

MINISTRY

International Journal for Pastors December 2003



Celebrating 75 Years of
Ministry Magazine

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Cover Design and Digital Illustration Harry Knox

Subscriptions: 12 issues: United States US\$29.99; Canada and overseas US\$31.99; airmail US\$41.75; single copy US\$3.00. To order, send name, address, and payment to *Ministry Subscriptions*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904 U.S.A.

Circulation queries, renewals, new subscriptions, address changes: Email: norcottj@gc.adventist.org; ministrysubscriptions@gc.adventist.org; phone: 301-680-6510; fax 301-680-6502.

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Writer's Guidelines available on request.

Ministry (ISSN 0026-5314), the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association © 2003, is published monthly by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and printed by Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1350 N. Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687-3193. Member Associated Church Press. Standard mail postage paid at Nampa, Idaho.

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Vol. 75 Number 12

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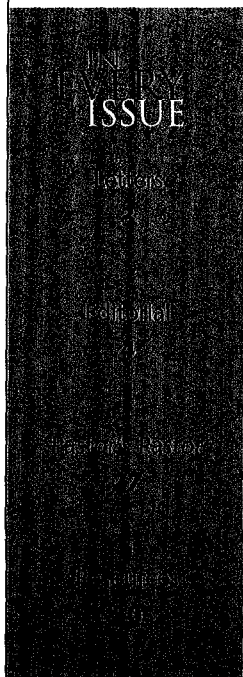
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ULTIMATELY, THE REFORMATION DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH "ALONE" HAS TO BE CONTINUALLY REVISITED AS THE HEALING CURE.

I want to express my appreciation for the excellent article by Dr. Roger W. Coon, on "Phillips Brooks: The Man and His Master" (December 2002). I would like to urge that more such articles be featured in *Ministry*. While we thank God for the many outstanding preachers we have had—and still have—in our church, we do well from time to time to reflect on the remarkable ministries that have been in the past in the churches generally.

What did disturb me were the statistics cited by Dr. Russell Burrill in his article "Can Dying Churches Be Resuscitated?" (December 2002). I refer to George Barna's "shocking study of the religious beliefs and practices of overcomfortable Christians." To think that among other things, only 67 percent of Seventh-day Adventists (in the survey) believed the Bible to be totally accurate and that only 45 percent felt that Christ was sinless . . . !

May I express my utter amazement. I am 91 years of age. I embraced the Advent message when I was 14 . . . and by the grace of God I have remained loyal to it through all the intervening decades. But I never dreamed in those early days of my association with the Seventh-day Adventist Church that I would witness the times to which we have come. I find myself asking, "Where are we heading? How much longer will it be before the Lord appears?"

I believe wholeheartedly that God's final message of truth will go through to a glorious triumph, and I thank God for every effort that is made in *Ministry* to keep our church on course in the faith and to encourage all whom God has

called into its ministry to uphold the truth.

I therefore pray that the Lord will bless you very richly as you continue to monitor it in its vital role.

—Alfred S. Jorgensen, Heathmont, Victoria, Australia.

Bert Beach can't have it both ways (December 2002). He began by correctly saying that "No other name has been given to men . . . by this name we must be saved." Later he said that some in other religions or cultures may "demonstrate the operation, in their thoughts and actions, of the law of God" and by it be saved. The first is the gospel, the second is salvation by works of law.

Beach's conflict arose when he quoted from Romans 2:13-15, and as many do, neglected to interpret the verses in context. The NKJV encloses verses 13-15 as a parenthesis amidst Paul's careful argument in chapters 1 through 3:9. His aim was to exclude works of law by either Jew or Gentile, as their basis of salvation. . . .

Many believe that "thoughts and actions, of the law of God" will save non-Christians. But this is alien to Paul's gospel (see Gal. 1:6-12). Paul's purpose in Romans 1:14 to 3:10 is to prove the perversity, guilt, and doom of the entire human race. He reiterates his point made in chapter 2, "We have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. . . . There is no righteous, *no not one*" Jew or Gentile—law or no law (3:9, 10).

This is no minor matter! The humanist notion that God bypasses Christ to

save people of alien cultures on the basis of their works of law is what stifled missionary outreach in the nineteenth century.

—Norman L. Meager, Lima, Ohio.

First, as a retiree, I greatly appreciate continuing to receive *Ministry*. Even though I'm formally retired I'm still involved.

Re: Roland Hegstad's "What's With Adventist Theology?" and his discussion of the 27 doctrines book (April 2003). I realize this book has been out for several years. However, a recent experience has caused me to look at it with a different perspective.

Recently a 40-plus-year-old mentally astute pastor's son contacted me for help in preparing him to lead a Sabbath morning Bible class discussion on the topic of the Trinity. I recommended the 27 doctrines book as one source. Later he asked me why it was written in such an incomprehensible manner. He said he could never recommend it to the average person, believer or nonbeliever, inquiring into the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Its language is that of the professional theologian and does not communicate with others.

Thus, permit me to suggest that this book (27 Doctrines) be rewritten in the common language of the people. The purpose of this idea is to make this book explaining our doctrinal beliefs not only thoughtfully and carefully written but also something that all can understand.

—Eugene Miller, Days Creek, Oregon.

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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.

Adventists and ecumenism

The traditional emphasis upon the doctrinal uniqueness of each Christian denomination has waned and given way to an opposite trend: the pressure to de-emphasize theological and behavioral denominational distinctives. This bent is not merely the product of recent ecumenical ambitions, but also part of a powerful cluster of largely unrelated social trends.

What, then, are some of the contemporary social paradigms that seem to join with the ecumenical stimulants, especially in the Western world, to put pressure upon Seventh-day Adventists and other Christian bodies to re-evaluate their identity and their role in the world? Here are some:

1. *The postmodern paradigm.* A staple for the postmodern soul is the tendency to question almost anything that has centralized, authoritative sanction. In the postmodern world, the individual—certainly not any organized religion—is king. This, of course includes the individual's personal estimate of what is to be embraced or rejected. This influence obviously places pressure upon any church in which absolute truth claims are infrastructural.

2. *Definitive truth cannot be known.* Consistent with postmodernism's rejection of centralized authority is a closely related corollary: that human beings simply cannot know what truth actually is, and cannot therefore articulate or require adherence to any particular truth or definitive pattern of behavior. In many ways, this belief, born of popularized renderings of some of the existentialist philosophies of the last century or more, has watered and fertilized the plant of postmodernism. Its challenge to a denomination such as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, whose

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identity and missiological thrust rests upon clear perceptions and articulations of "the truth," are difficult to miss.

3. *The unbalanced use of reason and science,* in many ways the spinal cord of "modernism," has left in its wake a new culture of uncertainty, and above all, spiritual, relational, and personal emptiness. Aside from what else this unbalanced use of reason might engender, it is its innate uneasiness with the reality of the Spiritual (with a capital "S"), and thus its dominating emphasis on the physical, material, technological, and experimentally verifiable, that is most challenging to anything that tries to travel to dimensions beyond it; entities such as any order of viable biblical faith.

4. In such cultures, the questions "Does God exist?" and/or "Is the Bible a valid guide for today's world?" is no longer even on the radar screens of many people's consciousness. For increasing numbers of people, the answer is "No" to both questions, and has long since been settled in the minds of these people, with a new materialistic or secular "orthodoxy" sweeping in to openly disdain the act of even raising such questions.

5. Then there is *the phenomenon of a shrinking planet.* In an amazingly expanded, constantly changing, interactive and at the same time diversified

world, Christians must communicate a relevant faith. Aside from this any attempts to secure global peace and/or to initiate religious unity must include not only Christian denominations, but all of the great religions of the world, perhaps including for example, subgroups such as certain militant fundamentalist branches of Islam.

In the light of these things, it is not difficult to understand why sincere Christian people might feel the burning need to modify or oust the old denominational structures, and develop some kind of fraternal unanimity on the basis of which they can bring a combined front to the global ecumenical table where they might meet the great world religions.¹

The reasons for such a global quest are compelling. But if Seventh-day Adventists are to retain the essence *and the spirit* of their original God-given calling, and their transcendent reason for existence, they must move in this milieu with divinely inspired wisdom and care. While there is by all means every legitimate reason to adapt and adjust the ways in which we relate to a "brave, new world," we must, under God, hold fast our original Christian and Seventh-day Adventist charter: To proclaim the everlasting gospel in the light of an imminent eschaton . . . with all that's implied in a biblical commission such as Revelation 14:6-12.

Angel Rodríguez's cover article, "Adventists and Ecumenical Conversation," is an insightful and far-reaching contribution as we search out our particular role in the heart of all that is unfolding these days. ■

¹ See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* ((Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1888; rev. 1911.), 584-592.

Adventists and ecumenical conversation

Angel Manuel Rodríguez



Angel Manuel Rodríguez, Th.D., is director of the Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not exist in isolation from other Christian communities. Social and religious trends in the Christian world impact us; they force us to decide how we should relate to those trends and changes. The Christian concern about the unity of the church, voiced particularly through the World Council of Churches, forces us to define where we stand on this important subject. Certainly, "no Adventist can be opposed to the unity Christ Himself prayed for."¹

This article looks at the nature of Seventh-day Adventist involvement in the search for unity among Christians, as well as the doctrinal and theological parameters within which we operate in that search. It also briefly discusses the risks and benefits present in the conversations with other Christian bodies.

Our hope is that the ideas expressed here will be useful to Adventist ministers who interact with non-Adventist clergy at a more personal level, as well as a help to our pastors as they answer some of the concerns that church members might have regarding these conversations.

Adventist identity and ecumenical dialogues

The Adventist Church has occasionally had conversations with other Christian communities and even participated with them in

special activities (such as the matter of the promotion of religious liberty throughout the world). We have entered into those conversations with some apprehension, while at the same time acknowledging their need, usefulness, and importance.

What are our concerns as we deal with interfaith relations and dialogues? The church has not been quiet about that question. Adventists are concerned about the nature of the unity that is being sought and the methods that are employed in the attempts to accomplish it.²

There is much debate in the ecumenical movement about church unity. Traditionally that unity has been understood as "agreement in the confession of the faith and mutuality in the sacraments and in the ecclesiastical office (ministry), common worship life in prayer, common witness and common service to all human beings, the ability to act and speak together in view of the concrete tasks and challenges, the local as well as the universal dimension of the ecclesiastical unity, unity as well as diversity."³

This far-reaching understanding of unity is incompatible with Adventist self-understanding, especially as Adventists see themselves called into being to be a reformation movement based on a particular prophetic role. The kind of unity expressed in the above statement ignores the damage that apostasy has inflicted on Christianity and, consequently, does not attempt to remedy it.

Hence Adventists are reluctant to be officially involved in the organized ecumenical movement.

Three ecumenical models for unity

Three specific models for unity have been proposed in ecumenical circles.⁴

The *first* one, the Cooperative-Federal Model, is considered the most elemental type in that it does not address topics like communion of faith, worship, sacraments, and ministry. These are issues of great concern in the ecumenical movement (which is why some people refuse to call it a model of Christian unity).⁵

This "model" consists in the development of a confederation or alliance of churches in order to work together on common interests. The identity and autonomy of each church is preserved and respected. Adventists have remained open to possible involvement in

such a federation because it does not threaten the church's message and mission. This is particularly the case in France, with our participation in the French Protestant Federation.

