has been lost.

Clergy sometimes feel used and misused by those in authority or by those whom they serve. Empowerment therapy helps them realize that they have rights like everyone else and can champion their identity and sense of personal dignity while still remaining pastoral and gospel-centered.

Self-ministry issues

As a group, clergy are generous. They freely give of their time, their resources, and above all, themselves. In therapy, I often work with them on the need for self-ministry, so they can minister to themselves.

Clergy are exceptionally skilled at caregiving, but not to themselves. Pastors need to be reminded to take care of themselves, along with the people they serve.

In practical terms, this means as basic a matter as taking a day off and taking an annual vacation, spending time with family and friends, exercising and relaxing, eating nutritionally, having an annual physical, and leading a balanced lifestyle.

Self-ministry, of course, also includes addressing spiritual and emotional needs such as making and taking time for daily prayer, reading Scripture and other spiritual material, placing one's ministry in God's hands in order to let go of obsessive worry, and the ability to deal with failure as well as success.

More clergy seek therapy these days. This does not mean that clergy are getting sicker. On the contrary, it is a positive sign that they want to become healthier by working on themselves. Good therapy is not at all incompatible with good spirituality, and by becoming more whole, they are able to be more effective ministers of the gospel. ■

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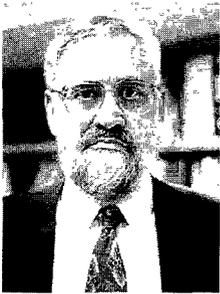
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Eleven-year-old LaRee Wyatt is the coordinator for the Discover Bible School in Gordon, Nebraska. Don't miss her personal testimony on the February Discover Seminar on ACN!



THE WORD IN WORSHIP

Worship is holy conversation to which God constantly invites us. In worship we speak to Him, and we speak to one another, but the conversation is not complete until we hear Him speak to us.



Donald Rhoads, Ph.D., is self-employed in Bloomington, Indiana.

We are often prevented from hearing God speak because of the noise and distractions we carry within us. His invitation to worship creates a place in which these distractions are laid aside. Then, when our souls are quieted, we can hear Him speak in many ways—in silence, in meditation, in music, in fellowship, in prayer, and, most concretely, through His Word.

Many want to see God's Word as central to their worship. They have tended to equate this centrality of the Word with preaching. It is the preacher's task, through the Holy Spirit, to mediate God's Word to the gathered people. Some would insist, further, that the preacher speaks "God's Words."

We who preach, constantly experience the weight of this tradition. Every time we sit before the blank page or the empty screen of the word processor, we pray that the Holy Spirit will help us speak God's Word truly and prophetically. It is surely a noble goal, but who among us is so arrogant as to claim to have achieved it? Could we possibly be requiring ourselves to bear too much of this burden? Perhaps there should be more place in worship for letting the Word speak for itself.

Letting the Word speak

Consider what the Bible says about this. Moses commanded that the law be read

publicly every seven years (Deut. 31:10-13). Joshua, Josiah, and Ezra all participated in lengthy public readings of the law, which were occasions for revival in Israel. In Ezra's case, the law was explained "so that the people could understand what was being read" (Neh. 8:8).*

Jesus, when He went to Nazareth, read from the Scriptures and then expounded on them (Luke 4:16-21). Acts 13:15 shows that readings from both the Law and the Prophets were a standard part of synagogue worship. Paul asked that his letters be read publicly (Col. 4:16), and he admonished Timothy on the duties of apostleship: "Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching" (1 Tim. 4:13). The public reading of Scripture has been a prominent part of worship for thousands of years.¹

How, then, do Seventh-day Adventists justify our own common practice—a "Scripture reading" consisting of two or three verses that take up perhaps thirty seconds, and then preaching for up to sixty minutes? How can we be "people of the Book" while treating Scripture reading as incidental, one of the "preliminaries" to worship? How is it that we who claim the Bible as "our only rule of faith and practice" so often use it in worship only in bits and pieces?

The Scriptures were intended for reading

D O N A L D R H O A D S

aloud. They contain dramatic stories, impassioned polemics, and poetry that plumbs the depths of despair and ascends the heights of ecstasy. None of these can be fully appreciated in a silent reading. Even the most perceptive and faithful conversation about Scriptures is not a substitute for hearing them read aloud, expressively, speaking for themselves.

Why read Scriptures in worship?

The Scriptures ought to be read often in our worship, in generous portions, for the following reasons:

1. When we read, sing, chant, or pray the Scriptures, we make the heavenly language our own, and it becomes part of us.

2. Their reading lends weight, substance, and seriousness to worship and prepares worshipers to receive the Holy Spirit and be receptive to the preaching that follows.

3. Reading several related passages encourages thoughtful, contextual preaching that bases the sermon broadly on the Scriptures, rather than narrowly on one verse or phrase.

4. Reading Scripture provides opportunity for participation in worship. Many who cannot be persuaded to preach or offer a prayer can handle a reading assignment with excellence. Age is no barrier to this participation: the cadences of a well-loved passage may assume special richness in a reading by an elderly person, and there is special beauty and charm in the voice of a young child raising an ancient praise.

5. The one who reads the Scriptures in public performs a priestly function, that of speaking on God's behalf to His gathered people. In this way, the Reformation teaching of the "priesthood of all believers" is given new reality.

6. The reading of a variety of Scriptures expands the possibilities for laypersons to preach. Simply explaining and commenting on the various passages can become an effective sermon.

How to incorporate Scripture in worship

There are several good ways to incorporate the reading of Scripture into our public worship.

Reading related passages. A traditional practice—one that my own congregation has been following for over a year—is to

read three related passages from different parts of the Bible before the sermon. An appropriate psalm may be read responsively, chanted, or sung according to the abilities and tastes of the congregation. In my own congregation, nearly all members participate as readers from time to time.

Scripture services. Occasionally, an entire service may be constructed from Scripture readings. Scripts can be prepared for readers to read one of the epic stories of the Old Testament or a whole book of the Bible, in one service or in two consecutive ones. This type of presentation—which may or may not include a sermon—might be called "Readers' Theater" or some other apt name, for purposes of publicity.

The Scriptures
were intended for reading
aloud. They contain dramatic
stories, impassioned polemics,
and poetry that plumbs the
depths of despair and ascends
the heights of ecstasy. None of
these can be fully appreciated
in a silent reading.

Reading and meditation. A variant of this is particularly appropriate for the Passion season: the story may be read by various readers, from one or more of the gospels, with appropriate music or silences between the readings. It is especially fitting to follow the climax of the reading, which tells of the death of our Lord, with meditative silence.

