

# Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/July 1983



*The family: bulwark against alcoholism*

# Letters

## Where's the flea?

"Make the Bible Live" (March, 1983) was of special interest to me and caused me to search various translations in trying to determine what the author was saying regarding Matthew 2:13. He suggests that a careless reading could cause someone to think Joseph was commanded to take a small insect with him. By what stretch of the imagination could anyone get the idea, even from a careless reading of the text, that Joseph was instructed to take a small insect with him on his flight into Egypt, as the author suggests? How could it be said more plainly that he was to take the young child and his mother?—United Methodist Church, Tennessee.

*In Matthew 2:13 (K.J.V.) the angel instructs Joseph to "take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt." The author warns that ignoring the comma could conceivably cause some to mistake flee for flea and picture in their mind Joseph carefully bringing the family insect along with Mary and Jesus! Misplaced inflections in the spoken word can do stranger things than this.—Editors.*

## Overlooks the gospel

Dr. Vitrano's article "Whatever Happened to the Resurrection?" (March, 1983) overlooks what Paul tells us the gospel is all about. "Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received. . . . For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:1-4, R.S.V.).\*

The gospel is crucifixion and resurrection together. Later Luke would add incarnation to the gospel. Paul says, "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles" (chap. 1:23, R.S.V.). I'm sorry the crucifixion is such a stumbling block for the author.—Evangelical Lutheran Church, Illinois.

Anyone who has been reading *MINISTRY* during recent months will realize that we

*place the cross in the central position it should occupy. To us Dr. Vitrano's article seems to make the same point you do—the gospel is both crucifixion and resurrection. An inordinate preoccupation with the cross alone, he says, ignores the important dimension supplied by the resurrection.—Editors.*

## Bringing in works

In the editorial "More Than Just an Empty Tomb" (March, 1983) you comment: "When Jesus cried out on the cross, 'It is finished,' He was referring to the ceremonial system of sacrifices as given to Israel."

This is a good example of Adventist theology, afraid of the real import of what Christ did. He is the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Paul's marvelously clear teaching of salvation by grace alone and Luther's proclamation of this truth are vitiated by any theology which reintroduces works side by side with faith, instead of recognizing works as faith's fruit.—Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wisconsin.

*In applying Jesus' cry on the cross to the Old Testament ceremonial system of sacrifices, the editorial did not intend to say that that is all He referred to. Jesus' cry indicated that in a very real sense victory over sin had come to pass, the provisions of the plan of redemption determined by Heaven had been fully complied with and completed. All this the Old Testament sacrificial system had pointed forward to in symbol, as highlighted by the reference to Jesus as "the Lamb of God." Thus the Saviour's cry referred to the cessation of the sacrificial system as indicated by the torn veil of the Temple at the moment He died (see Mark 15:37, 38). This in no way reintroduces works alongside faith as a basis for our salvation or vitiates the clear teaching of Scripture that our salvation is by grace alone through faith in Jesus.*

*Although the cross completely satisfied salvation's provisions, the total goal of Heaven's redemptive activity was obviously not then realized. We continue to live in a world of sin some nineteen hundred years later. God's eternal kingdom is not yet*

*ushered in. It was this point—the continuing activity of Christ for our salvation as our High Priest—that the editorial was concerned to discuss.—Editors.*

## Thank you too

Please keep *MINISTRY* coming. It helps me more than you know. I don't always agree with what I read, but my mind is open enough to study so that I can learn even from those things with which I disagree.—North Carolina.

I find *MINISTRY* to be the most thought-challenging and inspiring church publication I have ever known. I admire the research that goes into many of the articles and the high level of scholars who contribute. I receive much helpful information through them. I appreciate deeply your distinctive contribution.—United Methodist Church, California.

\* The Scripture quotations marked R.S.V. are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952 © 1971, 1973.

If you're receiving *MINISTRY* bi-monthly without having paid for a subscription, it's not a mistake. Since 1928, *MINISTRY* has been published for Seventh-day Adventist ministers, but we believe 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 with you our aspirations and faith in a way that we trust will provide inspiration and help to you too.

We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulders, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you cannot use. Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy; requests should be on church letterhead.

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# Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/July 1983/Volume 56/Number 7



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# The family: bulwark against alcoholism

*What makes an alcoholic an alcoholic? Scientists do not always know, but recent well-documented studies are beginning to provide the answers. □ by Winton H. Beaven*



*Society today camouflages, ignores, evades, and denies both the nature and the seriousness of the problems caused by alcohol. Facts are obscured by prejudice and ancient myths. Advocates of total abstinence are often ridiculed. Those favoring beverage alcohol tend to deny the extent of the problem of abuse, to be*

critical of those who objectively analyze the problems, and to heap scorn upon those who suggest that the drinking act should be inhibited either by legislation or public opinion.

Ten years ago, in the keynote address for the First International Congress for the Prevention of Alcoholism, I declared that the problems created in society by the use and abuse of beverage alcohol must be attacked by the whole of society. This includes such measures as taxation, enforcement of existing regulations, and legislation limiting production, outlets, hours of service, and general availability. It also includes making every effort in the care and treatment of the alcoholic to return him to society as a useful member. But beyond all this, it must include attempts to educate a whole generation of young people with a value system powerful enough to help them

protect themselves from dependence upon a destructive chemical.

Today I wouldn't change a single word I said in that speech ten years ago. The needs and misinformation remain largely unchanged.

One of the most pervasive myths over the past thirty years has been the idea that alcoholics and social drinkers are two entirely distinct breeds with nothing in common. According to this idea, two fundamental types use alcohol—those who become alcoholics and those who do not. And for those who do not, drinking does not cause severe problems. As a result, although the original premise has not been realistically investigated, alcoholics have been widely blamed for society's alcohol problems. The prevalent idea that alcoholism is a disease has provided the foundation for the development of this whole concept.

In the past ten years, however, significant research has challenged the prevailing view of the alcoholic who drinks to damage and the nonalcoholic who

drinks harmlessly. Indeed, some evidence now indicates that certain alcoholics have more control over their drinking than our usual ideas about alcoholism would permit. There are even a few well-documented cases of alcoholics who have returned to a low intake of alcohol. Nancy Mello is one researcher challenging the concept that an alcoholic can exert no control over his drinking. Her work and that of others show that alcoholics do not necessarily drink as much as possible and that the degree of control demonstrated depends on the situation and the individual.

The literature today also rejects to a large degree the belief that a common set of personality factors exists predisposing individuals to alcoholism. There is no evidence that alcoholics share significant common psychological, biological, or physiological traits beyond the pharmacological one of tolerance for and dependence upon alcohol. Instead, alcoholics are quite diverse, differing from nonalcoholics mainly in the amount of

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alcohol they consume.

The emerging consensus of such research, then, is that alcoholism's claim to constitute some unique and definable clinical entity is a "myth." This challenge has produced a similar scrutiny of what may be called the "myth of social drinking"—the notion that the social drinker has mysterious abilities or capacities in regard to alcohol that are possessed by most members of society. This myth is based on a simple, and in some contexts quite legitimate, observation. Some people *do* possess certain powers, abilities, capacities, or resources that account for their success or failure in specific difficult or hazardous activities, for example, flying an airplane, skiing a steep slope, riding a wave, or performing complex surgery. The trouble begins when the notion of such abilities is used as an unverifiable analogy that distorts the phenomena to which it refers. There is no such special skill involved in alcohol consumption.

The challenge to the myth of social drinking began in 1968 when an article by Jan de Lint and Wolfgang Schmidt, two Canadian researchers at the Addiction Research Foundation in Ontario, Canada, appeared in the quarterly *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*. The study began with this sentence: "An important question in the study of alcohol use is the statistical distribution of consumption in a population." The fact was that until this project, almost no one doing research on alcoholism, or even on the drinking behavior of national populations, regarded the statistical distribution of alcohol consumption in a population as an "important question" to study. The article reported the results of a 1960 survey investigating the purchasing practices of those buying distilled beverages and wine from retail stores in Ontario. Since purchasers were required to fill out forms giving their names and addresses and the amounts ordered, the researchers had a convenient source of data on the pattern of sales. Records showed that the largest number of purchasers bought small quantities. A much smaller group bought what might

be called moderate amounts, and a very small group purchased large amounts of alcohol. Schmidt and De Lint argued that this consumption pattern confirmed the findings of the French alcohol researcher Sully Ledermann, who had argued that all Western societies followed a similar pattern. Ledermann had done his studies years before on French, Swedish, and Italian subjects living in America. The same patterns appeared in each group.

Subsequent research by Ledermann, Skog, Brunn, Cartwright, Popham, and Smart has tended to support the broad outlines of Ledermann's thesis, at least to the extent of indicating that alcohol consumption is not normally or bimodally distributed in the population, and that the level of general alcohol consumption is directly related to the prevalence of problems caused by alcohol. Ledermann's work, practically unknown to English and American scholars, was introduced to the English-speaking world by the Canadian researchers De Lint and Schmidt and is now referred to as "The Distribution of Consumption Thesis." This thesis states that in a general population, drinking will be distributed according to the following pattern: a very large group that drinks very little and seldom, a much smaller group that drinks regularly but not at risk, and a very small group that drinks heavily and alcoholically. The progression from each category to the next is relatively smooth; there is no "bump" or shift in the curve for heavy alcoholic drinkers. One implication is that drawing a line dividing "nonalcoholic" from "alcoholic" consumption is difficult and ultimately arbitrary. All the problems alcohol causes in society are directly correlated with levels of consumption.

The Canadians argue that three key propositions flow from their and Ledermann's work:

1. A change, either up or down, in the average consumption of alcohol by a given population is likely to be accompanied by a similar change in the proportion of *heavy* consumers.

2. Since heavy use of alcohol generally increases the probability of physical and social damage, the average consumption should be closely related to the prevalence of such damage in any population.

3. Any measures that may be expected to affect overall alcohol consumption (such as regulating its availability) are likely to also affect the prevalence of alcohol problems, and hence should be central considerations in any program of prevention.

In addition to the research that supports these findings, we have historical evidence as well. The experience of England during the war, of America during prohibition, and of Finland and other parts of Scandinavia, where changes in alcohol legislation in recent years have liberalized alcohol control laws, all indicate that the Ledermann thesis is valid. All measures that liberalize the availability of alcohol increase consumption and thus increase the negative social effects of its use.

Drinking tastes seem to be converging throughout Europe, North America, and the rest of the industrialized world. Unfortunately, these customs, social and otherwise, are being spread to the developing countries. The same trends that have been experienced in the societies of Europe, the United States, Argentina, New Zealand, Chile, and Japan bode ill for the rest of the world if these habit patterns spread widely. Since 1980 the level of alcohol consumption in the Western world has increased markedly and so have related problems. The only conclusion any fair-minded observer can reach is that the only way to reduce the problems of alcohol in society is to reduce consumption.

History has taught us that positive changes in this area can be achieved through the family, education in the schools, and legal restraints.

Children learn by two principal methods: by imitating and identifying with their parents, and by formal education either at school or at home. The former type of learning involves absorbing emotions, attitudes, and character

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traits, as well as ideas. Studies have shown that a tendency to drink is associated to a great degree with the extent of drinking in the home. Children of alcoholics have a one-in-three chance of becoming alcoholics if one parent is alcoholic, and more than a 50 percent chance if both parents are alcoholics. Attempts should, therefore, be made to establish negative home attitudes toward drinking. A child's identification with his parents is unconscious and based on his emotions and attitudes toward them. If the parents do not drink, and if, in addition, the child is taught from the earliest age that there is no good evidence that drinking is beneficial, he may seek the real gratifications in life, rather than the spurious ones involved in alcohol. In the Western world, children are constantly exposed to radio, television, and newspaper advertising that associates liquor with pleasure, relaxation, beauty, and even love. It is difficult to combat this type of propaganda; therefore, it seems a reasonable exercise of society's prerogatives to prohibit such advertising—indeed, all advertising—of liquor.

The results of formal education regarding the effects of alcohol consumption and alcoholism have not been very promising. Largely, this is because attitudes are usually crystallized by the time formal education is given, and cannot readily be changed. If, however, we provide this teaching by the third, fourth, or fifth grades, experimental evidence indicates attitudes can be changed.

We may all need to do some rethinking about the implications of early drinking in the home. In 1972, Dr. Forrest S. Tennant, a physician in charge of the U.S. Army's drug abuse program in Europe, completed a doctoral study at the University of California in Los Angeles. Its results, while widely disseminated, do not seem to have affected society very greatly. His study, conducted on young U.S. Army soldiers stationed in Europe in 1971, indicates that authorities interested in preventing alcoholism will have a difficult time

predicting who is likely to become an alcoholic. The study also covered abuse of amphetamines, hashish, and such opiates as heroin. All five thousand subjects reported their childhood experiences with 107 different activities—hobbies, raising pets, games, outdoor activities, membership in social organizations, school sports, school programs such as band and debate, et cetera. They were also asked whether they had had household chores, how often they were spanked, the amount of time their parents spent with them, the frequency with which their parents drank at home, and about their church attendance.

Dr. Tennant found only one correlation with subsequent drinking patterns: drinking at home before the age of 15. He found two activities, spanking and church attendance, which correlated inversely with the abuse of amphetamines and opiates. Subjects who had been spanked as children tended to be nonusers of either amphetamines or opiates, unless they were punished more than three times a week, in which case they did tend to become abusers. And those who had been to church fifty or more times before the age of 15 had a far less chance of becoming drug abusers.

"Never before have I been involved in a study with results so far different from what I expected," Tennant said. "I thought that both the nondrug and nonalcohol users would have played the most games, belonged to the most clubs, and so on. I was hoping to come up with a kind of recipe for parents, but it didn't turn out that way."

Tennant's final word of advice? "Spank them moderately, send them to church, and don't give them anything to drink until they are older than 15! That is about all we can say."

It seems clear, then, that the problems created in society by alcoholic beverages are directly related to the amount consumed, and thus the only way to reduce those problems is to reduce consumption. It also seems clear to me that the chief bulwark against any social deviation is the home. Society, from the dawn of history, has demonstrated that

strong homes make strong societies. Therefore, one of the three basic foundations for a concerned alcohol policy for all of society must focus on improving the quality and character of the home. Studies confirm that families who have firm discipline, who have a strong religious foundation, and who do not drink have the greatest likelihood of protecting their children against alcohol use and abuse.

