

MINISTRY

International Journal for Pastors

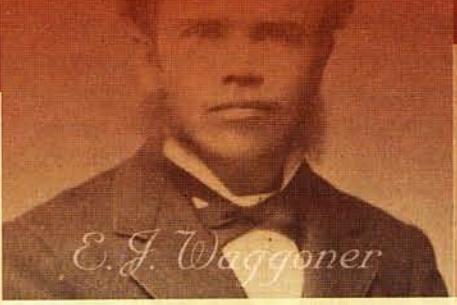


Celebrating 75 Years of
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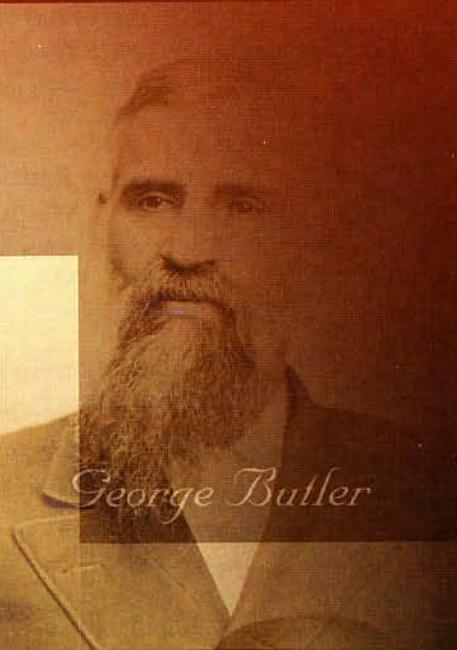
February 2003



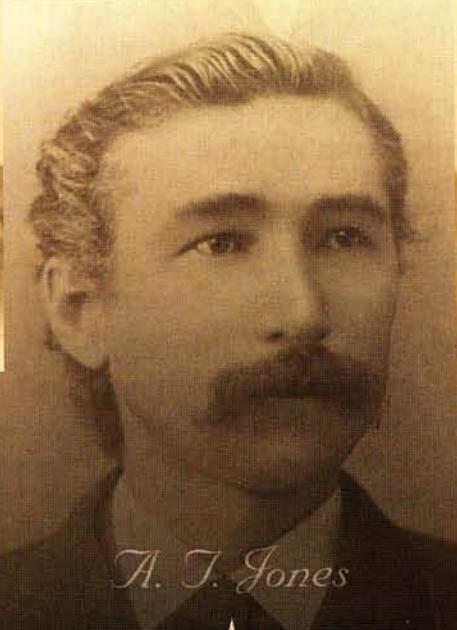
Uriah Smith



E. J. Waggoner



George Butler



A. T. Jones



Ellen G. White



W. W. Prescott

A Slice of History

The Difficulties of
Imposing Orthodoxy

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THROUGHOUT THE GOSPELS, JESUS DOESN'T SPEND HIS TIME CONDEMNING SEXUAL SINS AND DRUNKENNESS, BUT INSTEAD ATTACKS THE OPEN SINS OF PRIDE AND SELFISHNESS.

October 2002 issue

The article entitled "Church Discipline the Redemptive Way" deeply saddened me. I disagree with it and have major issues with the content.

It seems that Tim Crosby—as well as most Christians—define "open sin" as sexual sins as well as the usage of alcohol and drugs. However, this definition of open sin is far too narrow, especially in light of Jesus' teachings. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus doesn't spend His time condemning sexual sins and drunkenness, but instead attacks the open sins of pride and selfishness.

The open sins of pride and selfishness are far more damaging than any sexual impropriety. These sins cause much more pain and hurt to the church and its members than any other sin. If we were to take Crosby's advice of kicking out people with open sin and used the true definition of open sin, I'm afraid we would be left with very few church members. In fact, we would have to shut down the majority of churches for lack of members, and I personally would have to be kicked out of the church because I struggle with these sins myself.

The other issue I have with the article is Crosby's use of a few "success" stories of people who have been kicked out of church and then came back. The reality of the situation is that there are millions of people in the world who will never step foot in a church again or for the first time because of the judgmental attitude they experience among the members.

As a future pastor, I hope and pray

that Crosby's attitude is not one that I will come across frequently in the churches I will pastor. This attitude among the members is one of the reasons our churches are not flourishing like God wants them to.

—Trevan Osborn, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Tim Crosby's "Church Discipline the Redemptive Way" is pure gold. It should be a main article in the *Adventist Review* on a high-priority track.

—Rolland Ruf, Collegedale, Tennessee.

I can't help but respond to Richard Coffen's "The Enigma of Unanswered Prayer." It is unfortunate that books of prayer stories always chronicle the prayers that have answers directly in line with the requests made of God. Rarely, if ever, do we find detailed accounts of prayers either denied or answered in a manner greatly different from the initial request.

When God did not strike Mrs. Brown with death, it was a clear answer to the prayer of Kurt and Kent, and I am sure that with a little maturity and introspection, they should recognize that fact. Our Savior must have known that His prayer, "Let this cup pass from me," was answered, although it could seem to have been ignored in the events that followed.

The prophet Elijah surely had the inspiration of God when he confronted Ahab a second time and demanded a convocation on Carmel. With instruction of this nature, Elijah could know, in advance, the response of God. The rant-

ings of the heathen priests were, in fact, no prayers at all since prayers must be made to a being who can fulfill them. Baal was the product of man's imagination constructed by man's hands.

Surely, most of us have prayed prayers where the silent "No" of God directly corresponds with the request. And, this correspondence can, later, be clearly seen.

—Bryce Hickerson, Carmichael, California.

I read with interest Gosnell Yorke's letter concerning Bible translations.

He commented upon the book *Battle of the Bibles*, by H. H. Meyers, which is an affirmation of the King James Version of the Bible. I too have read this book, and unlike Gosnell Yorke, found it to be an excellently researched book. It is historically sound.

It appears that Pastor Yorke may not be familiar with the fact that, at the time of the Reformation, the battle as to which manuscripts to use was pivotal. All European Protestants chose the untampered Eastern Syriac-Greek texts, while Roman Catholics chose the tampered Western Alexandrian Greek texts. By the way, the present King James Bible that we have today, rather than being the early seventeenth-century edition, is the late eighteenth-century revision.

Brother Meyers has raised a not insignificant issue concerning the most valid record of Scripture in the English language. This issue should not be treated lightly. ▀

—Colin Standish, Australia.

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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.

God can be mystifying!

It seems to me that God is more rigorous and even, at times, severe, in His dealings with us than we would like to admit or accept. What is even more disturbing to us is that God appears to us to be much less consistent and much more mystifying than we would like to acknowledge.

We appreciate God more when we feel we can prescribe His thoughts and ways until they coincide with our own. We are more comfortable with God when to us He seems more adaptable to this or that carefully developed, politically correct notion.

We feel we can then place the tough issues of life and the church in the category of being settled and finalized, so that when we encounter any deviation from that settled position, it will be obvious to us how we should think and act. This is not the worst description of what's often behind what we call "orthodoxy."

We like to worship gods whom we have determined are in the business of making us feel good; who protect our peace of mind; who cure, comfort, and cater to us. We like a god who lives to shield us from having to deal with anything disturbing or different.

When you think about it, whether or not we worship God is often based on whether we approve of, or can in fact appreciate and identify with, His thought and behavior.

As part of this way of looking at God and truth, we sometimes seem to be convinced that when any given viewpoint is divisive, it must be wrong. It is intriguing to note when it was, and in

which specific and general setting, that Jesus, the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6), said, "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34, NIV).

Looking at all this, we can well ask, Was God ever more mystifying to us than when He became a man at the Incarnation? Did He ever act in a more surprising, unexpected way? Was there ever a moment when God so entirely confounded what we humans were predicting and bargaining on?

Born with nowhere to lay His head. Reposed in a donkey's feeding trough, wrapped in borrowed rags, which were bound about His tiny body by a peasant mother who was, of all things, a virgin!

And then, at virtually every significant step, He countered the expectations of His closest followers, who even when He was ascending . . . ascending? . . . held onto Him still insisting, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6, NIV). And finally, quite understandably, being killed as a danger to the faith and established

structures and cultures of the nations; thus adding to His resumé one more massive offense—the offense of the Cross.

And the Incarnation itself was only part of the catch! No more sacrifices for sin, no more lambs or priestly ministries in the temple, and no more temple! No more Levitical or ceremonial systems. In other words, no more of that which had been central to the faith and practice of the faithful for centuries. It seemed it was time for the orthodox to act and to stand up to be counted as proponents of the faith of their fathers. So the orthodox ended up putting God to death.

This matter of God's involvement or guidance among us, of what the actual will and way of God are in a given situation, is a difficult issue to tackle. It is difficult because no matter which side of the line one stands on in a given situation, he or she is subject to the same questions about the validity of their position versus that of their counterpart.

Gil Valentine's penetrating article, "A Slice of History" (see page 5), is a fine example of our classic struggle to understand and follow the way God is leading in His movements on this planet. The players in this "slice" are classic characters, as is the issue of orthodoxy versus innovation, as are the complexities of the struggle, as are the ways they play out, as is the frustrating, knotted-up impasse Dr. Valentine describes, as are the feelings that storm through the discussion, while the quiet, confident, hand of God is omnipresent throughout. ▀

WILL EVA



A slice of history: The difficulties of imposing orthodoxy

Gilbert Valentine

The General Conference Committee faced a serious managerial problem. How could it ensure that an independent, "autonomous" senior college board follow its direction in the matter of ministerial education and the employment of theology teachers? How could it ensure the provision of safe yet effective ministerial training? How should the college board manage an unorthodox teacher? The year was 1888, and the issues were serious and complex.

The following little-known episode from one of the most painful years in Seventh-day Adventist Church history may offer insights and provide a context for some of Ellen White's strongest statements on academic freedom.

Traditional versus innovative

Concerned to ensure that ministers in training were exposed to the best in biblical and practical instruction, the General Conference Committee, in April 1888, had formally recommended that the Board of Battle Creek College appoint the energetic 38-year-old Alonzo T. Jones as its Bible teacher. At the time he was teaching Bible and history at Healdsburg College in California, and his fresh insights had impressed W. C. White and his mother.

At Battle Creek, Professor E. B. Miller had become rather staid and stale, and would ben-

efit from a transfer to Healdsburg, to take Jones's place. Influential members of the GC Committee, W. C. White and W. W. Prescott, had previously discussed the idea and persuaded the GC Committee to act. Besides, in the new year, they planned to bring in ministers from the field for a five-month intensive "in-service" training course, which needed a fresh, relevant, cutting-edge approach.

But the college board, dominated by more traditional thinkers, were not persuaded that this was a safe move. Although Jones was a bright and charismatic teacher, he was also outspoken and had begun to develop a reputation for challenging the status quo. Wasn't he too unorthodox? And, in the view of *Review* editor and senior board member, Uriah Smith, the unorthodoxy was neither trivial nor inconsequential.

Jones had allied himself with Elliot Waggoner, the brash and even younger editor (31) of the *Signs of the Times*, in advocating a dangerous reinterpretation of Galatians 3:24. In suggesting that the Galatians text referred to the "moral law" and not the temporary and shadowy Mosaic "ceremonial law," these teachers were deemed to be on extremely dangerous ground. Such a view, in Smith's opinion, undermined "the pillars of the faith."¹

It overthrew the validity of the church's teaching on a central doctrine, the seventh-day Sabbath. And, as well, it negated the teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy for, as Smith pointed out, Mrs. White had previously indicated such teaching was wrong. The view of the "moral law" in Galatians, simple and spiritually insightful though it might sound to the uninitiated, threatened to undo teachings "vital to the existence of our faith," explained the respected editor, who was also the senior (although part-time) Bible teacher at the college.² Many respected pastors and church leaders agreed.

Furthermore, Jones had recently adopted a new interpretation of Revelation 13 and the mark of the beast and the Sunday law. Uriah Smith objected that this new teaching on eschatology contradicted all the church had published on the topic. It threatened the reputation of the Church and "undermined the positions held for 30 years." No wonder parents in California were threatening not to send their children to Healdsburg if such things were being taught there.³



Gilbert Valentine,
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president for
academic
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Mission College,
Thailand.

The transfer of Jones to Battle Creek College would, therefore, not receive Smith's endorsement. It was obvious that there was no consensus. Thus, the board, after "lengthy discussion," declined to make the appointment. "No formal action was taken."⁴

Differences: Battle Creek College and the General Conference

Six months later, in October, the theological controversy in the Minneapolis General Conference session proved the point for leaders such as GC President Butler and editor Smith. Jones's role in the troubles vindicated their caution. The fact that he had taken such a "prominent part" at the conference in "pressing vigorously points of doctrine, concerning which there exists differences of opinion among the body of Seventh-day Adventists," did not win him friends in Battle Creek.

Nor did it make things easier for Smith and Butler when the idea of a transfer arose again at the college board meeting.⁵ Wasn't it clear, they argued, that Jones was simply not a safe teacher? How could they have him teaching ideas in one Bible class that were at variance with what Smith himself would be teaching in another? So the board again discussed the proposal "at considerable length" and decided to appoint a solid, middle of the road (but uninspiring) teacher named Frank D. Starr.

The action of the board, however, complicated things for the General Conference Committee. They had other plans for F. D. Starr, and this independent, noncooperation on the part of the college board was not acceptable to the GC Committee. They requested a highly unusual "joint meeting" of the college board together with the GC Committee.