The *second* model is called the Model of Mutual Recognition. One of the key goals of ecumenical dialogue is the mutual acknowledgment of by

Adventist thinking, the goal of true ecumenism is the restoration of biblical truth rejected or ignored by different Christian bodies.

Consequently Adventists see themselves as a reform movement, calling Christians back to the Scriptures as the sole foundation of faith and practice, and to the restoration of a true

for most Christian communities because it requires radical changes and the loss, to a large extent, of ecclesiastical identity. This model, of course, is incompatible with the message and mission of the Adventist Church. Besides this, it does not seem to be prevailing in ecumenical circles, even if it remains an ideal. It has largely been replaced by the search for "visible unity."

The "Model of Church Fellowship"

There is now an interest in what could be called the Model of Church Fellowship (*koinonia*), based on the model of mutual recognition.⁹

Churches possessing different confessions could enjoy the unity of fellowship with or without organic unity. Under this model, confessional identity does not have to be surrendered but recognized and accepted as an expression of apostolic faith and church life. What has to be eliminated is "divisive sharpness and depth."¹⁰

Following this model, fellowship is based on "a common understanding of the gospel and its correct transmission in the proclamation of the Word and the sacraments."¹¹ This concept of fellowship is very similar to the Catholic concept of *communio*, as the Catholic ecumenical vision.¹²

In their bilateral dialogues, Catholics have noticed that the dialogues usually "define the visible unity of all Christians as *communio*-unity, and agree in understanding it—in analogy with the original Trinitarian model—not as uniformity but as unity in diversity and diversity in unity."¹³

Seventh-day Adventists, however, would still find this model unacceptable. There are understandings of the apostolic faith that are distortions of that faith. In Adventist thinking it is practically impossible to separate the understanding of the gospel from other doctrinal statements. Adventist doctrines are not independent units but a body that expresses a whole system of truth that centers in Jesus.

ACCORDING TO ADVENTIST THEOLOGY, THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST DOES NOT SUBSIST IN ANY PARTICULAR CHURCH OR DENOMINATION.

participating churches that they are all a genuine expression of the One Church of Christ in its fullness.⁶

Among Catholics the situation is quite different. In Catholic theology, the One Church of Christ subsists in its fullness only in the Catholic Church, that is to say, "the one Church of Jesus Christ is concretely real and present in the Roman Catholic Church, in communion with the pope, and the bishops in communion with him. In this statement lies the nerve of the ecumenical dialogue . . .," and consequent debate has shown that "the nerve here is raw, and the pain threshold correspondingly low."⁷

According to Adventist theology, the One Church of Christ does not subsist in any particular church or denomination. This fundamental ecclesiological stance makes it practically impossible for us to be a true partner in any dialogue aiming at unity with another Christian body.

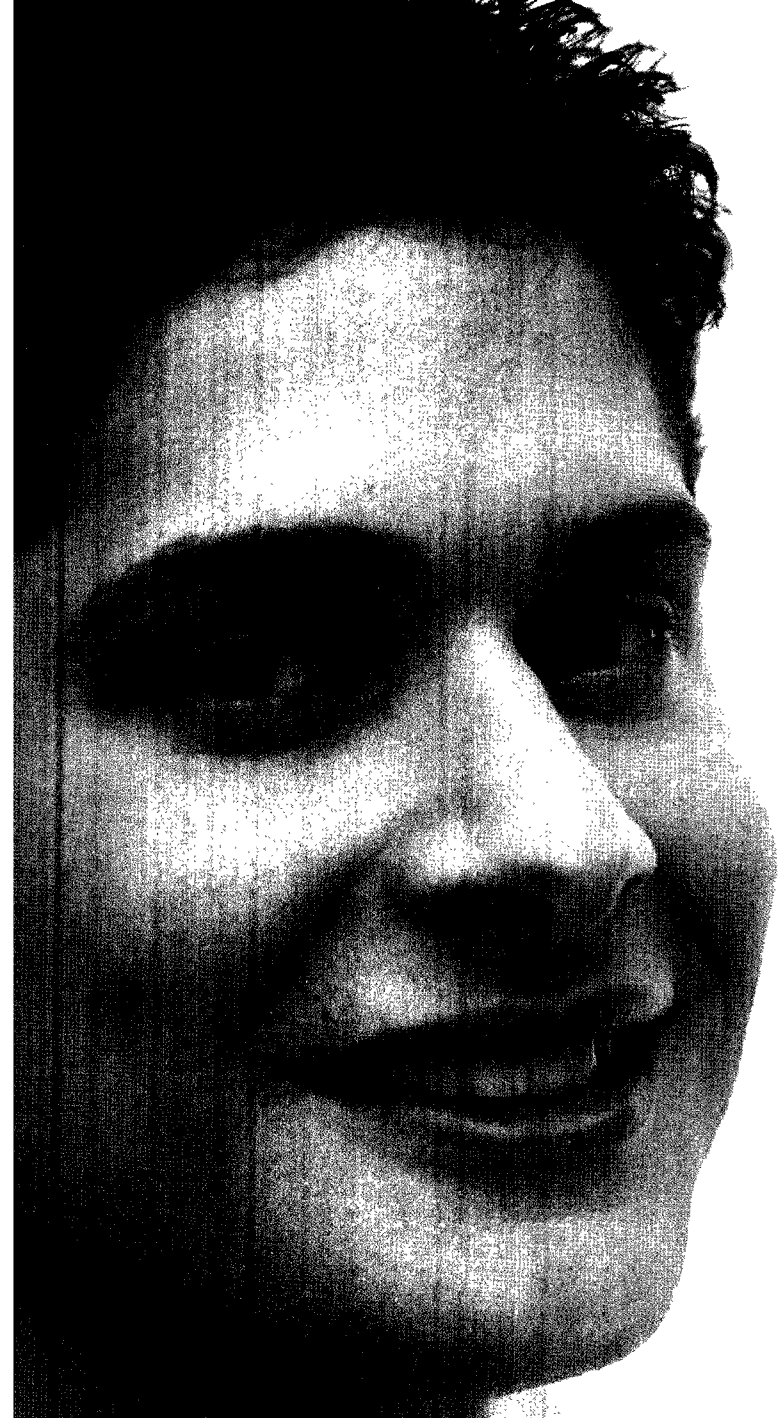
We believe that the One Church of Christ is fundamentally invisible, diffused throughout the different Christian bodies. While ready to acknowledge that the apostolic church was fully visible, we also recognize that it soon became largely invisible as a result of apostasy. In

apostolic faith. One could suggest that Seventh-day Adventists see their God-given "ecumenical" mission as instrumental in making the invisible church visible again before the parousia, toward the close of the cosmic conflict on earth.

The *final* model of ecclesiastical unity is the Model of Organic Unity. Although it is possibly the ultimate goal of ecumenical dialogue, it appears to be an ideal that will never be fully realized.

"In contrast to both the cooperative-federal and the mutual-recognition models, the model of organic union strictly rules out the possibility of institutionally independent churches with special—including confessional—form and identity within the accomplished unity. This is the real pathos of this model. When hitherto divided churches that live 'in the same territory' enter into organic union, they cease to exist as institutionally identifiable entities. What comes into being is a single church with its own new identity. The undivided loyalty of its members belongs to this single church and no longer to the churches from which they came and from which the union has been formed."⁸

This model of unity is problematic



"I love the fact that I have gotten acquainted with ministers from different areas of the world, to know their backgrounds and culture and how it has influenced their religious experience. I have been able to get out of the box of my culture and the way I see things and be invited through this atmosphere to other possibilities and ways of ministry and theological knowledge. I'm happy with my choice of coming."

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When the doctrines are viewed as a totality, they convey a theology that is larger than its individual parts.

Risks

The Adventist involvement in interfaith conversations has never had the purpose of seeking unity with other ecclesiastical bodies. We have used such conversations as a means of sharing our true identity and mission with others, and as a way of eliminating misunderstanding and prejudices against us.

In that task the Council on Interchurch/Faith Relations of the General Conference has performed a significant role; it has been of great service to the Adventist Church and has represented it with dignity and respect.¹⁴

All conversations, formal or informal, contain risks as well as benefits. Below are some risks:

1. *Compromising the Unity of the Church:* We live in an age of suspicion and the fear of conspiracy. There are church members, some on the fringes, who consistently see conspiracies in everything our church leaders and theologians do. They hear that the church is in conversation with another church and they immediately suspect that our beliefs are being altered or compromised.

In other cases they may perceive the church's involvement in any kind of interfaith conversation as a threat to our mission, particularly in the context of last-day events. This risk could be minimized if there were better communication from church leaders to church members about the reasons for such meetings.

2. *Compromising beliefs:* Those involved in conversations with other Christian bodies can be tempted to de-emphasize the differences while they emphasize similarities. In fact, this seems to be part of the psychology of interfaith dialogue involving the World Council of Churches.

There is always the risk of misrepresenting differences in order to make them more palatable to the partner in

conversation. It is therefore extremely important for the church to make sure that the individuals selected to participate in conversations know well what we believe, are personally committed to our message, and are not ashamed of it. They should not go to the meetings to compromise or negotiate what we believe, but to represent us to the best of their ability.

3. *Compromising evangelism:* Coming too close to other religious communities could hamper our mission to them. It is tempting to conclude that since believers in those communities are good Christians, we have little or nothing to offer to them. Why should we invite them to become Adventists? Would we feel free to tell the members of those religious communities that the gospel and the law are not in opposition to each other, or that what their pastor is telling them about the Sabbath and the return of Christ is false?

Therefore it is important for us, when dialoguing with other religious communities, to emphasize not only our doctrines and message but also our *mission*. They have to understand that we have a particular role within the Christian world, and that our target is not any particular religious community but the whole world.

Our mission is that our message is to go to every people, language, and nation. We should make it clear that proselytism is not wrong but is an intrinsic aspect of the freedom with which God endowed the human race, and a healthy way of retaining the balance of diversity that is critical to the search for truth.

It is critical to note that when confronted with different doctrinal options in the market of religious conviction, we all have the right to consider and to reconsider what we have and even to give up cherished ideas.

Benefits

Despite the potential dangers, meetings with other Christians also come with potential benefits. Therefore we should not discourage,

formally or informally, approaching other Christians and even non-Christian religions.

1. *Share our message with non-Adventist church leaders:* Conversations with other people outside the Adventist circle should be viewed as part of our evangelistic outreach; not that we are making overt attempts to convert them, but that we are sharing our beliefs. It is our responsibility to inform the Christian world of the reason for our existence as a religious community.

Our emphasis on end-time concerns requires that our message be well known throughout the Christian world. We should take every opportunity to make known to others what we proclaim as end-time truth.

2. *Present truth in a winsome way:* Possibly one of the main benefits derived from conversations with other Christians is that we are challenged to examine our teachings and to seek ways to express them in a

nonconfrontational way. Aware that what we offer will be carefully scrutinized and evaluated, we must present it in a persuasive and cogent way.