In this effort, churches can perform a major function. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has taken an official stand for total abstinence and carries on an active program of narcotics education and temperance activities.\* Other churches have similar stands against the use of alcohol.

The largest branch of the Christian church, the Roman Catholic Church, teaches that alcoholic beverages are a gift of God, yet at the same time millions within that church are total abstainers. These members take a formal vow of abstinence because of their conviction that many members of society are so weak that they will fall victims to alcoholic abuse if they are not provided with good models. This abstinence is noble. It says that I am my neighbor's keeper, and in the language of the New Testament, I will abstain for the good of the greater number.

The privilege of rearing children carries with it the responsibility of preparing those children to lead useful and productive lives. The evidence clearly indicates that one of the greatest benefits parents can provide for their children is an alcohol-free environment and role models who protect them from the insidious effects of beverage alcohol when they are young, immature, and incapable of appropriate self-protection. Anything that any society can do to provide the parental education and support to increase abstinence in the home will pay untold dividends.

\*More information on the temperance activities of the church may be obtained by writing Narcotics Education, Inc., 6830 Laurel Street NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.



# The view from the pew

*Preaching takes on a different perspective once we look at it from the other side of the pulpit. The people in your pews know what they want from a sermon. Here are eight characteristics given by a former producer of sermons, now turned consumer. □ by Eldred Johnston*



*After forty years and two thousand sermons, I retired in 1972. All at once I was looking at preaching from the other side of the pulpit, a new perspective for me. For the past ten years or so I've been in the pew as a listener in scores of churches across the country. I don't claim to be competent enough to teach you how*

to preach, but of one thing I'm sure: I know what I want from a sermon now that I'm a consumer and not a producer.

1. *Clear auditory reception.* Speakers who don't use adequate vocal volume or who have never learned to enunciate clearly or use a microphone are wasting my time and theirs.

2. *I want you to acknowledge my presence.* This is not a TV sermon where the preacher and I will never meet. You are my pastor; I am a member of your flock. The true shepherd knows his sheep, their particular needs, scars, and hopes. If you keep your nose in a manuscript or continually stare above the heads of the congregation, you might as well be delivering a radio sermon as far as I'm concerned. I expect you to glance my way now and then and act as though you see me. A little eye contact goes a long way toward transforming even a dull monologue into a living dialogue.

3. *Simplicity.* I don't want seven points, or five points, or even the classic three points—just one distinct point. To try to do more in approximately thirty minutes is sheer folly. I'm not asking for simplistic thinking, but for effective

communication. Jesus' parables are classics because they gave His hearers one clear and impressive point to take back into daily life.

I said I wasn't going to tell you how to preach. But please let me say this: Decide on one clear, specific purpose for your sermon. Write it in large letters and pin it above your desk so you never lose sight of it as you prepare. Avoid generalities; be specific. On Easter, for example, don't try so hard to help me appreciate the resurrection; show how the resurrection can make a difference in my Monday morning life.

4. *I want to feel that this sermon is based on a message from God.* Too often today the term *preacher* means the typical TV clergyman who continually assures you that God loves you and therefore everything will turn out right as long as you keep those letters and postcards coming.

The Biblical meaning of *preacher* is derived from the word *prophet*—"one who speaks for God." As I listen to you I want to feel that you have had an intimate conversation with God in which you were a keen listener. I want to feel that the ultimate authority for your sermon is not Plato, or Freud, or Luther, or Cranmer, or Peale, but the God of Moses, David, Jeremiah, and Paul. I want to feel that you are not speaking casually, but that you have a sense of

divine compulsion and urgency in your message.

5. *I want to feel that you are in touch with reality.* We are not in a Middle Eastern country of the first century. We are not in medieval Wittenberg, Elizabethan England, a celestial kingdom surrounded by angels and saints, or in a science-fiction world of the twenty-first century. We are in the real world of the 1980s and enjoying many material advantages but facing the desperate problems of crime, nuclear warfare, sin, economic instability, and human insensitivity. I want to feel that you have not been living an insular life, but that you are involved in the same world I am.

6. *I want intellectual stimulation.* I want to feel that you have wrestled with difficult concepts and philosophies and are challenging us to do likewise. The famous preachers of our Christian tradition have not been preoccupied with creating euphoria, but have appealed to the powers of reason and logic with which God has endowed us. If I want a polished presentation of mere crumbs of intellectual nourishment I can turn on the TV preachers and watch camera shots of flowers, water fountains, and swaying singers.

7. *I want color and warmth.* We are not in your pews as a seminary class to listen  
(Continued on page 27)

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# Security in Christ

*Our salvation is secure. We need entertain no fears on that point. But we are secure only in Jesus Christ and only as long as we remain in Him. We are promised that nothing can pluck us from the divine hand. Yet if we wish to leave, God Himself will not force us to remain. □ by Douglas Bennett*



*Salvation is the free gift of God (Eph. 2:8). When a person believes on the Lord Jesus and accepts God's offer of salvation extended to him through the life of Jesus we say he is saved (Acts 16:31). Thus far virtually all Christians agree. But how complete is this salvation? How long does it last? What are its*

ultimate consequences? Can it be later rejected and lost? These are questions on which Christians differ.

The apostle John states clearly that all our past sins are forgiven when we accept Christ and ask for His mercy. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Paul indicates that there is a present experience of salvation as well. "The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18, R.S.V.).<sup>1\*</sup>

Finally, there will be a future salvation when we will be saved from the presence of sin, when our disease-prone bodies will be changed into glorious, immortal bodies. "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). On the day of resurrection "this mortal [body] must put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:53).

These three facts of salvation—past, present, and future—are linked together in God's plan. But in a certain sense there is a tension between the present and the future, a tension that Bultmann calls "the Christian's betweenness."<sup>2</sup>

Can one who is saved, who has accepted God's offer and been forgiven of his past, ever lose his present and future salvation? Does the experience of accepting Christ immunize the new

believer against the possibility of later reversing his decision, and thus automatically ensure his continued and future salvation? If not, can one change his mind and return to his past Christless life? Would one thereby relinquish any future hope of being with Christ in His kingdom? To what extent does a person's salvation—past, present, and future—depend on his constant, continued acceptance of Jesus throughout a lifetime?

Early leaders of the post-New Testament church developed a sophisticated system of penance and excommunication that sprang from their belief that a Christian could apostatize.<sup>3</sup> St. Augustine suggested that there are two kinds of people who accept Christ—the truly elect, who receive the grace of perseverance, and those who merely profess but never receive this grace. John Calvin accepted Augustine's position and made it the basis of his teaching on the grace of God and election.<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther also espoused this view, but his followers and the theologians of the Counter-Reformation rejected it.<sup>5</sup>

What does the Bible teach about perseverance in salvation? The problem pivots on determining whether one's saved experience from a past life of sin and the promised future saved state with Christ in His kingdom can be affected by anything done in the present saved condition of the believer.

One quality God bestowed on Adam and Eve at their creation distinguished them from all other creatures: their freedom of choice (Gen. 1:27). Scrip-

ture and experience seem to agree that God has never revoked that privileged status for man. Scripture echoes God's appeal to man to choose His way: "Whosoever . . . believeth" (John 11:26); "As many as received him" (chap. 1:12); "Whosoever will" (Rev. 22:17). It is true that God takes the initiative in drawing man to Himself, but He will never coerce a person to accept Him. This divine gift of choice has great potential. It makes possible man's loving acceptance of God, but it also allows for his unappreciative rejection of God's will. And Adam and Eve, of course, exercised this right in making their fateful choice to doubt and distrust God.

God might have made man an automaton, a kind of mechanical slave with instincts for proper behavior. Such an arrangement would have eliminated sin, but it would have also eliminated love. God did not want that kind of servitude. He wanted man to be free to choose Him from a love awakened by love and an appreciation of His character. The risks were high, but God's determination to give man room for such freedom and creative love was even higher. God would allow nothing—not even salvation—to take away this freedom of choice, for salvation on any other basis would not really be salvation in the way God wanted man to experience it. He has planned that salvation will not rest on coercion.

Some have suggested that, although one is initially free to accept or reject God's salvation, once having accepted he can never reverse his choice and

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# Heaven will be secure, not because God exercises mind control or other forms of coercion, but because the redeemed have been unalterably convinced of His goodness.

return to his old way of life. But if God should choose so to preserve men and women today who accept Him, why did He not prevent Adam and Eve from such a decision and spare the world the horrors of sin? Coercion and force are foreign to God's nature and method of dealing with men. His plan of redemption does not at any point encroach on our freedom to choose or reject Him. Instead, He relies on so clearly demonstrating His love, character, and justice that the redeemed will voluntarily choose to continue trusting Him throughout the ages of eternity. Heaven will be secure, not because God exercises mind control or other forms of coercion, but because the redeemed have been unalterably convinced of His goodness and justice. They will willingly sing, "Just and true are thy ways, O King of the ages! Who shall not fear and glorify thy name, O Lord? For thou alone art holy" (Rev. 15:3, 4, R.S.V.).

The book of Hebrews lays great stress on the importance of the believer's voluntary choice and perseverance in his Christian life. The book was written to Jewish Christians, some of whom evidently were having second thoughts about their conversion from Judaism to Christianity. Hebrews was written in an attempt to clarify the gospel; throughout the book the old is contrasted with the new, the partial with the complete, and the earthly with the heavenly. The Christian faith is presented as God's final revelation, superior to Moses and the old covenant, which prepared the way for it. The writer forthrightly warns those who turn away from the gospel that they are on dangerous ground.

Hebrews 3:1-5 sets forth Jesus, the High Priest, as one, like Moses, who was faithful over God's household. This leads, in verse 6, to the thought that Christians are members of God's household only if they, like Moses, "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." In other words, persevering endurance is a condition for membership in God's household. Succeeding passages in Hebrews 3 and 4 make reference to the stern warning

given Israel in Psalm 95:7-11, against following the example of their ancestors who turned away from God's leading in the wilderness exodus from Egypt. Readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews are admonished likewise to hold fast their faith and refrain from backsliding, lest they too be excluded from God's promises. (See Heb. 4:2, 6, 11, 14.)

Hebrews 5 and 6 present material intended to arouse the people from intellectual and spiritual apathy. Chapter 6:1 urges, "Therefore let us . . . go on to maturity" (R.S.V.). Maturity, growth in Christ, is thus presented as the best defense against backsliding.

The book of Hebrews recognizes, however, that some among the Christian flock may have backslidden so far that they cannot profit even by hearing someone repeat the fundamental teachings of Christianity. "It is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt" (verses 4-6, R.S.V.).

Although this has always been a puzzling text, it appears that certain backsliders cannot be restored. What were these people like before they turned away? Were they genuine Christians or only halfhearted ones?

There are three participles in this passage that, in my opinion, indicate that once-genuine Christians may be among those impossible to restore to fellowship with God. The passage states that they were "once . . . enlightened" (*photishtentas*). Thus, they had once been instructed in the gospel. In this context it probably means more than receiving a mere body of instruction. The word in Greek may be equated with *conversion*.<sup>6</sup>

The second participle is *geusamenous*, "having tasted." Although some, such as John Owens, have contended that there is a difference between tasting and fully

eating, the New Testament meaning of the word is "to experience something."<sup>7</sup> It is the same word used in Hebrews 2:9, where Jesus is said to have come that "he might taste death for every one" (R.S.V.). The obvious meaning is not that Jesus merely sampled death, but rather that He experienced it to the full. Likewise, the author's whole point in verses 4 to 6 would be weakened if he were speaking of those who had only sampled the Christian life but who had not responded to what they were taught with a genuine experience of salvation.

The third significant participle is *metochous*, sharers or "partakers" of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament consistently presents the concept of receiving or partaking of the Holy Spirit as characteristic of Christians. There is no record of non-Christians doing so, and thus this word also points to genuine Christians.

Verse 5 repeats the idea of tasting (*geusamenous*): having "tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come" (R.S.V.). The idea, again, seems to be that the hearer has had an experience in the things of God and has received benefits from the Lord. "The powers of the age to come" are a foretaste of the blessings granted to each believer in anticipation of his future salvation.

If this understanding is correct, the passage declares that those who once truly have experienced God's saving grace but who later apostatize, and thereby figuratively crucify anew the Son of God, find that further repentance is impossible. The immediate context, as well as the theme of the entire Epistle, seems to indicate that this impossibility comes about because the individual no longer desires repentance. After all, this is the logical outcome of rejecting the only One who can prompt to repentance. Jesus Himself said that those who reject the Holy Spirit may pass beyond the desire for repentance and forgiveness (see Matt. 12:31, 32).

Thus Scripture teaches here and elsewhere that, although eternal life is freely  
(Continued on page 13)

# Getting the most from volunteers

*Much of our task as pastors and church administrators is to manage volunteer workers. Managing volunteers in the church is quite different from managing employees in a business. The most unique difference is probably the source of authority that undergirds the leadership of those who manage volunteers. □ by John W. Fowler*



*In the United States, 90 million people, nearly half of all adults and teen-agers, serve some organization as active volunteer workers. The September 20, 1982, issue of "U.S. News & World Report" that cited this figure also reported that the number of volunteer workers in other countries has risen sharply.*

A great many of these volunteers are participating in the work of the church, and it is our task, as pastors and church administrators, to be managers of these workers. But managing volunteers in the church is quite different from managing employees in a business. Volunteer management is unique within the management profession. Church administrators and pastors see themselves as having the spiritual gift of administration.

Carl F. George, director of the Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, in Pasadena, California, defines the gift of administration: "The administrator gift excels at clearly stating major goals and supporting goals, visualizing the division of labor required to enable a group to work together toward those goals, and especially

appraising the work force; who can handle what assignments? Another way to say this is that an essence of the administrative gift is the ability to recognize ability."—*Leadership*, Summer Quarter, 1982, p. 55. The manager of volunteers, then, seeks to identify the varied gifts within the church, to develop and utilize those gifts, enabling the members to cooperate in such a way as to effectively achieve their goals and objectives.

Even the secular business world is beginning to recognize a number of the principles upon which volunteer managers build. An article in the *AMA Forum*, volume 71, number 6 (June, 1982), calls this "influence management" (in contrast to what the boss in a business does). It says: "Influence management training is designed to teach managers and supervisors nontraditional management practices that enable them to influence others rather than rely on their authority

or status to get things done. That influence is based on knowledge, competence, and participative leadership rather than authority. It seeks to make people feel secure and supported in their work environment."