The brethren gathered in the Review office on a Thursday morn-

ing. Board members again stated publicly the reasons for their decision, and a long animated discussion followed.⁶ It was finally resolved that the college president, Professor Prescott; the chair of the board, George Butler; and Smith himself would interview Jones about his views and the possibility of his teaching position at the college.

Within the next 36 hours, the interview panel had a long conference with the unconforming teacher. Whether Jones had been advised beforehand, whether he really wanted the job, or whether he was simply intimidated by the weighty panel is not clear. In any case, he seemed to satisfy them. He conceded "the right of the board to determine what views should be presented," and he assured them "in a very positive manner" that "if he should be employed to assist in the Lectures, he would not knowingly teach any opinions contrary to those which the Board desired to be taught . . ."⁷

Views and role of Ellen White

Although such acquiescence may have pleased Smith and Butler, Mrs. White found it incomprehensible that just two men should be considered the guardians of the teachings for Seventh-day Adventists.⁸ She had delivered an impassioned speech at the Minneapolis General Conference session a month earlier (October 21) dealing with this very notion—the inappropriateness of a few people being guardians of doctrinal orthodoxy.

The atmosphere had been oppressive and supercharged at Minneapolis, as it still was at Battle Creek headquarters a month after the session. Mrs. White's message seems not to have registered with editor Smith, who already had resigned from membership on the General Conference Committee to protest the way affairs were being run.

Matters were made worse by an incident revolving around the question of whether Jones should even be

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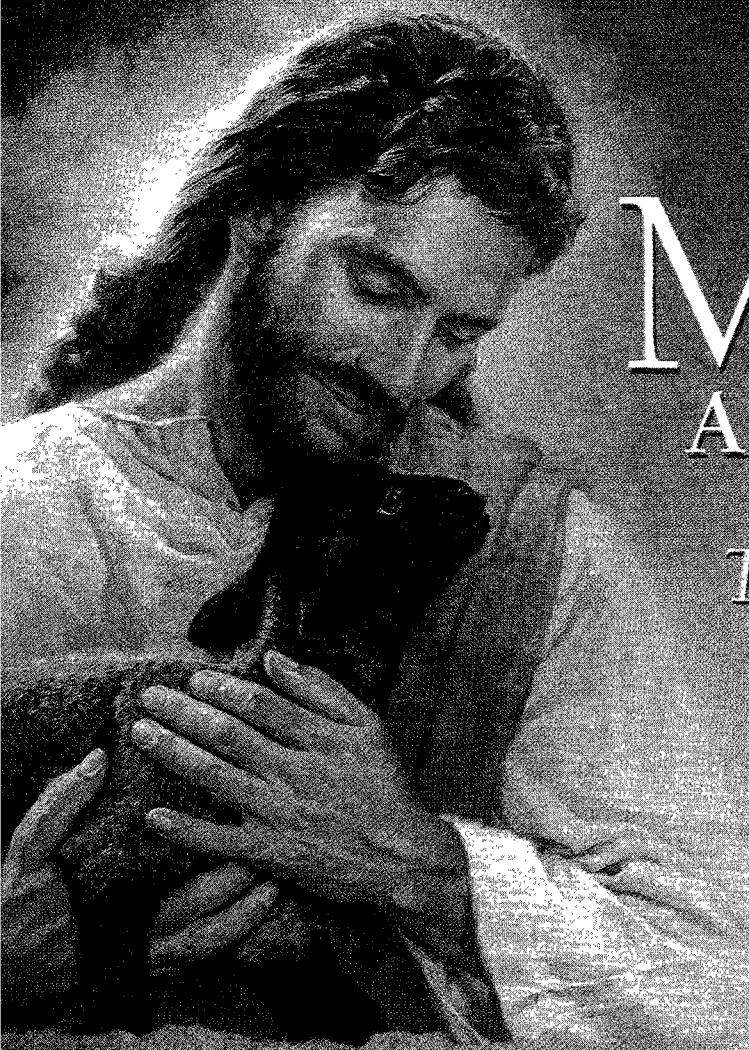


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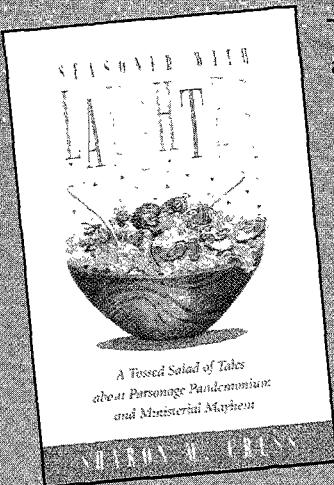
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allowed to preach in Battle Creek. It seems that on this same weekend (November 24), it had been suggested that A. T. Jones be invited to preach at the Battle Creek Tabernacle. The church would be blessed, it was said, by his innovative insights on theology and eschatology as they related to current Sunday law issues. Senior editor Smith objected, however, saying that he could agree to such an invitation only if Jones would agree not to speak on the new themes. Prescott was commissioned to talk to Jones, who agreed to the conditions.

When Mrs. White heard of the strange goings-on, she was incensed. What an "incomprehensible tug of war" this was turning out to be.⁹

The college board was reconvened. George Butler, the board chair, report-

ed on the interview. Very strong differences of opinion were voiced, although these were expressed "in a brotherly spirit." Finally, in one of the longest actions on record in its minutes, the board voted to accept the General Conference recommendation and appoint Jones as Bible teacher, under the stipulated conditions. The vote was split 60/40. The chair abstained, and members felt such strong convictions that individual votes were recorded.¹⁰

Mrs. White worried about the larger issues. Could a church continue to grow in truth with these kinds of attempts to preserve orthodoxy and maintain the status quo? She thought not.

Prior to the Jones affair at Battle Creek College, someone had framed a

resolution at the General Conference session that "nothing should be taught in the college contrary to that which has been taught. . . ."¹¹ Ellen White spoke vigorously against the resolution and voted against it. She felt deeply, she said, for she knew that "whoever framed that resolution was not aware of what he was doing."

Later she was again horrified when she heard that Jones should not be invited to preach at the Tabernacle because "he took rather strong positions" on Revelation 13. And she was aghast that "arrangements were made to shut him out of the school for fear something should come in that would be at variance" with what had been previously taught at the college. "Was this a conscientiousness inspired by the Spirit of God?" she asked. In her view, the spirit of such inspiration was not "from God, but from another source."¹²

In her speech at the General Conference, Mrs. White had been very pointed in her opposition to these inappropriate attempts to ensure a status quo orthodoxy. In words that are troubling, but in some ways refreshingly radical, she declared that, "Instructors in our schools should never be bound about by being told that they are to teach only what has been taught hitherto. Away with such restrictions. There is a God to give the message His people shall speak. . . . That which God gives his servants to speak today would not perhaps have been present truth twenty years ago, but it is God's message for this time."¹³

It was her view that "the Lord has need of men who are spiritually sharp and clear sighted, men worked by the Holy Spirit, who are certainly receiving manna fresh from heaven." She was sure on that occasion in 1888, that the time had come when "through God's messenger, the scroll is being unrolled to the world."¹⁴

Of course, Mrs. White did not advocate unfettered libertarianism. She stoutly defended the faith of the fathers. The landmarks and pillars of

the truth were of vital significance to her; they described the self-identity of the church and provided the basis for its mission. Mrs. White was deeply committed to the unity of the church, but she also saw the need for the church community to live with the creative tension between preserving the faith of the fathers and having a faith that was relevant "present truth."

"The God of heaven sometimes commissions men to teach that which is regarded as contrary to the established doctrines," she wrote to Haskell eight years later, in 1896, trying to help him open his mind to accept Prescott's new Christological interpretation of church teachings (that's another story!).

What can we learn?

This episode suggests that some approaches for ensuring orthodoxy are clearly inappropriate if they put authority for orthodoxy in the hands

of very small groups, or if they reflect a disposition to control the minds of others, or if they reveal a phobia about things new.

The task of balancing openness to the freshness of the Spirit with the need for church unity and the ensuring of orthodoxy is a demanding task for any church leader today, just as it was in Ellen White's day. But then, when established reactionaries such as Smith and Butler could argue that a new idea was dangerous and undermined the essentials of the faith, at least the voice of the prophet could insist on openness and suggest otherwise with a "No, I don't see this as vital. What is more vital is to manifest a Christian spirit."

Today the church no longer has the living voice at Elmshaven or in committees to respond to specific new ideas, new circumstances, and new settings. But the Lord who gifted Mrs. White has indeed gifted the

church and promised the church that the same Spirit, if allowed, will guide us into all truth (John 16:13). M

1 Uriah Smith to A. T. Robinson, Sept. 21, 1892.

2 Ibid.

3 Ellen G. White (EGW) to Brother Healey, Dec. 10, 1888.

4 BCC Board Minutes, April 8, 1888.

5 Ibid., November 13, 1888. Although Butler had been replaced as GC president and Smith had submitted his resignation from the GC Committee, both retained their roles as college trustees.

6 BCC Board Minutes, Nov. 22, 1888.

7 Ibid., Nov. 25, 1888.

8 EGW to Brother Healey, Dec. 9, 1888.

9 EGW to Mary White, W-82 - 1889.

10 BCC Board Minutes, November 25, 1888. A month later, Butler submitted his resignation as chair of the board. He had received a scolding letter from Mrs. White for his attitudes. Out of office as GC president, he argued he would not be much use to the board. His resignation was not accepted, but he still did not attend any meetings during the next 12 months. Vice chair, Uriah Smith, directed affairs.

11 EGW, *Manuscript 16*, 1889.

12 Ibid.

13 EGW, *Manuscript 8a*, 1888, a talk to the ministers delivered on October 21, 1888.

14 EGW, *Manuscript 8a*, 1888.

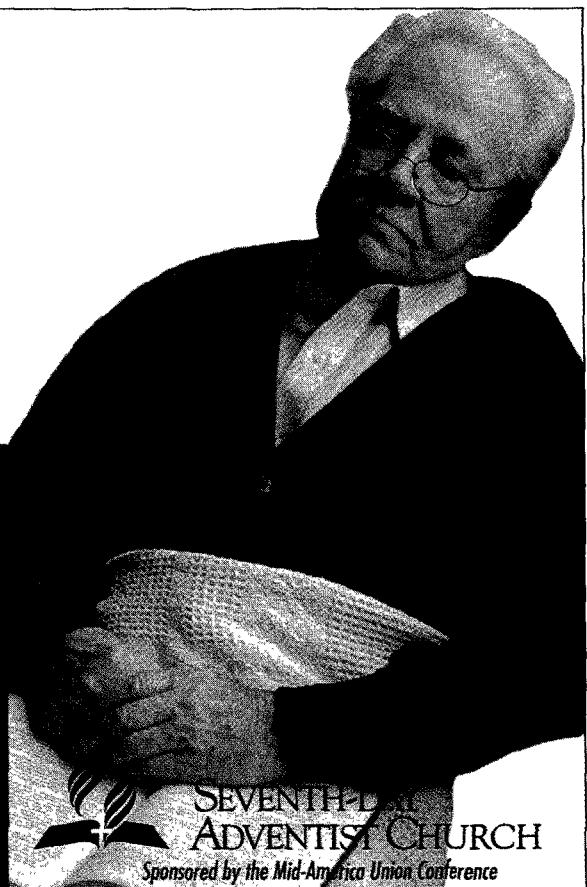
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Editorial Note: This is the second in an extended series of articles in which *Ministry* writers will express Seventh-day Adventist faith in Christocentric terms.

Seventh-day Adventist faith, Belief 2: *The Trinity: "There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation."*¹

This quote, elaborated on by subsequent statements [Belief 3 ("The Father"); Belief 4 ("The Son"); and Belief 5 ("The Holy Spirit")],² expresses the Trinitarian convictions of Seventh-day Adventism. It represents a significant culmination of doctrinal development in denominational history, a development that evolved from a distinctly non-Trinitarian mind-set (often expressed in an anti-Trinitarian spirit) to Arianism, semi-Arianism, and then onto the full triumph of the present Trinitarian confession of faith.³

The key issues that had to be thrashed out were essentially the same ones that the church of the third to the sixth centuries resolved. These questions revolved around the tensions between the biblical revelation that seemed to point to God's profound oneness (the unitarian evidence) and those passages that strongly pointed to a plurality of divine Persons in the Godhead (the Trinitarian texts).

More specifically, the central issues revolved around two key questions: (1) Is the deity of Jesus Christ just as fully divine in substance and nature as is the deity of the Father? and (2) Is the Holy Spirit also fully divine and genuinely per-

The Trinity

WOODROW W. WHIDDEN



sonal—just as divine and just as much a person as are the Father and the Son? By the middle of the twentieth century, Seventh-day Adventists had reached the same consensus on these issues as had the church of the fourth century: that there is "one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," who have manifested themselves as a "unity of three co-eternal Persons." When it comes to confessing that all Three possess divine characteristics of immortality, omnipotence, omniscience, and eternal existence, what can be said about the substance of the Father's divine nature can also be said about the Son and the Spirit.

While incomprehensible to the unaided human mind, the triune God can be "known through His self-revelation!" And it is the steady conviction of Seventh-day Adventists that the key revelation of God has come through Jesus Christ, the Infinite Son of God and Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The key work of the Holy Spirit has been to proceed forth from both the Father and the Son to draw attention to the Son. And in uplifting the Son, the Father is revealed and glorified.

