

Ministry

International Journal for Clergy June 1986

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Inspiration and originality

The thesis articulated in Crosby's article "Does Inspired Mean Original?" (February 1986), namely that "originality is not one of the tests of a prophet" because Bible writers made "extensive use of uninspired sources," is destructive to the authority of the Bible and based on fictitious reasoning.

First, the assumption that literary resemblance implies literary dependency is gratuitous and unfounded. Anyone who has done some writing can testify to this point. Some readers of my books have suggested that I have drawn some of the ideas from sources that I did not even know existed. A colleague related a similar experience. Christ and many New Testament writers would be equally surprised to learn that they were being accused of drawing "extensively from nonbiblical works."

Second, writers like Crosby fail to recognize that Christ and most Bible writers had limited access to literary sources. Scrolls were very expensive, and very few private individuals or "public" libraries could afford to own a significant collection of literary works. Religious knowledge was transmitted mostly through oral tradition. Thus if any "borrowing" of sentences, imageries, and concepts did occur, it could have come from oral religious knowledge, not from "nonbiblical works." Support for this view is provided by the fact that none of the biblical examples given by Crosby represent an exact quotation from the alleged nonbiblical sources.

Third, what at first appears as a literary resemblance is more apparent than real.

One example given by Crosby is the alleged literary resemblance between Christ's parable of the sheep and goats and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. In this case any literary dependency is negated by the fact that in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs it is not the Lord who commends His "sheep" for having helped the needy, but it is the needy who thanks God for having supplied his basic need. Such a conceptual contrast hardly allows for literary borrowing.

Fourth, the originality of a Bible writer—or of any writer, for that mat-

ter—is not necessarily negated by their use of sources. In writing my book *The Advent Hope for Human Hopelessness*, I have used over a period of five years some 100 books. Yet I like to believe that my book is original because I do not know of any other author who has conceived and executed a study of the Second Advent in the way I have done it.

To be "original" does not necessarily require originating new words, sentences, imageries, or illustrations. On the contrary, it often means using familiar knowledge to express new concepts. This is the sense in which Bible writers were "original." Unfortunately, Crosby's article fails to make this clarification, choosing instead to conclude with the misleading statement: "In conclusion, we see that originality is not one of the tests of a prophet."—Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph.D., Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Crosby replies

If my thesis that inspired writers made extensive use of uninspired sources is "destructive to the authority of the Bible," as Bacchiocchi states, then the fact that Ellen White made extensive use of sources in some of her books (which has been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt) is destructive of her authority. It is this error that I was trying to refute in my article.

As to the possibility of oral transmission, the mode of transmission is irrelevant to the thesis of the article. It does not make any significant difference whether the writer acquired the idea through his eyes or his ears; he is still using sources. Moreover, while a certain amount of coincidental similarities between two works may be allowed, this does not explain the lengthy parallels between Enoch and Revelation or Enoch and Jude (which *does* contain an exact quote from Enoch).

The fact that there are theological differences between source and borrower does not negate the possibility of borrowing. Of course, the borrower modifies his source and uses it in an original way (see Robert Johnston, "Twisting Their Tales," *MINISTRY*, October 1985, for additional examples of Christ's creative

borrowing). The New Testament uses the Old Testament in just this way. Thus Bacchiocchi's argument pointing out that despite their verbal similarities, there are differences between the teachings of Christ and those of Ahikar is irrelevant because such differences are to be expected; they are no greater than the differences between many an Old Testament source and its New Testament allusions. Using arguments like the ones Bacchiocchi uses, for example, I could "prove" that Revelation 14:11 does not borrow from Isaiah 34:10; and this is only one of a hundred similar examples that could be drawn from Revelation alone.

Finally, I used the word *original* in its popular sense. I agree that the New Testament and Ellen White's writings are "original" in Bacchiocchi's sense in spite of borrowing.—Tim Crosby, Ellijay, Georgia.

Nature of Christ

In considering the recent presentations in *MINISTRY* on the nature of Christ, one is again impressed by the fact that there are no simple answers or solutions.

In some respects, Jesus Christ was far superior to Adam before the Fall; in other aspects, He was similar to Adam prior to his fall; and in yet other respects, He was like Adam after the Fall.

If we are looking for easy and quick answers to this problem, we might be searching a long time. If Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, then we must expect certain profound mysteries about His person that will keep the brightest intellects on the stretch.

It was P. T. Forsyth who made a succinct remark in this connection concerning our Lord. He wrote: "Beware of clearness, consistency, and simplicity, especially about Christ. The higher we go, the more polygonal the truth is. Thesis and antithesis are both true" (*The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, p. 71).