Some principles are similar in both employee and volunteer management, but the differences are far greater than the similarities. Apart from the spiritual dimension of volunteer management in a church setting, the most unique difference is probably the source of authority that undergirds the leadership of those who manage volunteers.

Managers of secular business organizations generally derive their authority from a source other than the employees, or workers. Authority in a secular business usually flows downward from the stockholders to management, which uses this authority to decide what is best for the organization and to manage it in such a way as to achieve goals often

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**T**he manager of volunteers is far more than a mere facilitator of the desires of church members. He performs some of the functions of prophet, priest, and king.

owned solely by the manager and stockholder.

Just the opposite is true in a volunteer organization. In the church those who own the stock and those who do the work are one and the same. Seventh-day Adventist pastors are placed by the conference committee and are accountable to the conference president via the delegated authority of the constituency, but ownership still resides with the rank and file of the churches. Therefore leaders must derive their power and authority to lead from those they desire to lead. They do this by winning and maintaining the confidence of the majority of the group. The members then willingly loan their authority to the leader, thus enabling him to supervise the group effectively.

Members vote for or against the leader by giving or withholding support. Refusing to attend services or withholding financial support is a powerful method of protest. We don't like to think that the average attendance of 50 percent in most churches represents a vote of no confidence for leadership. However, we cannot casually dismiss this deplorable attendance as simply a lack of commitment on the part of members. The fact that you must manage with a "borrowed" authority demands a more participative style of leadership. The broader the base of participation, the greater the goal ownership, motivation, and support for the activities of the group.

The success or failure of those who manage volunteers is determined by their style of leadership. Leadership style reveals one's concept of human nature and something of his own view of management. It appears to me that many leaders within the Adventist Church, both in administration and in pastoral leadership, use a style sometimes referred to as *laissez-faire*, or a hands-off approach. Those who use this style seem to have an unrealistic concept of human motivation. They give little direction and hold no one accountable for the work that is to be done. The members of the church usually feel respected and

secure with this style of leadership, but little or nothing is accomplished. The *laissez-faire* approach seems to gain support during times of prosperity and security; however, crisis situations quickly reveal its weaknesses.

Other leaders go to a different extreme, seeming to believe that all workers are either so indifferent or self-centered that they have little concern for their work. These leaders often use force of personality, organizational ability, or the authority of position to motivate others. This style of leadership often produces results on a short-term basis; however, there are diminishing long-term returns.

The most effective leaders believe that people are generally motivated and willing to expend their energies for the

ministry. Recognizing his special calling by God, the manager of volunteers is far more than a mere facilitator of the desires of church members. He performs some of the functions of prophet, priest, and king, thus bearing the responsibility to bring the Word of God to bear conscientiously upon the mission and work of the church. The authority flowing up from the people and down from God makes the ministry truly a unique calling and work.

Motivation is another point of difference between secular and volunteer management. Some leaders have the idea that because volunteers are not paid they lack motivation and thus are more difficult to manage. Yet most would agree that religious conviction is the most powerful motivation to be found

**R**eligious conviction is the most powerful motivation to be found anywhere. Properly guided, volunteers in a religious organization can be the most highly motivated, the most involved and productive members of all.

good of the group. Yet these managers also recognize that if members of the group are to perform effectively there must be clear-cut goals and objectives, definite action plans, and well-structured organizational support that involves training, supervision, and accountability. This may be the greatest weakness of volunteer management—failure to see the value of all these helps—although secular business makes use of them. Insightful leaders use a participative style of leadership to gain a consensus for the goals of the church and the organizational structure that is so necessary for success.

Many managers of church organizations have an additional source of authority that contributes singularly to the uniqueness of volunteer management—his calling and subsequent ordination by the church to leadership

anywhere. Properly guided, volunteers in a religious organization can be the most highly motivated, the most involved and productive members of any organization.

Most volunteer managers recognize two basic group activities necessary if the church is to grow: pastoral nurture and evangelistic outreach. What is often missing is the *means* of achieving these goals. This is where management makes its singular contribution. It is the leader's *modus operandi*. It is a systematic approach to management that develops and utilizes the total resources of the church to carry on nurture and outreach.

When we talk about a "systems approach" to church management, we are talking about a planning process, an organizational structure, and an administrative program that will enable the group to achieve the goals and objectives

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that grow out of the planning process. The value of such an approach is apparent: (1) It is a powerful teaching tool. "Planning is everything, plans are nothing," Eisenhower is supposed to have said. The point is that the planning process itself clarifies the mission of the group and brings an understanding of how the group must work together. It also results in group consensus, goal ownership, motivation, and involvement in the activities of the church. (2) It enables the group to work together to experience achievement not possible to individuals. Hospitals are not very cost effective, but they are the best illustration available of how to manage a group of people with varied skills and abilities to achieve a common goal. (3) It is the means of coordinating and guiding the activities of group members to achieve positive change. Most leaders of volunteers are frustrated because they have a difficult time achieving positive change. The management system can help enable the group to work together effectively. (4) It provides an organizational structure that sets limits within which the organization can function effectively. (5) It stabilizes member relationships by reducing uncertainty about the purpose and function of the organization and the various roles within it. (6) It defines and provides a rationale for power and authority roles within the organization. (7) It identifies the work to be done and properly assigns it to the individuals within the group. (8) It provides church leaders with time to become the spiritual men and women so necessary in this secular age. This is accomplished through the proper use of delegation, which enables a leader to direct the organization without spending all of his time dealing with the day-to-day responsibilities that so often usurp his time and energies.

Most church organizations recognize the need of clarifying their mission, writing goals and objectives, and planning activities that will enable the group to realize those objectives. The total planning process is vitally important, but delegating responsibility for achieving

those objectives and carrying on those activities is the key to volunteer management. Yet little or no training is given to pastors in this most important area of pastoral leadership! This is where most church-growth programs break down. After the planning process has reached the point where activities have been designed to achieve the goals and objectives set by the church, your most important responsibility as a manager of volunteers is to recruit and develop the necessary staff to carry out those activities. Pastors often are afraid to hold church members accountable for quality performance. Consequently we downplay the difficulties of a job and present the responsibility of a certain office as though not very much is required and that anybody could do it. We expect little and quickly find out that people live up to our expectations!

The first step in recruiting and developing competent volunteers for important jobs is a clear-cut job description. Most church members are motivated, competent individuals. They can, and do, perform effectively in the business and secular world. Why, then, do they not carry the same competence into their church work? Most often it is because they do not have a clear picture of what is expected of them, nor have they been adequately trained as spiritual leaders. With proper training, members will respond with competent performance when they know what is needed and what is expected of them. Clearly defined job descriptions can provide the direction they need; without them, volunteers experience an intolerable degree of frustration and fear.

The job description usually is prepared by the church board and often approved by the church body. The principle to be followed here is that structure follows strategy. Job descriptions have to grow out of the planning process. This is the reason why those found in the *Church Manual* or in a good book on church management are not often helpful to the local church. If we take job descriptions someone else has developed, we are in fact making our strategy follow a prede-

termined structure. That is one of the besetting problems in any organization and particularly in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We have a structure that has been with us since 1901 and that often fails to encourage and support the developing strategy that is so necessary if the church is to grow in this generation far removed from the horse and buggy of yesteryear.

A good job description for each position in the church should include (1) the purpose of the position, (2) the tasks and responsibilities of the job, (3) the time limits on the job, (4) the abilities and skills necessary to perform the responsibilities of the job, (5) the authority of the person accountable for performing the assigned tasks, and (6) to whom that person is accountable or to whom he reports.

After the planning has been done and the necessary tasks have been identified and clearly described, then either the church board or the nominating committee should carefully consider who is best qualified to perform those given tasks. The spiritual gifts of the individual being considered should be looked at carefully. Several questions should be asked: (1) Does the person being considered have the ability or the spiritual gift necessary to do the job? (2) Is that person willing to carry the responsibilities outlined in the position description? (3) Does the person have the time to do the job? (4) Does the person need additional training in order to carry out the responsibilities effectively?

When a person's abilities and gifts have been appraised and the committee nominates the person, then ideally the pastor or his designee should make at least two visits with that individual before a final decision is made. He should be given the job description on the first visit and asked to think about the responsibilities, seeking God's will, until a second visit is made. At the second visit it should be ascertained whether or not the person feels he has the ability, the time, and the skills necessary to do the job, and whether he is willing to make a firm commitment to the respon-

# Most church members are competent individuals. They can, and do, perform effectively in the secular world. Why, then, do they not carry the same competence into their church work?

sibilities outlined in the job description. That commitment can be made verbally or by signing a ministry covenant.

We could very well profit if we were bold enough to ask the volunteers to sign a ministry covenant, indicating by so doing their willingness to perform the activities and responsibilities to which they are being called. Only if a person is willing to make that commitment should his name then be brought back to the board or the nominating committee for final approval. This is a distinct departure from the usual method of pairing people and jobs in the church. Yet perhaps it is time to expect much more of our members than we have in the past and to give them the authority and support to do what we have asked them to do.

The next important step in managing volunteers is providing a support system that will enable each person to feel secure and competent in his responsibilities. This must include regular meetings to review progress. Are the activities progressing according to the schedule? Are they resulting in the desired objective? Does the volunteer need additional training in order to perform the tasks effectively? What additional physical or financial resources does the person need?

Having regular meetings with the basic organizational units of the church is one of the best ways to provide this regular support system to volunteer workers. One quickly recognizes that this will require many meetings. Again, this is where the organizational and administrative structure of the management system comes into play. The manager, or pastor, can organize the church so that he does not have to be at all these meetings himself. He need only conduct regular staff meetings with the key leaders of the church who are conducting review meetings with their subordinate leaders and reporting to him the progress of the groups under their supervision. The pastor holds the key leaders responsible for their area of supervision, and they in turn hold their subordinate leaders responsible for their area of responsibility. In this way the

church can be brought together in a team effort that provides fellowship, encouragement, training, accountability, and church growth.

Finally, conduct an annual evaluation of each activity or program. Is it an essential activity that is contributing positively to the goals of the church? Is the individual responsible for carrying out the activity performing adequately? Is the person willing to continue that responsibility for another year? What additional skills or tools does the person need to continue to carry the assigned responsibility effectively? Could the job description be adjusted to make the activity more effective?

Notice E. G. White's grasp of the basic managerial concept: "Well-defined plans should be freely presented to all whom they may concern, and it

should be ascertained that they are understood. Then require of all those who are at the head of the various departments to cooperate in the execution of these plans. If this sure and radical method is properly adopted and followed up with interest and good will, it will avoid much work being done without any definite object, much useless friction."—Manuscript 24, 1887.

It may appear at first that this approach will make more work for the pastor. Just the opposite can be true. Organization is not just an added burden of dull and demeaning work. It can become a means to achieve effectively the objective of the church, providing the pastor the time and freedom to pray, study, and plan for a greater and more effective program of spiritual and numerical growth in his church.

## Security in Christ

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and truly granted to a converted sinner, there is still a sense in which his possession of and continuance in that life is conditional upon his continued relationship with the Life-giver. Eternal life is, in fact, the very life of God Himself; He merely shares it with humanity. Man can claim it only as long as he maintains a continual, living union with Christ. As Robert Shank has said: "We must carefully distinguish between the certainty of God's promises and His infinite power on the one hand, and the weakness and variableness of man's will on the other. If man falls at any stage in his spiritual life, it is not from want of divine grace, nor from the overwhelming power of adversaries, but from his neglect to use that which he may or may not use. We cannot be protected against ourselves in spite of ourselves."<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, the believer's salvation is secure. He need entertain no fears on that point. But he is secure only in Jesus and only as long as he remains in Him. "The just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Heb. 10:38).

\*The Scripture quotations marked R.S.V. are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952 © 1971, 1973.

<sup>1</sup> See also 1 Cor. 15:2; Gal. 2:20. Paul's use of the present tense suggests that the cross and the resurrection are present means of being saved. See E. M. B. Green, *The Meaning of Salvation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), pp. 152-189.

<sup>2</sup> R. K. Bultmann, *The Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), vol. 2, p. 185. See also 1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:11, 13; 3:5. Although the grace of God has appeared, it is intimately connected with the future appearance of God's kingdom of glory. Oscar Cullmann speaks of the tension as the difference between "D" day and "V" day (*Christ and Time* [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964], p. 141).

<sup>3</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God* (London: The Epworth Press, 1969), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes*, II, 3:11-14; III, 21:7, 22:7, 24:6-17.

<sup>5</sup> Marshall, *loc. cit.* See also Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1962), pp. 246-255.

<sup>6</sup> Compare with Ephesians 1:18, where a form of the same Greek word is used to refer to the Christians of Ephesus.

<sup>7</sup> See Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 137. See also Gerhard Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1964), Vol. I, pp. 675-677; and 1 Peter 2:3; Matt. 16:28; John 2:9.

<sup>8</sup> *Life in the Son* (Springfield, Mo.: Westcott Pubs., 1960), p. 59.

# Picking up the pieces

*Death is not the only loss that causes grief. In some ways loss of a spouse through divorce can be even more painful. With all the discussion about the causes of divorce, few are paying attention to the needs of individuals who are experiencing its grief. According to the authors, society provides some degree of support for the bereaved, but the person who is divorced had better be prepared to grin and bear it.*

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In 1900 one in twenty American marriages ended in divorce. Today in some areas of the United States the divorce rate now exceeds the marriage rate. But while popular magazines, scholarly journals, TV talk shows, and professional seminars have been busily exploring the causes of divorce, little attention

has been paid to those actually caught in its turbulence. Society seems to have adopted a 1980s' acceptance of the fact of the rise in divorce without a corresponding acceptance of the people involved.

Lynn and Ron Gordon, nurse and chaplain, respectively, at Kettering Medical Center, learned about the problems facing divorced persons from personal experience. Both were divorced before they met and married each other and both went through similar feelings of shattered self-esteem and abandonment,

Lynn and Ron Gordon, nurse and chaplain, respectively, at Kettering Medical Center, Kettering, Ohio, led a session on divorce recovery at the 1982 Institute on Mental Health at Harding Hospital. For further information on the program described in this article, contact the authors at: Department of Pastoral Care, Kettering Medical Center, 3535 Southern Blvd., Kettering, Ohio 45429. (513) 298-4331.

stemming not only from the primary experience but also from the reaction they noticed in the people around them.