Historically, there have been two basic types of objections to the Triune understanding of the Godhead: (1) scriptural and (2) logical. The main temptation in meeting these objections has been to gravitate to either unitarian or tri-theistic solutions. We are persuad-

ed that neither Scripture nor logic will sustain either the unitarian or tri-theistic interpretations. If sufficient evidence can be adduced from the Scriptural testimony to support the full deity of both the Son and the Spirit, then we will have taken giant steps toward a Trinitarian interpretation of the evidence.

We will present some of the most appealing biblical evidence when we discuss the Son and the Holy Spirit in succeeding articles. But at this juncture we will present more general biblical evidence for the Trinitarian oneness of the Godhead. Then we will address the logical objection to the Trinity.

Old Testament evidence

One of the passages that is most often cited in support of unitarian interpretations of the Godhead is Deuteronomy 6:4. This great passage, known as the "Holy Shema," forthrightly proclaims the oneness of God: "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (NASB).

A superficial reading of this text could point toward unitarianism, but when the meaning of the Hebrew word that is translated "one" ('echad) is explored in depth (and compared with the word *yachid*), the results are revealing. '*Echad*' actually means "'one (among others)', the emphasis being on a particular one. . . . The possibility of there being others is inherent in '*echad*', but *yachid* precludes that possibility."⁴

The difference between '*echad*' and *yachid* can be further explained: '*echad*' refers to the oneness that results from a unity of numerous persons, while *yachid* is used in Hebrew to refer to an exclusively unitary being. In contrast to '*echad*', *yachid* "means 'one' in the sense of 'only,' or 'alone.'"⁵ Moses, therefore, chose to employ the word '*echad*' to express the idea of one among others in a joined or shared oneness.

This use of 'echad' is neatly illustrated by the way Moses employed it to describe the marriage union: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one [*echad*] flesh" (Gen. 2:24, NKJV, emphasis supplied). Here we have a plurality of two persons who enter into a deep plural oneness—a most appropriate illustration of the infinite oneness of the plural Godhead.

Other suggestions of this "oneness" are hinted at in Genesis. Genesis 1:26 reports the Creator God as saying, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (NKJV, emphasis supplied). The passage has God speaking of Himself with plural references. Furthermore, when God did create humanity in "Our" image, He established a plurality of two individuals, distinct from each other, yet capable of becoming "one" (Gen. 2:24). These verses strongly portray the historical fact that the plurality of oneness involves the image of God.

Yet there is further evidence in the Genesis record and in Isaiah that hints at God's inherent plurality: (1) Referring to the sin of Adam and Eve, "the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of *Us*, to know good and evil'" (Gen. 3:22, NKJV, emphasis supplied). (2) In the story of the great sin of the people at the Tower of Babel, God said, "Come, let *Us* go down and there confuse their language" (Gen. 11:7, emphasis supplied). (3) Isaiah 6 records a remarkable vision in which the prophet saw "the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up" (verse 1). During this experience, Isaiah reports hearing "the voice of the Lord, saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for *Us*?'" (verse 8, NKJV, emphasis supplied).

While none of these examples are coercive, their cumulative force provides interesting evidence from the Old Testament for the plurality of persons within the Godhead. The evidence, however, from the New Testament is more compelling.

New Testament evidence

The most often cited passage is in Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (NKJV).

Please note that the text declares the Three Members of the Godhead to have a "name" (singular, not plural), strongly suggesting that They are One in personal character and nature.

This verse, along with 2 Corinthians 13:14, offers a striking insight to the life of the early apostolic church. These two passages present the apostolic greetings and Christ's own formula for the rite of initiation (baptism) into the family of God in triune ways. Both suggest the unity of the Three great Persons operative in redemption and the life of the church.

The final evidence of the unity of the Godhead arises out of the presence of the Three at the baptism of Jesus: "When He had been baptized, Jesus

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came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matt. 3:16, 17, NKJV).

Thus, Jesus formally begins His public ministry of redemption, all Three Members of the Heavenly Trio are present. The newly baptized Jesus comes out of the Jordan, the Spirit descends on Him like a dove, and the Father audibly speaks words of divine approval and identity from heaven. This scene powerfully portrays the oneness of purpose shared by the Godhead. Furthermore, it clearly evidences the distinctness of each divine being. Matthew does not present the Spirit and the Son as different manifestations or personifications of the Father, but as distinct personalities in concert with the Father even while They give every appearance of oneness in purpose and character as They focus on the redemptive mission of the Son.

Logical objections to the Trinity

To many non-Trinitarians the concept of one equaling three seems illogical. Millard Erickson has cogently suggested that Trinitarians need to give a coherent answer to how we can logically conceive three as one.

Erickson suggests that the real-life, practical world would not tolerate such fuzzy, "three = one" math. If I went to the grocery store and took three loaves of bread to the checkout counter and tried to persuade the clerk that they were really one and all that we have to pay for is one, the clerk might quickly call for store security.⁶

Thus Trinitarians must give some reasonably coherent account to explain how one is three and three is one in the life of the Godhead. The question is this: What is it about the nature of the triune Godhead that makes the alleged persons called Father, Son, and Holy Spirit "one"?

The first response to the logic of Trinitarian thought is to admit that we

are dealing with a profound mystery. While we readily believe the Bible when it says that Adam and Eve became "one" and were yet two, we have yet to fully fathom the ways of any man with any maiden (Prov. 30:19). Yet in loving relationships, there does develop a profound oneness. Are such relationships, therefore, illogical and incoherent?

Erickson points the way to a credible solution: "We therefore propose thinking of the Trinity as a society of persons, who, however, are one being. While this society of persons has dimensions to its inter-relationships that we do not find among humans, there are some illuminating parallels. Love is the binding relationship within the Godhead that unites each of the persons with each of the others."⁷

It comes as no surprise to Seventh-day Adventists that Erickson then appeals directly to 1 John 4:8, 16: "God is love." Do we truly comprehend the depths of this inspired statement, so disarming in its seeming simplicity? We would suggest that these three words have a profound contribution to make to our understanding of a God who has eternally preexisted in a state of Trinitarian "oneness."

Once more we resonate with the suggestively intriguing comments of Erickson: "The statement . . . 'God is love,' is not a definition of God, nor is it merely a statement of one attribute among others. It is a very basic characterization of God."⁸

For Seventh-day Adventists the key question about God has ultimate reference to the issue of His love. And if God is not *love* in the very core of His being, then any questions about His nature quickly descend to a state of biblical irrelevance. We, however, sense that love is the most basic characterization of God. If God is truly—in His essence—the God of *love* (John 3:16 and 1 John 4:8), then consider the following:

Could One who has existed from all eternity past and who made us in His loving image—could this God truly be called love if He existed only as a solitary being? Is not love, especially divine love, possible only if the One who made

our universe was a plural being who was exercising *love* within His divine plurality from all eternity past? Is not real, selfless love possible only if it proceeds from the kind of God who, by nature, was and is and shall eternally be a God of love? Is the Creator God, who is called love, in any way finally dependent upon His created beings to reveal and demonstrate His love?

Instead, God is a Trinity of love, and this love has found its most moving revelation in the creative work, incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of the fully divine Son of God. In the unique God/Man, love has been fully demonstrated, and the Godhead will be fully and finally vindicated as the only Power that can govern the universe. Seventh-day Adventists believe that the great issues of sin, salvation, and God's fitness to govern can be fully vindicated only through the unfolding revelation of Triune love.

God's Trinitarian oneness, in the finale, is not illogical but is the source of the only logic that makes any ultimate sense—a love that is self-sacrificing, mutually submissive, and eternally outward flowing in the graces of creative and redemptive power.

More on this topic in March . . . □

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1 *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Revised 2000, 16th edition) (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 2000), 9.

2 These confessions will be elaborated upon in subsequent articles in this series on the fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventism.

3 This fascinating history is succinctly traced by Jerry Moon in two chapters entitled "Trinity and Anti-Trinitarianism in Seventh-day Adventist History" (chap. 13) and "Ellen White's Role in the Trinity Debate" (Chap. 14) from the book (co-authored by Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John Reeve) *The Trinity: Understanding God's Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 2002), 190-231. The persistent Trinitarian testimony of Ellen White (especially from the 1880s on) proved to be formatively influential as the denomination shed its anti-Trinitarian bias.

4 Otto H. Christensen, *Getting Acquainted With God* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1970), 69.

5 Ibid.

6 *Making Sense of the Trinity: Three Crucial Questions* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 2000), 43, 44.

7 Ibid., 58.

8 Ibid.

Truth and experience: Finding an authentic combination

Kevin Morgan

Americans are expressing renewed interest in spiritual things. As *Modernism* has proved cold and unsatisfying, the present generation has begun looking for spiritual sustenance or emotional meaning elsewhere, though not necessarily through the channels of previous generations.

In a 1996 broadcast, Peter Jennings of America's *ABC News* articulated some ways Americans are conducting their spiritual search. His special report began by saying, "While 88 percent of Americans count themselves as Christian, membership in mainline or traditional Protestant churches has been declining since the 1960s. The Catholic Church is also struggling. And yet, here we are in the mid 1990s with Americans hungering for spiritual meaning. . . ."¹

Americans are looking for something beyond mere formalism. They are seeking a religious experience that they can actually feel. They are longing for an encounter with God that is personally and emotionally satisfying. Now more than ever, American Jews, Protestants, Catholics, and non-Christians are shifting away from *formalism* to what I would term "public and private *mysticism*."

What does this mean for the church? What challenges does this new, more mystical approach to spirituality present? How can we ourselves avoid falling into the pitfalls inherent in this kind of worldview?



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Experiencing the spiritual

Consistent with this burgeoning mysticism is the growing curiosity of Americans and others in Zen Buddhism—a religion that has become popular with some among the American entertainment *elite*. At the same time, popular entertainers such as Tina Turner and Herbie Hancock chant Buddhist mantras. Terms such as *Nirvana* and *koan* are in common usage in Western cultures that were formerly foreign to such language, if seldom understood. "Then there are celebrities whose exact commitment to the faith is a guessing game. Oliver Stone publicly conscripts Tibetan 'wrathful deities' to fend off his detractors; Courtney Love is said to be a practitioner, while Harrison Ford simply supports Tibetan freedom (his former wife, Melissa Mathison, wrote Kundun's script). And in one of the more peculiar occurrences along the Hollywood-Lhasa axis, action-film star and all-around surly guy Steven Seagal was recognized by the head of the venerable Nyingma Tibetan lineage as the reincarnation of a fifteenth-century lama."²

What draws people to Zen Buddhism is that its "meditation strikes some as a daily, direct experience of the sacred absent from Sundays-only religion."³ In other words, the "magnet" of Zen is its sense of "immediacy," or supposed personal contact with God. For this reason, *New Age* phenomena are also thriving. They emphasize immersion in experience and suspension of reason, such as seen in "channeling."

"What I offer people," said channeler Thomas Jacobson, "is the chance to temporarily suspend the debate over whether channeling is real and just *immerse themselves in the experience*"⁴ (emphasis supplied). Among Jews there's a growing interest in a popular form of the *Kabbalah*, a "received" mysticism based on the *Zohar*, the thirteenth-century mystical book set down in ancient Aramaic by the Spanish-Jewish writer *Moses de Leon*. "Kabbalism . . . prescribes prayers, meditative practices and, depending on whom you ask, magical practices and numerology."⁵

All these forms of *mysticism* have one thing in common: they emphasize experience and the bypassing of reason. In fact, this is Webster's very definition of *mysticism*: "The doctrine or belief that direct spiritual apprehension of truth or union with God may be obtained through contemplation or insight

in ways inaccessible to the senses or reason.”⁶

The Christian connection

Some Christian writers echo this broader definition of *mysticism* and suggest that such a direct and mystical connection with God might be a good thing. “There is no need to blanch at the word *mysticism*. It’s a perfectly sound word that merely describes a way of knowing beyond your physical senses; thus it accurately describes the life of anyone who believes in God and a world of the unseen. It is not a

Christians that could fall into the category of the mystical because it claims to be a direct connection with God is the experience of ecstatic utterance, or “speaking in tongues.”

The Pentecostal movement, with its phenomenal outburst of tongues, has swept over the Christian world.¹¹ Called the “third force” in Christendom,¹² it constitutes “a revolution comparable in importance” with the Protestant Reformation and the launching of the Apostolic church.¹³ Never has a movement taken over the churches to such a

being prepared for the *antichrist* instead of *Jesus Christ*.¹⁴

He then connected his statement with the prediction of false prophets working deceptive signs and wonders (Mark 13:22) and the prediction of the spirits of devils working miracles to deceive the whole world (Rev. 16:14). Bakker concluded by saying that instead of teaching people to seek after the miraculous, “We must lead people to love Jesus Christ.”¹⁵

Jim Bakker is right. God would not have given us the scriptural warning if it were not possible for “even the elect” to be deceived (Mark 13:22). We must teach Christians to rely on Jesus Christ and His Word, not merely on their own experience.

Is this emphasis the fulfillment of God’s promise?

However intriguing these new forms of religion may seem, the honest seeker after truth must ask the question, “Should the Christian see mysticism as God’s open door into a deeper experience with Him?” And with the concerns about eschatological deception, “Does modern mysticism answer to the unique experience that God’s Word foretells as coming to His people just before He comes?”

The prophet Joel does describe a refreshing of the Spirit that will come before the end of all things: “And it shall come to pass afterward, *that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit*” (Joel 2:28, 29, emphasis supplied).