In conversations with other Christians, confrontation of diverse and irreconcilable ideas is unavoidable, but these ideas must be presented in a nonthreatening, even winsome, way. The proclamation of a particular truth should have as its purpose making friends, not enemies.

This does not mean that we should sacrifice truth for *friendship*, but that every effort should be made to present *truth* in an attractive package. This will require packaging our message in a way that will facilitate its understanding and that will lead others to acknowledge that, even though they may still disagree with us, what we say makes sense and has a biblical basis.

3. *Clarify issues in an informal way:* Apart from the papers presented in the meetings dealing with our message

and mission, there are many opportunities for informal conversation. Those important moments provide the opportunity to speak more freely than in an open meeting. Usually our partners have many questions that they feel free to ask only while walking together during a break, or while having a meal together.

At such meetings we come to know each other much better and occasionally sensitive questions are asked behind the scenes, on the basis of the developing friendship. It is safe to say that these important questions would almost certainly not be asked in the more formal setting of the main meetings. Here witnessing takes a personal dimension at a moment when confrontation is at its lowest point.

4. *Eliminate prejudices:* Closely related to our previous comments, conversations are very useful in providing reliable information about our church that will help to eliminate

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of Faith #15: "By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members of His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit. It is by immersion of water and is contingent on an affirmation of faith in Jesus and evidence of repentance of sin. It follows instruction in the Holy Scriptures and acceptance of their teachings. (Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:12, 13; Acts 16:30-33; 22:16; 2:38; Matt. 28:19, 20.)"

High in the Himalayas I have seen them—pilgrims trudging the mountain trails. Clad in saffron, staff in hand, a few belongings bundled on back, they slowly wend their way higher and higher, seeking the headwaters of the holy Ganges or Jamuna. And when they at last reach the sacred place, they plunge into the icy, cleansing stream.

Students of the world's religions like Paul Ricoeur tell us that the desire to be made clean manifests itself in every society and culture. Human beings have a way of expressing or admitting their basic sense of falling short, of being wrong, of saying, "I am dirty." They do this when they acknowledge their desire for purification, and when they search for agents of purification.

Christian baptism becomes more meaningful in light of these background realities. In particular, Christian baptism is tied to the person and work of Jesus Christ in a manner that makes it unique. Thus, in seeking to understand the meaning of baptism, we need to look at its origin.

WILLIAM G. JOHNSON



The origin of baptism

The Greek word used for baptism, *baptisma*, occurs a total of 20 times in the New Testament. It is not found at all in secular or sacred writings before the New Testament. In the Old Testament we find frequent references to religious washings, especially in the books of Leviticus and Numbers (Lev. 11:24, 28, 40; 14:1-9; 15:1-32; Num. 8:7, 21; 19:1-13). We even find the verb *baptizō*, which means "to wash" or "to bathe," in the Septuagint, as when Naaman washed seven times in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:14). But the noun *baptisma* is not employed anywhere before the New Testament.

Christian baptism has its origin in the work of a new prophet who suddenly burst on the scene: "In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.' . . . People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River" (Matt. 3:1, 2, 5, 6).¹

Prophets before John had challenged Israel to repentance, but none had linked the challenge to "the kingdom"—God's breaking in to the world order. None had announced that One far greater was about to appear. "But

after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry" (verse 11). And none had called those who heard to demonstrate their acceptance by a public act—immersion in water.

John the Baptist's preaching declared that an extraordinary moment of history had arrived, a moment that demanded an extraordinary religious response. That response was baptism.

All four Gospel writers record the work and message of John the Baptist. And all four also tell us that Jesus came to John and was baptized by him—something perhaps embarrassing to some Christians—publicly, without any attempt at concealment.

Why Jesus was baptized

Why did Jesus seek baptism? Not because He needed to repent. John made this clear: He was reluctant to baptize Jesus, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (Matt. 3:14).

Jesus' reply points to His purpose in this act: "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness" (verse 15). By His own baptism Jesus put His stamp of approval on both the mission of John and the rite of baptism that was its hallmark. Further, with this act Jesus commenced His public mission, signifying that the age of "the kingdom," so long awaited, had at last arrived.

Finally, by coming forward to be baptized, Jesus identified Himself with sinners—with us!—in our need of God's righteousness.

Jesus' baptism puts it squarely in the new age that He inaugurated—the age of "the kingdom." But Christian baptism goes beyond that of John. It cannot have exactly the same meaning, since the Coming One has arrived and the

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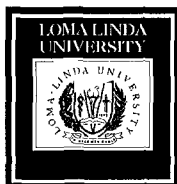
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kingdom has commenced. Jesus makes all things new—including baptism!

Elements of Christian baptism

Baptism is important. Jesus not only entered into this rite to set an example for His followers, He commanded them to go throughout the world and make disciples from all nations, “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).

But why baptism? What lies at the heart of its meaning?

Three elements in particular: confession, new life, and family.

1. *Confession* signifies more than the acknowledgment of one’s sins to a priest or in private before God. In the New Testament we find it used frequently in the sense of a public statement or profession.

For example: “Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess” (Heb. 3:1). “And every tongue [should] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:11). “If anyone acknowledges [RSV “confesses”] that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God” (1 John 4:15).

For early Christians, baptism was a solemn and even dangerous act. As the convert to the new faith stood by the waters, he declared his faith in Jesus as the Christ. The earliest declaration was probably: “I believe that Jesus is Lord.” This is why Paul wrote, “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9).

By confessing Jesus as Lord the candidate renounced allegiance to all other “lords”—including Caesar, who ruled in Rome.

It is still a serious acknowledgment, and still a dangerous one in some parts of the world. By confessing Jesus as Lord by entering into the rite of baptism we declare that we are turning our backs on all other claims to lordship over our lives and looking to Jesus as ultimate author-

ity and the only hope of salvation.

Confession of Jesus through baptism reaches further, however. When the crowd in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost were convicted of their sins and cried out, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter answered: “Repent and be

God unless he is born again. . . . You must be born again” (John 3:3, 7).

The word translated “anew” or “again” (*anōthen*) also means “from above.” To be born again means entering upon a new course of life at a point in time, a new life brought about by the

THROUGH BAPTISM THE INVISIBLE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IS MATCHED BY A VISIBLE WORK OF THE BELIEVER.

baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:37, 38). Thus, baptism signifies our acknowledgment of our *need* of Jesus and *faith* in Him as our Savior from sin.

Paul elaborates on this aspect of baptism in a key passage: “Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection” (Rom. 6:3-5).

Baptism, therefore, signifies our participation in the death of Jesus, our incorporation into His crucifixion. *When He died, we died!* Not just in the sense that He died for the whole world, but because *by baptism* the believer (not every person) becomes identified with Christ in His crucifixion.

The confessional significance of baptism is thus twofold. By this public act believers declare their acceptance of Jesus as both Lord and Savior, as they acknowledge their own sinfulness and become united with Christ in His crucifixion.

2. Then, *baptism is the gateway to new life.* In Jesus’ famous encounter with Nicodemus, He shocked the learned Pharisee with: “I tell you the truth, no one can see the Kingdom of

working of the Holy Spirit. “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit,” explained Jesus (verse 6). And He linked the new birth with baptism: “I tell you the truth, unless [a man] is born of water and the Spirit, no one can enter the Kingdom of God” (verse 5).

The invisible work of the Spirit is matched by a visible work of the believer. Just as the act of going forward to the water gives concrete expression to one’s inner acknowledgment of the person and death of Jesus, so immersion in the water becomes the transition to new life in Jesus.

3. Along with this, *baptism also makes a person a part of God’s family.*

“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Cor. 12:13). “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it” (verse 27).

A person, therefore, is not simply baptized as an act between them and God. They are baptized “into one body.” Although in today’s hyper-individualistic society some people seem to think they can simply be baptized and be a solitary Christian, that idea finds no support in the New Testament. Those who confess Christ and follow Him in baptism, by the same rite become part of His body, the church.

With peculiar force baptism tells us who we are—sons and daughters of the
continued on page 29

Don't hold your breath

Richard O'Fill



Richard O'Fill is director of health ministries for the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Winter Park, Florida.

Though nobody will be saved merely because they pray, no one will be saved *unless* they pray. When the last Bible study has been given and the last sermon preached, the fact is that it will have been through prayer, through the asking, that we will have received salvation; because Jesus comes into our hearts as an answer to prayer (Luke 11:9).

There are some things that others can do for us, but there are also things we must do for ourselves. We may hire someone to cook our food or be our personal physical trainer. Yet our health cannot be delegated to others.

In the same way we can hire someone to teach us a particular subject, yet in the final analysis we must learn for ourselves. And so it is with the aspect of our lives that deals with eternal things.

The pastor's need for prayer

The hard but pressing truth is that a minister who claims to have a relationship with God but who is not a man or woman of prayer is not being honest, because prayer is communication with God. We cannot have a relationship with someone with whom we do not communicate. It should therefore come as no surprise that men and women of God in every generation have been, without exception, people of prayer.

Because it is simply demonstrably true, it can be safely said that our spiritual condition

at any particular moment is a direct reflection of our prayer life. Before a baby is born, its mother's blood provides the fetus oxygen. But at birth, if it is going to survive it must begin to breathe for itself. Prayer is the breath of the soul.

A healthy Christian is *always* a praying Christian. If it is possible, this is doubly true for a minister. A minister who prays will reap the richest benefits, as will his or her congregation. A minister who neglects prayer sooner or later will pay a high price.

Neglecting personal prayer cannot help but result in a personal spiritual slide.

It may be hardly noticeable at first, but eventually the symptoms will be unmistakable:

(1) Heartfelt prayer soon becomes only empty words and a form;

(2) the values of those who neglect it, inevitably begin to slip away from Christ and toward the emptiness of the present age.

(3) progressively they think, feel, and talk less and less about God and spiritual things;

(4) private time alone with God becomes less and less frequent until at last it disappears altogether; and finally,

(5) resisting sin becomes less and less important until it is resisted only when it would have the most serious consequences.

Praying churches

Prayer has far-reaching consequences, and so therefore does prayerlessness. If a church appears to be dead, among all the reasons often given, an underlying cause is that earlier, prayer died in that church. Therefore, if there is to be revival, reformation, and renewal in the church, there must be a revival of prayer. It is not that there is a magical property in the act of praying itself, but it is, of course, that prayer is the means by which we speak to God and He with us.

It has been said there are three kinds of churches.

1. There is the church in which there is an opening prayer, a pastoral prayer, a prayer for the offering, and of course the benediction.

2. Then there is the church that has a prayer ministries department.

3. The third kind of church is a living church where everything that happens in every phase of church life is bathed in prayer.

On one occasion I preached in a church where I noticed in the bulletin that after the

worship service there was to be a meeting of the "prayer warriors." After standing at the door and shaking hands with the congregation, I returned to the front of the church to pray with the group. The group consisted of the pastor, a teenage boy, and three women.

As the little group knelt and prayed together, I wondered where the elders, the deacons, the deaconesses, and the other church leaders were. I have come to believe with all my heart that those who are the leaders of the church must be men and women of prayer. How can I be a legitimate leader of the church if I am not spiritual? How can I be a spiritual leader if I am not a man or woman of prayer?