"Friends, the community at large, and even family members place censure on those involved in divorce, branding them with their own biased attitudes and feelings," says Lynn. "If one's partner dies he or she will receive outside support: flowers, food, phone calls. But say, 'My husband left me' or 'I left my spouse,' and you had better be prepared to grin and bear it. 'You've made your bed, now lie in it' seems to be the attitude of many."

The result is a feeling of failure. No matter what has caused the breakup, no matter how right the decision to separate seems to those involved, the programmed judgment of society surfaces: you must have done something wrong. You just didn't try hard enough. You have failed at marriage, and consequently your whole life is a failure.

"You do hope that your minister might be of help at a time like this, but that is

not often the case," says Chaplain Gordon.

In some instances divorce seems to put the participants outside the understanding and help of the church. In others, even when the clergy wants to help, many do not know how. Counselor training covers the grief that follows death, but is not apt to address the grief that follows the loss of a love relationship, no matter how similar the two may be.

This point was brought home to Ron Gordon when he initiated a grief recovery program at Kettering Medical Center, a program open to anyone in the Greater Dayton community who had suffered "a significant personal loss." The wording was chosen deliberately to open the group to persons who had suffered a loss by divorce or such things as loss of a job or a house, as well as a loss by death. But although the grieving process is much the same no matter what the cause, Chaplain Gordon soon found that mixing the death and divorce groups was



# Mixing death and divorce groups was not a good idea. During an angry exchange one widow told a divorcee, "I lost my husband, but you threw yours away!"

not a good idea. During an angry exchange one widow told a divorcee, "I lost my husband, but you threw yours away!" The widow never returned. By the time the exchange took place it was apparent that, philosophical differences aside, there was enough need to support two separate groups.

Beginning a divorce recovery program was not easy. The territory was relatively uncharted. Since few similar programs existed, the Gordons sat down together and drew upon their own painful experiences to build a primary support system for persons having difficulty coping with divorce. They coupled this with a helpful workshop in Boulder, Colorado, developed by Dr. Bruce Fisher and aimed at divorce recovery. The Gordons' program was geared to giving people who had no place else to turn an opportunity to express complex emotions and channel energy toward growth-producing goals. Other objectives were to help those in the throes of divorce explore other life-style options; to help the divorced cope more easily with relationships made difficult by the divorce; and to promote a greater intellectual understanding of the reasons behind the confusion and strong emotions those involved were feeling, so that future action could be based on rational thought.

The pilot plan that the Gordons drew up called for the group to meet once a week for eight weeks, with each class period devoted to exploring a different aspect of divorce. The program was kept flexible, however, so that the order of discussion could be changed if that would better suit the needs of the participants.

A typical program goes something like this:

The first meeting usually deals with an overall view of the emotional and social steps that follow divorce. The second one examines the marriage relationship between partners who are splitting. (Interestingly, the Gordons have found that many marriages that end in divorce had a parent-child, rather than an adult-to-adult, relationship. An awareness of such factors can help divorced

persons make personal changes to avoid such situations in the future.)

The third meeting studies how rejection and the ensuing anger affect a person's feelings of self-worth. The fourth explores the grief process and how it ties in with divorce. The fifth deals with "rebellion identity crisis," often a major cause of divorce.

The sixth meeting tackles the subject of children, their attitudes toward the split, and parental responsibility in helping them develop ways to cope with the changes in their lives.

The seventh meeting discusses the possibility of future love relationships, while the eighth encourages an overview of newly established goals and growth patterns.

But the sessions provide more than information and suggestions for coping with emotional pain while at the same time carrying on the functions of daily living.

First, they provide a place for divorced persons to take their problems and to discover that they are not alone. The group offers affirmation—"What you are feeling is normal"—and acceptance—"And it is OK to have these feelings."

Perhaps one of the greatest benefits can be likened to a steam valve. Participants are encouraged to express their feelings, and such expressions help provide a better understanding of the stress each has been under. It is easier to recognize your own attitudes as defense mechanisms, for example, if you hear your words, your viewpoint, coming from other mouths. Such third-party expressions can provide the distance necessary for self-recognition.

The sessions help rebuild badly battered egos. Participants learn that with or without spouses they are still useful, worthy human beings. The sharing of feelings gives those involved a chance to give, as well as take. Each person has special insights into the divorce process, and those insights can help others. The social contact is also valuable, especially at a time when many divorced people find that their married friends are no longer including them in two-by-two

get-togethers, and that family members may be taking sides—either becoming too sympathetic or too hostile to be comfortable company.

Since the program began about a year ago, fifty-three persons have taken part in five sessions. Forty of those attending were women, and thirteen were men, but the number of men seems to be increasing. The classes are purposefully kept small so that there will be ample time to address individual concerns. The Gordons prefer to refer to themselves as facilitators rather than leaders, to avoid giving the impression that they have the answers to everybody's problems. Divorce recovery, they are quick to say, is basically a do-it-yourself project: the group merely provides a forum for the rebuilding.

One important technique used for self-discovery is journaling. Participants are asked to write down daily some of their thoughts and observations about the divorce and about the class.

"When I first came to class," wrote one man, "I thought I had already made a fairly good adjustment to my impending divorce, but as the weeks went by I found that I had problems and emotions that I still had not adequately resolved."

Another participant said, "Through this class I have learned to accept my children's attitudes concerning the separation." Still another wrote, "Listening to others express their feelings somehow enabled me to understand my own." One person said, "I am glad that someone in the church is not afraid to acknowledge and deal with divorce."

But the recurring theme behind the journal accounts was best expressed by the woman who wrote: "It was great to feel yourself grow and change, as well as to watch others do the same. . . . The fact that I could reach out and talk to other people who had been through what I had been through . . . made me realize that I wasn't alone in this world and I wasn't the only person hurting."

From *The Harding Report: A Newsletter of Psychiatry and Religion*, Worthington, Ohio. Used by permission.

# Creation, redemption, judgment

*The May, 1983, issue of MINISTRY contained an editorial that responded to recent allegations in regard to theological dissension within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At the end of the editorial we promised our readership that future articles would carry an examination of the teachings in question. Here one of MINISTRY's own editors takes an introspective look at the doctrine of the pre-Advent, or investigative, judgment. □ by Warren H. Johns*



Three great themes—Creation, redemption, judgment—run like golden threads throughout Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. These three great truths cluster around a single Person, Christ, who is Creator, Redeemer, and Judge (John 1:1-3; Luke 19:10; John 5:26, 27, 30). To understand and appreciate these three

themes is to understand and appreciate all the more the work of Christ on our behalf.

Creation exhibits the wisdom, love, and perfection of the Creator. From the highest shining seraph to the lowliest buttercup in the meadow, from the sparkling jewels of the midnight sky to the tiniest cricket in the blackest cave—all carry with them the trademark of their Creator. The words "very good" were embossed upon each article to issue forth from the Creator's workshop. The very air of Eden was absolutely free of taint. The whole world, saturated with

God's very presence in its sparkling beauty, was given to Adam and Eve as their dowry to remind them of its Giver continually. But somehow the spoilage and rot of sin took root in a perfect planet. It certainly wasn't because of any flaw in the Creator's work or in His finished product. Otherwise the reputation of the Master Designer could be impugned. It started with a seed of pride, of self-will, and that seed germinated within the human breast until man of his own volition found himself in rebellion against the government of the One who had graciously given him life.

Redemption is the Creator's plan for restoring man to his unfallen pre-Fall condition—to full harmony with the world around him and more important,

to complete harmony with his Maker. All too often man has scorned this perfect plan and resorted to his own self-created plans for self-help and self-righteousness. Man has no innate powers by which he can elevate himself to the pure moral state in which he once stood. It takes power from without. To save a soul from the gutter takes just as much creative power as to create animate man from inanimate clay. Just as the powers of demons were exerted to keep the divine Redeemer in the tomb, but could not, so all the powers of evil cannot enslave the weakest soul who wants the unshackling grace of Christ. Creation is a miracle, and redemption is a miracle! The work of salvation is to make man's best efforts nothing, so that Christ can

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One purpose of the judgment is to incinerate man's best efforts and the garments of his self-appointed dignity into mere ashes, so that the saving robe of Christ's righteousness may be placed around him.

become everything, "all, and in all."

In reality, judgment is a continuation of the work of redemption. Its ultimate purpose also is to restore the image of the Creator in man, the image that was defaced at the Fall. Man's own self-centeredness is the chief stumbling block on the road that leads from Paradise Lost to Paradise Restored. One purpose of the judgment is to incinerate man's best efforts and the garments of his self-appointed dignity into mere ashes, so that the saving robe of Christ's righteousness may be placed around him (Isa. 64:6; Zech. 3:1-5). Only then can Christ's creative power re-create the lost image in us.

From one standpoint, Creation was the work of separation. Night was separated from day; dry land from the waters; and the waters above from the waters below. The crowning work was a work of separation: a lump of clay was excised from the soil to form man, and a rib was extracted from man to form woman. But we must never forget that man is much more than mere clay, and woman more than a rib. Redemption has continued the work of separation. The cross is the great separator of mankind. Sadly, it separated Judas from the twelve; it put a wedge between Jesus and the Jewish leaders; it put a Roman governor beyond the saving power of the Crucified One. But it also created a church by forging the twelve into an unconquerable unity, and it melted the heart of a Roman soldier at Calvary, separating him from his comrades, but uniting him to his Saviour.

Just as Creation and redemption are interrelated, so there is an unbroken continuity between redemption and the judgment. In judgment the work of separation must continue. Just as the hidden motives of Judas did not come to light until he threw down the thirty coins in the judgment hall on that early Friday morning, even though largely undetected by the other disciples just the evening before, so the motives of the innermost recesses of the mind will not be thrown wide open until the judgment day (Eccl. 12:13, 14; Matt. 12:36). At

that time we will stand naked in the presence of our Creator (Heb. 4:13)—a striking replay of what our first parents experienced on their first day of rebellion.

True, the judgment is a time when the good are separated from the bad, the righteous from the wicked, the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the tares. But it is more than a time for giving awards for service or rewards for disservice; it is a time when Christ Himself is given to His people. The climax of the judgment, according to Daniel 7, is the granting of the kingdom to the saints (verse 18). It is inconceivable that a kingdom could exist without a king; thus the granting of the kingdom is the granting of the King of kings permanently to His people. The occasion for this is the great wedding supper (Rev. 19:6-16). Redemption at Calvary was consummated when the Son of man refused the kingship of this world, and the judgment will be consummated when He takes the kingdom that rightfully is His, purchased by His own blood, and makes His people both recipients and subjects of this kingdom (Dan. 7:26, 27).

The sequence of Creation, redemption, and the judgment is crucial. Just as redemption could not have taken place until after Creation and the Fall had occurred, so the judgment could not convene until after the price for man's redemption had been paid at Calvary. However, there is a sense in which one aspect of the judgment took place at the cross, for Christ said with His eye on the cross, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). It could be said that the obituary of Satan was written at the cross, but his end was not yet. As with Satan so with all his agents, both demonic and human, Scripture describes a waiting period before the final execution of the sentence. They are "reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2:4; cf. verse 9).

From the perspective of the Biblical author, the judgment of the rebellious was yet future—"a fearful looking for of judgment" (Heb. 10:27). Does this

mean that the judgment of the righteous likewise is yet future? Some may feel that the righteous are granted a certificate of exemption from judgment, based on the fact that Christ died as our Substitute. If He died the death that is ours, does that mean that He also endured the judgment that we are supposed to face? Here it is easy to confuse the work of redemption with the work of judgment. The confusion is owing in part to semantics because of the various shades of meaning the word judgment can have in the original language. The Greek *krima* refers to the judicial sentence and is most often translated as "judgment" in the K.J.V. and less often as "condemnation" or "damnation." The Greek *krisis* refers to the act or process of judging as well as the execution of the sentence, and is translated some forty-one times as "judgment" and only a few times as "accusation," "condemnation," or "damnation."

The case for our exemption from judgment is usually argued from John 5:24, where Christ says, "He who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life: he does not come into judgment [*krisis*], but has passed from death to life" (R.S.V.).\* It may be easy to pause here and exclaim, "Great, I'll never have to face the judgment," not realizing that what Christ is talking about is "condemnation," or an unfavorable sentence. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). Thank God that the power of the cross is able to efface completely the condemnatory stain of our sins and is able to transfer the guilt from the ones who deserve it to Him who is so undeserving!

We dare not treat John 5:24 in isolation from verses 25-30. Looking at the sequence of logic that follows, we find Christ saying that He possesses the "authority to execute judgment" (verse 27). Is the execution of the judgment directed only toward the wicked, the righteous being exempted? Surprisingly not. Verses 29 and 30 amplify what is stated in verse 27, and suggest that the execution of the sentence has a dual

**T**he removal of our sins is a paradox in that on the one hand cleansing from sin is simultaneous with confession, yet on the other hand those very sins will be held against us if we apostatize.

aspect: (1) the raising of the righteous to a reward of eternal life, and (2) the raising of the wicked to a reward of eternal death. The execution of the sentence, which includes both the "resurrection of life" and the "resurrection of damnation," implies that a prior process of judging has already taken place involving both groups. If the righteous and wicked alike must come under the execution of the sentence, which is favorable for the one and unfavorable for the other, then we would expect that both groups must be involved in a preresurrection judgment in which their lives are carefully scrutinized.

To exempt the righteous from judgment cuts diametrically against such clear Pauline passages as Romans 14:10-12, "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. . . . So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God," and 2 Corinthians 5:10, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive . . ." Not only this, to deny the judgment of the righteous is to blunt the strong note of accountability and to remove a motivational impetus for moral behavior used by Paul in these passages, which have an overriding ethical tone. It would result in putting Paul into direct conflict and contradiction with John.

This leads us to the inescapable conclusion that the judgment of the righteous did not occur at the cross. True, the cross provides the only antidote and the only means whereby a struggling Christian can ever have the hope that he will indeed survive the devastation that will occur when the glaring record of his own sins will come to light. Thank God that the words "condemned to die" etched upon Christ's cross are transformed to read "no condemnation" on the cross each of us individually is commanded to carry and to be crucified upon!