The practice of Scripture reading in worship is simple to implement and is available equally to large and small churches, regardless of style of worship. The biggest challenge is the actual selection, week by week, of the readings.

Using a lectionary

A few years ago, Dr. Steven Vitrano, now retired from the Andrews Theological Seminary, compiled a one-year, topically-organized lectionary, and I am indebted to him for the inspiration to carry out my own compilation, which I have dubbed "The Greenwood Lectionary."²

The Greenwood Lectionary is a collection of nearly 200 Scripture readings, each consisting of three related passages from different parts of the Bible, together with a psalm. Most of the readings may be read in five to eight minutes.

When the lectionary is used as a preaching schedule, it will provide a well-balanced "diet" of practical, doctrinal, and devotional topics over a three-year period. The teachings of Jesus are used as occasions for preaching on all the Christian and specifically Adventist doctrines, including the Sabbath and the Second Coming.

The lectionary has extensive indexes that make it useful as a sourcebook of worship readings, even where it is not followed as a schedule. Alternative texts are supplied with many of the readings to accommodate differing interpretations of the gospel text. While the lectionary is compiled especially for Seventh-day Adventist use, it is easily adaptable to the needs of other evangelical churches.

Regardless of our theological persuasion or style of worship, the mystical power of the Scriptures is available to all of us through the Holy Spirit. Giving the words of Scripture audible expression is an important way in which worship may draw us together, in wholeness, about the Living Word, our Lord Jesus. ■

*Scripture quotations in this article are from the New International Version.

¹ For an account of Jewish and Christian worship practices in respect to scripture reading, see Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship* (Nashville: Star Song Publishing), vol. 1, chap. 29.

² The author has a few copies of a preliminary edition of The Greenwood Lectionary he would like to distribute to pastors or worship leaders who would be willing to undertake to use, criticize, and contribute their own selections. Comments will be used in the process of compiling a final publishable edition. Persons willing to assist the author in this way should contact him at 1000 W. Williams Road, Bloomington, IN 47404; telephone 812-876-1042; fax 812-876-3942; E-mail <jrheads@indiana.edu>.

SOUL-WINNING THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

Not far from where I live is the famous South Mountain. Last summer I bushwhacked up the side of the mountain in search of a particular tree, the chestnut tree, an important part of United States' eastern woods until the early 1900s.



Josephine Benton, Ph.D., is a chaplain at Williamsport Retirement Village, Williamsport, Maryland.

Today a blight has virtually wiped out the tree. The disease keeps spreading to new shoots that come up from dead trees. We no longer enjoy Longfellow's "spreading chestnut tree," a source of beautiful furniture for generations.

A couple of years ago I was trying to find a new way to the top of South Mountain by following a logging road recently constructed in my area. Convinced it was not going to get me to the top of South Mountain, I started pushing my way up the mountainside with the help of my compass.

As I climbed up a steep slope, I found myself suddenly looking at chestnuts! Spiny fruit lay scattered on the rocks. On the tree above were chestnut leaves! The trunk was about seven inches in diameter. The tree did not seem to be diseased, although I could not tell for sure. "This is important!" I said to myself. I made mental note of a few landmarks so that later I could return to the tree.

Months passed. I was looking through one of my tree books. Under "chestnut" I noticed the suggestion that "Someday a blight-resistant specimen may occur, from which a new strain could be developed."¹

That tree I saw may be significant, I thought. I must find it again!

Last winter I started the search, going up just as nearly as I could remember to the place where I had seen the tree. I went every weekend I could find time, tying markers to indicate areas where I had looked.

One summer day, as I was searching, I thought, *how hard I am searching just for one tree! Am I willing to work this hard to find a soul that is lost?*

That moment I started to pray more earnestly and think more diligently than ever before about the "soup and salvation" program I felt would be good for our church to offer. To me a "soup and salvation" meant providing a meal so that people could come directly from work to church and afterward participate in their choice of classes that we would offer. I had in mind one particular family for whom I had prayed for years. I hoped they and others might be drawn into the nonthreatening setting I had in mind.

Taking interest in people's needs

After coming down from the hike, I asked two of my fellow church members to join me in brainstorming about "soup and

JOSEPHINE BENTON

salvation." We prayed and generated ideas with enthusiasm. I took the results to our church Personal Ministries council. There, too, enthusiasm developed. Since we were planning satellite TV evangelism in November and early December, I thought we might need to wait until the first of the year. However, our pastor asked, "Why don't you go ahead on the five Wednesday evenings in October?"

All right! With God's blessing, things began to take shape. We replaced our code name "soup and salvation" with "food and friendship." The Pathfinder leader volunteered her organization to prepare and serve the food: what a blessing! The elders agreed to lead a group in "basic, practical Bible study." I considered the needs of my "target family," Ginger and Tom Roberts' and their three daughters. Since their 17-year-old had run away from home, I asked our pastor and his wife to offer "parenting teenagers." They agreed. Our pastor's wife has a master's degree in family life.

Because of suggestions of the administrator of Williamsport Retirement Village, where I am chaplain, another group was put together to handle "self-reliance and dealing with domestic violence."

Could we get someone to care for young children? Julie Lyles was at the time eager to start an adventurers' club. She offered to take the children "from 0 to 12." We just about had our program together.

As Ginger, the mother in my "target family," sought my counsel at work in the complicated matter of her runaway daughter, I told her about the "parenting teenagers" group we were going to offer on Wednesday evenings in October. Her first response was, "You know I can't commit to anything." I continued to pray.

A week later Ginger asked if she could bring her 15- and 13-year-olds. This made me want to offer something especially for teenagers. David Byrkit accepted that responsibility. We were all set!

Food, friendship, and group meetings

I appealed to church members to attend, not only for a blessing of their own but also to make the program seem alive for any nonmembers whom the Lord might see fit to bring.

The first Wednesday evening in our fel-

lowship hall we had a splendid group of people eating and visiting happily together when Ginger walked in. I greeted her, talked her into eating, and introduced her to several people, including the pastor and his wife. At group time she went to "parenting teenagers," the topic that had been thought of with her in mind! She didn't bring her daughters that night.

Two vanloads of children from a city housing project came in; they were fed and taken to the teens' and children's groups. The mother of one of them came along and attended the parenting class. The inner city

To me, "soup and salvation" meant providing a meal so that people could come directly from work to church and afterward participate in their choice of classes that we would offer.

people and Ginger constituted our nonmembers in attendance for that evening. We were happy!