I am thankful that we have persons in every church who have answered God's call to pray. I am thankful for those whom we call prayer warriors. Yet we must not delegate the spiritual life of the church to the department of prayer ministries. If we are to be healthy physically, emotionally, or spiritually, we must not expect others to do for us what we must do for ourselves, and that is to develop our own prayer life.

Time for prayer

One day a colleague and I were discussing the matter of prayer. He told me that he and his wife had attended a retreat for married couples. One of the purposes of the retreat was to encourage the spouses to communicate with each other. At one point they were asked to write each other notes. He told me that in one of his wife's notes she asked, "When do you pray?"

I am sure that her question was not inquiring when he prayed in church, or when he prayed with the children in family worship or before a meal. She wanted to know when he personally spent time alone with God.

"What did you tell her?" I asked.

He said, "I told her I pray when I walk and when I drive." Then looking me right in the eye he said, "Dick, I don't have time to pray."

I have never forgotten his words. His answer to his wife could make it appear that he was praying all the time, but in fact he was confessing to me that though he prayed "all the time" in reality he wasn't giving God any special time.

While it may be inspiring, it can also be intimidating to hear someone tell how they get up at four o'clock in the morning and pray for two hours. It can make one feel that anybody who is anybody spiritually has to get up before dawn, and if they don't, spiritually, they must be a lesser life form.

To be able to say you have a devotional life has become the gold standard of the Christian life. While this goal can be an inspiration to some, when flaunted it often becomes a discouragement to others. Jesus left no room for doubt that devotional time was to be not only private but also secret to the extent that it must not be held up before others as a type of spiritual badge of courage.

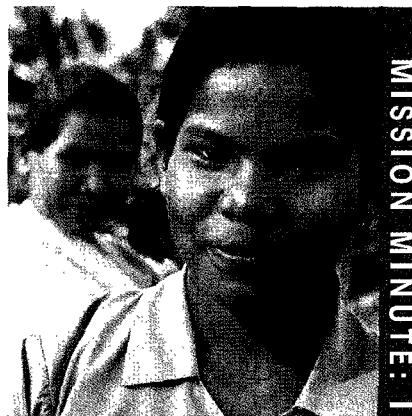
To the individual who is not a morning person, and there are many, I would say if you can't get up at four o'clock and spend some quality time with God, then spend some quality time with Him whenever you get up. This will not be to "be seen of men" but to survive. Starting the day whenever you start your day without committing your ways to the Lord can easily contribute to complicating your life further down the line.

Though I ate, bathed, and breathed yesterday, my physical well-being—yes, my very existence—demands that I do the same every day. And so it is, of course, in our spiritual life.

While it is essential to spend quality time with God each day, the devotional life can easily become a routine that not only loses meaning but that can even become unhitched from the rest of our lives.

Compartmentalizing our lives

Some time ago I found out that an acquaintance of mine decided he did not love his spouse anymore. He



Reaching Out to Her Community

Anisha could hardly believe it. She was wearing her new uniform that showed she was a nurse in training. She was standing in front of a group of women who were eager to learn about healthful living from her. And she knew that many of them would stay for the branch Sabbath School that would follow her class.

Until the nursing school at Ranchi was completed, Anisha's hope of becoming a nurse seemed impossible. But now here she was—completing her training in an Adventist school and sharing her skills with those who needed her. And sharing her faith.

Anisha and her fellow students had been welcomed by the women in this mostly Muslim community because of the help they would bring through the classes and the simple medical care and medicines they could provide.

Anisha had always dreamed of working as a nurse in a rural clinic or hospital. And now her dream was coming true!

The construction of a nursing school at Ranchi is one of many projects funded through *Gathering: Hope For Humanity*.



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apparently became infatuated with another woman. This is not unheard of, except this individual was very spiritual; he even got up early in the morning to pray with others before beginning his day.

When I heard what had happened, I could not help wondering how a person could be getting up early in the morning and spending time with God and at the same time watch their relationship with their spouse coming apart as they pursued, at least in their mind, another woman.

I realized that this could happen when we compartmentalize our lives. Prayer was never meant to be an end in itself, or simply another event in our daily lives. Prayer is a means to an end—and that is to enable us to have a living connection with God and thus to live holy lives.

A seventeenth-century Frenchman named Nicholas Herman of Lorraine had been a soldier in his younger years. Later he became a monk. We know Nicholas as Brother Lawrence.

His great contribution to thousands of lives down through the years is that he has inspired Christians to practice the presence of God. With Brother Lawrence, his set times for prayer were not different from other times. For him prayer became a lifestyle.

Prayer and life

Surveys have been conducted asking people if they pray. The results are both encouraging and discouraging. While the majority of the people interviewed said that they pray, even every day, prayer has little effect on the direction of their lives.

Many people divide their lives into two compartments. They have what they see as a spiritual life and a secular life. A person who tries to maintain a balance between the spiritual and the secular could be compared to the image of Daniel 2, whose feet were made of iron and of clay. The prophet Daniel put it plainly, "They shall not cleave one to another." Our lives cannot be spiritual and at the

same time materialistically secular.

A truly spiritual life will be one that not only begins the day with God but also includes a walk with Him all day. A true Christian's devotional life becomes his lifestyle; a practical demonstration of the text which says, "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Many have testified that there are blessings to be had by fasting, by praying all night, and by spending two hours every morning in prayer, yet a person could conceivably do all of these things and not have their heart in it. Scripture warns that it is possible to have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof (2 Tim. 3:5).

The final test of effective prayer is the changed life. Jesus puts it another way, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). As ministers of the gospel it is not enough that we be men and women of prayer but men and women who live as they pray. ■

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Ministerial students get basic training in Los Angeles churches

Betty Cooney and Gerard Kiemeney



Betty Cooney is communication director for the Southern California Conference, Glendale, California.



Gerard Kiemeney is the Los Angeles metro region director, Southern California Conference, Glendale, California.

A session of *Ministerial Boot Camp* was recently held in the Los Angeles Area. It networked more than 15 experienced pastors with Adventist university students in a mentoring-field school experience. The concept, influenced by a business model, was proposed by Diane Kiemeney, owner of a successful transcription business. " [This kind of] networking is important in my business," she said, "so why not in ministry, too, with ministerial students drawing on the strengths and experience of senior pastors?"

Key elements and goals

Key elements needed for Ministerial Boot Camp to work, according to Gerard Kiemeney (director of the LA metro region in the Southern California Conference, and coordinator of the program) are a corps of motivated, experienced pastors, who, along with enthusiastic ministerial students are willing to drive to urban-area churches for weekly meetings, and who are interested in effective pastoral interning.

Basic Boot Camp goals are: "Enhancing Adventist ministry in the region, and providing avenues through which uninvolved lay people can turn their passion into a ministry for Jesus."

Ripple effects

The Boot Camp concept has spillover

potential for other pastors in the region. Currently, one or two Los Angeles metro ministerial colleagues are "Boot Camping" each other, sharing strengths as colleagues, and consulting with one another on better ways of doing ministry.

Another exciting aspect of Boot Camp is its potential for discovering expertise in laity and networking them in training other lay people. One of the recent lay training events, sponsored by Southern California Conference's Los Angeles metro and African-American regions, solicited information about lay people with skills they want to share. This information will be used by the region to initiate lay networking.

With this in mind, Ministerial Boot Camp will operate year round, with a curriculum that includes skills-based workshops conducted by trained laity. A Web site will facilitate networking; it will enable churches in search of particular skills to find lay-resource contacts for the churches.

What some Boot Camp pastors discovered

Joseph Charles, a PUC senior, learned about the Boot Camp opportunity through a Pacific Union *Summer InMinistry* internship at South Bay church. When he checked the descriptions of the program's different stages, "I could see that they would be so beneficial for my professional growth. I felt that being exposed to ministerial development through in-the-field mentoring would be a great blessing."

By summer's end, Joseph found that having the opportunity to meet with different pastors with expertise in their various topic areas had not only been excellent training, but had also provided the added benefit of knowing he could access the teaching pastors as resources later on.

La Sierra student Steve Toscano came to Boot Camp, "not quite sure what to expect, and I was pleasantly surprised. Rather than nonstop theory, the stages were very practical. The pastors broke things down so we could see how to use, replicate, and adapt ideas."

Boot Campers appreciated the various topics covered in the initial program, including Pastor Jim Park's instruction on discipling, which involved a Discipleship Walk in the Angeles Forest.

Others found visitation insights shared by Temple City Pastor Benjamin Del Pozo espe-



MISSION MINUTE: NEW YORK

Adopting a Police Precinct

Bethany Adventist Church was famous for their worship services, but this might have been the most unusual service ever! In addition to the parishioners and the pastor and the choir and the deacons, here sat more than a dozen police officers, all dressed up in their best uniforms, filling the front pews of the sanctuary.

They had come to be "adopted" by the congregation—and they represented nearly 350 officers in their precinct. They had come to participate in a service that would formally link the Bethany Adventist Church to the Nassau County Police 3rd Precinct in a commitment to work together for their community.

As a result of the partnership, the two organizations work much more closely on projects and affirm the contributions made by the other to the community. "It's changed the way we relate to their work," says a church member.

"It's reminded me that I don't have to carry all these burdens by myself," says one of the police officers.

The Adopt-A-Precinct program is one of many projects supported through *Ingathering: Hope For Humanity*.



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cially helpful. "From the visitation training, we learned about types of questions to ask, and the need to focus and listen. The pastor also suggested practical books to give to particular families being visited," says Toscano. (Boot Camp topics and pastors will vary in coming sessions. For a complete list of the opening session's pastor-mentors and topics, visit scc.adventist.org/articles).

Other Boot Campers were drawn to the cell church or family-group ministry station. They said such things as, "I feel the approach is more personal with the members and more effective in reaching out, and reaching in. I liked the part-theory, part-practical instruction, which cleared up a lot of questions for me."

Stacey Gurgel was interested in the Boot Camp program as soon as she heard about it. "I had been wanting to do inner-city work for a couple of years, so an LA-based program was appealing. I want to be involved with youth ministry—particularly to gang members and runaway teens—and my dream is to build a big city center to help young people."

As summer approached at the end of her first year at La Sierra University, Stacey signed up for an internship as a youth pastor at the Glendora church. One day Dr. Bailey Gillespie, La Sierra's liaison with the Boot Camp program, spotted her working at her campus landscaping job and asked her if she would be interested in the Boot Camp program.

"When he said it had to do with Los Angeles and ministry, that's all that mattered to me," she recalls. "I said yes, right away. And I just learned so much in the Boot Camp stations. I hope I can go through another one."

In the meantime, Stacey will be continuing at the Glendora church, with youth ministry one Sabbath each month, putting boot camp youth-ministry principles into practice.

Quite another emphasis is represented by the focus of Stefan Wilson.

He is a 2002 La Sierra University graduate whose dream is "to [work with] a group of young individuals and see how they benefit from the Christian lifestyle. I'd like to see [my ministry] benefit society the way Dr. Harry Miller did as a missionary in China decades ago, with his invention of a soy-milk machine."