The removal of our sins is a paradox in that on the one hand cleansing from sin is simultaneous with confession, yet on the other hand those very sins will be held against us if we apostatize. The blood of Christ is completely efficacious

in removing our sins the moment we make confession and restitution (1 John 1:9; Eze. 33:14, 15). Sin and guilt are completely removed from us, "as far as the east is from the west" (Ps. 103:12), yet we have the unhappy thought that if we eventually turn our back on the Lord, then none of our righteousness will be remembered, and we will die for the sins we have committed, presumably those sins that we once confessed and obtained forgiveness for (Eze. 18:23, 24). How can this be? From a human standpoint sin is completely removed from us at the moment proper confession and restitution is made, but from the Creator's standpoint the record of every aspect of our lives, both good and bad, is retained on the record books until the judgment day (Eccl. 12:14; 2 Cor. 5:10). Therefore, we find from Scripture that the removal of sin comes in two phases: (1) experientially, at the moment we ask divine forgiveness, and (2) judicially, when the forgiven sins are completely expunged from the divine record books. We can make this distinction because redemption and judgment are not one and the same event.

Judgment is more than an examination of the heavenly archives to see what a person's life pattern has been and what his eternal destiny should be. Deity already knows what the destiny of each should be, for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). More than a divine inspection, judgment involves a vindication of the character of God, a testimony to the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, as well as the occasion for the removal of sin and guilt. The task of sin removal is not only experiential but also judicial, as suggested in Peter's Temple portico sermon: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). Daniel speaks of this blotting out as a work of cleansing of the temple, and not an earthly one, because the setting and context is that of heaven (Dan. 8:14; cf. chap. 7:9-14). The book

of Hebrews symbolically portrays Christ, the High Priest, as purifying "the things in the heavens" from the effects of the sins of the righteous (Heb. 9:23). Final disposition is made of these sins, so that they are as good as buried in the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19). The sins of the wicked are thrown back upon their own heads, as well as upon Satan, the instigator of all sin (Eze. 18:4, 10-13; Rev. 20:10).

When is it, then, that our sins will be blotted out judicially from the divine records, and when will our lives come up for review? Many of the parables of the kingdom told by Christ depict the judgment as an event reserved for the end-times: the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13), the net (chapter 13), the laborers in the vineyard (chapter 20), the man without a wedding garment (chapter 22), the ten virgins (chapter 25), the talents (chapter 25), and the sheep and the goats (chapter 25). All of these parables presuppose that lives have been lived prior to the judgment: the wheat and tares both have grown to maturity, the fish have grown to the size that they can be caught in the mesh of the net, the laborers of the vineyard have worked till sunset, the talents have been used and invested, and a wedding suggests a period of maturation, preparation, and advance planning. The plain teaching of Christ is that we are not judged until we've had the opportunity to live our lives. This concept is reiterated in Hebrews 9:27: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

If the righteous have not been judged before birth, and if they have not been judged at the cross, then precisely when are they judged? Some assert, It doesn't really matter when they are judged, as long as they are covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness. The same statement could be applied to the Advent. It doesn't really matter when Christ comes the second time as long as I'm ready. But if it doesn't really matter, then why has Christ given such detailed signs to alert us to the nearness of His coming? The fact is that in part our readiness impinges

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upon the timing of the Advent. So with the judgment: a knowledge of the time when the judgment occurs aids us in making sure that we are ready.

If God had a particular time when He descended through the hazy mists of this cosmos to create an inhabitable planet, and if Christ, His Son, descended incarnate into the bosom of this sin-darkened planet at a particular time ("the fulness of the time," Gal. 4:4), we would likewise expect that He would have a special time in which to judge the world. And so it is. "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained" (Acts 17:31). Like its counterpart, Creation, which has a well-defined starting point (Gen. 1:1) and completion point (Heb. 4:3), judgment, too, has a particular point in time for beginning and ending. Its beginning is of sufficient importance in the eyes of Deity to send an angelic envoy to earth announcing, "The hour of his judgment is come," and in the same breath calling men everywhere to "worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:7). Here is additional evidence of a strong link being forged between Creation and judgment. Both are events of cosmic proportions, the reverberations of which extend like ripples to the farthest bounds of the universe. It was an angelic choir that provided the anthem to celebrate the birth of our planet, and it will be the angelic hosts that are summoned to the judgment as participants to eulogize the death of the old and to welcome the birth of the new (Job 38:7, Dan. 7:10, Rev. 5:9-13).

If the time of the judgment is of such prominence to capture the attention of every created being, certainly God would not leave the human race in the dark in regard to this event. Whereas the New Testament Epistles are concerned more with the meaning of the event, the apocalyptic books of Daniel and Revelation are concerned not only with its significance through symbolism but also with the timing of the event. In Daniel 7

the judgment is described as occurring during the time when antichrist, or the "little horn" power, is yet in existence, and prior to the time when all earthly kingdoms are destroyed. The judgment, then, is a *pre-Advent* and therefore a *preresurrection* event, since the Second Advent and the resurrection are considered to be simultaneous (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

It is important to interject an idea here that has far-reaching implications: the manner in which we view the resurrection will largely determine the manner in which we view the judgment. If the resurrection is the union of soul and body, the soul coming down from heaven to unite with the body coming up from the grave, then the judgment will take on a different aspect than if we view *both* soul and body remaining in the grave until the resurrection morning in

judgment can take on an eschatological aspect. It is inconceivable that the righteous would be allowed to set up residence in heaven without having been judged first—having been completely clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness and having His name, or character, imprinted upon their minds (Rev. 7:9-17; 14:1-5; 19:7, 8; 22:3, 4). An entrance into heaven presupposes a judgment that determines what rewards will be given (chap. 22:12). If, as we believe, the resurrection is the doorway event to heaven, then the judgment must be a preresurrection event.

One of the most striking parables of the judgment told by Christ and shared by the Gospel writer is the parable of the sheep and the goats. Notice the eschatological flavor in this parable: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then

**J**udgment is more than an examination of the heavenly archives to see what a person's life pattern has been and what his eternal destiny should be. Deity already knows.

the latter days. If we view heaven as a place where the soul will have a spiritual body, devoid of any physical aspect, then the judgment will be seen in a different light than if we believe that man will be resurrected as a complete unit, body and soul, when Christ comes the second time for His own (1 Corinthians 15; Dan. 12:2). The reason is simple: If the soul goes to its heavenly abode immediately at death, then this would presuppose that we are judged individually at death. We must appear before Christ's judgment throne before entrance is given into the Holy City. Under this construct, there would be no latter-day judgment when all the righteous collectively are brought before the judgment bar to receive their rewards. Whereas if we believe that the soul rests in a state of total unconsciousness in the grave until the resurrection day, then the day of

shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. 25:31, 32). First, we should note that this parable combines the judgment of the righteous and the wicked into a single event, as in other parts of Scripture. Second, we should keep in mind that judgment has two phases: an investigation of the records (Daniel 7) and the granting of the rewards (John 5:28, 29). This parable describes only the second of the two phases. Third, we should remember that parables should not be used to develop a systematic treatment of doctrine. A story by nature is not systematic, but it does offer a central lesson. The point of this parable is that the final separation of the wicked and the righteous, as in the parable of the wheat and

**T**he investigation of the records, according to Scripture, precedes the time when the righteous enter heaven. In fact, they are not even present at their own trial!

the tares, does not take place until the Second Advent.

Like the parable of the sheep and the goats, other parables, such as the wedding supper, seem to combine the work of judgment with the second coming of Christ. But such parables given in symbolic language must not be divorced from Christ's eschatological discourse (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21), much of which has been given in straightforward literal terms. Speaking of His coming, Christ declares: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36). If no one knows the time of this momentous event, and if the judgment is simultaneous with the coming of Christ, then it's also impossible for anyone to know the time of the judgment. But we have just said that God esteems the judgment to be of such magnitude that He has announced its arrival in advance. The solution to this dilemma is found in separating the judgment into more than one phase, the first being the actual work of judgment and the second being the execution of the judgment, or the giving of the rewards. The second phase is the only one that actually takes place at the Advent.

The first phase of the judgment occurs before Christ returns in glory back to this earth. The investigation of the records, according to Scripture, precedes the time when the righteous enter heaven. In fact, they are not even present at their own trial! Look at Daniel 7:9, 10: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Notice that this awesome event has no mention of human beings. The "thousand thousands" and "ten thousand times ten thousand" are in reality the angels who

are summoned as witnesses to the judgment. Revelation 5:11 explicitly denotes them as "angels." The righteous appear at the heavenly assize not in reality, but by means of the meticulously detailed books that record each act, word, and thought. Christ, their Advocate (1 John 2:1), appears as their representative in the judgment so that they do not have to appear in person.

This idea is supported by two strong lines of scriptural evidence, both of which were given in symbolic form. The first symbolic portrayal of the judgment is found in the Day of Atonement ceremony, which was the only one of the sanctuary services to culminate within the Holy of Holies (Heb. 9:7). The Day of Atonement in reality was a figurative portrayal of the final judgment: the Shekinah glory representing God as the judge, the ark of the covenant being the throne of judgment, the tables of the law being the standard of judgment, and the high priest representing Christ as lawyer and saviour. According to the description of this earthly pre-enactment of the judgment found in Leviticus 16, the believer is not allowed in the sanctuary itself, or even in the courtyard during the Day of Atonement services. His case is carried by the high priest into the Holy of Holies while he must wait expectantly and penitentially perhaps at the door of his own tent or at least outside the door to the sanctuary's courtyard. The point is that the believer does not attend the judgment in person.

The second symbolic portrayal of the judgment is found in a vision described in Zechariah 3. The imagery is that of the sanctuary: Note the description of the seven-branched golden candlestick (chap. 4:2) and the reference to the priestly miter (chap. 3:5). Joshua, the high priest, stands before God as the representative of his people, while Satan standing beside him lashes out at him in a scathing verbal attack. The issue is sin in the life of God's saints. The solution to this sin problem is the placing of the divine robe (Christ's righteousness) around the sinner. Thus justification takes place here in a judicial setting. In

the judgment portrayal of Zechariah 3 the sinner himself does not appear in person in the heavenly judgment, but vicariously in the person of his representative, the high priest. So in the latter-day judgment, "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands . . . but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). Thank God that we have a divine Representative to appear in the judgment in our place!

The vast majority of God's saints are resting in their graves at the time the latter-day judgment takes place in the heavenly courts. If there is any credence to the text that says, "The dead [including the righteous dead] know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5), then the righteous who are in their graves awaiting the resurrection know not that they are being judged. Just as Adam was yet dust when God was making a home for him and preparing a perfect world for his enjoyment, so the majority of God's people quietly rest in the dust while their lives are being examined in the divine tribunal and while their Maker is preparing a restored Eden for them. A few righteous at the close of time will be alive when their cases come up for divine review in the heavenly courts—Scripture says the "living" as well as the "dead" are involved in the judgment (2 Tim. 4:1).

In summary, the great themes—Creation, redemption, and judgment—cover the scope of human history and the breadth of God's activities on man's behalf. Creation vindicates the great power of God, redemption vindicates the unending love of God, and judgment vindicates the absolute justice of God. God receives all the glory, and His Son all the praise, as the judgment concludes with this anthem: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:12).

\* Scripture quotations marked R.S.V. are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952 © 1971, 1973.



# What prophecy means to this church

*From the earliest days of Adventism, Bible prophecy has been the framework within which we have understood our times, our identity, and our task. Prophecy still provides that crucial focus for our self-understanding today. In the great apocalyptic scenes of Daniel and the Revelation we see the hand of God moving across the ages to control and order human history according to His own divine providence. □ by Frank B. Holbrook*



*What is a Seventh-day Adventist? A common description is that a Seventh-day Adventist is a Christian who observes the seventh-day Sabbath and who is preparing for the Saviour's second coming. That is true, but the perspective is larger.*

*The real distinctive frame holding together the picture of truth*

as perceived by Seventh-day Adventists is their understanding of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. In these apocalyptic prophecies Adventists have found their times, their identity, and their task.

Seventh-day Adventists arrive at their interpretations of Bible prophecy by employing the principles of the "historicist school" of prophetic interpretation. This historicist view (also known as the "continuous historical" view) sees the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation unfolding at various points in historical time, often encompassing the sweep of history from the times of Daniel and John (the human authors of these books) to the establishment of God's eternal kingdom.

A Biblical illustration of this unrolling of the prophetic scroll along the continuum of human history is the prophetic

dream given to the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar and its interpretation by the prophet Daniel (see Dan. 2:31-45). In his dream the king saw an image of a man composed of various metals of descending values: golden head, silver chest and arms, bronze belly and thighs, iron legs, feet and toes made of iron and clay. The dream concluded with a large stone, mysteriously quarried without human assistance from the side of a mountain, that fell with devastating force upon the statue, smashing it to pieces. As the wind blew these metallic elements away "like the chaff of the summer threshing floors," the stone "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35).

Daniel clearly identified the golden head as symbolizing the empire of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar (verses 37, 38). It was to be followed by three successive world kingdoms corresponding to the three different metals. History records that these were Medo-Persia, Grecia, and the "iron monarchy"

of Rome. In the latter part of the fifth century A.D. the empire of Rome in the West was fully broken up. Its parts came to form the nations of Western Europe—symbolized by the strengths and weaknesses of the feet and toes composed of iron and clay. The "stone," which will ultimately destroy these and all other human, political entities, is the eternal kingdom that "the God of heaven will set up" at the end of human history (see verses 44, 45, R.S.V.).\*

Thus the historicist system of interpretation sees in the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation the hand of Divine Providence moving across the ages, overruling events to bring about the fulfillment of God's purposes.

Jesus, our Lord, saw a similar unrolling of the prophetic scroll in Daniel 9:24-27, part of a much longer prophecy given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel in the early years of the Medo-Persian empire. In this portion, several important predictions were made. A period of "seventy weeks" was to be allotted to Israel subsequent to

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# The real distinctive frame holding together the picture of truth as perceived by Seventh-day Adventists is their understanding of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

their release from Babylonian captivity. On the principle that in apocalyptic prophecy a symbolic "day" equals a literal year, this period translates into 490 years (70 weeks of seven days each equals 490 days, or 490 actual years). Near the close of this time the long-awaited Messiah would appear. This could and should have been Israel's finest hour when the Saviour of the world would "make an end of sins," would "make reconciliation for iniquity," and would "bring in everlasting righteousness" (verse 24).

But there was a shadow—a dark side to the prophetic picture. It implied a rejection of the Messiah, who would "be cut off, but not for himself." Tragic retribution would follow in the destruction of both Jerusalem and its Temple (verse 26).