God clearly wants a deeper experience for those who love Him, and dry formality without the power of the Spirit is useless, and worse. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away*” (2 Tim. 3:1, 2, 5, emphasis supplied).

THOSE LOOKING FOR A MYSTICAL/EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE TEND TO ACCEPT A WIDE RANGE OF SUPERNATURAL EXPERIENCES AS BEING OF GOD.

belief system or a set of doctrines. When we talk or think about love, prayer, meditation, revelation, inspiration, perception, intuition, or imagination, we are working in the realm of the mystical.”⁷

Many Christians are, indeed, looking for meaning in mystical experiences. They don’t want to just *know* God, they want to *experience* Him. One of the new forms of Evangelical Christianity that Jennings highlighted was the Vineyard Fellowship, started by John Wimber, former musical arranger for the 1960s singing group The Righteous Brothers. Wimber started the fellowship, Jennings reported, because he hungered for the supernatural in Christianity.⁸ “I love Jesus. I love the stuff He did. I love the multiplying of the food and the healing of the sick, giving sight to the blind, spitting in people’s eyes. I love that stuff!”⁹ At the Vineyard, the publicly mystical is not only tolerated but encouraged. “There is no doubt that emotional therapy is central to the ministry.”¹⁰

Another phenomenon among

degree.¹⁴ But are there aspects to this mystical experience that are related to the practice of sacrificing objective reality for subjective experience?

The ready reception that modern tongues has received could well arise from the now common desire for “immediacy” with God. It too tends to bypass the intellect to gain a direct experience, an encounter with something mystical.

Concerns about seeking after the mystical

Those looking for such a mystical/emotional experience tend to accept a wide range of supernatural experiences as being of God (unless, of course, those experiences are clearly demonic). People in Christian meetings bark like dogs, or laugh until they fall on the ground.

After his prison term, Jim Bakker came to stark realizations about the type of religion he had been promoting. “One of the things I need to warn . . . people [about is] that, if we fall in love with miracles—if we fall in love with signs and wonders—we are

The opposite of this "form of godliness" is exposed by Ellen White when she describes the revival of primitive godliness that is to be seen before the return of our Lord: "Notwithstanding the widespread declension of faith and piety, there are true followers of Christ in these churches. Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a *revival of primitive godliness* as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children"¹⁶ (emphasis supplied).

Will this revival sweep Adventist believers in line with other Christian faiths? "Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming. The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power *he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out*; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when *the work is that of another spirit*. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world"¹⁷ (emphasis supplied).

God is anticipating a people who have an intimate relationship with Him, but we are not to seek to know Him merely through our own subjective feelings. There is jeopardy in pursuing a relationship with God that depends primarily on experience without the objective guidelines and safeguards of Scripture applied in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Does the bypassing of reason for immediacy with God have a more sinister side to it? "Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by gratifying the love for what

is new and startling. Converts thus gained have little desire to listen to Bible truth, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles. Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attractions for them. A message which appeals to unimpassioned reason awakens no response. The plain warnings of God's word, relating directly to their eternal interests, are unheeded."¹⁸

Two practical safeguards

What about a Christian's own private devotional world? How is he or she to pursue an intimate relationship with God without being confused by this hyper-experiential subterfuge?

It is important first to anchor all meditation in the revealed Word of God. The Bible says, "O how love I thy law! *It is my meditation* all the day" (Ps. 119:97, emphasis supplied). Here is a primary purpose for the Word of God. God knows that our human tendency is to gravitate toward things that will destroy us. He wants us to hide His Word in our hearts (Ps. 119:11) as the foundation of all Christian meditation.

What place does the imagination play, if any, in Christian meditation? Sanctified imagination is ours to apply in an unambiguous way, one described in profoundly practical terms: "It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross."¹⁹

We need to hold our experience accountable to the Bible: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the

knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).²⁰

Shall we search for *truth* or shall we look for *experience*? If experience is what we are looking for, it is experience we will have, though it may not be the kind that is built on truth. In seeking truth we will find truth and the authentic experience that goes with thoroughly encountering it. □

1 Peter Jennings on "Peter Jennings Reporting: In the Name of God," (aired March 16, 1996, on ABC).

2 David Van Biema, reported by Jeanne McDowell/Los Angeles and Richard N. Ostling/New York, "Religion: Buddhism In America: An Ancient Religion Grows Ever Stronger Roots in a New World, With the Help of the Movies, Pop Culture, and the Politics of Repressed Tibet," TIME (October 13, 1997), 72.

3 Ibid.

4 "Voices From Beyond: The Channelers," People, January 26, 1987, 30.

5 Mary A. Jacobs, "Beyond Torah: Once Taboo, Kabbalah Is Gaining in Popularity," The Dallas Morning News (September 13, 1997), 1G.

6 *The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Lexicon Publication, Inc., 1988), 660.

7 Bill Loveless, "God Does Talk Back," Adventist Review (special issue on the devotional life, 1998), 31.

8 Jennings, "Peter Jennings Reporting: In the Name of God."

9 John Wimber in interview with Peter Jennings, ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 "One of the distinctive charismatic characteristics is glossolalia—the gift of speaking in tongues. Certainly it is the single most controversial aspect in the Pentecostal sweep of the Christian community." *Speaking in Tongues, Let's Talk About It*, ed. Watson E. Mills (Waco, Texas: Word, 1973), 13. cf. *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1976), 205, where Clark H. Pinnock says, "For I recognize it as a sweep. I recognize it as an upsurge of the Spirit."

12 Perhaps called "third force" first by Henry P. Van Dusen, president of Princeton Theological Seminary in his article "Third Force in Christendom," Life, June 9, 1958, 113-124. Van Dusen's "third force includes, in addition to the various types of Pentecostals: the Churches of Christ, the Seventh-Day Adventists, Nazarenes, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christian and Missionary Alliance." See Frederick D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Erdmanns, 1970), 29, footnote 25. But subsequently the literature seems to narrow the term to Pentecostalism. Thus "Pentecostalism has now become a movement of world-wide importance, reckoned as 'a third force in Christendom' (alongside Catholicism and Protestantism) by not a few leading churchmen." James D. G. Dunn, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit, A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today," *Studies in Biblical Theology, Second Series*, number 15 (SCM, 1970), 2, cf. Cyril G. Williams, *Tongues of the Spirit, A Study of Pentecostal Glossolalia and Related Phenomena* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1981), 46, cf. Gordon E. After, *The Third Force* (Ontario, Canada: The College Press, n.pd.).

13 Henry P. Van Dusen, quoted in Watson E. Mills, *Speaking in Tongues: A Guide to Research in Glossolalia* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Erdmanns, 1986), 340.

14 Norman Gulley, "The Charismatic Movement," syllabus *Christ Is Coming Soon* (Collegedale, Tenn.: photocopy), 109, 110.

15 Jim Bakker in interview with Kenneth Strand, editor of *Charisma* magazine (aired September 23, 1998, on Christian television).

16 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1911), 464.

17 Ibid.

18 Ellen G. White, *Revival and Beyond* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1972), 9.

19 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1940), 83

20 "Imaginations" can be reasonings.

First books and last things: What did Job believe about resurrection?

Lael Caesar



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We live in a time when some theological and religious authorities question the validity of the bodily resurrection of our Lord, and thus ultimately of people of faith. As they extend their arguments back into such ancient works as the book of Job, it is enlightening to critically review the validity of their views as they relate to passages such as Job 19:25-27, and to give well-founded interpretations of passages such as this one.

Two decades ago Michael Fox stated that Ezekiel, with the message of resurrection in his dry bones vision (Ezek. 37:1-14), reveals the courage of one who dares to affirm the absurd. Fox assumed this because in his opinion, no one in sixth century B.C. Judah was capable of contemplating an actual, physical resurrection.¹ Fox's position is that only during the intertestamental period did Jewish apocalyptic literature accept anything more than a metaphorical resurrection.

While this view is not universal,² if we give credence to Marvin Pope's modest proposal of a seventh-century B.C. date for the writing of the book of Job,³ we would be required to reexamine Job's own statements before accepting a post-exilic date for the resurrection concept in the Hebrew Bible.

Positions such as Fox's wrestle with the awesome implications of Job 19, which features some of the most famous words in Job:

"I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God" (Job 19:25, 26, NASB).

Analyzing Job's rhetoric

Job could hardly speak more clearly than he does in verse 25a: "And as for me,⁴ I know that my Redeemer lives." Nor do alternative readings of verse 25b present any particular interpretive crisis. In the NASB that line reads: "And at the last He will take His stand on the earth." In the light of this eschatological emphasis, Job's Redeemer appears at the end, or "at the last." Thus it is not the clarity of verse 25 but the interpretive chaos on verse 26 that presents any real question about physical resurrection.

In 1950, E. F. Sutcliffe commented on the original Hebrew rendering of Job 19:26: "Every word of [this] text has been so thoroughly discussed in the commentaries that it seems superfluous to say more than a word on '*nach Verlust meiner Haut*' ('after loss of my skin')."⁵ Other commentators, however, do not even accept that the words "after loss of my skin" appear in the text;⁶ they read "awakening" instead of "skin,"⁷ or neither skin nor awakening.⁸ Or they may preserve Job's skin, while they alter the text elsewhere.⁹

The context of Job 19

A study of the context of Job 19 surely challenges our placid notions of the patient Job of James 5:11. In 9:20-24 he is guiltless, but God finds him guilty; he despises his life, while the wicked run the world by God's permission. Despite this he will argue his case before God (verses 34, 35), a God who would plunge him into the pit until his own clothes would abhor him.

In 10:14 God is, on the one hand, unforgiving of his sin and, on the other, contemptuous of his goodness. We do well to remember, though, that the Job who rants and rages also rejects the arguments and denounces the fraudulence of his treacherous friends.

Their best arguments come from Bildad. Even when Bildad speaks negatively in chapter 18, his words contain a familiar and valid hope that Job will frustrate only if he insists on wickedness. In verses 17 and 19, Bildad describes the fate of the one who so insists: "His memory perishes from the earth, and he

has no public fame. He has no offspring, he has no progeny, and there is no survivor where he once lived."

In his faithfulness to the wisdom tradition, Bildad strives to protect Job from endangering his prospects as a sage. His advice against the loss of memory, that is, fame (literally, having a "name"), is the highest appeal available to the ancient sage.¹⁰

Job's next answer to Bildad must represent more than mere dialogic continuity. From this perspective, juxtaposed against Bildad's persuasive zenith, Job 19 might be seen as Job's decisive response to his opponents' convincing though flawed challenge. Along with this, the controlled intensity of Job 19 presents a remarkable contrast to Job's earlier speeches.

Still, despite the violent mood swings, we discern progression in Job's condition—from the utter gloom of his opening lament, an ode to death and oblivion, to the celebrated lines climaxing in chapter 19. Especially in his third speech, two entirely new elements both intensify the reader's dismay and hint at breaking barriers to new regions of thought for Job's exploration.

One of these new elements is the enigma of Job 13:15, a bedeviling utterance that may mean either that Job will hope or that there is no hope. Nevertheless, even this verse makes clear that Job knows himself to be right (he "will be vindicated"—verse 18, NASB). He has known this before (6:10; 9:13, 20, 21) and yet despite the knowledge, has sunk into despair.

But now, before his next descent into hell, Job introduces the second new astonishment of this speech by posing what seems no more than a rhetorical question: "If a man dies does he live again?"

Job proposes an answer where none seems required, an answer that contradicts or transcends all expectation: "All the days of my struggle I will wait, until my change comes. Thou wilt call, and I will answer Thee. Thou wilt long for the work of Thy hands" (14:14, 15, NASB). In this dra-

matic outburst, Job breaks through the barrier of Sheol to speak of communion with God beyond the grave.

Unsurprisingly, however, even this new confidence seems to go unsustained. Job's lips fall silent again, as their final words cynically repudiate Eliphaz's effort to assure him a good death.¹¹ The last words of his fourth speech complain: "Where is my hope now? And who regards my hope? Will it go down with me to Sheol? Shall we go down into the dust together?" (17:15, 16, NASB).

But then, following Bildad's speech, come the eschatological, resurrection-oriented words of chapter 19. This is a statement of such focus, and so consistent within the balance of its thematic development, that it stands in clear contrast to the circuitous and contradictory expression of the earlier diatribes of Job himself.

Job's self-conscious control may even be noted in the length of the speech, which seems to be the briefest of all his speeches.¹² Christo has shown how pivotal it is to the whole book of Job.¹³ Within the overall speech, the confidence of verses 23–27 amounts to the next logical step in

Job's continued progression from a soliloquy of absolute gloom (chap. 3), through the consolation in his righteousness (6:10; 9:13, 20, 21), to daring to speak of communion with the Deity beyond the time of his death (14:14, 15). Also, it demonstrates that the protagonist is equal to the rhetorical challenge as he confronts Bildad's skillful argumentation recorded in chapter 18.

A translation of verses 25–27

Job's "If only . . ." speaks his confidence in the words he wishes preserved. His concern is both that their credibility not be forgotten, and that the story of his vindication be properly attested. Here, as I understand them, are the words he speaks: "As for me, I know my Redeemer is alive, Who, the Last, shall rise¹⁴ upon the earth.¹⁵ And after my corruption, though my skin has been stripped away,¹⁶ I shall yet, in my flesh, see God. I myself shall see Him for myself. Such a longing consumes me!"