Says Stefan, "I didn't know the churches had the resources we encountered. At first, I would look at a church and think, 'There's nothing going on here,' but it started with a boom and never let up. I want to use what I learned; it has been exciting."

Following Boot Camp, Stefan assisted in the Voice to the World—LA evangelistic series featuring *Voice of Prophecy* speaker Lonnie Melashenko and sponsored by Southern California Conference's African-American region.

Gerard Kiemeney's reaction to the initial summer session has been upbeat. "I am really happy with the pastors. They were all there, and prepared. Because they are not experienced, some Boot Camp stages did not seem practical to them at first, but they learned otherwise." ■

Letters

continued from page 3

My comments and questions are as a result of having read two articles in the April 2003 edition of *Ministry*: "What's With Adventist Theology?" (Roland Hegstad) and "Developing Truth and Changing Perspectives" (Gilbert Valentine). The latter quoted a statement from Mrs. White which said, "That which God gives His servants to speak today would not perhaps have been present truth 20 years ago, but it is God's message for this time." I fully endorse the statement made by the author of the article on Adventist theology—"No new light will ever push the fundamentals of our faith into obscurity. Rather, it will enhance them, as is happening with our concept of the

sanctuary and the investigative judgment."

About two years ago, I read a manuscript that originated with a lay Adventist that gave a different perspective on the "scapegoat." The bottom line was that a spotless goat could only represent the spotless Lamb of God who bore our sins. Recently, I saw a similar view on a Web site. Are there any studies emerging from Adventist theologians on this topic?

Would you share the sources of the new concepts on the sanctuary and the investigative judgment?

—Gloria Josiah, St. Croix, Virgin Islands.

With reference to *Ministry*, August 2003, the debate over the human nature of Christ, whether He took the pre-Fall nature of Adam or the post-Fall nature of Adam, that raged particularly from 1957, one text really settled the matter for me: 1 Corinthians 15:45. If Christ is the "second Adam," as stated in this text, Christ "began

where the first Adam began" (Ellen G. White, *My Life Today*, 323). And the first Adam began—"created a pure, sinless being, without taint of sin upon him" (Ellen G. White, Letter 8, 1895 in the *SDA Bible Commentary*). I am, therefore, convinced that Christ took the pre-Fall human nature of Adam. And I fully endorse the *Ministry* insert article by Erwin R. Gane in which he elaborates on E. G. White's letter in 1895 under the subheading "Spiritually Christ Stood in Adam's Position."

But I do not endorse the new edition of *Questions on Doctrine*, published by Andrews University Press. What good can come from digging up dry bones, resurrecting old rivalries over the nature of Christ, etc., that ensued from the 1957 publication of QOD and virtually split the church? For George R. Knight to "pull no punches" criticizing L. E. Froom and his colleagues (according to Woodrow W. Whidden's article "Questions on Doctrine: Then and Now"), serves no purpose. All of these

personalities, including M. L. Andreasen, were great men of God and need no post-mortem dissection of their views. A positive presentation of the humanity of Christ, without discussion of personalities, as found in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (45-52), is most commendable.

—Ron Thompson, retired pastor/evangelist, Longs, South Carolina.

I would like to complement Andrews University Press, *Ministry* (August 2003), and Woodrow W. Whidden for bringing knowledge and insight again to the historical 1957 book *Questions on Doctrine*.

As a fourth-generation Adventist, it is my view that "perfectionism" coming forth from false views of Christ's "heavenly ministry" is a continual fly in a "healing ointment." Ultimately, the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith "alone" has to be continually revisited as the healing cure. ■

—Pat Travis, chaplain, Orlando, Florida.

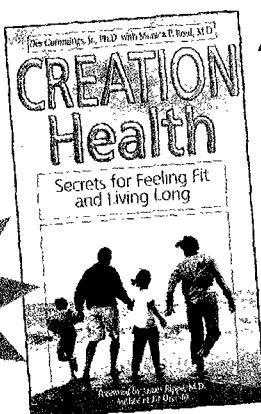
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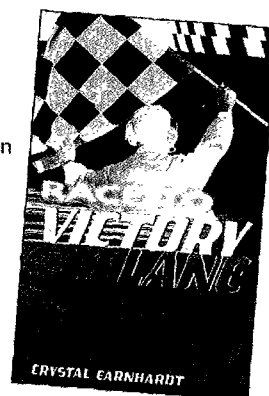
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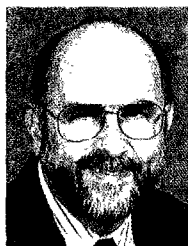
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The pre-Advent judgment: Fact or fiction? (Part 1)

Gerhard Pfandl



Gerhard Pfandl, Ph.D., is associate director of the Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Of all the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the doctrine of the pre-Advent judgment beginning in heaven in 1844 has been questioned more than any other. This questioning has come from scholars and others both outside and inside the church.

From outside the church, Walter R. Martin in his book *The Kingdom of the Cults* has written, "Adventists, in the opinion of conservative Biblical scholars, not to mention the liberal wing of Protestantism, are only speculating with their sanctuary and investigative judgment theories. Actually, most are agreed that they have created doctrines to compensate for errors in prophetic interpretation."¹

Within the church, the most thorough negative inquiry was initiated in recent times by my former mentor Dr. Desmond Ford. In 1980 he presented a 991-page document to more than 100 church leaders and theologians gathered at Glacier View. In his study he contended that the judgment in Daniel 7 is not a pre-Advent judgment, that apocalyptic prophecy is also conditional, that according to the apotelesmatic principle a prophecy can have multiple fulfillments, and that the antitypical day of atonement began in A.D. 31 rather than in 1844.²

At Glacier View, Ford's views were rejected. However, the questions he raised were deemed sufficiently important to merit a

1981 action by the Executive Committee of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which asked that the General Conference Biblical Research Institute form a special committee to restudy the books of Daniel and Revelation.

During the 11 years of its existence, the Daniel and Revelation Committee produced seven volumes³ that address many of the issues raised during the Glacier View meetings. In its final report the committee stated that "far from being a museum piece of pioneer theology, the biblical teaching of the pre-Advent, investigative phase of the final judgment is of vital importance to the Christian today. It is a concluding portion of the overall salvation process and is an integral component of the three angels' messages."⁴

Apocalyptic prophecy and historicism

It is generally agreed that there is a difference between classical prophecy, in which the prophet was God's spokesperson to His people in Old and New Testament times, and apocalyptic prophecy with its focus on the end of the world and the coming of the kingdom of God.

The fulfillment of the promises in classical prophecy was dependent on the response of the people (Jer. 18:7-10). "Classical prophets tied God's activities to events in human history."⁵

On the other hand, apocalyptic prophecy presents God's cosmic timetable for the final supernatural appearance of the kingdom of God. Hence it is not conditional. In other words, it is not dependent on the human response, e.g., Christ's first coming was not dependent on Israel's or Judah's obedience. He came, "when the fullness of the time [outlined in Dan. 9:24-27] had come" (Gal. 4:4, NKJV), even though the Jews were not ready to receive Him.

Similarly, the time prophecies in Daniel and Revelation which point towards the time of the end and the Second Coming are independent of any human response. In apocalyptic prophecy we become "spectators to events on a world stage; we are seeing the divine foreknowledge unfold the course of the future."⁶

Apocalyptic prophecies explain what God has foreseen and what He has determined should happen. The 2,300 "evenings and



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mornings" and the "three and a half times" in Daniel 7 and 8, therefore, are not conditional. They cannot be repeatedly applied to different ages as the interpreter sees fit. In the sweep of history they can only have one fulfillment, just as the 70-week prophecy in Daniel 9 only had one fulfillment.

Throughout most of church history these apocalyptic time prophecies were interpreted according to the historicist method of interpretation. Only in the last two hundred years have other systems, such as preterism and futurism, replaced historicism. And, as all students of prophecy know, the backbone of historicism is the year-day principle.

The year-day principle

It is ironic that one of the best summaries of the year-day principle, based on the works of T. R. Birks⁷ and H. G. Guinness,⁸ is found in Dr. Ford's first commentary on Daniel.⁹ This, of course, Dr. Ford rejected 18 years later, because he contends that it cannot be biblically justified.¹⁰

Contrary to this position, Seventh-day Adventists believe that the year-day principle is a Bible based principle. The main points in support

of it can be summarized as follows:¹¹

1. Since the visions in Daniel 7 and 8 are largely symbolic, with a number of different beasts representing important historical empires (7:3-7; 8:3-5, 20-21), the time periods (7:25; 8:14) should also be seen as symbolic.

2. The fact that the visions deal with the rise and fall of known empires in history which existed for hundreds of years, indicates that the prophetic time periods must also cover long time periods.

3. The peculiar, distinctive, even metaphoric way in which the time periods are expressed indicates that they should not be taken literally. If the "time, times and half a time" in Daniel 7:25, stands for three and a half literal years, why didn't God say "three years and six months"? In Luke 4:25 and James 5:17, where three and a half literal years are referred to, each time the phrase is "three years and six months." Similarly, Paul remained in Corinth "a year and six months" (Acts 18:11, NKJV), and David reigned in Hebron "seven years and six months" (2 Sam. 2:11, NKJV).

4. In Daniel 7 the four beasts which together account for a reign of

at least one thousand years, are followed by the little-horn power. This four-beast reign is the focus of the vision since it is most directly in opposition to God. Three and a half years for the struggle between the little horn and the Most High would be out of proportion to the comprehensive scope of salvation history portrayed in this vision.

The same applies to Revelation 12:6 and 14 where the 1,260 days or three and a half times, cover much of the history between the First and Second Advents.

5. According to the context, the expressions "time, times and half a time" (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14, NKJV), "forty-two months" (Rev. 11:2; 13:5, NKJV), and "one thousand two hundred and sixty days" (Rev. 11:3; 12:6, NKJV), all apply to the same time period. But the natural expression "three years and six months" is not used once.

"The Holy Spirit seems, in a manner, to exhaust all the phrases by which the interval could be expressed, excluding always that one form, which would be used of course in ordinary writing, and is used invariably in Scripture on other occasions, to denote the literal period. This variation is most significant, if we accept the year-day system, but quite inexplicable on the other view."¹²

6. The prophecies in Daniel 7, 8, 10, and 12 lead up to the "time of the end" (8:17; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9) which is followed by the Resurrection (12:2) and the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom (7:27).

"In the sweep of history described in these prophecies that extends from the prophet in the sixth century B.C. to our time and beyond, literal time periods of only 32 to 62 years are not capable of reaching anywhere near this final end time. Therefore, these prophetic time periods should be seen as symbolic and standing for considerably longer periods of actual historical time extending to the end time."¹³


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ure of time not used in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation is the year. Days, weeks, and months, are referred to, but not the time unit "year." The most obvious explanation is that the "year" is the unit employed to symbolize throughout these prophecies.