The Messianic aspects of this prophecy met their respective fulfillments in the life, ministry, and atoning death of Jesus Christ. But the destruction of the city and the Temple were still future events when the Saviour gave His important discourse on Olivet two days prior to His passion (see Matt. 24). On the basis of the prophecy recorded in Daniel 9, our Lord pointed to the impending national ruin (see Matt. 24:15; cf. chap. 24:1, 2; Luke 21:20-24), which met a fiery fulfillment by Roman arms about forty years later, in A.D. 70.

Daniel 9:26, to which Jesus alluded, is a part of a much larger vision occupying chapters 8 and 9 of Daniel's book and symbolizing events that extend from Persian times to the onset of God's final judgment (see chap. 8:13, 14). Here again is another striking example of the historicist perspective of apocalyptic prophecy that serves to confirm and to strengthen faith in God's leading across the centuries through all the play and counterplay of satanic opposition and human pride and ambition.

## Historicism and the Reformation

The Millerites, the immediate spiritual forebears of Seventh-day Adventists, were historicists; that is, they interpreted Daniel and Revelation in harmony with

the principles of the "historical school" of prophetic interpretation. But the method was by no means original with the Millerites of mid-nineteenth-century America; they simply reflected and elaborated upon the labors of many earlier Bible students of the Reformation and post-Reformation eras.

Sixteenth-century-Reformation preaching of the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation tended to center on what the Reformers believed to be a Christian apostasy that had arisen within European Christendom and which they saw symbolized in the little horn (chap. 7), the leopard beast (Rev. 13), and the woman seated on the scarlet-colored beast (Rev. 17). This preaching had a telling effect upon Europe.

In the Counter-Reformation, which inevitably followed, Rome, rising to the challenge, sought to divert the damaging import of these applications. The result was the publishing of the initial argumentation for what would later become two distinctive, but diverse, methods of prophetic interpretation: the futurist and the preterist systems. Catholic and Protestant scholars alike agree on the origin of these two distinctively different systems, both of which are in conflict with the historicist method and the interpretations derived thereby.

## Futurism

Toward the close of his life, the Spanish Jesuit Francisco Ribera (1537-1591) published a 500-page commentary on the book of Revelation. He assigned the first few chapters to ancient Rome but proposed that the bulk of the prophecies would be fulfilled in a brief three-and-one-half-year period at the end of the Christian era. In that short space antichrist (a single individual, according to Ribera) would rebuild the Jerusalem Temple, deny Christ, abolish Christianity, be received by the Jews, pretend to be God, and conquer the world. Thus the Protestant contention that the apocalyptic symbols of antichrist denoted an apostate religious system was countered, and the focus of

the prophecies was diverted from the present to the far distant future.

## Preterism

Another Spanish Jesuit, Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613), also published a scholarly work on Revelation, this one posthumously in 1614. The result of a forty-year endeavor to refute the Protestant challenge, Alcazar's publication developed a system of interpretation known as preterism (from the Latin *praeter*, meaning "past"). His thesis, the opposite of Ribera's, was that all the prophecies of Revelation had been fulfilled in the past, that is, by the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., the early centuries of Christianity. He asserted that this prophetic book simply described a two-fold war by the church—its victory over the Jewish synagogue on the one hand (chapters 1-11) and Roman paganism on the other (chapters 12-19). Chapters 21, 22 Alcazar applied to the Roman Catholic Church as the New Jerusalem, glorious and triumphant.

With the passage of time, these distinctive systems of counterinterpretations began successfully to penetrate Protestant thought. Preterism was the first; it began to enter Protestantism in the late eighteenth century. Its present form is linked with the rise and spread of higher critical methodologies and approaches to Scripture study. Preterist interpretations of the prophecies have today become the standard view of liberal Protestantism.

The seeds of Catholic futurism, although refuted at first, eventually took root in the soil of Protestantism during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Futurism, amplified with other elements (for example, many futurists teach a secret, pretribulation rapture), is currently followed in some form by most conservative Protestant bodies.

Thus in the centuries following the Reformation, Rome's countermoves to deflect the Reformers' application of the apocalyptic prophecies from herself have been largely successful. The futurist system of interpretation, as it functions today, wipes the Christian era clean of

**I**f our interpretations of prophecy differ from those of Christian friends outside our ranks, it is largely because we are committed to a system of prophetic interpretation that we believe is soundly Biblical.

any prophetic significance by removing the bulk of the prophecies of Revelation (and certain aspects of Daniel) to the end of the age for their fulfillment. The preterist system accomplishes the same objective by relegating the prophecies of both books to the past. According to preterism, the significant prophetic portions of Daniel are assigned to second-century-B.C. events and the times of Antiochus IV Epiphanes; Revelation is restricted to Judaism and Rome in the first five hundred years of our era. Thus for most Protestants and Catholics the Christian era from the sixth century until the end of time stands totally devoid of prophetic significance as far as the books of Daniel and Revelation are concerned.

Seventh-day Adventists stand virtually alone today as exponents of the "historicist school" or prophetic interpretation. If our interpretations of prophecy and our self-understanding differ from those of Christian friends outside our ranks (or from some critics who may arise from within our communion), it is largely because we as a people have been and are committed to a historicist system of prophetic interpretation, which we believe is soundly Biblical.

### **Our times and task**

In Daniel 7 the prophet records the first of several visions given to him personally. This vision parallels the prophetic dream given many years earlier to Nebuchadnezzar. However, instead of a metal image to symbolize the sequence of history, Daniel is shown the same world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome as wild beasts—lion, bear, leopard, and a fourth creature, which bore no similarity to anything in nature. In Daniel 7 the division of Rome into the nations of Western Europe is symbolized by ten horns that rise from the head of the fourth beast. Two new elements, however, are introduced into this vision: (1) a little horn that rises among the nations of Western Europe with "eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (verse 8)—namely, the antichrist—(2) the

opening phase of the final judgment.

Two things are immediately noteworthy about the prophetic description of the judgment. First, it takes place *in heaven*. "I beheld," Daniel says, "till the thrones were cast down [placed], and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (verses 9, 10).

Second, this heavenly court scene occurs *before* the advent of Jesus. It is a pre-Advent judgment that begins and functions in probationary time. At its close Daniel sees another scene in heaven that confirms this observation. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (verses 13, 14). At His trial Jesus Christ identified Himself with this heavenly "Son of man" described by Daniel (*cf.* Matt. 26:63, 64).

According to Daniel 7, it is at the close of this heavenly judgment scene that Christ will receive His kingdom and all those worthy to be His subjects under His eternal reign. Then He will descend the second time to this earth, not as a lowly babe, but as "King of kings, and Lord of lords," to bring the rule of Satan and sin to an end and to take His people to Himself.

But when will this pre-Advent judgment phase take place? Does prophecy specify a time for this awesome event other than in general terms—at the end of the age? Seventh-day Adventists believe that it does. In Daniel's second vision (Dan. 8 and 9)—which again parallels and further elaborates on the

dream and vision given earlier in chapters 2 and 7—the pre-Advent judgment is described as a "cleansing" of the heavenly sanctuary or temple.

A time element of 2300 prophetic "days" is given, or a period of 2300 years according to the year-day principle. Beginning with the 70-week prophecy (an integral part of the vision and interpretation of Dan. 8 and 9) in 457 B.C. at the time of Artaxerxes' decree that restored Jewish autonomy, these 2300 years span the centuries, extending to the fall of 1844 A.D. At that time, in heaven "the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Dan. 7:10), and the process of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary, or restoring it to its rightful state, was begun (Dan. 8:14).

It is these lines of prophecy found in Daniel chapters 2, 7, 8, and 9, interpreted along historicist principles, that cause Seventh-day Adventists to sense the seriousness of the era in which the world now lives since 1844. The pre-Advent judgment is in progress, the first phase of the final judgment. In 1844 the world entered as it were the last inning in the game of life, the last lap of the race. Christ entered His final phase of priestly mediatorial ministry. Mercy began making her last plea to a doomed planet. The sands of probationary time have nearly run through time's hourglass, and Jesus Christ is about to lay aside His role as man's intercessor and to come as the rightful owner and ruler of this world.

It is in the awesome setting of this pre-Advent judgment that Seventh-day Adventists believe that Daniel's companion book, the book of Revelation, identifies their movement and end-time task. According to the prophet John the gospel invitation, along with certain specific emphases, is to be proclaimed worldwide just prior to our Lord's return (see Rev. 14:6-14). This special end-time work is symbolized by three angels who each have a message for the inhabitants of earth as they fly through the sky. Note some of the specifics:

The first angel is described as preaching "the everlasting gospel" to a global  
(Continued on page 27)

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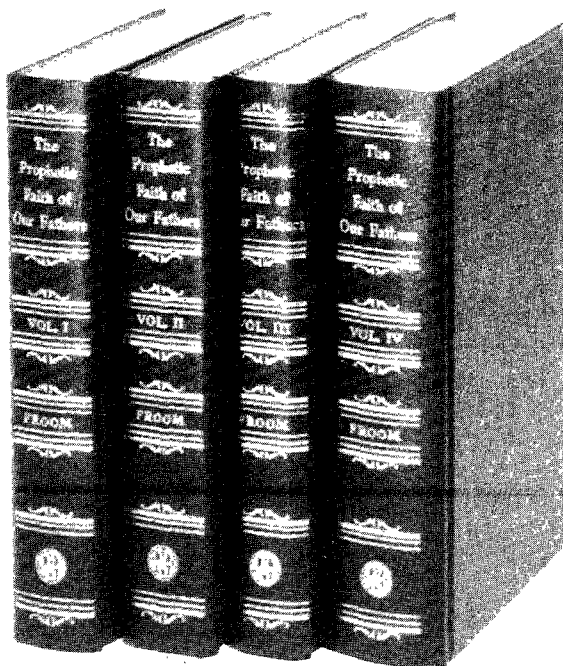
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## Year of the Bible

Why is the book that is always at the top of the best-seller list also at the bottom of the "most-read" list? Will the fact that 1983 is the Year of the Bible make any difference? It's somewhat up to us.

Applauded by more than two thousand religious broadcasters at their fortieth annual convention in Washington, D.C., Ronald Reagan challenged America to "face the future with the Bible." A couple of days later, at the National Prayer Breakfast, the President signed a proclamation designating 1983 as the "Year of the Bible." (Well, in the United States at least.) "Can we resolve to read, learn, and try to heed the greatest message ever written—God's Word in the Holy Bible?" Mr. Reagan asked in his prepared remarks.

Such a proclamation is no doubt excellent politics. I hasten to add, however, that I believe the President was sincere in what he said about the Bible and that I agree with him. But I venture to predict that the practical results will be somewhat less than spectacular.

Like motherhood and the national anthem, the Bible commands automatic respect and support, but it doesn't really make a great deal of practical impact on most people's lives. It consistently comes out on top of best-seller lists, but I have a sneaking suspicion it's way down at the bottom of nearly everyone's "most-read" list. Even some of us who have dedicated our lives to preaching and teaching its principles to others might be surprised to realize how little time we spend with it. A number of general factors tend to relegate Bibles to dust-gathering duties on neglected shelves. We clergy face all of them, plus a few that are unique to us.

1. *No time.* The average pastor's daily schedule would make a whirling dervish tired. For that matter, so would the average housewife's or businessman's. Everybody is busy—too busy.

The solution is as simple as it is trite: Set priorities. If we are to be men of the Word we may have to decline the church softball league or let someone else have the devotional for the ladies' afternoon social circle. We may even have to move more substantive matters to a less urgent spot in the list of priorities.

2. *The paper blizzard.* Solomon complained, "Of making many books there is no end" (Eccl. 12:12, R.S.V.).\* Apparently the magazine had not yet been invented, or the newspaper, and if he had only known what copying machines were going to do to us, his comments probably couldn't have been included in the Bible!

Just as inflation, an increase in the money supply, drives down the value of all the money in circulation, so the paper blizzard has devalued the printed page. Today the Bible must compete with a plethora of secular and religious publications that bombard us constantly and vie for our attention. The subtle implication of all the book titles, periodicals, newsletters, study guides, curricula, research projects, polls, surveys, ad infinitum, is that we must keep our noses above the rising literary tide if we are to keep from drowning professionally.

The truth of the matter is that far too much of what is coming off religious presses is, of necessity, simply reinventing the wheel. There is a limit to how much can be new and fresh. Thus it becomes much easier to read *about* the Bible than to read the Bible. We need to ask: "How much time am I spending drinking from the streams, when the source of the river is at hand?" I realize that MINISTRY is implicated in this charge, and if you put it down right now and get out the Scriptures, I won't blame you.

3. *Nonconsumers.* Most of us look at the daily round of our ministry and refuse to believe that we neglect the Bible. We're constantly involved in using Scripture—sermon preparation, Bible studies, counseling, midweek services, Sabbath school classes, even hospital visits. But in all these activities, we are largely nonconsumers. We are the doctor dispensing Biblical pills, the grocer passing bread and milk across the counter, the fuel tanker delivering gasoline to the filling station. But the doctor

sometimes needs medicine too. The grocer must eat the food he sells; the gasoline truck that doesn't keep its own tanks full will stop running no matter how many thousands of gallons it is carrying.

If we subtract from the total time spent with the Bible all that time used to prepare materials for others, most of us will be surprised at how little is left. Study for others has a benefit for ourselves, of course, but we all need regular times when we go to God's Word with no thought of anything but our own personal needs.

4. *Lack of interest.* Could this be possible? Many outside the church are uninterested in the Bible, but not clergy! Yet, those things that really interest us usually have a way of being squeezed into even overcrowded schedules. *Time* magazine and the local newspaper? Well, of course, we need to know what is going on in the world and in our community—but the fact is, we are also interested. If we weren't, we wouldn't read them. A half dozen of the shortest books of the Bible would fit on the front page of the average daily newspaper, and in the time required to read ten pages of the newspaper, you could read the nearly forty thousand words of all 150 psalms.

Could it be that what we lack most is not time, but interest?

I'm glad President Reagan declared 1983 to be the Year of the Bible, even though I don't expect to see Matthew 7:12 cropping up in foreign policy papers or Leviticus 25:35-37 incorporated in economic plans sent to Capitol Hill.

But, then, that's *our* job, isn't it? It's up to us to make the Bible mean something more than motherhood and the national anthem, to make it a living, moving force—first in our hearts, then in the hearts of those who sit under our ministry.—B.R.H.

\* From the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952 © 1971, 1973.