I translate the disputed phrase "after my skin" (*'ahar ori*) as "after my corruption." The wealth of discussion and proposed optional

The advertisement features a black and white photograph of three young people jumping joyfully in the air. To the left, text reads: "Get your MA in Youth Ministry and stay in your current position Intensive March 24 - April 25, 2003". Below this, another section reads: "Upgrade to a DMin in Youth Ministry first cohort begins Loma Linda March 2-14, 2003". At the bottom, a banner says: "Leap in... get equipped... make a difference. CALL 269-471-3318 and talk to Dr. Barry Gane".

emendations of the phrase seems to overlook its connection with the book's first mention of "skin" on the lips of Satan (2:4).

When Satan fails to induce Job to blasphemy through material deprivation, he launches a new and enigmatic challenge: "Skin for skin," he taunts. "All that a man has he will give for his life" (2:4, NASB). His argument is that the threat of death will be enough to expose Job's insincerity and separate him from his God.

Job's reference to "skin" (*ori*) in context of physical corruption (19:26) may be designed both as his own climactic affirmation of faith, and the ultimate undoing of the mischievous claim on which Satan had founded that horrible test of the patriarch's faith. Job knows nothing of the adversary's charge. But he may yet expose the falsehood of Satan's claim by a precise contradiction of the adversary's own language. His words point to a time yet distant when Job will experience a vindication over which God Himself will preside, and one which Job will be alive to experience.

Summary and conclusions

Job 19:25-27 is the climactic peak of Job's response to the challenges of his friends. Here Job contemplates his own case at a level hitherto unknown, and hereafter unsurpassed. He thinks and speaks *sub specie aeternitatis*.

If Job was written as early as some traditions suggest, his thinking may have influenced the writing of Israel's eighth-century prophets more than is generally acknowledged. It should not then be surprising that his concept of a final day of reckoning and vindication closely corresponds with other Old Testament passages.

Having studied the concept of resurrection in Hosea 5:8 to 6:6, Pryce contends that though the mode in this Hosea passage is metaphorical, it appears that "the resurrection notion probably does not have its origin in the exilic or intertestamental period, as is often assumed."¹⁷ It must predate

Hosea's day.¹⁸ Even Pope's proposal (see above) of a seventh-century B.C. date for the dialogue of the book of Job, makes it apparent that resurrection conceptions were hardly alien to ancient Israelite thinking.

Popular faith in a resurrection derived from Jewish intertestamental literature gives no credence to the tradition of the Babylonian Talmud on this question. Nor does it accept Ellen White's implication that the book of Job may be the first biblical book ever written, being composed, along with Genesis, during Moses' self-imposed exile in the Midian desert.¹⁹

Taking Ellen White's comment at face value, the book of Job apparently dates to the first half of the fifteenth century B.C., the time of Moses' sojourn in the desert of Midian. And the sentiments of Job 19:25-27, compared with other biblical passages such as Job 14:12, 14; Isaiah 26:14, 19; or Hosea 5:8-6, solidly buttress the confidence that this book explicitly supports the faith of one man, the protagonist, Job, in a miraculous resurrection (resuscitation) at the end of time ('*rwn*), by the One who is the Last to receive personal vindication for His faithfulness, from the God whom he knows to be his Redeemer.

It is no mere coincidence that in Revelation 1:17, 18, Jesus is described (describes Himself) as "the First," and most significantly, "the Last." Here John employs that name, the Last, in connection with the very principles with which Job first placed them: the context of conquest over death and the grave.

Jesus, our resurrected Lord, has not lost the keys to death and hell (Rev. 1:18). Thus, we today, with more assurance than ever, may declare with Job, our faith in a day of eternal liberation to come. Jesus Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Job's Redeemer, the Redeemer of John's Revelation, is our Redeemer and Life-Giver also. ▀

of the Bones," *HUCA* 51 (1980) 1-15, 1 [abstract], and 11.

- 2 See, for example, Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1974), 193, 194; Bertrand Pryce, "The Resurrection Motif in Hosea 5:8-6:6," (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1989); Gordon Eugene Christo, "The Eschatological Judgment in Job 19:21-29: An Exegetical Study," (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, SDA Theological Seminary, 1992). Also Lael Caesar, "Yet From My Flesh I Shall See God": A Reexamination of the Concept of the Resurrection in Job" (ETS national meeting, New Orleans, 2000).

- 3 M. H. Pope, *Job*, 2nd ed., *Anchor Bible* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), xl.

- 4 Representing the independent personal pronoun in its almost exclusive usage as emphasizing the nominative-subject (GKC, 32b).

- 5 E. F. Sutcliffe, "Further Notes on Job, Textual and Exegetical," *Bib* 31 (1950), 365-378; 377.

- 6 C. Larcher, "Livre de Job," in *Bible de Jérusalem*, 2nd ed., 1957; 96; quoted in Tournay, ibid., 490, and reflected in *The Jerusalem Bible: Reader's Edition* (Garden City, N.Y.: 1971): "This I know: that my Avenger lives, and he, the Last, will take his stand on earth. After my awaking, he will set me close to him and from my flesh I shall look on God" (Job 19:25, 26). For Patrick W. Skehan see idem, "Strophic Patterns in the Book of Job," *CBQ* 23 (1961), 125-142; 138, 139.

- 7 Larcher, ibid

- 8 Skehan, ibid.

- 9 Dhorme, ibid., 285.

- 10 See Proverbs 22:1 on the value of *nem* (good name, public esteem). Christo, ibid., 43-61, shows keen awareness of the thematic relation between chap. 19 and Bildad's preceding speech. He does not comment on its rhetorical power.

- 11 See again 5:24, 25.

- 12 There is strong opinion that the text of Job has become scrambled, particularly from chap. 26-28. But a conservative evaluation of the material suggests ten speeches for Job: 1st (chaps. 6; 7)—50 verses; 2nd (chaps. 9; 10)—56 verses; 3rd (chaps. 12-14)—74 verses; 4th (chaps. 16; 17)—37 verses; 5th (chap. 19)—28 verses; 6th (chap. 21)—33 verses; 7th (chaps. 23; 24)—41 verses; 7th to 10th (chaps. 26-31)—13 verses; (chap. 26) 26 verses—22 verses, (chap. 27)—28 verses; (chap. 28)—95 verses [chaps. 29-31].

- 13 Christo, ibid., 42, 83, 226, where he also argues that verses 25-27 are central to this speech.

- 14 Pryce, ibid., studies the term *qwm* in the Hebrew Bible and finds it applied to God as personally involved in human history, raising up leaders or rising up to defend. Man as subject of *qwm* rises after falling, having been sick, or dead (p. 167). Christo cites Isaiah 26:14, 26:19, and Hosea 6:2, as passages that pair *qwm* and *y* to "describe the concept of resurrection" whether in affirmation or denial (121, 122). Thus Christo finds here the possibility of intentional double entendre, with *qwm* suggesting both "stand/rise up" and "raise up/resurrect."

- 15 Use of '*pr*' in an undisputed resurrection passage (Isa. 26:19) points to the meaning "earth." It is those who lie in the dust (*skn >pr*—verse 19c), dead men and corpses (19a, b), who will live (*yh—19a*), who are to awake and shout for joy (19c). Cf. Genesis 2:7 for *>pr* as reference to humanity; for contexts of finitude and mortality see Genesis 18:27; Job 42:6; Ecclesiastes 12:7.

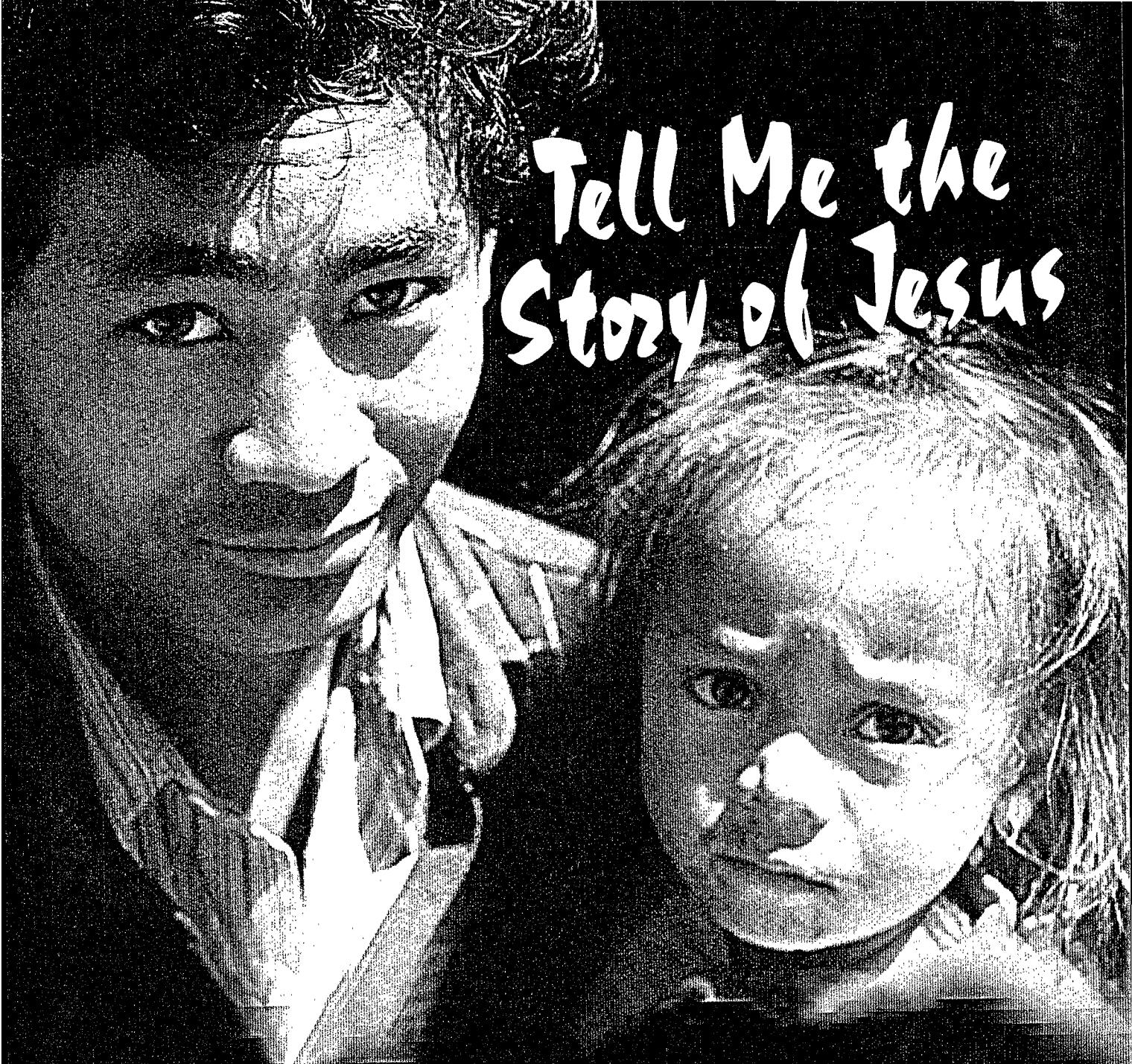
- 16 "It is entirely possible" that *nqp* is used for its double meaning, "strike off," and "go round," Christo, ibid., 220. Also the *f. s. z'tl* may be understood as an abstract, referring to Job himself (ibid.). So that the line may also read "after I have been brought around," i.e., been resurrected [see n. 30], *nigappi* being an impersonal or passive plural—"after they have [or one has] resurrected me."

- 17 Pryce, ibid., 366, 367.

- 18 Pryce, ibid.

- 19 See Ellen White's comments in *Sigis of the Times*, Feb. 19, 1880, par. 14. This article supplies valuable insight into how Moses' desert experience contributed not only to his subsequent leadership of Israel but specifically to writing these books. The White quotation on Mosaic authorship also appears in Francis D. Nichol, ed., *SDABC* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1977), 3:1140. For more discussion sympathetic to Mosaic authorship see ibid., 493.

1 Michael Fox, "The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley



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A kiss of charity: The debate over *agape*

John Dinsley



John Dinsley is a Bible worker and coordinator for Revelation Speaks Peace seminars in New Glascow, Nova Scotia, Canada.

We often hear that God's perfect love is best expressed in the Greek word *agape* while earthly love is best summed up with the word *phileo*. Is this true, or just an idea made prominent in sermons, articles, and books? To search out an answer, I went to the Bible, where I first assembled two piles of data: One containing biblical material which employed the word *agape*, and the other, texts of Scripture using the word, *phileo*.

This article deals with some of what I discovered.

How *agape* is used in the New Testament

"God is [*agape*]" (1 John 4:8). "For God so loved [a form of the word *agape* is used] the world that He gave . . ." (John 3:16, NKJV). "The [*agape*] of Christ, which passeth knowledge . . ." (Eph. 3:19). "Greater [*agape*] hath no man than this . . ." (John 15:13). "If you [*agapao*] Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). "He that loves [*agapao*] another hath fulfilled the law" (Rom. 13:8). The crown of life is promised to "them that [*agapao*] him" (James 1:12). And Christ warns those who "have left [their] first [*agape*]" (Rev. 2:4).

Clearly the ability to exercise *agape* is not only an attribute of God; it is also a vital ingredient in the Christian's experience. But can I have *agape* love? Evidently. And, can I have

agape love without God's help? Absolutely. In Christ's own words, we read of the unconverted sinner (just below John 3:16), "men loved [*agapao*] darkness rather than light" (John 3:19). Further, Jesus talks of people who "*[agapao]* the praise of men more than God" (12:43), and Peter says they "*[agapao]* the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Peter 2:15). If *agape* love is the benchmark of God's love and the converted Christian, why does Jesus say "sinners also [*agapao*] those that [*agapao*] them" (Luke 6:32)?