8. There are a number of texts in the historical narratives of the Old Testament in which "days" stands for "years" (Exod. 13:10; 1 Sam. 2:19; 20:6; Judg. 11:40; etc.). Also in the poetic portions of the Old Testament "days" at times stands in parallel to the word for "year" (Job 10:5; 32:7; 36:11; Ps. 77:5; 90:9, 10; etc.). "Both of these usages provide a ready background for the kind of thought that could be extended to the more specific quantitative application of this relationship in apocalyptic."¹⁴

9. In Numbers 14 and Ezekiel 4 God deliberately used the day for a year principle as a teaching device. "According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection" (Num. 14:34, NKJV). And in an acted out parable the prophet Ezekiel was told to lie 390 days on his left side and 40 days on his right side, "I have laid on you a day for each year" (Ezek. 4:6, NKJV).

10. In Daniel 9:24-27 the 70-week time prophecy met its fulfillment at the exact time, if we use the year-day principle to interpret it. Many interpreters, who in other apocalyptic texts do not use the year-day principle, recognize that the 70 weeks are in fact "weeks of years" reaching from the Persian period to the time of Christ. Thus the pragmatic test in Daniel 9 confirms the validity of the year-day principle.

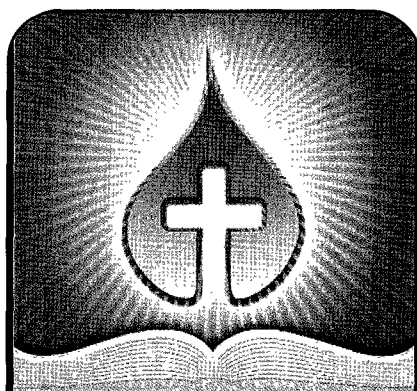
References to the year-day principle can be found in intertestamental times in Qumran as well as in other Jewish writings of that period.¹⁵ Thus the historicist method of interpretation is not a Johnny-come-lately arrival on the theological scene, rather it rests on a solid biblical and

historical foundation. And in spite of what some may claim, it is not an outdated method belonging to the past but a valid principle of interpreting apocalyptic prophecies today.

When the year-day principle is applied to the time prophecies in Daniel 7 and 8, a pre-Advent judgment beginning in 1844 emerges from the text.

In the concluding article (which will appear in the upcoming February 2004 issue of *Ministry*) we will specifically look at the judgment scene in Daniel 7. ■

- 1 Walter R. Martin, *Kingdom of the Cults* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1965), 407.
- 2 D. Ford subsequently published his Glacier View document as *Daniel 8:14: The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment* (Casselberry, FL: Euangelion Press, 1980).
- 3 The set of seven volumes is available from the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference as well as from any Adventist Book Center.
- 4 W. R. Leshner and Frank B. Holbrook, "Daniel and Revelation Committee: Final Report" in *Symposium on Revelation*, Book 2, DARCOM, edited by Frank B. Holbrook, 7 vols. (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 7:455.
- 5 Dewey M. Beegle, *Prophecy and Predictions* (Ann Arbor: Pryor Pettengill, 1978), 90.
- 6 William G. Johnsson, "Conditionality in Biblical Prophecy with Particular Reference to Apocalyptic" in *70 Weeks, Leviticus, Nature of Prophecy*, DARCOM, edited by Frank B. Holbrook, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 3:278.
- 7 Thomas R. Birks, *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy* (London: William E. Painter, 1843).
- 8 H. G. Guinness, *The Approaching End of the Age, Viewed in the Light of History, Prophecy, and Science*, 8th ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1882).
- 9 Desmond Ford, *Daniel* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Pub. Assn., 1978), 300-305.
- 10 In his latest Daniel commentary he denies that the 70 weeks are cut off from the 2,300 years of Daniel 8 and adds, "Neither do I consider that the year-day principle should be applied in the study of the prophecies of Daniel, though I recognize it as a providential aid over long centuries of Christ's delay." (D. Ford, *Daniel and the Coming King* [Newcastle, Calif.: Desmond Ford Publications, 1996], 298).
- 11 See Ford, *Daniel*, 300-305 and William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, revised edition, DARCOM, 7 vols. (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 1:67-104.
- 12 Birks, 352.
- 13 Shea, 73.
- 14 Ibid., 103.
- 15 See Shea, 106-110.



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Every church can help smokers quit

Linda Royer

I've smoked for 35 years. I don't know how to quit. But I sure would like to. I am sick so much." "I learned to smoke in high school. Now that I am finishing college and planning to get married, I want to quit before we have a baby, so it will be healthy."

These two statements represent smokers who are of particular concern to public health officials. They represent tobacco users:

1. Who cannot remember what it is like to be a nonsmoker, who are known as "hard-core" because they have tried numerous times to quit smoking without long-term success, and who contribute to the high cost of health care because of their unremitting chronic diseases; or

2. Young women in childbearing years who not only bring harm to their own bodies, but put their unborn babies at risk for interrupted pregnancy, premature delivery, respiratory or heart problems, susceptibility to allergies, and asthma.

A history of concern mixed with disappointment

Pastors and health professionals want to help these individuals to have victory over nicotine addiction and the culture of smoking. Other members of the general and church community share that desire.

For decades there have been stop-smoking classes or support groups conducted in

churches or other community venues, among Seventh-day Adventists, usually led by a physician and or the pastor. Depending on the advertising, the support of the laity in recruiting smokers who are interested in quitting, the community will, the credentials or charisma of the presenter, and the format of the programming, attendance ranges from being miniscule to monumental.

Those involved in smoking cessation programs tend to get discouraged when the group is small; and the frequency of the effort diminishes until another surge of concern motivates us.

In some busy churches, when the responsibility of conducting a *Breathe Free* or *5-Day Plan* falls to the pastor(s), an inconsistency might prevail. It happens when the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is known to be the most dependable religious entity to be involved in tobacco cessation intervention, fails to offer the community-at-large services that are reliable.

Further, in churches where no health professionals attend, laymen who are skilled when it comes to leadership may recognize the role of their church in this ministry of reclamation, but they require training.

Why Adventists are concerned about smokers

But why are we concerned about smokers? Aren't there many commercial and public health aids already in existence that are designed to help those who want to quit smoking? There are the patches and chewing gums that a smoker can now purchase without a prescription. There is at least one nose spray and the pills one can obtain by prescription. Then there is acupuncture and hypnotism, herbs and biofeedback, and an array of gadgets, such as the small computerized messaging and prompting devices that are available. There are also helplines and online tutorials. The list goes on.

Seventh-day Adventists are concerned because there is nothing more effective than the divine-human factor in facilitating health behavior change. We *must* continue to provide this kind of education and support to individuals who desire to quit smoking.

Society is telling smokers that they need something (sometimes a little too crutchlike) to help them cope with the smoking urge. Health care is telling them they must quit to



Linda Royer writes from New Market, Virginia.

preserve their quality of life for themselves and others.

We need to persuade them that eliminating tobacco and the drug nicotine from their lives gives them the power to excel in other health-promoting changes. We need to lead them to the true Source of that power so that they will realize the value of their body and appraise their life in terms of eternity.

How a church can participate

Research is supporting what we have believed for some time: that those addicted to nicotine (smoke or smokeless tobacco) need *long-term* support to be successful. Churches can do that better than any commercial or public health program because churches *volunteer* their services.

But isn't that an overdemanding commitment of time and effort? It could be, but it doesn't have to be. Here's a proposed method that pastors can establish in their spiritual communities.

There is a self-help program that I have authored that increases the effectiveness of intervention for members as they reach out to help tobacco users quit. It is now available on CD or as a download from my Web site (see below).

Under this program the participant learns from 14 days of audio messaging how to end tobacco addictions under the influence of a holistic approach.

He or she is instructed in exercise, relaxation, nutrition, diet, and through the help of dynamic spiritual principles. Under this program, the audio messages are supplemented with printed guides. The program is called *Taking Control*. Here is how your church can set up a consistent, burden-free tobacco cessation program:

1. First of all, you must understand that there are five stages individuals may process through in changing their health behavior:

Pre-contemplating—hearing messages about change even when they may not be interested in change.

Contemplating—knowing/being convinced that a change is necessary but not yet ready to commit to a change.

Preparation—experimentation with small changes and considering how to change.

Action—now ready to quit and taking the quitting step.

Maintenance—in a quit stage and holding steady, but maybe still requiring periodic encouragement and support.

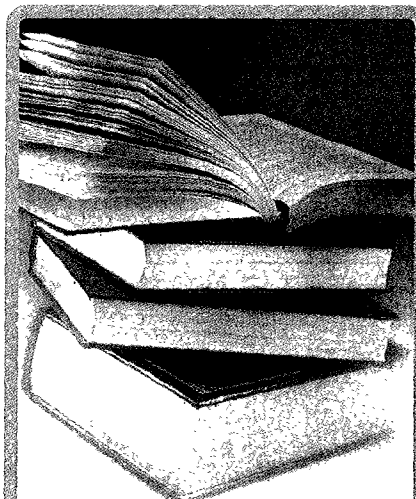
You must determine what you want to do for tobacco users under any of these stages. For *pre-contemplators*, for example, you may integrate information about the benefits of a holistically healthy lifestyle in communications to the community or in other lifestyle programming you present, while announcing that you are a resource for tobacco cessation as well. You may run a regular ad or column in the local newspaper.

For *contemplators* and those in *preparation* you may hold regular, scheduled (quarterly) meetings entitled "Let's Begin to Quit," in which you may explain the accepted strategies for quitting and the benefits enjoyed. Here you explain what your tobacco addiction intervention is like and what commitment is required of the participants. Or, for this group you may wish to hold a social event such as a potluck or dinner in the context of promoting health and inform them of your resources for quitting tobacco.

2. If your church has a Health Committee, choose members from it to form a tobacco subcommittee of at least three people. Decide from the ideas above, or from those you discuss, how often and when you will schedule events. Recruit other church members to assist and give them specific duties with orientation to their responsibilities.

3. Utilize the self-help training course described in my Web site, <www.resources-for-better-living.com> especially the section

continued on page 28



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Lacking leaders: A personal view of how to work with them

Suppose your leader is lacking in one area, or more? How would you handle it? Would you pray for his removal and the installation of a better one? Would you go to other workers and convince them that they need to vote “wisely” at the next opportunity? Would you rise up, refusing to cooperate with him? What, indeed, does one do with a leader who lacks some of the skills crucial to effective leadership?

Wherever there are people, there is leadership of some kind. And those at the head are often not perfect in their role. They may have the essential characteristics of good leadership, but still possess serious “flat spots” in certain important aspects of leadership. The truth is, of course, that in any organization, those who are led have always found weakness in those who lead them.

Does this, then, give us the right to rise up against such leaders?

I believe there are better ways to work with leaders, even those who aren’t just lacking in certain areas but who may, in fact, be seen as simply bad leaders.

What are my expectations of the leader?

I have a personal philosophy when it comes to the way I treat my leaders; a philosophy based on my expectations of what a leader is.

I do have some irreducible assumptions about leadership and therefore expectations of any particular leader: I want to work under a leader who is competent, compassionate, and committed. If this leader is a religious one, I have the assumption that he or she is a servant of God, and fears Him. This means that God has sent this person to lead me.