Let me endeavor to give a brief compound statement on the nature of Christ taken from different sources in Ellen White to illustrate the fact that thesis and antithesis can both be true:

(Continued on page 29)

About 11 months after Ellen G. White died, a Mrs. Margaret W. Rowen, an Adventist living in Los Angeles, began having visions. Witnesses described her physical state in vision in terms similar to those used to describe Mrs. White: Her eyes were wide open and unblinking, they could detect no breathing, and her body was rigid. When the church did not accept her claims as authentic, she started her own movement—the “Los Angeles, California, Seventh-day Adventist Reform Church.” Later she forged a statement that authorized herself as Mrs. White’s legitimate successor. After signing Mrs. White’s name to the manuscript, she had one of her followers slip it into the White manuscript files: The poorly done forgery was exposed soon after.

Within a few years Mrs. Rowen began predicting that probation would close February 6, 1924, and Christ would come exactly one year later. Many of her followers sold their homes and furniture to support the work of carrying that message to as many people as possible. The failure of her prophecy opened the eyes of the editor of the journal advocating her teachings. When he published an issue repudiating Mrs. Rowen, she made an attempt on his life. That resulted in a prison term and effectively ended her influence. (A. L. White tells the story in “When Mrs. White Was Gone,” *Review and Herald*, June 15, 1967, pp. 6-8.)

Our church has had more than its share of people claiming the gift of prophecy. Many have been sincere, not intending to deceive, as Mrs. Rowen apparently did. But they have been sincerely wrong. We are now experiencing a burst of claims to this gift. In the lead article, beginning on the next page, our senior editor shares the conclusions at which he arrived after carefully investigating several of the current “messengers.”

Coincidentally, another article in this issue adds confirmation to J. R. Spangler’s conclusions. Dr. George Rice develops a picture of the kind of inspiration that produced most of the books of the Bible.

On another note, the shuffling of personnel and responsibilities within the Ministerial Association since the last General Conference session has led to some switching in offices. Perhaps this, among other things, led to our interest in the rather radical article “Democracy by Design,” which we’re reprinting from *Science* 86. We hope it will stimulate thinking and discussion within church entities contemplating office building or remodeling. (Equal space for equal work? What will they think of next!)

And one year after the issue in which we published “pre” and “post” articles on the nature of Christ, we have a third alternative—and several letters from overseas responding to our original articles.

This issue of *MINISTRY* has no particular theme—just, I think, a lot of good reading. I hope that you enjoy it, and that you find at least one article that strengthens your ministry.

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The gift of prophecy and “thought voices”

Has God changed His mode of inspiration? Is He dictating letters to His church today? Is it too late for normal prophecy? It's time to take a careful look at “thought voices.”

human race like a heavy fog. This is not surprising. Christ named deception as a major sign of His coming (Matt. 24). He said that even the very elect are in danger of being deceived. Whom, then, can we trust? Whom can we believe? Because of Christ's warning I felt compelled to investigate the prophetic claims arising within our church. I have read numerous “messages” and conducted in-depth interviews with several different parties, attempting, while doing so, to maintain a neutral position—who wants to be found fighting the Lord or supporting Satan? Now I want to share with our readers my own findings and state my position on this subject.

The phenomenon confronting the church

The current spate of messages seems to be characterized by the following:

1. The individuals I am acquainted with who have been connected with this phenomenon are not wild-eyed fanatics. This may not be true of all who claim to be messengers, but those whom I know are sincere, dedicated Christians.
2. The purported messages come via three major methods of communication: dreams, visions, and “thought voices.” (Some claim to have received a message on only one occasion; others claim multiple communications.)
3. The main theme of the dream/vision communications is that a catastrophic earthquake will wreak havoc on the entire state of California,

Our church is facing a rather interesting but potentially confusing situation: Many people are claiming that they have the prophetic gift. Through our history quite a few have made this claim. In fact, in 1915, W. C. White reported that a dozen or more persons were doing so. Today's situation, then, is not unique—except for the number of individuals involved. Today a score or more state that they are receiving some type of supernatural revelations from the Lord.

Number 17 of our Fundamental Beliefs claims that the gift of prophecy “is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White.” Note the past tense—“was.” The rest of the statement says that “her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction.”

Ellen G. White died more than 70 years ago. Some ask if another prophet or messenger will arise in God's church today. I myself have asked the same question, especially in light of Joel 2:28, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. To many, these passages suggest that along with the other promised gifts, the gift of prophecy is to be found among God's people now.