How *phileo* is used

Meanwhile, what about the other love, *phileo*?

"The Father himself loves [*phileo*] you because ye have loved [*phileo*] me and have believed" (John 16:27). While Jesus loved (*agape*) His disciple John, Jesus also loved (*phileo*) him (20:2). Further, the "Father [*phileo*] the Son, and sheweth him all things" (5:20). And one who "*[phileo]* father or mother . . . son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me," says Jesus (Matt. 10:37).

Like *agape* love, *phileo* love can be earthly, even "earthy." The Pharisees "*[phileo]* to pray standing" (Matt. 6:5) and "*[phileo]* the uppermost rooms at feasts" (23:6). "He that [*phileo*] his life shall lose it" (John 12:25). Those standing outside heaven's gates are those who *phileo* and make lies (Rev. 22:15).

Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance* identifies *agape* as primarily a function of the head, the mind, the intellect, while *phileo* is more a matter of the heart, the emotions. But, lest there be any doubt as to God's approval of *phileo* love, as well as His insistence on practicing it, Paul, the great champion of *agape*, includes this admonition in his benediction to the church at Corinth: "If any man [*phileo*] not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (1 Cor. 16:22); that is, excommunicated or cursed until the divine judgment!

It is no wonder then that, when Jesus asked Peter the first two times, "Simon, do you [*agapao*] thou me?" Peter replied, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I [*phileo*] Thee" (John 21:15, 16). In answering this way, Peter knew, or at least felt himself to be, on safe ground, even though Jesus was challenging his level of devotion.

One God, two loves

Agape is occasionally translated "charity"

in the King James Version, and *phileo* is sometimes rendered "kiss." Again both words are set in a framework of approval and censure. First Corinthians 13, the "love" chapter, edifies *charity*, while in His letter to the church at Thyatira, Christ rebukes their brand of *agape* when it does not condemn fornication (Rev. 2:19). Likewise, when translated "kiss," Jesus chides Simon the Pharisee for giving Him no *philema*, while Mary had not ceased to (earnestly) "kiss" (*phileo*) His feet (Luke 7:45).

In fact, the disciples were all admonished to "salute one another with an holy kiss [a word derived from *phileo*]" (Rom. 16:16, KJV, emphasis added) as a token of their affection for one another. Then as an act of supreme rejection and deception, Jesus asks, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a *kiss* [from *phileo*]" (Luke 22:48, emphasis added).

In a revealing blend of these two words, Peter places them both in one verse, showing us their simultaneous place in the conversion experience. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned [*phileo*] of the brethren, see that ye [*agape*] one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again" (1 Peter 1:22, 23). Then in his benediction, Peter does a similar thing when he calls the growing church, in a time of great trial and betrayal, to "greet ye one another with a *kiss* [*philema*] of charity [*agape*]" (5:14, emphasis added).

Making sense of apparent contradictions

What sense then are we to make of all this, the admonitions and apparent contradictions? As our Creator, Christ fashioned humanity in His image, imbued with all the functions of God's heart and mind, emotionally and intellectually, though in a finite form. But God's creation went amiss and all that God had pronounced "very good" came under the law of sin, and the seed of death

planted itself in the human soul.

What had been pure and noble and abounding, now, under the power of sin, became perverted and self-seeking. Nevertheless, the good seed, embedded in the soul by grace, remained ready to break out to produce its own fruit when the human being responded to the goodness of God, repented, and was born anew by the Holy Spirit.

So today, we see the love functions of mind, heart, and body devoted to the flesh or, when revitalized by the gift of God through faith in Jesus Christ, aligned with the mind and heart of God. Yet both seeds strive for space in every soul.

Both God's Spirit and Satan's are at work in us. Paul laments for all of us, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). Who can save me from this internal civil war? "I thank God [He can] through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (verse 25).

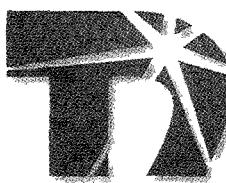
In God's original plan we can see that both *agape* love, that seated in the intellect, and *phileo* love, that issuing from the heart, were originally on an equal footing in the human

soul. Neither one predominated. But when Satan beguiled humanity, largely through exploiting our emotional, or *phileo*, side, it was *phileo* love—the emotional side of the human being—that became especially vulnerable.

Both kinds of love are constantly operative and both are an authentic way of expressing love; both being a part of God's creation. Both kinds of love are potentially operative in human-to-human, God-to-human, and human-to-God relationships. All things considered, however, it is nevertheless true that *agape* love is that which is primary, which is the ultimate in our relationships to one another and to God.

Thus, while Christ challenges us to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37), *phileo* love is subject to *agape* love, even while we are to love God completely, that is, in every way. While we go from faith to faith, maturing in our experience, we are to add to brotherly kindness, charity (2 Peter 1:7); that is, we are to add to our *philadelphia*, *agape* (2 Peter 1:7).

As Christ laments, "thou hast left thy first [*agape*]" (Rev. 2:4); nevertheless, "as many as I [*phileo*] I rebuke and chasten" (3:19). ▀

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The Discover Bible School

Kurt Johnson



Kurt Johnson is the Bible School Director for The Voice of Prophecy, Simi Valley, California.

My parents asked me to begin studying the Bible with them and our neighbors, at their house," said 15-year-old Andrea before 1,000 camp meeting attendees. "I told them 'No.' However, God thought differently. He had a plan for my life and finally I said, 'Yes.' God impressed me to make that choice. If I had not made that one choice for Jesus, I would not be standing here today."

Two weeks before her testimony, on September 14, 2002, Andrea and six others were baptized in Newbury Park, California. All had been participants in a small-group meeting hosted by their neighbors, Augie and Eleanor Ariza. The group watched the Discover Videos and studied the Discover Bible Guides.

A new outreach is born

Andrea and her family and friends are examples of many who have become involved in the "new look" Discover Bible School Ministry that has swept across North America over the past six years.

NET '95, the first satellite evangelistic meeting in the Adventist Church, had been concluded for several months. With thought and prayer, the leaders weighed their options, hoping to improve the '95 plan. A planning meeting for NET '96 was scheduled.

In the meantime, Dan Guild from The

Voice of Prophecy and Robert Spangler were praying, talking, and strategizing. Mark Finley and Don Gray, on an overseas trip, were doing the same. When they all got together, Dan presented the Discover Bible School concept. According to Dan, smiles of amazement crossed the faces of others; all had come with similar thoughts! In this setting, the Discover Bible School for North America was born.

What began in 1996 as a local church-based correspondence Bible school, with some visitation involved, has evolved into a multifaceted, nationwide Bible study outreach ministry. Today almost 2,400 churches have registered for the course since the first Discover Bible School was organized in North America.

Features of the Discover Bible School

Personal touch is the first goal of the school. Church members are encouraged to deliver Bible lessons personally to those requesting them. There are also small groups, one-to-one studies, video/DVD presentations, correspondence, and the Internet.

A Discover Bible School manual, instructional videos, mail services, a resource catalog, training/consulting, a quarterly newsletter, and a constant flow of new soul-winning products are part of the services.

Especially popular are the new Answer Sheets (Discover Discussion Sheets) used with the Discover Guides. The student looks up seven to ten Bible texts and writes in the answers to the questions posed in the lessons. The questions are paged to a NKJV Bible. The discussion and decision questions make for an easy-to-use soul-winning tool.

In addition to using The Voice of Prophecy Bible Guides, Bible study videos, and other soul-winning materials, the Discover Bible Schools are encouraged to combine the VOP lessons with study guides from other ministries. This team-ministry approach serves as an umbrella over the local churches and their Bible study outreach ministry. Thus, a Discover Bible School is more than just the handing out of the Discover Bible Guides. The bottom line is to meet the needs of people while leading them to Jesus.

Varied approaches, inspiring results

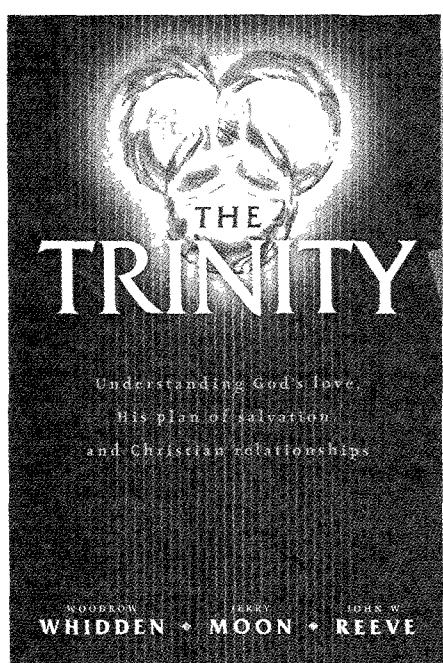
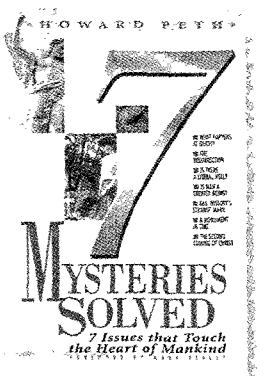
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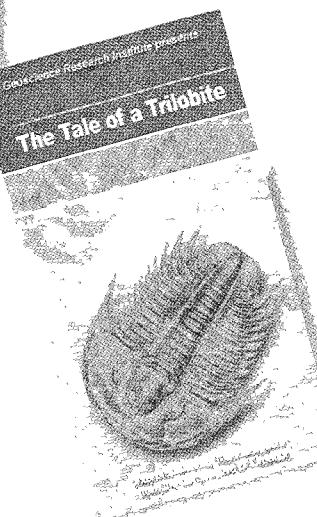
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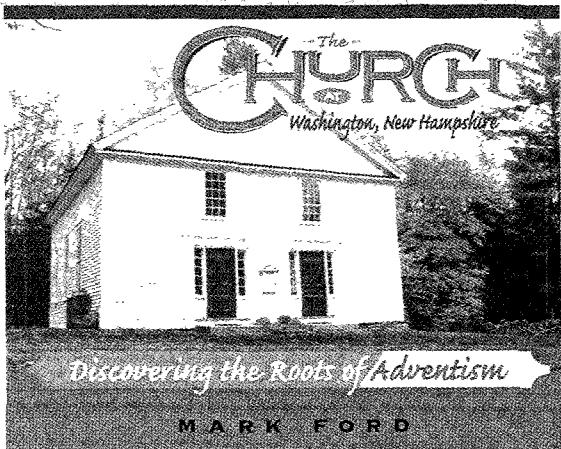
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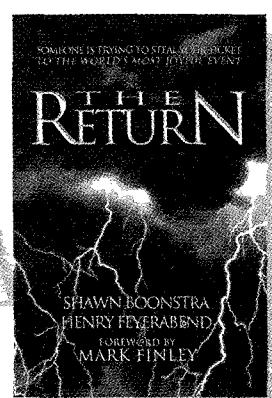
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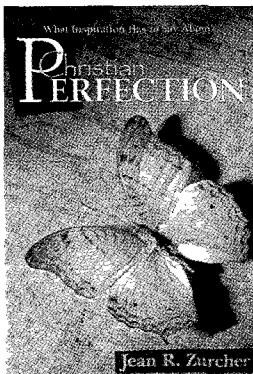
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Four additional Wednesday night sessions will be telecast on May 28 and June 4, 11, and 18. During this time of transition to the local church, pastors are encouraged to present worship services on additional prophecy topics.

"The success of any evangelistic series is determined to a great degree by what happens on opening night," says Benny Moore, VOP executive director, "and opening night success depends on good preparation long before the meetings begin."

Discover Bible Schools at churches across North America are a vital part of the preparation. "This will be a natural way to reap Discover Bible School interests," says James W. Gilley, vice president for the North American Division. "For churches with a Discover Bible School, now is the time to develop more interests. For others, this is a great opportunity to get one started."

The Voice of Prophecy daily and weekend radio broadcasts will help build an audience for NET 2003, since listeners already identify with the VOP and Pastor Melashenko. Every broadcast encourages listeners to enroll in the Discover Bible Guides.

Preparation for the evangelistic series includes three interactive training sessions by satellite on January 25, March 15, and April 19. Training videos will also be available.

"We live in urgent times," says Pastor Gilley. "Let's seize the opportunity, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to share Jesus with our neighbors."

For further information, visit www.net2003.com on the Internet.

—Eldyn Karr, Public Relations Director, *The Voice of Prophecy*

Virginia, was visiting his daughter. As Fred left her apartment complex, he took her garbage to the dumpster, where he saw a number of mass-mailed enrollment cards. Fred picked up one of the discarded cards, filled it out, and mailed it to the local Discover Bible School. He completed the lessons, started attending church, and was baptized.

The Internet phase of the Discover Bible School is gaining popularity. Anyone with computer Internet access can give Bible studies to students anywhere! There is even a CD Enrollment Disk similar to a printed

enrollment card or Lesson #1. Mass mail or hand out the CD, and recipients can complete Lesson #1 from the CD and connect to the Internet to sign up for the rest of the study guides. In addition, one can advertise and obtain their own students, grade lessons, as well as communicate with the students regularly.

Karen Glassford has been operating an Internet Discover School from home. "I have had the awesome privilege of being an Internet Bible School instructor for nearly four years," she says. "I have students from eight years old to those in their eighties.