EMMANUEL MWALE



If my leader is lacking in one or two of my expectations, I have resolved that I will find a way of helping out. I am also convinced that God has given my leader someone on his team who is gifted in whatever area my leader is lacking. If this person meets that expectation, my leader has met that expectation as well, and I find that acceptable.

I’m not perfect

I have had to accept the fact that I am not perfect. If I am not perfect, then I am to accept my leader’s imperfections as well. God has not given me all the talents and gifts; why, then, would I expect my leader to possess them all? Instead I will find a way of appreciating whatever talents and gifts my leader does possess. Where I can, I will use my talents and gifts to complement his (or hers).

Jesus said, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matt. 7:12). These are words that have strengthened my resolution to respect my leader despite whatever he or she may be lacking in certain areas. How would I expect my leader and others to treat me if I were the leader?

Honesty with the leader

If my leader does not treat me with respect, I have found it my obligation to discuss the matter with him or her alone. This is the biblical approach. I have resolved that I will courageously, but with respect, approach my leader and express my concerns. It is dangerous to pretend that all is well when, inside, I am “burning.”

When a new leader comes, people say a lot of things about him or her, some good, some bad. In such situations, I choose to work with the leader despite what has been said of him or her.

Though our leaders will always lack in certain areas, they are still our leaders. They deserve to be treated with love and respect.

Despite weaknesses

The Bible gives us examples of David, Elijah, Daniel, and many others whose characters are worthy of emulating. In spite of the weaknesses of their leaders (Saul, Ahab, Nebuchadnezzar), they worked with them. In some cases they helped their leaders find personal salvation.

We pastors are leaders in the highest sense of the word. We need to swallow our pride. We need to change our attitudes. In most cases our leaders are better than we think they are. It may be hard to accept certain leaders but it is not impossible. We have Jesus as both our Savior and Example! ■

Emmanuel Mwale is a pastor in the Katete Mission District of Seventh-day Adventists, Katete, Zambia, Central Africa.

Thanks, Pardn'r

Approaching year end and anticipating opportunities and challenges in 2004, I'm praising God for several partnerships.

First, I praise Jesus for Sharon, my partner in marriage, ministry, and mischief. Details of marriage and ministry are far too numerous to enumerate without sounding like a holiday newsletter. Our recent mischief is our new Yorkshire Terrier, Dixie, a three-pound bundle of fearless fun.



I'm also grateful for energizing association in excellence with our other senior staff, Will Eva, Peter Prime, Joel Sarli, and Nikolaus Satelmajer, plus the magazine management of Julia Norcott and Cathy Payne in the magazine and pastoral resources. Likewise, I benefit from encouragement provided to women in ministry by Kit Watts who edits our newsletter, *Contact*, and Penny Shell's leadership of La Sierra University's Women's Resource Center.

Then there's the lifesaving contribution of Gloria Massenburg, my administrative assistant, who directs a thousand details every day and remains unfailingly gracious to every individual fortunate to encounter her high quality, customer-friendly ministry.



Hosts of friends share joy as they contribute emotional, spiritual, and financial strength to multiplied projects which, otherwise, would not occur. Whether a note that reminds Sharon and me of your prayers, a phone message that assures of your thoughts, a contribution that accompanies your interest in a young minister, a seminary library, a woman struggling to com-

JAMES A. CRESS



plete theological education, a bicycle for African pastors, or a project in India, you demonstrate that anything accomplished for Jesus is a true partnership. Until Christ's kingdom, you will never know how you have blessed.

Among our many friends, perhaps none has ever been as long-standing and consistent in their support for ministry projects than Judy Thomas.



I'll always remember the day Judy stopped by the church office to request my prayers for her new venture. Practicing the *Prayer of Jabez* long before it became a media phenomena, Judy pledged to prioritize God's work.

A self-styled "business buccaneer" and president of her own company, J. A. Thomas and Associates, Judy shares the vision of providing quality resources for pastors of every denomination.

Unabashedly advertising her business as Christian (she prays with potential clients, recruits associates who "hope to work in a believing environment," and maintains chaplaincy service for her company), Judy is an industry leader in integrating faith into the business environment, opening opportunities to women, and sharing

profits with her employees.

Ask her "How are you doing?" and she typically responds, "Better than I deserve!" Then she quickly changes the subject to her favorite projects such as resource books for pastors, scholarships for women theology students, church buildings, Habitat for Humanity, video and live seminar resources such as our annual satellite Professional Growth Seminars, disaster relief for earthquake, bombing, hurricane, or terrorist victims, as well as soup kitchens and shelters.

It is far beyond coincidence that Judy's life preaches a sermon in shoes as she makes business priorities comply with heaven's priorities. She says, "Coincidence is only a miracle in which God chooses to remain silent."

Finally, I want to thank organizational colleagues like Ron and Karen Flowers of GC Family Ministries for fresh resources on sexuality and family evangelism; Lonnie and Jeanne Melashenko from VOP for sharing an ACTS100 vision to spiritually impact St. Louis, and Walter and Sandi Pearson from Breath of Life for creatively moving beyond narrow boundaries.

Then there's the innovative team at ACN (Adventist Communication Network) of Kermit Netteburg, Jere Wallack, and Dave Gemmell who, invest their energy and vision into making pastors more productive and empowering laity leadership.

Right from the start, Kermit offered encouragement, support, and production skills for our satellite seminars. Without their team's emphasis on quality and technical skills, these events could not occur.

The ACN team also provides gripping preaching resources through Adventist Preaching DVDs which allows

continued on page 28

Thanks, Parn'r

continued from page 27



a multiple-church district to bring a quality sermon message on those Sabbaths when their pastor must be absent or to resource small group study.

Likewise, their *Pastor's DVD* (Digital Vitality Disc) gives pastors fresh ideas, user-friendly programs, and a cornucopia of quality programs for healthy congregations (see www.acn.info).

For now, Thanks pardn'r! You'll hear it again when Jesus will say, "Well done, faithful partner!" ■

Adventist theology

continued from page 9

prejudice. In some cases the prejudice has been so strong that it has been difficult for our counterparts to accept what we were in fact telling them about our true position on a particular theological issue. Their preconceived ideas have not allowed them to listen.

On the other hand, we as Adventists can also have false or inaccurate information regarding other churches or faith-groups. Only the truth is most effective in dealing with others. False stereotypes and the lack of correct information weaken witness. It is precisely the purpose of the conversation to create an environment in which we are willing to listen to each other in a Christian spirit of love and cordiality.

Conclusion

Adventists have not isolated themselves from the Christian world and its search for unity. We have been selectively involved in conversations with other religious communities, not because we want to pursue unity on their terms, but because we want to make ourselves known and, at the same time, eliminate misconception.

It is important for us as theologians and pastors to keep in mind that when involved in activities with representatives of other religious communities, we are called to represent not just our private views but the church we serve. Our self-understanding makes it impossible for us to enter into ecumenical dialogue along the lines of the ecumenical movement as epitomized in the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

We should nevertheless take advantage of the ecumenical spirit to make ourselves and our mission and message better known and more faithfully effective. ■

Help smokers quit

continued from page 25

entitled "The Health Professional's Guide to Tobacco Addiction Intervention." This is especially helpful in preparing a team so that it has an understanding of the tobacco issues, the nature of addiction, the health consequences of tobacco use, and ways to design strategies for cessation.

4. Acquire at least one kit of *Taking Control* from the above Web site, either by purchase of hard copy and CDs or by downloading it from the Web site. The printed guides are color illustrated in PDF format for easy printing and the audio files can be downloaded to your own CDs.

The attendees at your quit-smoking class or support group may purchase their own copies from the Web site or you may do so and include it in a fee for the program. (Yes, there should be a fee to cover expenses.) By using this self-help program, you do not have to be trained in giving formal quit-smoking classes; you only need to provide loving, patient, and understanding support.

5. Prepare a team of facilitators to conduct support sessions on a regular basis to those you are helping. With the *Breathe Free*, the *5-Day Plan*, or the self-help program outlined here, you need to provide long-term support for at least a year. It should be frequent in the first two weeks, and then you may wean off with less frequent meetings during the rest of the year.

However, keep in tune with your participants and be flexible to their needs to meet together. Plan social events and invite them to other health-related events your church is offering. Make them a part of your spiritual community.

You don't have to be an expert to help people quit tobacco use. But you should have organization and consistency in your programming. If you have questions or comments, email me through the Web site. ■

- 1 Walter Raymond Beach and Bert Beverly Beach, *Pattern for Progress: The Role and Function of Church Organization* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), 100. See also, *Statements, Guidelines and Other Documents: A Compilation* (Silver Spring, Md.: GC Communication Department, 2000), 122.
- 2 Among many materials on the topic of ecumenism and the Adventist Church see, Bert Beverly Beach, *Vatican II: Bridging the Abyss* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1968), 259-266; Walter R. Beach, "SDA Relations to the National and World Councils of Churches," *Review and Herald*, October 9, 1969, 6, 7; *Idem*, "Why we Stand Apart," *Review and Herald*, October 16, 1969, 6, 7; Bert B. Beach, "The World Council of Churches: Seventh-day Adventist Conversations and Their Significance," *Ministry*, May 1970, 13-15; June 1970, 59-61; Jean Zucher, "Why Adventists Don't Join the WCC," *Ministry*, March 1979, 10-12; May 1979, 6-8, "Ecumenism," in *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, vol. A-L, edited by Don E. Neufeld (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1996), 491-493.
- 3 Harding Meyer, *That All May Be One: Perceptions and Models of Ecumenicity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 43.
- 4 For a discussion of these three models see Meyer, *One*, 81-100, to whom I am indebted.
- 5 Meyer, *One*, 83-86.
- 6 See, for instance, the affirmation of the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra: "The goal of the search for full communion is realized when all churches are able to recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church in its fullness" (*Official Report of the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches* [Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1991], 173).
- 7 Walter Kasper, "Present Situation and Future of the Ecumenical Movement," in *The Catholic Church in Ecumenical Dialogue 2000: Articles by Members of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002), 9.
- 8 Meyer, *One*, 97.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 107, 108.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 109.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 111.
- 12 See Kasper, "Ecumenical Movement," 6-11. He considers "full communion in the complete sense . . . only an eschatological hope" (11).
- 13 *Ibid.*, 6.
- 14 I must recognize, at least in a footnote, the excellent job that Bert B. Beach, former Director of the Office of Inter-church Relations, performed for the church in his involvement in ecumenical circles as observer for over 40 years, and as secretary of the *Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions* for 32 years. He is well known and respected in those circles and has been a genuine ambassador of the church.

Baptism

continued from page 13

King, servants of the Lord Jesus, and *what* we are—members of His body. It reveals our lofty status and magnificent privileges, and our corresponding responsibilities.

Sacrament or symbol?

It is possible to undervalue the importance of baptism. We may do this, for example, by reasoning from the experience of the thief on the cross that people can be saved without baptism. It is likewise possible to overstate the significance of the rite, as when it is supposed to confer a special unction in and of itself.

How baptism came to be regarded as a sacrament—a means of grace—makes for fascinating history. Although some gaps remain to be filled in, it is clear that the idea of “mystery” (Greek *must’rion*) played a key role.