Ginger came to each of the three Wednesday evenings. Donna, her middle daughter, came once; Laura, the youngest daughter, is still coming and loves the teenagers' group. As Ginger walked through the foyer leaving the church last week, she called out cheerily, "One day I'll be with you!" I don't know exactly what she meant, but it sounds encouraging, doesn't it?

Today, at Ginger's request, I got her in touch with the pastor's wife to set up an appointment. Yesterday at the nursing home fall festival, Ginger pointed out where her husband, Tom, was standing. I went over and spoke to him and renewed our

warm friendship. God is in the process of answering my many prayers for Ginger, Tom, and their family.

How relationship develops

Let's go back and review how it was that a relationship developed between this family and me. Ginger and I became acquainted when I volunteered to conduct a stop smoking plan at Williamsport Retirement Village four or five years ago. She didn't manage to kick the habit, but we became friends.

Not long after that I started work as chaplain at the Retirement Village. When the mother of Ginger's husband, Tom, passed away unexpectedly, since none of the family had any particular church connections, Ginger suggested that I be asked to conduct the funeral service. I talked and prayed with Tom, his father, siblings, and other family members.

In less than a year's time Tom's dad died, and I was asked to conduct that funeral also. Since this opportunity to minister twice in crisis, I've felt a spiritual responsibility for that family!

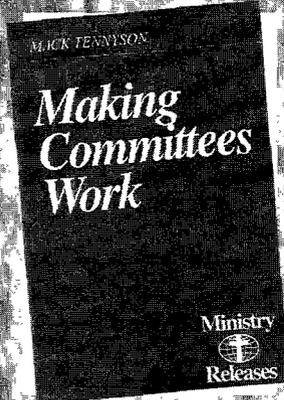
At work Ginger comes to me frequently for counsel. She did stop smoking! When our church brought in an evangelist about three years ago for meetings in a local school, I gave her invitations. Tom, Ginger, and the three girls came one night; Ginger and one of the girls came another night; but that was all. Evidently it wasn't what they were looking for at that time in their lives.

Ginger has been talking to me recently about problems with the oldest daughter, Heidi. She is an attractive, likable teenager who is in rebellion. This brings you up to date in my relationship with Ginger, Tom, and the girls.

Long-term relationships

Two other people with whom God has brought me into long-term relationships are Barb and Carol Ann. Barb attended a weekend cooking school that our church sponsored and to which I invited her about four years ago. I had only recently gotten acquainted with her, when I became chaplain at the Retirement Village.

When Barb showed up for the Sabbath morning eleven o'clock service that was part of the cooking seminar, I went to sit beside her to help her feel welcome. Reading

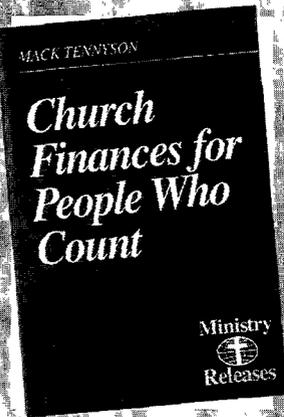


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through the announcements in our church bulletin, Barb turned to me and whispered, "Do you have any good Bible study groups going?"

"No," I replied. Then quickly I added, "But we may be starting one soon."

The next week I searched for suitable material. At the Adventist Book Center I found a set of lessons on the book of John, which I showed to Barb the next time I saw her. She thought it looked interesting, and we agreed to try meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays at my church.

I enlisted the head elder and his wife to help me conduct the class and announced it in our church bulletin. Barb invited friends: Of those who responded, Carol Ann attended the most faithfully. Barb told us, "It was because of what Carol Ann said to me that I found Christ!" The group was never large but held up well.

We were spiritually blessed by our study and prayers together. When we finished studying John, we continued with Acts and then Galatians. Occasionally we had differences of understanding, such as "once saved, always saved."

One night Barb and Carol Ann reported in class that they had been attending Net '95 meetings at another local Seventh-day Adventist Church. We exclaimed, "We're having those same meetings here in this church!" Obviously we hadn't done a very good job of communicating.

Carol Ann and Barb attended a good number of the satellite evangelistic meetings in our church. While on a trip down south, Barb took the list of locations with her and attended other Net '95 meetings on her journey!

At the end of Net '95, I believe both Barb and Carol Ann were convicted about the truth and blessing of the seventh-day Sabbath. They sat in our Bible study group and talked about changes that keeping the Sabbath might make in their lives.

However, I did not calculate on the fears that these friends apparently had of joining a Seventh-day Adventist church. Instead of coming to our church the next Sabbath morning, they visited a Christian Jewish congregation. Their interest began to wane considerably.

Not too long after this, our Bible study group broke up, but I maintained friendly

contact with Barb and Carol Ann.

Barb gave me a book on dispensationalism. With a smile she said, "That just about answers everything, doesn't it?"

I spent some time with the book and found that it contained what to me were unusual interpretations of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8. The Sabbath was assigned to a "dispensation" other than our own. This, more than anything else, I suppose, led Barb to feel "free" from the conviction she had experienced earlier.

I could see that Barb's interpretations could not be answered by glibly citing a few key texts. My own knowledge of dispensationalism was limited. I therefore began a study of the Bible relevant to the topic. After studying for perhaps six months, I offered to share some of what I had found in my studies, and we started the group again. Carol Ann didn't attend, because she was keeping her granddaughter on Wednesday evenings. Barb and her friend Frank came a couple of times, and when they did, they stayed for our regular prayer meeting afterward. However, they did not attend regularly.

When "food and friendship" was about to start, I told Barb about it and took a schedule by her home.

Neither Barb nor Carol Ann showed up for that first Wednesday evening of "food and friendship."

The next evening Carol Ann was involved in a terrible highway accident. With her in the car were her daughter and granddaughter. Carol Ann's spleen had to be removed; she suffered a broken femur, a concussion, and numerous spinal fractures. Her daughter had several crushed vertebrae and her granddaughter a broken thigh.

The next evening I visited Carol Ann in intensive care. Her face was swollen. She did not speak but showed some response by opening her eyes. I repeated Psalm 23 and offered prayer.

A week later I found Carol Ann moved out of intensive into progressive care. She was able to talk with me! I read Scripture and prayed with her. As I was leaving, Carol Ann said softly, "I miss doing things with you, Josephine." What music to my ears! The next day she had a setback. It was uncertain as to whether Carol Ann would recover. With many others, I continued praying for her.