Don't wait for a more convenient time to begin your own school. I can't overemphasize the joy and wonder that will come into your life."

The testimonies of her students keep Karen inspired. One student writes, "I never understood how God could torture someone in hell for all eternity. I am so relieved and happy now. . . . Thank you for helping me see God as someone I can't wait to spend eternity with."

Another writes, "I used to go to an Adventist church 30 years ago. I found your Web site and began Bible studies. It just dawned on me when I got to the lesson on the Sabbath that this was an Adventist Web site! I think the Lord is telling me what His will is through these lessons. I will be visiting an Adventist church soon."

Combining the Bible School with evangelistic meetings

A successful feature is combining the Discover Bible School with evangelistic meetings. The local church uses the Bible School ministry as preparation before an evangelistic series, operates the Bible School during meetings, and involves the Discover School in follow-up and discipleship of new members.

Here's how it works. Bible study enrollment cards are mass mailed and handed out by the members. Those who have completed the course, or are currently studying, are invited to attend the evangelistic meetings.

During the meeting a banner identifying the Discover Bible School and a table for the lessons is placed in the foyer. The evangelist asks the attendees to pick up a study guide each night at the table. Students return their completed answer sheets and pick up the next study guide. A graduation is held at the end of the series, with follow-up provided.

Weekly small-group Bible study in homes is very important. Friendships, discussion, and in-depth study with graduates, those newly baptized, and their network of family and friends are excellent discipling processes.

The Berean Adventist Church

An example of this kind of evangelism process at work is the Berean Adventist Church in downtown Los Angeles. The Berean Church hosted a multi-church reaping meeting with the VOP during September 2002.

Pastor Kendall Guy says, "The Discover Bible School is one of the most effective ways of working with people. The lessons generate an excitement for studying the Bible. People from all walks of life can identify with the lessons. During an evangelistic meeting the Discover Bible School is just the thing needed to keep people focused in learning the truth of the Scripture."

The Berean Church started with 150,000 Bible Study Enrollment Cards mailed prior to the evangelistic meeting. This mailing resulted in 2,333 requests for Bible studies. There were also 900 door-to-door responses requesting studies. About 170 who

came to the meetings took the lessons. Sixty-two completed them, along with 12 who completed the Focus on Prophecy Guides as well.

Here are responses from some of the Berean Bible School students.

"I am grateful for the Discover Bible Guides. The guides helped me understand God's Word and experience a deeper friendship with Jesus."

"These lessons have made me want to be baptized. I loved reading them, and learned a lot."

"The study guides have meant a lot to me. I had to stop at one point and give God thanks for sending His Son to die for my sins."

NET 2003

If your church is participating in NET 2003, the first step is to become involved with a Discover Bible School. The NET 2003 meeting will be uplinked from Columbia, South Carolina, April 26-May 24. In addition,

use the Discover School as part of your local church evangelism process. The Discover School can be the core of your church's evangelistic outreach, follow-up, and assimilation.

If you haven't updated your Discover Bible School or started one in your church, why not begin now? With commitment, dedication, and hard work—all immersed in prayer and the presence of the Holy Spirit—your church Bible study ministry can take on new life.

Through the Discover Bible School, there is something for every local church member to do. If someone can write a note, lick a stamp, use a computer, knock on a door, share a smile, and be part of a small group—let them decide their level of involvement—then there is a place for them.

For a free Bible School Information Packet: call 1-877-955-2525 (toll free) or 805-955-7659; fax 805-522-1760; or email discover@vop.com ■

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The magnitude of the pastoral call

Zinaldo A. Santos



Zinaldo Santos is the international editor of Ministry for the South American Division, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The picture of a pastor as spiritual leader originated in Scripture, and it remains one of the most ancient and fascinating biblical symbols. Before human beings spoke of God as their Father, they referred to Him as their Pastor. Micah referred to Him as the One who would gather Israel "like sheep of the fold, like a flock in the midst of their pasture" (Micah 2:12, NKJV), and prophesied about the Messiah saying: "He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord" (Micah 5:4, NKJV, emphasis supplied).

Jesus spoke of Himself as "the Good Shepherd," One who "gives His life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Of all divine titles, none is more significant than "the Good Shepherd." Jesus never introduced Himself as preacher, bishop, priest, or administrator, but in this passage and others He presents Himself as Pastor.

Many biblical passages overflow with descriptions and inspiration for the work of the pastor. While these portray God or Christ Himself as the Pastor of His people, their implications for the pastor are by all means valid enough.

Psalm 23 is one of these. It describes God as a tender and caring Pastor, willing to place Himself in courage and diligence as the Helper, Guide, and Protector of the flock. In Luke 15:3-7, Jesus describes Himself as One willing to face perils without end in seeking the lost sheep. Again, the implications for the

ministry of the pastor are transparently plain and strong.

The Pastor, the shepherd

The main task of the pastor is to render aid. The church has grown. It has become institutionalized. Thus the need is more urgent than ever for leaders who are especially gifted by the Spirit to manage the various aspects of the affairs of the church. No matter where one is serving—whether at the head of a congregation, promoting a department, administrating a given area, in a classroom, in an editorial office, or chairing boards and committees—he or she cannot afford to forget that at the heart of their calling, they are a pastor. The group being led is a "flock."

The issues the minister deals with are directly related to God's exaltation before humanity, as well as the growth and well-being of the flock, which is the church. The pastoral mentality should never be suffocated or replaced with the administrative and managerial mannerisms of the present age.

The pastoral worldview was the prevalent vision of the primitive church. As time went by, however, a change occurred in how pastoral work was faced, valued, and assessed. The situation has now evolved to almost tragic proportions. This is especially true in our scientific and materialistic age, when the tendency to value things above human beings is growing with frightening speed.

Some years ago, Roy Allan Anderson said: "The church has caught the spirit of the times, and she is doing her work today as a highly organized institution. But the Advent church began under the leadership of deep students of the Word. The pioneers were a deeply spiritual group of men and women. Prayer, study, and frequent counsels were a vital part of their program. But the tendency today is to place the emphasis on other things. The ability to expound the Word and feed the flock, the capacity to comfort the sorrowing and care for the fatherless, even the worker's personal piety, seem of necessity to be neglected by virtue of the heavy promotional program laid upon men."

It is necessary to urgently redeem the excellence of the pastoral call. "These are fast-moving days. Everything is measured by speed. And if someone trips and falls, before help can come he is trampled under foot by the surging crowd. Man finds himself home-

less amid a jungle of machines and untamed forces, and millions are wondering whether life is worthwhile. Others, trying to palliate their misery, are drifting down the stream of life to crooning music, not knowing which way they are heading and feeling that nobody cares. These conditions call for shepherds—strong, wise, kind shepherds, shepherds who can sympathize and love the wickedness out of human hearts, shepherds who are not too busy to spend time untangling individual and community problems. Everywhere there are broken homes and broken hearts, and these call for a shepherd's care. The world does not lack luxuries, but it does lack love. Eloquent preachers, detailed organizers, and business executives all have their place in the church of God, but the flock grows in grace and Christlikeness under the gentle touch of the shepherd.²

Showing the fruit

The greatness of pastoral ministry will reveal itself in the attitudes and in the life of the minister. His or her speech and action will do justice to the high calling of the pastor. The pastor's personal bearing and behavior are crucial. Here are some indispensable aspects of a healthy pastoral attitude:

Possessing conviction about one's call. In a missiological sense, we know that the Lord has called all believers for the task of evangelizing. This has to do with the exercise of the "royal priesthood" about which the apostle Peter spoke (1 Peter 2:9). Nevertheless, the Lord has blessed some of His children with the special gift of pastoring, calling them to the task of leading His people and spreading the saving influence of His kingdom.

The unequivocal conviction of the divine call is, no doubt, one of the pillars of ministerial success. Paul possessed it: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him

among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus" (Gal. 1:15-17, NKJV).

should remember that he is a human being, fallible and constantly exposed to danger. Distrusting our own strength, we may fully trust God.

Passion for souls. The founder of the Salvation Army once said to the

FOR PAUL, THE DIVINE CALL WAS SO DISTINCT THAT HE HAD NO NEED TO CONSULT ANYONE ELSE TO EXTINGUISH ANY DOUBTS ABOUT IT. GOD HAD MADE HIM A WORKER AND A MINISTER. AND THERE RESIDED HIS UNBREAKABLE STRENGTH.

For Paul, the divine call was so distinct that he had no need to consult anyone else to extinguish any doubts about it. God had made him a worker and a minister. And there resided his unbreakable strength.

The assurance of the call does not prevent trials and difficulties. But, in the midst of these, the pastor maintains a blazing flame of enthusiasm, a deep and inner motivation and desire to proceed. Whoever possesses this quality will not pull back in the face of the pressure; neither will such a pastor have peace and pleasure in any other activity.

Thus, divinely compelled, we should get ourselves into the work, trusting that the One who has called us will always go before us.

Communion with God. "Like people, like priest" (Hosea 4:9, NKJV). These words impose on us a tremendous responsibility. When the pastor enjoys a rich spiritual experience, no doubt he will communicate this to his congregation. Thus there is the critical need in the life of the pastor for close communion with God. If every minister always runs to God in fervent prayer, "as in agony," the Lord will certainly invigorate his spirit and multiply his faith.

Individually, and with our family, we should never forego the privilege of communing with God. The pastor

Queen of England: "Some have passion for gold; others for fame; others yet have a passion for power. My passion, your Majesty, is for souls." But this does not mean just an unrestrained race in pursuit of accomplishing numeric goals. Its greater, underlying expression is the love that brought Christ to the world.

Passion for souls is what Paul demonstrates when he writes to the Galatian people, referring to them as "my little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19, NKJV). It is Knox pleading: "Give me Scotland or I die!" It is David Brainerd in the snow, coughing blood from his tubercular lungs while praying for the Indians. It is Jim Elliot and his young colleagues spotting the sands with blood at the margin of a creek in Ecuador as they seek for the ignored tribe of the Auca Indians, to lead them to Christ.

God still needs men and women imbued with the sense of mission as was the apostle Paul: "Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16, NKJV).

The true passion for souls does not extinguish when people are merely accounted for in terms of the church's membership ledger books. Through diligent and systematic visitation work, the pastor continues to feed

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We get questions!

Everywhere our team travels we get questions, often variations on the same theme. Sometimes the questions are submitted in search of information, and other times individuals are in search of a platform to espouse personal views. I thought you might enjoy some typical questions from recent ministerial councils.

Over the years, there have been differences of opinions expressed by pastors in respect to head covering by women and wedding rings. Please, we need to have one teaching and understanding on this issue.

Here the questioner requests the impossible. Recognizing that differences of opinions have existed for years, he pleads for one consistent teaching. I'm reminded of a training convention for local church elders that I conducted in West Jamaica. Several hundred participants, including a significant number of women elders, listened as a man enquired whether it was custom or doctrine that demanded a woman wear a hat to church. My tongue-in-cheek answer was that in my culture it was custom but that in his culture it appeared to be both custom and doctrine. Then I closed the subject with admonition that in matters of women's hat styles and dress preferences we ought, as men, to remain silent.

Issues regarding wedding rings have been settled among Adventists for decades. Wearing, or not wearing, wedding rings is entirely a personal conviction of the individual members, and no pastor or elder may impose his or her personal view on anyone else.

Without any bias, is it possible to prove from the Bible, with specific passages, that women should be allowed to preach in the church?

First, let me state that it is nearly impossible to answer any question without bias from our own background, cul-

JAMES A. CRESS



ture, spiritual experience, or educational training. I'm sure the questioner believed I would be biased since my wife, Sharon, had just preached an excellent sermon at that Bible Conference.

A simple answer, of course, is No! There are no texts that command women to preach in church. Proof-texting our way to answers, however, may be the weakest approach to finding truth. Scripture and our own denominational heritage provide ample examples of women preaching. For example, the Samaritan woman at the well was the first individual whom Jesus commissioned as a public evangelist. She had amazing results. Mary, fresh from meeting Jesus at the tomb, was the first to preach His resurrection. Her results were not as great. Although her message was comprehended, Jesus later scolded His disciples for refusing to believe her proclamation. Priscilla held such an esteemed leadership role that she instructed other preachers, and our own Adventist heritage has relied on the effective preaching and writings of Ellen G. White's prophetic role. If you still need a proof text, try Galatians 3, in which the apostle declares, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Our church's polity decision to not ordain women should not be con-

fused with the Lord's call for every believer to proclaim His Word.

Is it our doctrine to force someone to marry a woman he has impregnated after the church board has disfellowshipped them?

The timing of the board's action has nothing to do with the issue except to remove the church board as party to the discussion.

Premarital sexual relations are a sin. They are also a reality. Perhaps the church should offer much more in premarital education, especially to young people, with the aim of avoiding sinful situations more than punishing sinners.

The answer to sin is repentance, confession, forgiveness, and walking in new life. Marrying an individual with whom you have sinned does not atone for those sins. Marriage certificates do not move past behavior from the prohibited column to the approved column. That would be salvation by works.

I want to be further illuminated on the theology of rebaptism.

So do I. But the scriptures are silent beyond one passage (Acts 19:1-7), which tells of 12 believers who had been baptized by John in anticipatory faith of the coming Redeemer and who did not know the historic reality of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension. When they heard this good news, they were baptized again.