## Levites and their religious practices

*Just as an inside look today into a pastor's parsonage reveals much about the pastor, so an archeologist's look into the homes of the ancient clergy, the Levites, tells us about their worship practices during the time of the Judges.*

The Levites traced their ancestry back to Levi, the third son of Jacob, but it was Moses and Aaron, the two great heroes of Israel's Exodus, who under God's direction gave the tribe its greatest prestige and standing. Ultimately it became one of the most influential tribes in Israel, owing to its position as holder of the Temple priesthood. Although this honor is viewed as a blessing, the tribe of Levi was not blessed with a territorial allotment as were the other tribes. This lack of landed inheritance in Israel could be seen as the result of an unfortunate situation (Gen. 49:5-7; see also 14:28, 29), but it was compensated by the spiritual honor of having God as their inheritance (chap. 10:9).

According to Joshua 21, the Levites were given forty-eight cities in which they lived, and most likely fulfilled the ritual needs of the town and its region. Of course, these local rites were not to take the place of the tabernacle (or Temple) ceremonies, but the Levitical presence was needed among all the tribes to prevent backsliding and apostasy, as well as to educate those whose homes were far from the central sanctuary. Note that most of the Levitical cities appeared to be situated far from the major centers of Israelite religion—Shiloh, Bethel, Jerusalem, and Shechem—and were, in fact, clustered near the traditional borders of tribal Israel.

However, the record shows that Levites were not confined to the designated Levitical cities, nor did they always retain a form of strict orthodoxy as they sought to make their living. For example, a young Levite once hired himself to a rich family in Ephraim, headed by a man named Micah, to minister in the family shrine that included a silver image of Yahweh! (see

Judges 17). Later the Danites, migrating from the region of their original tribal allotment in the lowlands west of Jerusalem to their new territory in the north, raided the shrine, and the Levite went with them to be their priest (chap. 18). With such potential problems it is no wonder that the Levites had finally requested security in their own cities (Joshua 21).

Not every Levite practiced his profession in a temple or tabernacle or even a shrine. In 1 Samuel 9:11-14 we find Samuel leading out in a sacrificial ceremony at a "high place" outside the city. Possibly many towns maintained such high places, whether orthodox or not, as a place for the practice of religious rites for which it was not necessary to attend the central sanctuary.

Most of the temples found by archeologists in the Holy Land come from the periods preceding the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan (See *MINISTRY*, August, 1978, pp. 21, 22). Only one certain temple from the Israelite period has been found so far, the temple of Arad, although the temple platform at Dan has most likely been discovered and a dismantled altar found at Beer-Sheba confirms the presence of a temple at that site (Amos 5:5), which has not yet been indisputedly identified.

The presence of a shrine is more difficult to detect than that of a temple, since it may have no distinctive plan that would allow an archeologist to differentiate it from a house or a room in a house. Only if distinctive cultic objects were found in immediate association would a tentative designation of "shrine" be possible. Even then, the room may have simply served to store the materials for use elsewhere. Even more difficult to detect would be the site of a tabernacle, since a tent would leave almost no recognizable remains for archeologists to unearth thousands of years later.

Because it is often difficult to determine what the function of a building or

an object was in antiquity and because ancient religions are usually enigmatic, there is a tendency to classify enigmatic finds as "cultic" simply because the excavator does not know the function of his find. Fortunately, as more and more of these wrongly labeled cultic objects are eliminated from the religious sphere, a corpus of objects that can be safely designated as cultic has been established.

The most common of the cultic objects were made of pottery. Wide-mouthed bowls set on top of cylindrical stands may have been used for libations or incense; double bowls (a small bowl built into a larger one) were used most likely for libations; censers (portable incense holders) with punctured holes to let the smoke out have been found; zoomorphic vessels or figurines could be crude representations of deities or pedestals for deities, or they could be children's toys; large stands, either plain or elaborately carved, were used to hold sacred objects. Sometimes animal bones from the sacrifices may also be found nearby.

Several caches of such cultic materials have been discovered. Most temples from pre-Israelite days contained store-rooms or benches housing such items, in addition to commonly used vessels that were used to hold offerings. Recently a cache of cultic vessels was found at a village site called Tell Qiri, situated in the Jezreel Valley just north of the Carmel Mountains. (Amnon Ben-Tor, "Tell Qiri: A Look at Village Life," *Biblical Archaeologist*, 42 (1979), pp. 105-113). The vessels were found in a typical Israelite domestic dwelling dated to the Iron I period (twelfth and eleventh centuries B.C.). Along with the cultic vessels, finds included several bones from the right foreleg of goats, calling to mind a sacrificial practice mentioned in Exodus 29:22, and in Leviticus 7:32, where the right thigh of certain sacrifices is said to belong to the priest as his share.

The excavator of Tell Qiri, Amnon

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Ben-Tor, has suggested that cult rites were not practiced solely in temples, but were also performed in private houses or at least in parts of them (*ibid.*, p. 113). He thus has posited that the Tell Qiri dwelling housed a shrine somewhat similar to that portrayed in Judges 17.

However, to have a full sacrificial ceremony performed within the small confines of the courtyard of a private house would be difficult if not awkward. The lack of bones other than the right foreleg from sacrificial animals would suggest that the bone finds in the house represented the meat cuts that were brought back to the house by the officiating Levites for the family's food. It thus seems to me that the house at Tell Qiri was a house belonging to a Levitical family, and not a domestic house with a sacrificial precinct.

Interestingly enough, Tell Qiri is not the only site where cultic vessels have been found in private dwellings. Similar finds from this same period have been made at Hazor, Taanach, Megiddo (with possibly two such dwellings), Beth-Shean, and Lachish. Interestingly, one of these cities, Taanach, is mentioned in Joshua 21 as a Levitical city. One might suppose that a more formal kind of rite was practiced at the designated Levitical cities than in the other cities. Indeed,

the cultic material found at Taanach included highly sophisticated materials—an ornate cultic stand and a nicely made censer—that make the other finds look crude by comparison. If these cultic vessels were used in the Yahwistic religion, as seems likely for at least Hazor, Taanach, Qiri, and Lachish, the implication of such texts as Judges 17 and 1 Samuel 9, that the Levitical profession was practiced outside the central sanctuary and the Levitical cities, is confirmed archeologically.

Almost all domestic dwellings with cultic caches so far discovered seem to date to the period of the Judges, that is, before Saul and David had centralized the government and the religious practices. This can be illustrated very nicely by the stories of Micah with his hired Levite and of Samuel at his high place at a time when independent Levites seem to have prospered. Thus the identification of these dwellings with Levitical families hired by various communities to perform limited religious rites is very attractive. Such practices in premonarchical days might be considered alien to Mosaic law, though perhaps the book of Judges offers plausible reason: "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (chap. 21:25).

## What prophecy

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audience, crying in a loud voice, "Fear God, and give glory to him; *for the hour of his judgment is come* [Greek, "has come"]: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (verse 7). The second angel announces the fall of mystical Babylon, and the third warns against the worship of the beast, its image, and the receiving of its mark.

In these prophetic scenes, Seventh-day Adventists see delineated their task—a global outreach to announce to their fellow men that the hour of God's judgment has come, that the pre-Advent judgment in heaven, as described by Daniel, has begun and is now in progress. As probation inexorably moves towards its close, their appeal to every race and culture is to accept the salvation that is offered in Jesus Christ, to come back to the worship of God who created mankind and to respect and to give honor to Him by living in harmony with His law, including the observance of His Sabbath as stated in the fourth precept. This task involves warnings, as well, against apostasy and the substitution of false worship and institutions in the place of what God has commanded.

The world today is like that of Noah. There is a strange abandonment to every form of wickedness and pleasure with little thought for the future. It will not be long before the solemn pronouncement will be made: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:11-12). Consequently, while Adventists seek to present Christ as the center of every doctrine and to emphasize the centrality of His atoning death, yet it is the urgency and the seriousness of the present judgment hour that impels this people to reach out by every possible means "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (chap. 14:6) with Heaven's balm of healing grace.

## The view from the pew

From page 7

to a theological exposition. We are all sorts of people with all sorts of backgrounds and experiences and we are easily diverted, especially if you lapse into lengthy scholarly discourse. Nothing puts me to sleep quicker than drab, pedantic, predictable theologizing. An X-ray of Miss America may be ever so accurate and scientific, but it's not going to hold my attention. Something in me is attracted to beauty, warmth, and color. Wrap the bare bones of your sermon in the living flesh of adjectives, illustrations, similes, analogies, et cetera.

8. Finally, I want a renewal of my faith in God and hope for the future. In this world of violence, international tension, increasing computerization, and depersonalization there isn't much to sustain us from week to week. We urgently need as never before the strength that God

can bring us through the sacraments, the church community, and preaching.

Here's an easy method for testing whether your sermon can deliver all these points and more. In your mind, change the setting from a public situation to an individual one. Take away the pulpit, the pews, the choir. Move to a kitchen table. You're on one side, a couple of your friends are on the other. Notice how the volume of your voice drops, the frequency of your gesticulations decreases. Your theology becomes more modest, less confident. Notice your increased concern for the response of your listeners. You might even look to them for help in this vital quest for God's word, God's love, God's peace.

If you can preach in the same way to me from the pulpit I'll have what I want from a sermon, and so will your members.

\*The Scripture quotations in this article marked R.S.V. are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952, © 1971, 1973.

## Advantage in adversity

*Troubles and difficulties come to the pastor's family, as well as to others. What an opportunity to demonstrate to the congregation that all the pulpit words about bearing affliction can really prove true!*

*In this world of sickness and sorrow none is immune. When our members experience tragedy we try to understand, comfort, or do anything to help them maintain their faith in God. But have you ever tried consciously to put yourself in a member's place?*

*A number of years ago I broke my heel bone, and for three days I had to lie in bed, waiting for the cast to harden. Recovery was quite a process—first crutches and later walking with the cast. I shall never forget how the members of our church rallied! We were never without prepared food, and many helped in other necessary ways. Even the conference president's wife (our beloved Kay Dower) came every day for weeks to tidy our house and do what she could to help things run smoothly. The love and concern of our members allowed my husband to stay by for the workers' meeting he was attending (accidents always happen at the worst possible times, don't they?) and carried me through the time he was gone.*

*We need the love and support of our members. It gives us extra courage to know they care and are sending prayers to Heaven in our behalf. You will enjoy Alice Taylor's personal account of her feelings when church members responded during a time of real need in her life as a pastor's wife.—Marie Spangler.*

Let no one suppose that the clergyman's family is freer from the vicissitudes of this life than any other family. In spite of all the jokes about it, the preacher has no hot wire communications with God, nor does he receive, or expect to receive, preferential treatment from the Almighty. He is subject to all the ills and anxieties that his flock have.

Although much of the sickness of this world is brought on by the misuse of one's body, or by ignoring the laws of science, nevertheless the accidents, the unearned sorrow, and the just plain hard experiences cannot be explained away.

We hear a great deal today about the relationship between sickness and sin.

God, we are assured, wills for us health, or wholeness of body, mind, and soul. Even though the healing Christ said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole," still there can be danger when one man, be he clergyman, spiritual leader, or whoever, stands in judgment upon another. A fine young mother in our parish, a devout Christian, awoke one morning to find her child stricken with a mysterious incurable malady. She attended a meeting at which a clergyman spoke on spiritual healing. He convinced that earnest, loving mother that some guilt of hers brought on the child's illness. She became so depressed that she herself became emotionally ill.

What a negative approach that speaker had taken. Our concern should be not so much with *why* we are visited with affliction, but *how* we bear it.

"He is such a good person. Why did this happen to him?" Just because he is good in no way insures a man against hard times. The saint and the sinner are shown no discrimination. "He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45, R.S.V.).

Knocks and bruises may be good for us. They may help to build character, changing our foundations from shale to rock. We know that the Lord does not "afflict willingly . . . the children of men," but we are aware, too, that these very afflictions may be used constructively. The other day, a close friend, returning home from the hospital, with a cast on her broken knee, said, "This is the first rest I have ever had in my life—I'm sure there was a purpose in this accident." As she said it, a radiance was upon her face that I had never seen there before.

A short time ago a young boy named Everett Knowles made medical history when his arm that had been completely severed by an accident was attached, and after many operations and ordeals had miraculously become a useful limb once

again. His doctor, who noticed the wonderful change in his personality, has been quoted as saying, "Having his arm ripped off and put back on may be the best thing that ever happened to him." Whereas before he was listless and dull, he now has an interest in his future—a yen for education, and purpose in life. "Why, he's actually motivated," said a hospital therapist.

What a perfect chance for the clergy family to demonstrate to their congregation the Christian's behavior and bearing of sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity. The preacher can expound from the pulpit forever about the acceptance of affliction. Only the deed will prove his sincerity. The doctor unable to give up the habit of smoking admonishes his patient, with a twinkle in his eye, "Do as I say, but not as I do," knowing full well that he is unconvincing.

Illness is bound to visit the parson's house at some time or another. Just how the family reacts will have a great impact upon their congregation. What a golden opportunity to preach a living sermon.

Suffering from the intense pains of bursitis, my husband declared, in between "oohs" and "ahs," "Now I know I'll be more sympathetic to the fellow who's in pain. From now on, no one can ever tell me that pain isn't real."

One of the most memorable Sundays in my life came as I sat in my usual pew one Sunday morning, listening to the rector preaching one of his best sermons on prayer and God's healing power. He closed with this sentence, "And now I am going to ask each one of you to offer prayers for my good wife, who enters the hospital tomorrow for heart surgery."

At that moment I realized that there was no turning back. My confidence in the doctors and surgeons was absolute, and a blanket of calm spread over me as a Voice seemed to say, "I won't let you down."

But as I lay looking at the ceiling of

that hospital room, the night before the operation, fear did indeed raise its ugly head. Once I had read in the newspaper about a young boy who was sent to the hospital the evening before a tonsillectomy. Late that night he found his clothes, dressed in the dark, and somehow sneaked home without detection. I knew exactly how he felt as I glanced longingly at my clothes locker.

What is my faith? I thought. If it is just a code or a philosophy or a set of rules, it won't be of any help to me now when I most need it. I suddenly became aware of the nearness of God, and the companionship of Jesus Christ. By holding His hand, I knew that I could go through any ordeal, no matter how terrifying.

Cards were sent to every woman in the parish, stating the exact hour of the operation. They literally poured out their strength in my behalf. As a result, I became uplifted to heights that I had never known. I felt their love working through faith and prayer.