In both the secular and the religious world, rampant deception envelops the



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including the Loma Linda area. According to one report, elements in this dream/vision are not to be revealed at this time. Supposedly the economic effect this earthquake will have upon the United States will precipitate action on the part of national political figures.

Other messages have come by dreams or visions suggesting that individuals relocate in a particular part of the nation. And one person humbly confesses that he is not seeking "honor or a position of leadership" but is merely sharing with others his vision of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary and the appearance of an angel who communicated with him. (This particular person has appealed to leadership for counsel regarding his experience.)

4. The majority of the messages of which I am aware did not involve dreams/visions but rather came by what is termed a *thought voice*. The thought voice is not audible either to the messenger or to anyone else. The messengers say the impression might begin with the words "My child, I want you to write," and then, when the individual begins to write, God dictates the rest of the message. One interviewee spoke of receiving messages from God through thought voices under varying circumstances. In view of the prevalence of the thought voice method of communication, I shall limit this article to this phenomenon.

Thought voices

The thought voice is definitely considered supernatural. The messengers believe that what they write constitutes the very words that God has dictated. It is claimed that most, if not all, of the individuals experiencing this phenomenon have been directly or indirectly involved with the exorcism of evil spirits or demons.

With the exception of two or three points, the messages contain nothing unique. The vast majority of the messages I have read could be classified as general exhortations. They give strong emphasis to the soon coming of Jesus, repetitiously and zealously urging preparation for the end, since the final events "will unfold like wildfire." Many of them also give descriptions of the Lord weeping for "My church." They contain strong rebukes to the church for being in a Laodicean state, and set forth vivid portrayals of the condition of God's people. And they make strong and

repeated appeals for God's people to study the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

I found three major unique features of these messages: 1) Predicting a California earthquake. There is no date set *when* this will take place, although one unsigned letter sent to the General Conference leaders predicted a major earthquake in California at 4:00 p.m. on December 29, 1985. Obviously this was a false alarm. Others predicting the earthquake simply say that it is on its way and is very near. 2) Declaring that the judgment of the dead is now passed to the living. 3) Informing the General Conference president that "all conferences must set up seminars to teach and prepare the ministers and laypeople how to [sic] cast out demons." (This particular message castigated leadership for not preaching "the whole gospel all these years.")

Discrepancies between the messages of different messengers have arisen, with some messengers not desiring to be connected or identified with other messengers. To support their divine authenticity, the messengers strongly emphasize that nothing in the messages conflicts with the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy.

Questionable methods of revelation

Many are asking whether these individuals are inspired messengers of the Lord. This is one of those situations where friendships with, and appreciation for, the individuals cause me to treat this subject as sensitively as I possibly can. And yet I must avoid gullibility. I cannot speak for the church, but I will share with you my own concerns.

I am most seriously concerned with the *method* of communication. I have not been able to find anything in Scripture that would support God's using thought voices in communicating His will to mankind. When I discussed this concern with one of the leading messengers, she answered, "But how can we judge God as to the way He wants to communicate His will to us?" Shortly after this interview the individual involved claimed to have received a message from the Lord. It read in part: "_____ has done some good, but he has put Me in a box just so many inches one way and so many inches another. . . . If he were really and truly looking for the Lord to come soon he would not be boxing Me in, saying I should not dictate messages. But, My

Some ask if another prophet will arise in God's church today. I myself have asked the same question in light of 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4.

daughter, know this, My time for coming to earth is so very short I do not have time to allow each messenger to prepare his or her own words. The messages must move forward at a rapid pace. There is also too much danger of a messenger putting his own thoughts in a message, if I allowed him the liberty of writing My words his own way.

"The angel of the Lord guided My Ellen, step by step, in the writing of My words. But in her day there was time ahead to compile many books, so therefore, I allowed her a little more liberty, BUT I gave My angel instructions to guide what she wrote." (The capital letters are in the message, the messenger claiming that they were dictated in this fashion by the Lord.)

These paragraphs make two points: We can't "box" God in as to His method of communication. And since there is no time to rewrite the message in more sophisticated or appealing language, "divine dictation" is now necessary.

Both of these arguments disturb me. As to the first, God has used verbal inspiration (divine dictation) only rarely in the thousands of years He has been inspiring men and women to write. Would He change now, knowing it would cause doubt and confusion among His people?