A few days later when I entered the hospital room, Carol Ann's eyes were closed. I was not sure I should disturb her. Finally I touched her hand softly. She immediately opened her eyes and smiled. I showed her the garden bouquet I had brought her. "They're beautiful!" she said softly. I told her how much she means to me and prayed for her and her family. She thanked me warmly.

A plan of action

Year after year, the Lord Jesus leads me to people whose study of the Bible results in baptism within six months to a year. Then the Lord also blesses me with contacts such as Ginger, Barb, and Carol Ann. I hope one day to be able to say that we have found the chestnut tree and that Carol Ann, Barb, Ginger, and other family members have committed themselves to Christ and become part of the church. God alone knows how that will all work out.

In the meantime, I have a plan of action. As for the tree, my family has agreed to search for it with me after frost cuts down the weeds. As for Ginger, I plan to invite her and Laura to come to Sabbath School soon. As for Barb and Carol Ann, when God has blessed Carol Ann with health enough to study again, I plan to flat-out ask them to come see what I've been studying about God's dealings with His people through all the dispensations. However, all these plans are subject to God's guidance day by day.

Just as I will continue to search for that lost chestnut tree until I find it, alive or dead, so I will continue working for the people whom God brings to me to love and serve through long-term commitments. Jesus waited years for Nicodemus to step out publicly (John 3:1-17; 19:38, 39). Then what a valuable person Nicodemus turned out to be!¹

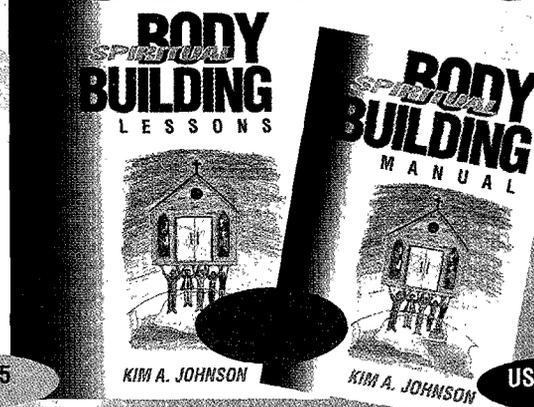
These friends I'm working with also have the potential to be exceptional leaders in Christ's work. ■

¹ George A. Petrides, *A Field Guide to Trees and Shrubs* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), p. 265.

² Some names have been changed to protect privacy.

³ See Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 177.

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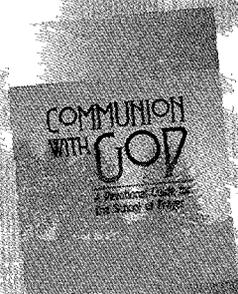
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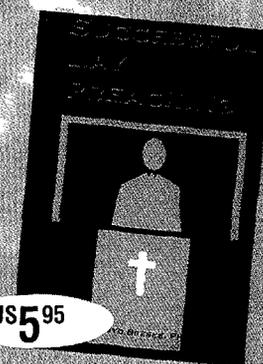
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Canonization, according to Leiman, is “the process by which a book leaves the realm of the ordinary, and instead becomes

authoritative for religious practice or doctrine for all generations.”¹ But, was any biblical book ever “ordinary” before becoming authoritative? The interpretive assumptions—that is, the hermeneutics—aid in determining the answer.

This article uses a canonical hermeneutic. It starts with the canonical text, accepts the information in it as historical, and seeks conclusions consistent with those facts. It deals with the development of the canon, introduces some new terms for canonical discourse, analyzes some hermeneutical approaches to canonization, and finally addresses the question of a “closed” canon. Most discussion deals with the Old Testament, although the principle applies to the New as well.

Canonization: terms and examples

The original meaning of canon is a “measuring rod,” used as we use words such as “standard” or “criteria”² today. The early church used the word to denote “the authoritative (canonical) list of books which belong to the Bible.”³

Obviously, the biblical canon was not completed at one time. If we think of the canon in terms of a healthy baby born at full term, we can usefully label each stage of its gestation before its birth. A human fetus is fully human without being fully developed. So the canon—from inception through gestation—was fully authoritative though not fully grown.

There was time between an inspired work’s composition and the time of its placement in the epichronous (at-that-time) canon. To refer to this interval, we could use the term *eisocanon*—that is,

Hermeneutics and the development of the canon

LUIS F. ACOSTA

the individual book is authoritative from the beginning but is on its way into (*eiso*) the authoritative collection. The interval was brief for the majority of the Old Testament. Joshua and Samuel became part of the epichronous canon in their

The original meaning of canon is a “measuring rod,” used as we use words such as “standard” or “criteria” today. The early church used the word to denote “the authoritative (canonical) list of books which belong to the Bible.”

lifetime (see Josh. 24:26 and 1 Sam. 10:25). Daniel accepted Jeremiah as authoritative within a short time of its writing (see Dan. 9:2; Jer. 25:11-12). Ezekiel, a contemporary of Daniel, had made note of Daniel’s proverbial fame by the twelfth year of the Babylonian

captivity (Ezek. 114:14, 20; 28:3; cf. 33:21 and 26:1; 29:1).

The book of Psalms is a clear example of developing or epichronous canonicity. It is also an example of subcanonicity: a smaller collection of works, as well as single works developing into a larger collection (see table on p. 27). During David’s lifetime, approximately 49 percent of the psalmic canon came from his hand. However, the psalm writers, Asaph, Heman, and Ethan were David’s contemporaries (1 Chron. 15:19). From internal evidence, most psalms were composed and/or compiled during David’s reign (see 25:1-6).

Three approaches to canonization

We shall look at examples of two major approaches in the study of how the canon developed. We will also look at the approach of a major Adventist scholar.

An historical-critical approach. Leiman wrote as if it were a matter of indisputable fact: “Though we possess a fair knowledge of the Bible’s message, we know next to nothing about its literary history. We do not know, for example, when or where the biblical books were first published, or how they gained admission into that very select group of writings which we call the Hebrew Bible.”⁴

However, Leiman did recognize a key element in the conjectures of some historical-critical scholarship. He stated that “most of the references to canonical literature refer to the Torah or portions of it. They are particularly *problematic* because of the ambiguity of numerous terms used to depict the Torah or its portions, and *because of the difficulty in dating passages which impute the notion of canonicity to the earliest periods of Israelite history.*”⁵

Here, methodological doubt admits having a problem with accepting the canon’s internal witness to early canonicity. Leiman saw the implications

of passages that attest to it (e.g., Exod. 24:4, 7, 12; 32:15; Deut. 9:9ff; 1 Kings 2:3; 8:9).