This unusual incident is insufficient to mandate that previously immersed believers ought to be rebaptized. Adventists have always maintained that an immersed person is welcomed into church fellowship by profession of faith in their previous baptism. The foot-washing service, which precedes Communion, is a tangible and spiritual reminder of cleansing that Jesus provides to all, and those seeking rebaptism should be directed first to this meaningful service. Our own manual, however,

does require rebaptism for readmittance into the church for certain moral failures that have disgraced the church's witness in the community. Although there is no biblical text to "prove" this point of polity, any organization has the authority to establish rules by which it will govern itself.

Kindly tell us why people should eat the Lord's Supper apart from the 14th day of Nisan (the biblical date for Passover). Why does our church conduct Communion quarterly?

With the reality of the gospel being present in Himself as our Passover, Jesus clearly terminated ceremonial feasts that pointed forward in shadow to Him. Therefore, the date of Passover has no controlling relationship to the Communion service, which may be celebrated quarterly, weekly, monthly, or annually. Rather than prescribing a frequency schedule, Jesus simply stated, "As often as you do this, do it in remembrance of Me."

Is it wrong for a widowed pastor's wife to marry another man who is not a pastor? If so, why do widower pastors marry whomever they choose?

No, it is not wrong. The profession of a second marriage partner is not governed by the profession of the deceased, who know not anything. Cautionary counsel might be that many pastoral spouses have invested much of their lives in a public role that is accompanied by respect and a certain "sense of place" in the eyes of the membership. Such should never marry a mate of whom, subsequently, they would be embarrassed because their new spouse's job does not elicit the same level of prestige. If a potential spouse's status might cause your own loss of self-esteem, then avoid inflicting pain on them. Every spouse deserves love and respect for who they are rather than unfavorable comparison with who they are not.

Your questions? In areas of practices, theology, hermeneutics, polity, etc., we will seek input of scholars and pastors. Submit brief correspondence, headlined "Questions," to the postal or email addresses listed in the masthead. □

The magnitude of the pastoral call

continued from page 27

and nourish the people with the bread that came down from Heaven; meeting their needs, comforting them in their afflictions, and encouraging them in their trials.

"Let every minister live as a man among men. Let him, in well-regulated methods, go from house to house, bearing ever the censer of heaven's fragrant atmosphere of love. Anticipate the sorrows, the difficulties, the troubles of others. Enter into the joys and cares of both high and low, rich and poor."³

Servant mentality. The principles of God's kingdom are different from those of the world: "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all" (Mark 10:42-44, NKJV).

The idea of greatness found in the

teaching of Jesus does not agree with what the world thinks. In the church, we all have to be servants. Only Jesus Christ is the Lord of the church. No human being may have the audacity to occupy this position, and even Jesus occupies it because He is the greatest of servants.

Struggling to gain a "promotion," compromising or planning it by some artful means would constitute the very antithesis of true Christianity. Whoever takes this route reveals a passion for power that does not consider the true means that are alone valid as we reach out to attain our aims as servants of God.

We must remember that in God's system there is only one caste—that of servant, and that is true no matter where one works. We must be seen as someone who serves, who gives of himself. What really matters is the attitude. Not the title.

Ministerial ethics. Someone has defined ministerial ethics as "moral science." It is an elevated standard of human conduct that involves consideration, respect, and courtesy toward our fellow human beings.

The Bible says: "Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion

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for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8, NKJV). "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness" (Gal. 5:22, NKJV). The corollary of all that is said about ethics is: "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matt. 7:12, NKJV).

The principles behind this theme encompass the type of relationship

nication and a relaxed relationship between individuals, many so-called taboos have been eliminated.

Let's speak from the male pastor's viewpoint: A pastor is expected to be friendly, respectful, elegant, and polite when dealing with anyone, including women. A great part of the church's work is done by women. Most women in the church give evidence of possessing an elevated and

may please him who enlisted him as a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:4, NKJV).

"The energies of the minister are all needed for his high calling. His best powers belong to God. He should not engage in speculation, or in any other business that would turn him aside from his great work."⁴

In sending out the twelve disciples, Jesus commanded them: "Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs" (Matt. 2:9, NKJV), which does not mean to adopt an out-of-context lifestyle. The principle implied is that of simplicity—no involvement in the spending fever of our days. With the command, Christ guaranteed the support of His servants: "For a worker is worth his keep" (Matt. 10:10, NIV).

When putting in practice the basic principles of economy, what seemed little, with the Lord's blessing, will be multiplied and the needs will be met. The wise control of the family budget will make sure that the spending is no greater than the income, so that the pastor will be free from the danger of indebtedness.

The present days, which are the last and most difficult ones in history, require a powerful ministry, a ministry of quality and uncompromised spiritual commitment. Our struggle is a spiritual one; God's cause is spiritual. We must be spiritual men and women. The church expects to see pastors with this profile.

In these critical days, the fervent prayer of every minister must be that God will grant us all the ability to develop and possess the rare qualities that stand behind true and effective pastoral ministry. It is ever true that this may be ours through the action of the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us so freely. ■

WE MUST REMEMBER THAT IN GOD'S SYSTEM, THERE IS ONLY ONE CASTE—THAT OF SERVANT, AND THAT IS TRUE NO MATTER WHERE ONE WORKS.

we should maintain with our family, with church members, with a predecessor, successor or colleague, with those who lead us or those we lead. As pastors, we are always dealing with individuals for whom Christ gave His life. They are more important than anything else. Their feelings must never be disrespected, whatever the provocation.

It is almost inevitable, however, that in our relationships with other people we will encounter people with personalities incompatible with our own; yes, even among gospel ministers. In these cases, we need to possess special grace from the Lord to learn how to solve the problems that may arise. Attitudes and decisions that we cannot understand and about which we can do nothing, should be placed in the hands of "Him who judges righteously" (1 Peter 2:23, NKJV). He will take care of it and in time show that "all things work together for good" (Rom. 8:28, NKJV).

Attitudes with the opposite sex. We can never repeat too many times the care that we should take when it comes to our relationships with other people in the arena of our sexuality. This is especially true in these days when, in the name of good commu-

exemplary spiritual experience.

But the enemy of God, along with our own human weakness, makes us vulnerable to that special attention we receive or even grant to someone special, that long handshake, that look, or that private interview or counseling situation.

"Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22, NKJV), says Paul. If today we regret the loss of powerful pastors from the past, it is because this counsel is underestimated. Deep dependence on God, alertness, prudence, Christian discernment, good judgment, and moderation are indispensable to the minister. All this is in addition to the protection a Christian wife represents, especially when the marital relationship is kept strong and each partner maintains themselves as attractive, inviting, and safe for each other.

Financial stability. The difficult survival conditions of the present world may represent, for many pastors, an invitation to involve themselves in sideline businesses to increase the family income. This practice, concealed or not, contradicts the greatness of the pastoral call. "No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he

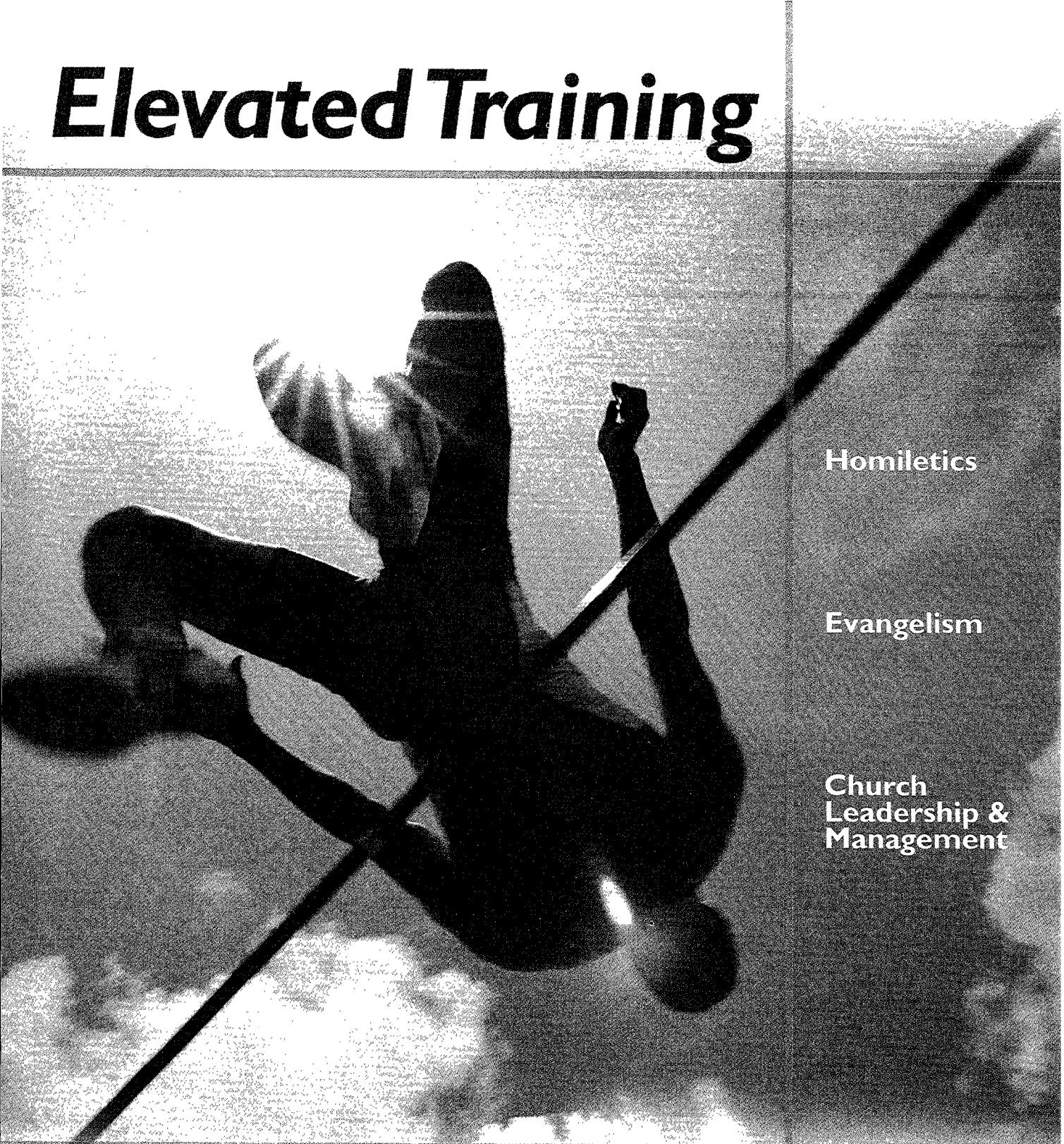
1 Roy Allan Anderson, *The Shepherd-Evangelist* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1950), 485.

2 Ibid., 480, 481.

3 Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), 398 (Letter 50, 1897).

4 ———, *Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), 339.

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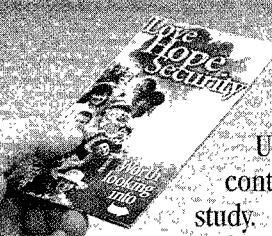


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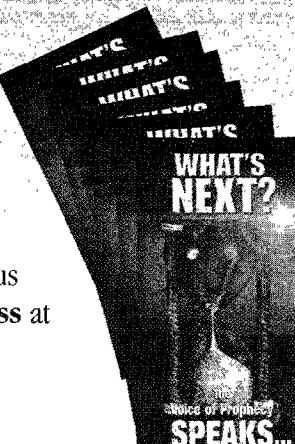
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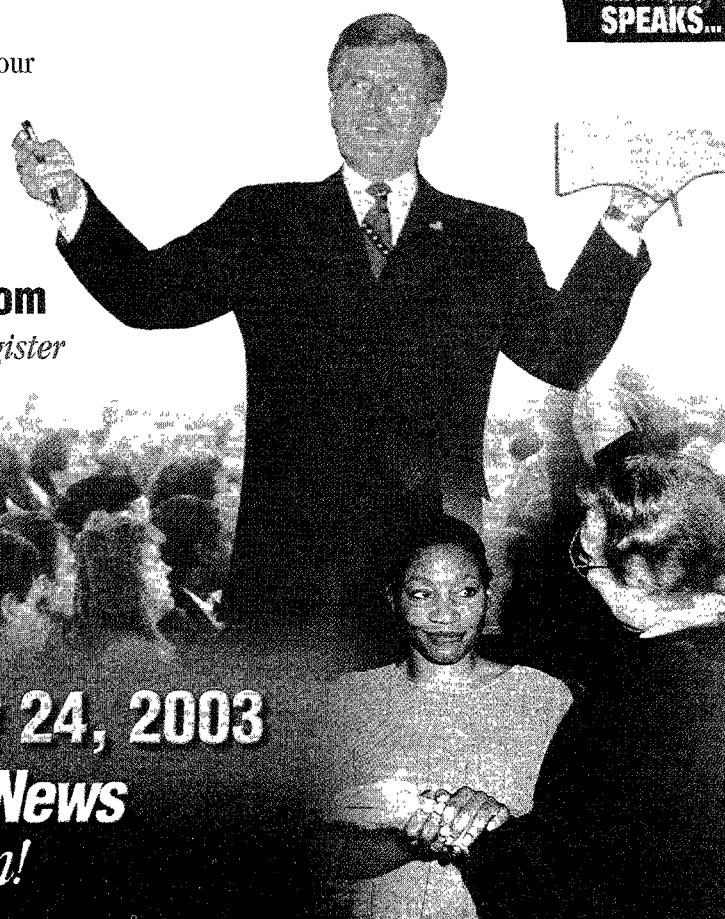
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