The second simply does not make sense. With word processors and advanced techniques in communication, any message, secular or religious, can be edited quickly and efficiently. Furthermore, the messages I have read

Some Adventists claim that God is dictating messages through them to the church. From what roots does this movement arise, what are thought voices, what messages do they bring, and what validity do they have?

do not constitute the type of material that would be put in a book. When Ellen White wrote the Conflict of the Ages Series, much research and editing were required. But her testimonies, which were letters containing general admonition written to various individuals, did not demand the refinement of a book manuscript. The content of the messages under discussion, although quite inferior in quality, is similar in type to the testimonies. So the time factor argument does not stand up.

Of greater significance is the fact that because of the evidence of the Scriptures themselves, our observation of how Inspiration worked through Ellen White, and her direct and clear statements, our church has never believed that the Scriptures were given through verbal inspiration. We do not deny that God communicated with His prophets in various ways, such as through "thoughts, dreams, and visions, and through angels who sometimes delivered explicit, word-by-word directions" ("Study Documents on Inspiration and Creation," *Adventist Review*, Jan. 17, 1980, p. 9). But we do believe that word-by-word counsel was used occasionally, not generally.

Inspired people, not words

Ellen White describes in transparent language how Inspiration worked on the prophetic writers: "The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen.

Look at the different writers.

"It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 21).

Again she emphasizes the freedom a prophet's mind has in using his own words to describe inspired concepts. "Through the inspiration of His Spirit the Lord gave His apostles truth, to be expressed according to the development of their minds by the Holy Spirit. But the mind is not cramped, as if forced into a certain mold" (*ibid.*, p. 22).

Those now claiming to receive inspired communications from the Lord through thought voices are certainly fettered with a "cramped" mind. They are mere automatons transcribing God's dictation. Even if this were the only objection, I would be forced to reject the writings of these messengers as being inspired.

But I see other problems as well. The messages from the different messengers vary as to the quality of writing and the language used. One is written more sophisticatedly than another. In view of this, I asked the question to which I received no satisfactory answer: If God dictates the actual words and the individual messenger has no freedom to express the inspired thoughts in his own language, then why are the messages not of the same sophistication and quality? During my lifetime, secretaries have faithfully transcribed my dictation. Regardless of the speed, abilities, or IQ of the secretaries, the letters transcribed have my stamp of ownership because the vocabulary and phraseology they contain are uniquely mine. If God dictates the messages, their quality should be consistent and far superior to those I have read. (Would God dictate grammatical errors? Ellen White says that as a consequence of receiving the gift of tongues, the disciples' language, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language, was "pure, simple, and accurate" [*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 40]). In addition, I am surprised at some of the words and

phrases these messages imply that God uses. According to them, God terms California "schizophrenic" and "totally possessed," and speaks of the "boob tube," "soap operas," etc. Are these really God's words, or do they reflect the messengers' way of expressing themselves?

Of questionable origin

Second, I am concerned because those experiencing the thought voice phenomenon are directly or indirectly connected with the deliverance from demons' ministry. (In future issues MINISTRY will publish articles on this subject.) None can deny the existence of demons and their present-day harassment and possession of individuals, but there is serious question over some of the methods used and claims made by those involved in deliverance ministry. Every Adventist minister ought to read carefully the 35-page report titled "Spiritual Warfare and Deliverance Ministry and Seventh-day Adventists." (For \$2 you can get a copy from the General Conference Biblical Research Committee.)

I believe the deliverance ministry and these claims of having the prophetic gift correlate. In fact, the deliverance ministry seems to be the springboard from which the supposedly supernatural revelations are launched. What safeguards against self-delusion does a person have if he believes that a thought voice is God's method of communication? This question is even more significant when the person is either present at, or participates in, exorcism sessions. Could sincere individuals whose psyches are extremely sensitive to what they consider to be of supernatural origin be deluded into believing that God is speaking to them in a supernatural way?

The content of the messages also leads me to doubt their authenticity. The messengers claim that the fact that the messages do not conflict with the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy adequately corroborates the claim that they are of God. I agree that messages from true prophets will be in full harmony with Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy; but, of itself, that is insufficient proof of inspiration. In dealing with the visions of Anna Phillips, Ellen White forcefully made this point. "The great wonder to me is that our brethren should accept these writings because they could see nothing objectionable in them. Why did they not consider what there is in them

that is of a character to be endorsed and sent forth with the power of influence which gives them their force?" (*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 94). Notice Ellen White's question in the last sentence: What content did Anna Phillips' messages have that would cause some brethren to endorse them?