A conservative approach. According to Vasholz, the view of a late Old Testament canonical development fails to take seriously at least one aspect of Old Testament canonicity into account: The "Old Testament itself vigorously and repeatedly asserts that it is the 'Word of the Lord.' . . . It always projects itself as binding, authoritative and God-given throughout. . . . The idea of 2 Samuel 23:1-3, 'The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me, his word was on my tongue,' is pervasive. The Old Testament never veers from this."⁶

Vasholz's overstated generalization faces problems with Ruth, Ezra, Esther, Nehemiah, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes. None of these Old Testament books claim that "the word of the Lord came" to their authors.

Indeed most Old Testament books are not explicit on authorship. No specific claim is made for Genesis. Nor for Kings or Chronicles, other than can be inferred from the mention of prophets such as Nathan (1 Kings 1:8, 10, etc.), Ahijah (11:29), Jehu (16:7), Elijah (17:1), and 100 of Elijah's unnamed colleagues (18:4). Prophetic chroniclers likely recorded the kingdom events of their own times.

Only Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Jonah, Micah, Haggai, and Zechariah say they spoke on the authority of God. Adding Moses (Exod. 17:14; 24:4; Num. 33:2; and Deut. 31:24), Joshua (Josh. 24:26), and Samuel (1 Sam. 10:25) accounts for only 15 of the 39 individual books.

Prophets did not seek to explain the source of their authority. Amos even denied he was a prophet (Amos 7:14). Jesus was actually asked by what authority He spoke and astutely denied the need to answer (Matt. 21:23-27).

It is true, Vasholz held, that ancient Near Eastern writings have examples of religious leaders who also professed to have received words from their gods. But

none claimed it in the context of a wide, public witness such as at Mount Sinai. That is unique to the Old Testament.⁷

Adventist hermeneutics. Seventh-day Adventist canonical research is a virtually untilled field. Only the late Gerhard Hasel has made a significant contribution in this area. According to Hasel, "Inspiration is . . . the essential, internal quality of Scripture from which its authority derives."⁸ Either "The Bible is the product of human decisions based on sociocultural norms and events in the history of the past which can be reactualized in the present," or "Humans came to recognize the authority of Scripture because of an inherent nature and quality of the writings of the Bible as the self-authenticating, self-validating Word of God."⁹

If so, how have communities known how to "affirm" true inspiration? Passages such as Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:5-22, Isaiah 8:20, Matthew 7:15-16, 1 Corinthians 14:29, and 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21 among others reveal the role of the community of faith.

Hasel correctly argues that a particular book or section became authoritative at the very time it was written.¹⁰ However, according to the passages above, all prophets and/or prophetic writings (after Moses and Joshua) were to be either verified or rejected by the faith communities.

Historically, the Pentateuch provided the first criteria by which to assess subsequent writings. Hasel agrees with Pentateuchal primacy.¹¹ Passages such as Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and 18:5-22 indicate not only that true messengers would come but also false ones. This is why Moses asks: "How shall we know the word which the Lord has *not* spoken?" (Deut. 18:21).

In attempting to avoid giving the faith community any determinative role in the canon's growth, Hasel advanced the theory that "the Bible is canonical before the canonicity is recognized by any community of faith."¹² Nevertheless, a body of writings is not authoritative

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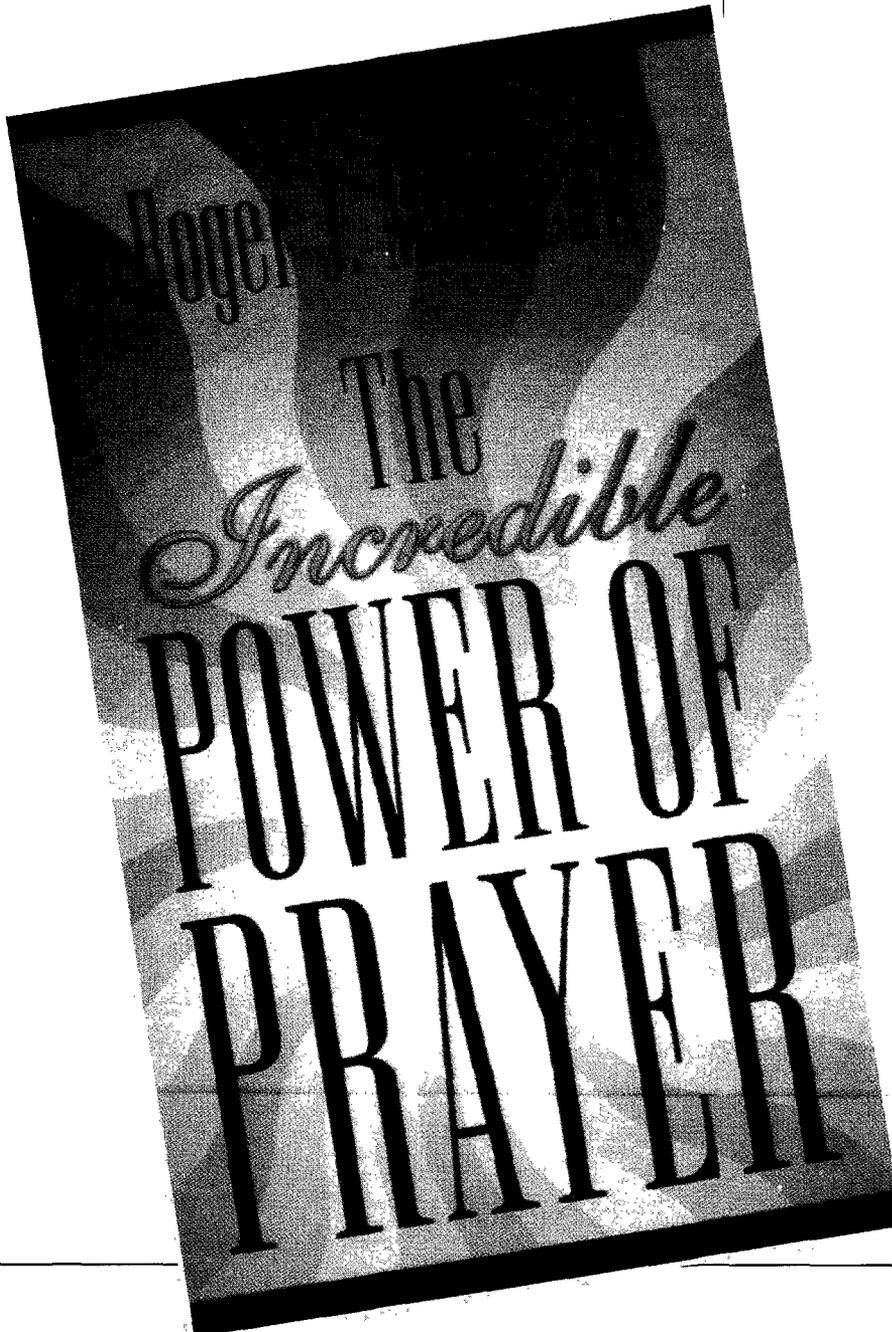
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unless it is authoritative for a body of people. There is no canon without some community of faith, and there is no community of faith without some type of canon.