For the next three days, as life and death played nip and tuck, it would be dishonest to say that my hand remained tightly gripped to the hand of God. Frequently, that grip was broken, and I seemed to descend into Sheol (as the psalmist puts it), the dreary, dark place of nothingness. I know now that my faith was insufficient, and faltered. In spite of all this, He chose to spare me. I quote from a letter from my doctor: "Obviously, it was pleasing to the Lord that you should regain your state of well-being. He must have further work for you to do."

The will to live is a tremendous force in the world. We had a blacktop road in front of our rectory, and once in a while a few tender blades of grass pierced through that hard surface to reach for life, with power that seemed insurmountable.

After a long recuperation, we knew that life would be very different for this preacher's wife. No more would be the busy, active existence, when physical strength was not even questioned. It was to be a newer and perhaps a fuller life, quiet, calm, and meditative.

Energy in one's system can be compared to money in the bank. Checks are drawn on the account, according to the amount that is there. She who overdraws that account is in for trouble. First things must come first, and the little unnecessary, foolish expenses must be foregone.

As I offer daily thanks for the gift of

life, I am mindful of the brave and saintly souls who have been far more courageous than I, and yet have lost the battle of life.

A fine couple moved into our community a few years ago. He had decided to retire early while there was yet time to enjoy life. His dream house had been on the drawing board for years, and now it was to become a reality. With only a minimum of professional help, he fashioned it with his own hands. The two of them entered into the life of the parish, endearing themselves to all who knew them.

One day as she and I were sewing she said, "Our house is almost completed now. One thing worries me—when there is nothing more to be done on it, I wonder what Walter will do with himself. He likes to be busy and he most surely will become restless."

Not long after that, a severe pain sent him to the hospital for tests and observation. Results? Diagnosis, cancer. Walter had said to the medical authorities, "Give it to me straight—how long will I live?" And he was told the somber facts. His wife, equally brave, donned her nurse's uniform that had been stored away for many years. Together for the next few months they faced their task, with controlled emotions, with never a thought of self-pity, and a resolute faith

in God. As the inevitable death came, the entire congregation was inspired by a glorious acceptance.

In a case very similar, and in the same year, a man in the prime of his life heard the word *leukemia* from his doctor—the dread disease that is, as yet, incurable. This fine man, with the help of his devoted and devout wife, faced up to reality. He reviewed his worldly goods, and attempted to teach his wife the rudiments of his real-estate business in the remaining few weeks. She was constantly at his side, reading him the Psalms and other passages from the Bible, as his pains and fears intensified. When the end came, her spirit and resignation was a sermon to us all.

This sort of thing, of course, is being repeated all over the world. These two saintly women are only a sample. But when the day of crisis arrives for the minister's wife, she will find no better pattern than the one so carefully and prayerfully drawn by these two courageous souls.

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## Prayers from the Parsonage

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Jesus, don't You enjoy watching this room filled with wide-eyed toddlers in their best clothes? The morning may have been a struggle, but the children are calm and happy now, looking forward to Sabbath school.

"Here is the way we walk to church, walk to church, walk to church . . ."

The older children walk confidently, while the 1-year-olds toe-step with their parents' help. Some of these adults sang the same song when they were in cradle roll. Bless them for their enthusiasm and give them energy to keep up with their busy little explorers.

My assistants hand out felt figures. Now the parents must carry a hefty 10-month-old to the flannel board and back or open baby's hand to release the

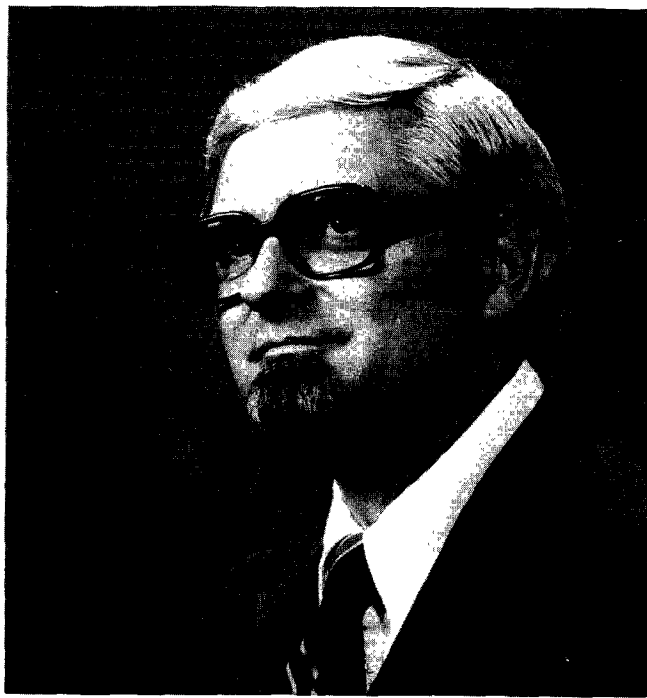
felt he's determined to chew. Habits are ingrained so that even little ones go to pat a felt child in place, then turn around with a smile of accomplishment. Oh, may these children continue to feel secure as they grow in You.

The Bible lesson reduces magnificent subjects—Creation, the Nativity, Heaven—to basic themes in the simplest words. Teachers should speak to the little ones but should not forget those listening dads and moms who can rediscover Your Word on a child's level. Give the teachers joy, I pray, in revealing great truths so that each can understand.

We all need Your blessing, Lord. Guide us as we work with the lambs of Your flock. Keep our smiles natural, our voices calm, our arms open. Make us gentle, kind Shepherd, as we show them Your love.

---

Cherry B. Habenicht



# Peter Wagner wants to talk to you

He may not be able to spend the morning in your study, but *MINISTRY* has made it possible for the two of you to get together at Church Growth Seminar III, sponsored by *MINISTRY* and the Andrews University Institute of Church Ministry.

If you've read his latest book, *Helping Your Church Grow* (1982), then you already know that Wagner is one of America's foremost church growth specialists. He is a professor of church growth at Fuller Theological Seminary and a senior consultant for the Charles E. Fuller Institute for Evangelism and Church Growth. He has authored or edited twenty-three published works on church growth, including *Your Church Can Grow* (1976).

You'll want to come hear Wagner at Church Growth Seminar III. Look at the benefits you'll

receive: • Five days of learning and skill-building  
• Lectures by Wagner and other specialists  
• Hands-on workshops • Creative films • Special presentations • Individualized attention from lecturers • Transferable academic credit (1 or 2 hours) • Registration fee of only \$85, with group rates available. • And spouses are welcome to attend at no additional charge. You may decide that coming to Church Growth Seminar III is *better* than having Peter Wagner all to yourself!

Church Growth Seminar III is too good to miss. Circle September 4-8, 1983, on your calendar now and plan to attend this important church growth event on the campus of Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. Space is limited and discounts are available for early registration. For more information, write:

**Church Growth Seminar III**  
**Institute of Church Ministry,**  
Andrews University, Berrien Springs,  
Michigan 49104, or call toll free  
(800) 253-2874. In Michigan: (800) 632-2248.

## Mental Health Institute

Harding Hospital's twenty-eighth annual Institute on Mental Health will be held on September 25-28, 1983, at Worthington, Ohio. Initiated in 1955, the Institute on Mental Health makes it possible for clergy to gain invaluable insights into people and their many problems by studying with Christian psychiatrists and other mental health professionals.

This year's theme is "Adolescence: Challenge or Catastrophe?" In addition to a basic introduction to mental health/illness, participants will be involved in the George T. Harding III Fall Symposium on "Adolescents in Turmoil."

Some of the subjects to be examined are "Self-esteem: A Crucial Issue in Adolescence," "Suicide Among Adolescents," "Substance Abuse," "Sexuality and the Adolescent," "A Working Model of Youth Ministry," and "What Makes Counseling Spiritual." Among the presenters will be George T. Harding, Jr., M.D.; S. R. Thorward, M.D.; Judy Perry, M.D.; Charles Wittschiebe; Al Brendel; and Darrell Nicola.

All clergy, whether pastors, chaplains, or teachers, are encouraged to attend the institute. College and academy administrators, physicians, deans of students, hospital administrators, and others are accepted as space permits. Registration is limited. For a registration form or more information, contact the Pastoral Care Department, Harding Hospital, 445 East Granville

Road, Worthington, Ohio 43085. (614) 885-5381. Continuing Education Credits for clergy are available.

## Don't buy; borrow!

You don't have to buy all those new theological and religious volumes you have been wanting to read. Why not borrow them instead? For an annual \$15 fee, you can have unlimited borrowing privileges at Boston's General Theological Library, a 118-year-old, nondenominational institution whose holdings are selected by a committee composed primarily of pastors. Borrowers are permitted to keep books for one month and must pay the return postage. Members receive an annotated bibliography of currently available books and periodicals four times a year.

For further information, write or call: General Theological Library, Room 206, 14 Beacon St., Boston, Massachusetts 02108. (617) 227-4557.



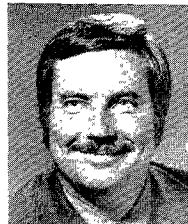
## MINISTRY included in index

The American Theological Library Association has begun indexing MINISTRY in its Religion Index 1: Periodicals. Volume 55 (1982) will be the first to be included in the index. For further information, write: American Theological Library Association, 5600 S. Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

## These people can help you build strong families in your congregation, but you'll have to be at Family Life Workshop '83



**Edith Schaeffer.** Edith and her husband, Francis Schaeffer, have authored more than twenty books and appeared in numerous film series. In Family Life Workshop '83 Edith will spend six hours discussing how to instill a uniquely Christian worldview into the family amid a secular society. She speaks from the experience of having made her home a refuge where hundreds have accepted Jesus Christ.



**Bruce Narramore.** Author of a dozen books on parenting and Christian psychology, Bruce will offer skill-building in these areas by uniting the best insights in current family counseling with Biblical principles.



**David and Karen Mains.** The high point of previous workshops, David and Karen will talk about how to help children form spiritual values through personal choices and also how to make home an evangelistic center.

You won't want to miss any of these speakers or the many others who will be at Family Life Workshop '83!

Check these features: ● Academic credit available ● Intensely practical ● Designed to give your own marriage an even stronger base ● Biblically centered ● Helps you enrich your ministry to families in your congregation ● Special group rates ● Spouses attend for only \$30

## Family Life Workshop '83 September 5-14, 1983

Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan  
For more information or registration materials, write:  
AU Lifelong Learning Center, Berrien Springs,  
Michigan 49104. Or phone: (616) 471-3286.

# Recommended reading

## When Death Comes

William G. Justice, *Broadman*, 1982, 95 pages, \$3.50. Reviewed by Lawrence R. Yeagley, chaplain, Fort Worth, Texas.

William Justice keeps his promise to address the concrete, specific needs of the grieving in a practical and understandable way. The entire book is based on his long years of contact with grieving people in a hospital setting. It is refreshingly readable and helpful.

The author admirably advocates a team approach to meeting the needs of the grieving. A team effort is not unusual in the hospital setting, but rarely do we see it operating in the church setting. Now the pastor can read a small book and feel prepared to put a team together.

Justice is aware that many people leave the church within six months after a death in the family and that a large share of the people admitted to psychiatric facilities are suffering from unresolved grief. He eloquently points out how the pastor and his team can make that first hour of grief a time of beginning adjustment and leads the reader into a support technique that extends into the years following a death in the family.

The question "What do I say when I visit right after a death?" is not avoided by Justice. He gives you things to say that really make sense. He also steers you away from self-centered comments such as "I don't know what to say" or "I'm sorry."

Finally an author has spoken to the needs of children who are grieving. Justice treats this area very well.

The day is long gone when a minister can meet all the needs of all the grieving people in a parish. It is the responsibility of the church as a healing community. This book gives more than lip service to this concept; it makes it workable.

## Preaching Biblically

William D. Thompson, *Abingdon*, 1981, 128 pages, \$4.95. Reviewed by Norman A. Yeager, pastor, Plymouth, Michigan.

*Preaching Biblically* is one of the Abingdon Preacher's Library. Thompson's challenge to preachers is to take the Written Word and make it speak to

today's need. In accomplishing this task he shows the urgency of using all of the skills of exegesis and interpretation.

The major contribution of this book is the dyadic model the author uses to illustrate the way the sermon can meet people's needs today. Basic to the model is the central controlling idea from the Scripture passage. The model outlines the need of the people at the time the Biblical message was first presented, God's nature and activity, the response of the people to the message. The mirror image, of course, deals with the need of the people now, the nature and activity of God, and the response of the people today.

Beginning with exegesis, which rests, according to the author, on the triad of literary, historical, and theological exegesis, the preacher is then ready to interpret the text for today's world. This interpretation comes from the various rules, or steps, of the traditional hermeneutical procedures; however, Thompson sees them not as steps or rules, but as principles.

## Music in Your Church

William C. Hunter, *Judson Press*, 1981, 112 pages, \$4.50. Reviewed by Merle Whitney, pastor, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Don't expect theological or musical depth in this book, but the instructions noted, the outline of a yearly program, and its definite applicability to even small congregations make it a helpful tool for the pastor to use and share. Since "a good music leader is to a church what a superior athlete is to a team" (p. 27), you may want to incorporate this guidebook in your leadership training.

Chapters are devoted to the responsibilities of the pastor for church music, the music committee, the choir director, and the choir members. Perhaps the most valuable feature of the book is the summary outlines concluding these four chapters. Another chapter gives good guidance for youth and children's choirs. If, as is often the case, your choir needs instruction in the rudiments of music, the last part of this guide has the minimum essentials for a short class.

## Legal Issues in the Practice of Ministry

Lindell L. Gumper, *Psychological Studies*, 6785 Telegraph Road, Birmingham, Michigan 48010, 95 pages, \$11.00. Reviewed by Robert Nixon, attorney, Takoma Park, Maryland.

As the author predicts, this book may irritate lawyers with its frequent lack of citations, but for ministers uneducated in the law it will be a welcome introduction into such perplexing religio-legal problems as professional negligence or malpractice, intentional torts (libel, slander, breach of confidence, et cetera), and contractual obligations.

Gumper also delves into clergy-penitent privilege and concludes that in many States it is "less definite and more complex than many clergy believe." Conveniently, Appendix A lists the statutes of most States as of 1980. Gumper concludes with helpful suggestions about what to do when a subpoena comes, how to deal with an attorney, preparing to testify, and what happens in court.

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