The same question must be answered relative to today's messages. There may be little or nothing that conflicts with the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy; however, the repetition is actually boring, and the content is largely a stream of verbose warnings of the end with virtually no concrete suggestions as to how to prepare for the Lord's coming other than by reading the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, smashing our TV sets with hammers, and moving out of California. The warnings relative to the end-time in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy are far more commanding and have a much more authentic ring.

Harmless doesn't mean inspired

Ellen White tenderly pointed out that she in no way wanted to hurt Anna Phillips, but she did not "dare to keep silent." Then she wrote: "You seem to think I should be able to point out just where the particularly objectionable sentiments lie. There is nothing so very apparent in that which has been written; you have been able to discover nothing objectionable; but this is no reason for using these writings as you have done. Your course in this matter is decidedly objectionable. Is it necessary that you should discern at once something that would produce harm to the people of God, to make you cautious? If nothing of this kind appears, is this a sufficient reason for you to set your endorsement to these writings? . . ."

"Do not spread abroad writings of this character without more consideration and deep insight as to the after consequences of your course of action. . . ."

"Fanaticism will appear in the very midst of us. Deceptions will come, and of such a character that if it were possible they would mislead the very elect. If marked inconsistencies and untruthful utterances were apparent in these manifestations, the words from the lips of the Great Teacher would not be needed. It is because of the many and varied dangers that would arise, that this warning is given" (*ibid.*, pp. 94, 95).

This counsel is most applicable to these messengers and messages today.

Consider one example. As already mentioned, one of the messengers wrote the General Conference president that he "must set up seminars to teach and prepare the ministers and laypeople how to cast out demons." According to reports, the methods used by many today in the deliverance ministry has brought confusion and division in a number of churches. It would not be difficult to envision what would happen to our church if this counsel were actually heeded. If all of the pastors and laypeople of our worldwide movement were to start concentrating on exorcism, it would lead us into fanaticism of a most dangerous and destructive type! Ellen White has given us balanced counsel that is most applicable to the point under consideration: "If we work to create an excitement of feeling, we shall have all we want, and more than we can possibly know how to manage. Calmly and clearly 'preach the word.' . . . We must not regard it as our work to create an excitement. The Holy Spirit of God alone can create a healthy enthusiasm" (*ibid.*, p. 95).

The above quotations dealt with the Anna Phillips problem. Anna Phillips was sincerely misguided into believing she was having visions from God. Fortunately, when she received Ellen White's counsel, she accepted it, and her supposed visions immediately stopped. She became a faithful Bible worker and served the church well for many years.

Truth from wrong source

Paul's experience (Acts 16) provides another example. A slave girl with a spirit of divination followed Paul and his companions, crying, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation" (verse 17, RSV). She did this for many days, annoying Paul, and finally he turned and delivered her from the control of the evil spirit.

Paul and his companions were God's servants proclaiming the way of salvation. But although the message this poor girl was proclaiming was true, she was being used by the evil one. "Satan knew that his kingdom was being invaded, and he resorted to this means of opposing the work of God, hoping to mingle his sophistry with the truths taught by those who were proclaiming the gospel message" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 212).

An additional caution comes from one individual originally involved in the thought voice phenomenon. She has

"Is it necessary that you should discern something that would produce harm to make you cautious?"

repudiated her experience, testifying that prior to receiving the messages she had a joyful daily walk with the Lord, but that when she became involved with the thought voice she lost that experience. This led her to believe that this phenomenon was not from the Lord.

After reading a number of pages of messages from one of the messengers, Arthur White, who has had years of experience investigating cases of this nature, succinctly stated, "I do not question ———'s sincerity, but I must say after giving two days of study to the writings and defense, I am convinced that her work does not meet the test of a genuine prophet and I have written in red [across the pack of messages] 'No clear evidence. This is a cheap counterfeit. Beware.' A.L.W."

May I urge our ministry to be cautious in dealing with those who claim to be messengers for the Lord. The fact that so many are claiming to have such supernatural experiences may be an indication that God is about to do something special for His people. I have no doubt that in these final hours the Lord will work in a marked manner. And I believe that Joel 2:28 will be fulfilled, God's Spirit will be poured out in latter-rain power, and signs and wonders will accompany the second Pentecost.

Undoubtedly, the nearness of our Lord's return should be uppermost in our minds. We should focus on developing a deep and abiding relationship with our Lord and Saviour. We should be pleading for an infilling of His Holy Spirit so that when a true manifestation of His presence and communication takes place we will be able to apply the tests carefully and thoughtfully, and know that it is truly of God.