Hasel proposed that "intrinsic authority, given through divine inspiration, both implies and produces canonicity."¹³ The "inspired Word of God is by its very nature 'Scripture' and is canonical from the moment it is recorded in written form by the hands of the inspired writers."¹⁴ Equating canon to Scripture is useful for explaining what is *in* the Bible. It fails, however, to answer for what is *not* in the Bible.

Twelve apparently "uncanonized"¹⁵ prophetic works appear in the Bible. Why are they not in the present canon if inspiration in, of, and by itself makes a book inherently Scripture. What were the criteria for *not* "affirming" them?¹⁶ Obviously, all things in the canon are inspired and authoritative, but *not all things inspired and authoritative are in the canon.*

New Testament usage of Old Testament passages are not proof enough of the canonicity and authority of the Old. The New Testament does not quote from 15 Old Testament canonical books—Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Obadiah, Nahum, and Zephaniah.¹⁷ Does this mean they are not canonical? Of course not.

To summarize: Leiman's hermeneutics cannot account for the early canonicity of what *is* in the canon; Hasel's solution cannot account for what is *not* in the canon; and Vasholz, though solid on the Pentateuch's early primacy, overstated part of his case for canonical authority in order to make it.

A dynamic canon

One could say that the idea of a "closed" canon is a theological construct. We can certainly say that the Bible is the "present" canon. We should also say that

Author	Number of Psalms	Percent
Anonymous psalms	60	40.00
Asaph	12	8.00
David	73	48.60
Ethan the Ezrahite	1	.70
Heman the Ezrahite	1	.70
Moses	1	.70
Solomon	2	1.30
Total Psalms	150	100.00

it shows greater prophetic activity than can be established by simply counting books.

Although we do not advocate an expanded canon, the present canon demonstrates dynamic growth rather than being static and terminal. Collectively, the canon calls us to expect, verify, and heed the continuing ministry of the Spirit.

Christ's wilderness experience in the context of His baptism exemplifies this expectation. The heavenly voice had testified that Jesus was God's beloved and pleasing Son. When tempted by Satan to doubt His divine origin, Christ resisted and rested on both the *Living Word* (see Matthew 3:16) and the *Written Word*—"every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4; cf. Deut. 8:3).

God has not canceled the right to be heard with authority both in preserved canon and through living prophet. The canon is paradoxically both more than and the same as its human authors, events, cultures, and literary genres. Divinity and humanity are equally involved. That much *human* involvement should help us see the Scriptures for what they are on a human level—a wrenching reality for some. That much *divine* involvement should help us see the Scriptures for what they are from a divine perspective—a troubling truth for others. ■

¹ Sid Z. Leiman, *The Canonization of the Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence*, vol. 47 of the Transactions of The Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences (Hamden, Conn.: The Shoe String Press, Inc., 1976), p. 9.

² Gerhard F. Hasel, "Divine Inspiration and the Canon of the Bible," *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* (Spring 1994), p.71.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁴ Leiman, p. 9. Emphasis supplied.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19. Emphasis supplied.

⁶ Vasholz, p. 2.

⁷ Vasholz, p. 9.

⁸ Hasel, p. 68.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 94.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁵ "Uncanonized" because they are not individually in the present canon. They were obviously "canonical" in the sense of inspiration and authority and are no doubt subcanons of books such as Kings and Chronicles.

¹⁶ In the New Testament canon, for example, Paul's letter to the Corinthians preceding 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 5:9), and to the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16).

¹⁷ See "Index of Quotations: Old Testament Order" in *The Greek New Testament*, 3rd corrected ed., Kurt Aland and others, eds. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1983), pp. 897, 898.

Luis F. Acosta is an associate pastor of the PanAmerican Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hacienda Heights, California.



I've got to show you something, pastor," Joe exclaimed as he unrolled a long strip of paper across my desk. On it he'd drawn

an elaborate time line of prophetic events, from ancient times to the present and well into the future.

With a pen as a pointer, Joe eagerly traced a line right to the end of the chart, trying to interest me in some new innovation on an end-time event that he had just discovered in a little-referenced passage. In spite of my admiration for his artistic and eschatological diligence, I confess that it was only a moment before my eyes glazed over.

Joe must have noticed my loss of interest, because suddenly he grasped my arm and said, "Pastor, these are things we absolutely must know if we're going to be ready for Jesus to come."

Was Joe correct? Is this what it means to be ready for Jesus to return?

The essential message

As of this month, *Ministry* has been published for 70 years. While we commemorate this anniversary, we must recognize the bad news—we are still here. After all, shouldn't we have been in the kingdom "long ere this"? Nevertheless, 70 years have passed, and we still wait. What shall we do while we wait?

Our first editor, L. E. Froom, clearly understood that the vital issue is the message more than the timing. In our inaugural issue he wrote, "The most irresistible thing in the world is a movement and a message whose time has come."

Froom then cited great movements and messages of spiritual history: Noah, Moses, John the Baptist, Jesus, Pentecost, the Reformation, and the Advent awakening. He concludes by saying of these movements, "They came each and

While we wait

JAMES A. CRESS

all, in the will and providence of God, at the time appointed."

What is that message? Froom said "Righteousness by faith is not a slogan or a catch phrase. It is not merely a doctrine to receive mental assent. It is a living experience that must become a personal actuality in all who shall triumph. . . . Call it what you will—the message of the indwelling Christ, the latter rain, genuine Christian experience, the deeper life, the victorious life, righteousness through Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit—if rightly understood, these are simply varying expressions for the one all-essential, crowning provision to prepare a people to meet their God. It is God's final call for an experimental fitness for translation day. . . . And let us remember continually the irresistibility of a heaven-born principle set free at God's appointed time."