By Paul’s day a new form of religion had become popular—the “mystery” religions of ancient Greece. Devotees of these cults sought a personal communion with deity through initiation and rites that gave them hope of eternal life.

Paul uses the same term for the gospel (e.g. Eph. 6:19; Col. 1:27), but with a radical change of meaning. For Paul, the gospel is not something secret but revealed through Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:9, 10). Nowhere does he call baptism a *must’rion*, nor does any other New Testament writer.

In the second century, however, a change took place: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper were called *must’ria*. Then, at the close of that century, Christian writings began to use Latin; and we find *sacramentum* and *must’rion* being used as equivalents. In this way sacramentalism arose that characterized the medieval church and still marks aspects of Roman Catholic faith and practice.

But the biblical rite of baptism is not magical. There is no special power in the water. The rite in and of itself cannot confer grace.

Baptism is not a sacrament. It is a

symbol charged with rich and irreplaceable meaning. It goes beyond sermon or song, involving the whole person in a public act of confession and witness, denoting the inner work of the Holy Spirit. And on this day the Triune God draws near to bring a blessing, as when the Holy Spirit descended on our Lord Himself and the Father declared: “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17).

Implications

Turning from the origin and meaning of baptism, we move to the implications that follow:

First, the mode of baptism is obvious. The word itself means “to dip” or “to bathe,” not “to sprinkle,” for which a different word was available.

The references to going down into and coming up out of the water (Acts 8:38; Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10), as well as the evidence from the ancient church baptistries, all point to immersion as the primitive mode of baptism among Christians.

Second, infant baptism as such, its presuppositions and the way in which it is practiced cannot be effective from a scriptural point of view, because biblical-

ly speaking, the candidate must repent, confess, and have faith in Jesus Christ.

Third, Christian baptism is a decisive rite and is not to be repeated. Occasional cases of rebaptism may be justified (there is just one instance of rebaptism in the Bible, and limited counsel from Ellen White that permits it), but it should rarely be done. Pastors need to better instruct believers in the way God deals with their sin. After Peter’s fall, involving an out-and-out denial of Jesus, he was not rebaptized!

Finally, more attention needs to be given to the baptismal service. It should be carefully planned, and thoughtfully administered so that its beauty and deep significance can be communicated to candidates, church members, and uncommitted onlookers.

Baptism is our commission. Baptism is our witness. Baptism is our gateway to new life. It is our privilege to go on learning its powerful meaning for us and for the men and women of our time. ■

William G. Johnsson is editor of the Adventist Review.

1. All biblical quotations are taken from the New International Version.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Soul Guide: Following Jesus as Spiritual Director, by Bruce Demarest (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Napless, 2003). ISBN 1576832864. Paperback, 204 pages.

Bruce Demarest is a gifted author (10 books so far) and a pastor's pastor who speaks, writes, and trains in order that both the pastor and the average Christian know, understand, and come to grips with the roots of their calling. Thoroughly Bible-based and unreservedly committed to the transforming power of Christ, Demarest presents in his latest work a roadmap for Christian living and growing.

Soul Guide begins with an unapologetic affirmation: Jesus "is the model spiritual director for twenty-first century disciples." What Jesus said, how He lived and cared for people 2,000 years ago is beyond the possibility of rusting. Neither time or trouble, nor culture or civilization's horrors, can blunt the Jesus Model. It is as sharp and powerful today as it was yesterday when it transformed the foul-mouthed Peter to a thundering Pentecostal power.

The author's argument is simple: a life that lets Jesus in cannot but be on the right road, moving in the right direction, toward the right destiny.

With that as foundation, and with Scripture as the source of his studies, Dr. Demarest outlines in 24 lucid, well-crafted chapters how to let Jesus master one's life problems—from character to career, from marriage to ministry, from living for today to anticipating eternity. As a skillfully laid out roadmap, *Spiritual Guide* is filled with real life stories—biblical and historical—and the simple lucid style make the work a breeze to read, and a blessing to experience.

What's more, pastors will find a homiletic bonus: each chapter comes as a prophetic thunder, as a challenging sermon to live a life worthy of our calling in Jesus.

—John M. Fowler, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Crown Him King by James Merritt (Nashville, Tenn.: Boatman & Hodman, 2003). ISBN 0805427627. Paperback, 117 pages.

In 117 power-packed pages, Dr. James Merritt, pastor of the Fellowship of Joy, near Atlanta, Georgia, deals with a subject that is most important to, and often neglected by, Christians: What does it mean to be a citizen of the kingdom of God here on earth? The difference between those who take the name "Christian" and those who live by that name lies in being citizens of that kingdom, who have totally and unreservedly accepted the lordship of Jesus?

With that as the central focus, the author approaches four compelling, non-negotiable factors of Christian life: that it is Christ-centered, kingdom-minded, church-based, and personally blessed. Each chapter has a study guide that will help not only in personal devotions, but group studies as well.

Crown Him King not only points to the uniqueness of the Lordship and Kingship of Christ, but shows in a practical way how we may exalt Him to the highest point in life so that others who see us will not fail to see the impact Jesus has in turning ordinary lives into extraordinary ones.

Blinded by the Light: The Anatomy of Apostasy, by Philip W. Dunham with Mallan Church (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 2001).

Judas the disciple turns into Judas the traitor. Annanias and Sapphira, tugged by the Holy Spirit to self-sacrifice, turn the noble into the trivial by a well coor-

minated lie. Apostasy takes many routes, but its anatomy is built around an ingredient as old as Lucifer: self.

Philip Dunham has the credentials to write on the contours, the anatomy and the lurking dangers of apostasy. Having served for 40 years as a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and conference official, Dunham knows the difference between being blinded by darkness and being blinded by light. He does not quite say it, but the latter is in reality a sort of spiritual imprisonment.

Filled with illustrations that range from David Carwash to the latest theologian who gives up a living faith in the Word of God, Dunham writes of the perils and early signs of apostasy in Adventism. He deals with 7 steps to apostasy; 16 ways to evaluate independent ministries; 11 tests to apply to teachers who may insidiously wander away from biblical truth, taking others with them; 10 marks by which "new light" advocates can be spotted, identified, and exposed for their darkness; and 7 mistakes made by break-away congregations.

Leaving mathematics alone, the spiritual markers are worth noting. Who knows? The soul you save may be your own.

The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity by Philip Jenkins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). ISBN 0195146166. Hardcover, 288 pages.

Philip Jenkins, professor of history and religious studies at Penn State University, is an effective communicator who keeps track of scholarly research of Christian concern. In *The Next Christendom*, he provides a compelling analysis of the coming of global Christianity.

Christendom is generally thought of as an European phenomenon, radically reformed in the sixteenth century, shaped by the evangelical revival of the

eighteenth century and advanced by North American awakenings and missionary impulses. But Western civilization has been so impacted by secularism and other influences of the twentieth century that today we speak of ours as a "post-Christian age."

Jenkins is acutely aware of the malaise of the Christianity represented by Rome, Paris, Athens, London and New York. The Christian faith, however, is not dying: it is being reborn in new locations, such as Kinshasa, Buenos Aires, Addis Ababa, and Manila.

From his point of reference in North America, Jenkins refers much to "Southern Christianity" as seen in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The demise of French, Portuguese, Spanish, and British colonial empires has not witnessed the corresponding burgeoning decline in Christianity across the developing world. For instance, the number of Christians in Africa increased "staggeringly" from 10 million in 1900 to 360 million in 2000.

Jenkins discusses the tricky nature of statistics and the perils of assuming too much from even government figures and denominational reports. Yet the larger picture is beyond dispute: The center of gravity for world Christianity is no longer within Western culture. The world missionary movement has been such a stunning success that the faith's numerical strength has shifted from the Old World and the New World to the Third World.

The implications of this reality are as numerous as they are profound. Already the churches in Europe and the United States are being impacted by the enthusiasm of Third World immigrants. The mission tide is turning as believers with roots in Africa, Asia, and Latin America lead congregations in cities as diverse as Frankfurt, Birmingham, and Boston.

The archaic term Christendom reminds us of the Middle Ages that "offered a common culture and thought-world," but were "characterized by widespread intolerance, symbolized at its very worst by aggressive Crusades, heresy hunts, and religious pogroms" (page 12). The glob-

al Christianity of the future appears likely to witness intensified conflict between rival Christian denominations, as well as between Christians and such other religions as Islam and Hinduism.

To understand the explosion of Christianity in the Third World is to be better able to develop an interpretive context for evaluating and implementing Adventist mission. Our message is for every nation, tribe, language, and people group. Nothing short of a balanced, consistent, global mission fits the commission that is ours. Adventism's unique strengths on health, education, and service (for instance, the current sterling work of ADRA) remind us what can and needs to be done.

The coming global Christianity will not only be infused with charismatic enthusiasm and visionary influences, it will be impacted by people movements, personality cults, racial and territorial conflicts.

Jenkin's book has much indeed to say to the thoughtful Adventist and to the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a world movement. Will the Adventist community, as a people of prophecy and navigators of an end-time "ark" be prepared to meet the challenge of this global Christianity?

—Arthur Patrick, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

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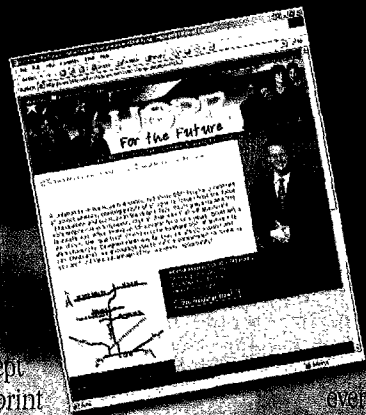
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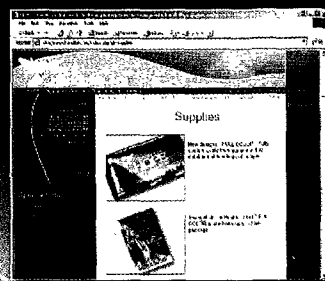


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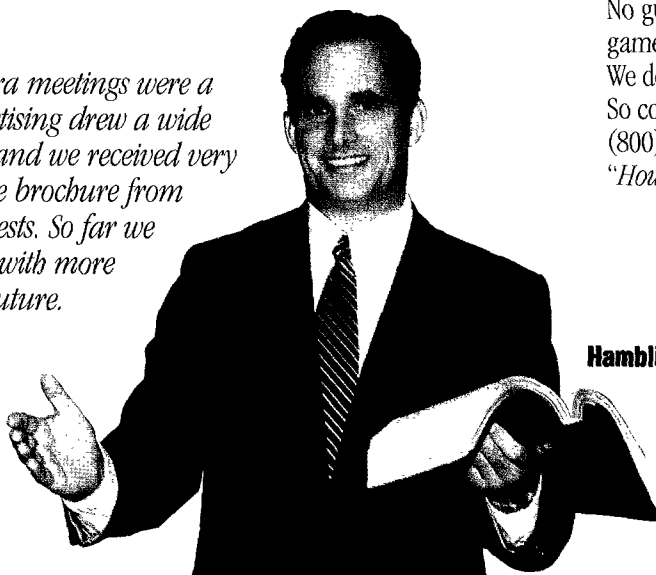
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