There it is. The question is not whether we are waiting for Jesus' return but how we are waiting. Our challenge is to do what we should at God's appointed time rather than to expend our energies in calculating dates and signs.

Relearning the lesson

Ironically, the very first lesson God taught Advent believers was that they were not to become too entranced with the time of Christ's coming. In 1844 our pioneers predicted the date of the Second Advent—and were disappointed. Right then and there they decided that Adventists would always eagerly await Jesus' return but they would never again specify when they expected it to happen.

This is a lesson we must continually relearn. For even if we don't set precise dates, we have tended to let eschatological

details captivate us. Thinking to apply Jesus' counsel to watch and wait, some draw charts and do fascinating things with Bible numbers. Some look for esoteric bits of knowledge in out-of-the-way passages while others concentrate on political events and read great portent into every headline. Others study each move of other religious organizations as if this will reveal the secret.

My encounter with my overanxious church member compelled me to pen a limerick. Its message is better than its poetic depth:

*A young theologian named Joe
Eschatologically was "in the know"
So he plotted and charted,
But the saints all departed
While Joe had three signs yet to go.*

Do we prepare for the coming by merely "making a list and checking it twice"? Can we face the challenge of waiting while avoiding the pitfall of dictating the details to Deity?

I once took a photograph of my wife on a busy Hong Kong street. I had stood a bit too far away from her, though, because when I saw the developed picture, I could hardly find Sharon amidst the cluttered background. The scene was so busy with people, cars, buildings, and signs that Sharon disappeared into the details.

When we fill our spiritual lives with the details of the Advent, the Lord of the Advent may well disappear into the background. Satan delights in sidetracking us. Far too many view the great controversy as if the enemy controls the agenda. With sadness I observe some believers as more diligent about keeping an eye on the beast than they are about keeping their eyes on Jesus.

Remember, God wins in God's time!

The "how" of waiting

There is a better way to wait for Jesus to come. Matthew 24 pictures Jesus on the Mount of Olives. There, gazing down at the temple shining brilliant in the sunlight, He tells the disciples about the

events that will happen before His return and warns them to watch and wait.

But knowing that what He says may be misunderstood, Jesus adds a parable. Imagine a small businessman putting his servant in charge of his affairs while he goes on a trip. But the boss's return is delayed. If this master has a bad servant, upon returning, he might find that the servant had given up waiting, had spent his time "goofing off," or even had begun to fight with his fellow servants.

And what would the master find a good servant doing? Working. That's all! Simply doing the work the master wants him to do.

That's what it means to watch and wait. Faithful servants work while they wait for their Master to come home. As they wait, they will be doing His business—preaching the gospel, helping those in need, raising good families, living Christian lives, winning souls to Christ—not speculating about dates and times.

Speculation versus faith

As the millennium approaches, some—even a few well-known names in our church—have stepped forth to declare that they have studied these details more diligently than the rest of us and can tell us, if not the day or hour, at least the general time of Christ's coming.

But while such tactics sell books, the popularity of these theories is not a good sign for Adventism. It suggests that even after 150 years we have never quite given up our desire to second-guess God. This is toxic religion at its extreme and defies the very words of our Lord who said "No man knows the day nor the hour."

I have noticed through the years that each time we Adventists have studied the signs and prophecies attempting to divine what will happen next, we lose spiritual perspective. We begin to "goof off," to scrap with one another about details, and to lose sight of both the Lord and His priorities. We can become so preoccupied with coming Sunday laws that we miss the coming King!

But when we have studied past events to see how the Lord has led us in accordance with His prophecies, our faith has been strengthened.

Why, then, you may ask, were these signs given, if not to provide us clues?

Nowhere does Jesus say "I'm telling you these things so you can figure out what is going to happen next before everyone else does." If that is what He intended to do, it would contradict His advice about being ever ready and vigilant because "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night."

What Jesus does say is "I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe" (John 14:29).

Being ready

I earnestly want Jesus to return. And I quite agree with Joe that we are not ready. But this is not because we have failed to memorize his time chart. It is because we have failed to experience Jesus' other advent. There is, you see, an advent of Christ in between the one recorded in the gospels and the one described in Revelation.

The vital coming between Bethlehem and Armageddon is when He comes into our hearts right now. And I boldly say that unless Christ has first been invited to come into the hearts and lives of His people, He will never come for us in the heavens.

If our Lord delays His coming, it is not because we have not traced out the right chart or calculated the right formula or spotted the right portentous event. It is because we have been too busy tracing, calculating, and spotting to welcome and know our life-changing Lord Himself.

Editor Froom was correct in understanding the primacy of righteousness by faith—faith in Jesus' righteousness that enlivens, transforms, and, ultimately, translates God's people.

What will the Lord find you doing when He returns? ■



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BOOKS

The Embrace of God, by M. Lloyd Erickson. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1996, 219 pages, paperback, \$9.99.

A clinical psychologist therapeutically applies the biblically-revealed characteristics of God as the divine Parent to the personal/relational needs of the "estimated 95 percent" of us whose lives and relationships have been adversely affected in numerous ways by "families [that are] troubled, unhealthy, or dysfunctional in some way."

Lloyd Erickson, director of counseling and testing at Andrews University, shares cases from his counseling practice involving patients who gained an understanding of God as their nurturing heavenly Father—a factor that provided a corrective healing influence essential to their personal recovery and growth.

All 18 chapters give a glimpse of God's character as a Parent who provides the counterpoint to malfunctioning family systems. Chapter titles include: "The Father Who Never Abandons," "The Non-perfectionist Parent," "The Issue of Parental Control," and "If My Heavenly Father Is So Good, Why Am I in So Much Pain?" The two chapters portraying "Glimpses of a Father Who Hugs" are classic.

This book helped me in numerous ways as time and again it cast respectable theology in a fresh, practical light. It provided our pastoral staff with many touch points for hours of fruitful discussion of our own family influences and personal views of God. I wish I could afford to give this book as a gift to every member in my congregations.—Skip MacCarty, associate pastor, Pioneer Memorial Church, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible, by Hans K. LaRondelle. First Impressions, 400 pages, softcover (\$19.90) or hardcover (\$29.90).

Dr. LaRondelle, emeritus professor of theology, offers to all pastors, teachers, and students of the Word of God the benefit of his years of intensive studies in the end-time prophecies. His new approach is to interpret the book of Revelation in light of how Jesus applied Daniel's prophecies in Matthew 24 and 2 Thessalonians 2. The result is a challenging contribution to a better understanding of Revelation.

To order, visit the Adventist Book Center. You may also call First Impressions at 941-335-0037 or fax 941-358-0162.

David, by Charles R. Swindoll. Word Publishers, Inc., Dallas, 1997, 297 pages, hardcover, \$19.95.

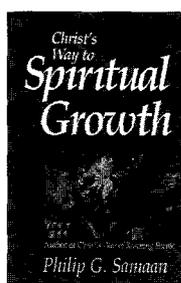
In this first book of a Swindoll series on colorful persons of the Bible, the author gives us the portrayal of David as he really was—a shepherd boy, a singer of songs, a slayer of Goliath, a passionate man, a conquering king, a sinner, and a man after God's own heart.

In studying David's life, Swindoll deals with crisis and fulfillment. In each crisis David had no one to lean on except God. In each crisis David was being prepared to learn to trust God before he could take the throne. Swindoll reminds us that God is sovereign and able to control matters in His own time and way.

This book is a straightforward look into David's heart. No matter what one's station in life, this book will lead to self-examination and soul-searching.—Kenneth H. Livesay, Paradise, California.

Christ's Way to Spiritual Growth, by Philip G. Samaan.

Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1995, 254 pages, \$12.99.



In recent years spirituality has captured the interest of the religious and the nonreligious. Many sense their need for something in their lives—something beyond

themselves that can transcend materialism, secularism, and the myriad other things that they hoped would give them meaning but do not.

There are diverse ways people pursue to experience some form of spirituality in order to satisfy their inward hunger. Genuine spirituality is the dynamic process of becoming Christlike as the Holy Spirit guides us to emulate Christ in His love and devotion to the Father.

This book will help pastors embrace authentic spirituality and expose their people to it.

Faith, Reason, and Earth History: A Paradigm of Earth and Biological Origins by Intelligent Design, by Leonard Brand, Ph.D.

Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs, Michigan. ISBN 1-883925-15-0, \$34.99.

Can creationists be effective scientists? Leonard Brand says Yes. In his patient and accurate explanation of the mission of science, Brand models his conviction that "above all, it is essential that we treat each other with respect, even if we disagree on fundamental issues."

One of Brand's main goals in this book is to present a constructive way of thinking about origins and earth history—to show how to analyze the available scientific data and how to approach unsolved problems. If we have confidence in Scripture, we don't need to be afraid of data but can contribute to progress in understanding earth history.

Ideal as a classroom text, this is one of the first books on this topic to be written from the point of view of an experienced research scientist. A published biologist and paleontologist, the author brings to this very well-illustrated book a rich assortment of scientific examples.

Kurt Wise, Bryan College, says "Leonard Brand introduces some essential pieces of the emerging creation model. . . [His creation text] is one of the first to have shed the positivist philosophy of science. . . Evolutionists and creationists, scientists and non-scientists,

theologians and non-theologians alike will profit from reading this volume.”

SHOPTALK

Putting the church to work

One Sabbath I preached a sermon on Matthew 16:24-26, concluding with an appeal to take a prayer request card from the pews and respond to the following statement: “If there were a ministry need that I have the talent or gifts to fill, I could routinely find ___ hours per week above my present church involvement to meet that ministry need.”

I acknowledged that there may be several members already sacrificing too much family time in order to serve the church activities, and in such cases they need not turn in a card. However, others may feel God calling them to rearrange some priorities to serve Him better.

We received more than twenty cards with commitments of more than fifty collective hours. To my further delight, nearly half of the cards listed specific areas of service that would be of interest to them. I am presently visiting with these members and releasing them to do active ministry in our congregation. Members who might have felt underutilized now know that they, too, are needed in the church.

For a copy of the sermon, send an E-mail to lennHolland@compuserve.com or mail a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Pastor Glenn Holland, Arden SDA Church, P.O. Box 128, Arden, NC 28704. Phone: 704-684-6700.

Postcard ministry

I’m always uncomfortable when I visit someone who has not attended church for some time and who says, “You’re the first person who’s called in three months!”

The reason for my feeling is that, at times, we could do a whole lot better at keeping in touch. The caring church will attempt to let others know that somebody misses them when, for whatever reason, they are absent from worship and fellowship services.

One way to facilitate this is what I call a “postcard ministry.”

Simply, the idea is to purchase some cards that can be placed in a box at the end of each second or third pew. A box of cards may also be left in a prominent place in the foyer of the church and/or next to the visitors’ book.

As members meet for Sabbath School or the worship service and note that some person is missing, they can fill in a card with an appropriate message, sign the card, and at the end of the service, hand it to a deacon designate who then places a stamp on the card and mails it.

Someone who is discouraged or is in the hospital may be uplifted by several messages of caring love.—Steve Cinzio, Logan Village, Queensland, Australia.

Ten Commandments in chanting

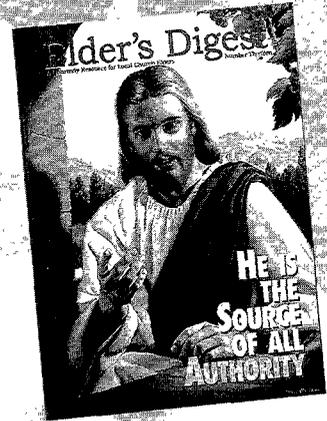
My wife Joyce, who has been composing church music for several years, recently felt impressed that if God wanted the children of Israel to chant the commandments, we may chant them today.

She researched the Hebrew chant and found that it was much more melodic than what we normally consider a “chant.” However, as Hebrew chanting has too much melisma for modern ears, she has written them as simple tunes sung easily by children or adults.

Each commandment has a positive principle that is also sung. For instance, the principle of “Thou shalt not kill” becomes “See that you reverence the life of God’s creatures.”

A short time ago I preached a series of sermons on the commandments, and during each sermon we taught the congregation to sing the commandment.

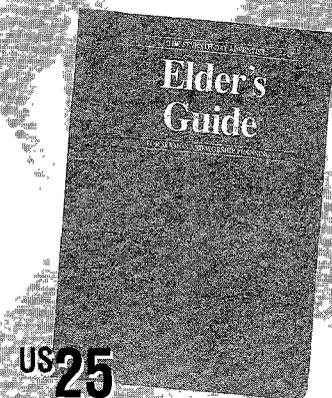
“The Ten Commandments in Chanting” has been well-received and is available with music, overhead transparencies, and recordings. Send \$19.95 to Melody Music, 562 Jefferson Road, Mullica Hill, NJ 08062-9447.
—Donald C. Bozarth, pastor, Mullica Hills, New Jersey. ■



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