How to write a Bible

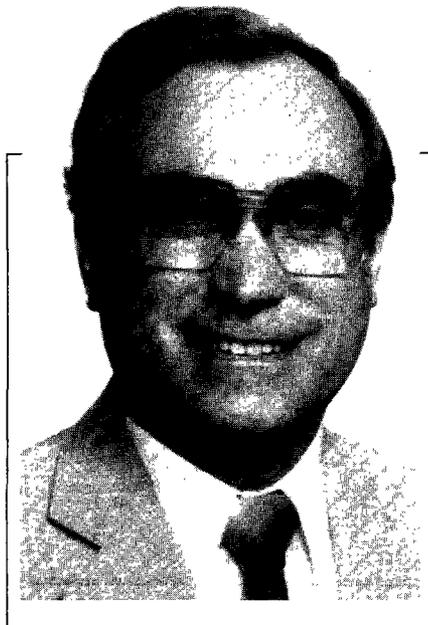
Was all Scripture inspired by means of dreams and visions? Can the writers of the biblical books be considered authors and theologians in their own right? Did some of their material come from their own research?

It is generally recognized that the Bible says very little about revelation and inspiration. We can read a great deal about the power of God's Written Word—how it can enlighten and convert the soul, how it can keep those who adhere to it from the paths of sin. But the passages that make definitive statements about inspiration are few and far between. So it is not difficult to see why people differ as to how God's Word was committed to written form.

The prophetic model

Often we think of inspiration as an experience in which the inspired person received dreams and visions. The theophanies (visible manifestations of God) Daniel and John the revelator experienced exemplify this prophetic model of inspiration. Paul J. Achtemeier has written: "Of all the prophets, Jeremiah is perhaps the clearest example of the usefulness of the prophetic model for inspiration. The words that Jeremiah has spoken to Israel were put into his mouth by God himself (Jer. 1:9; 2:1); but even more, Jeremiah at one point is commanded to write down the words that God had dictated to him (chap. 36:1-4, 32). Here, clearly, is a model that meets the test of inspiration: words written by human hand whose ultimate source is God himself."¹

Achtemeier explains that the Jews applied this understanding of inspiration to all other biblical books—even those not directly prophetic. And they passed this concept on to the Christian church, which has continued to preserve this expanded view.²



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Many Seventh-day Adventists think all inspiration follows the prophetic model. They believe that dreams and visions were involved in some way as a source for all the books of the Bible. Some use 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 and 2 Peter 1:21 as proof texts in an attempt to support this concept, but a careful look at these passages does not bear out their being used in this way.

The Greek word *theopneustos*, used in Scripture only in 2 Timothy 3:16, is a compound word made up of *theo* (from *theos*, "God") and *pneustos* (verb *pneō*, "to breathe"). The supporters of a mechanical inspiration seize upon this term as evidence that every word in Scripture comes directly from God ("God-breathed"). However, the intent of this passage is to differentiate between the Scriptures that are ordained by God and those other so-called sacred writings that God has not ordained.³

For a Seventh-day Adventist to use *theopneustos* as a defense for verbal inspiration or to suggest by innuendo that Scripture resulted from some kind of mechanical procedure is to contradict Ellen G. White's clear statement on inspiration.⁴

So, although 2 Timothy 3 does not exclude dreams and visions, it does not suggest that inspiration followed only the prophetic model.

On the other hand, in its context 2 Peter 1:21 asserts that the Holy Spirit moved men to write out the prophetic word. This passage is not dealing with the nonprophetic portions of Scripture. Consequently it must not be used as a blanket statement that covers the origin of all Scripture.

Second Timothy 3 assures us that all Scripture is inspired. And 2 Peter 1

informs us as to how the prophetic sections of Scripture came into existence. Where, then, do we find an explanation for the origin of the non-prophetic books?

The Lucan model

In his prologue (Luke 1:1-4), Luke explains how he constructed his Gospel. He suggests here a model that explains the origin of the biblical books that did not have dreams and visions as their source.⁵ Therefore, this passage deserves careful consideration. It reads: "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed" (RSV).

Luke explains the procedure by which his Gospel was put together. But what he does not say is of significance too. As one examines Luke's prologue, his silence on two points that many assume are present becomes obvious.

1. Luke does not claim dreams or visions as sources of his information about the life and ministry of Jesus. This omission is extremely important in view of the fact that Luke *does* speak of other sources. Surely, if he had had dreams or visions in connection with the writing of his Gospel, he would have mentioned them to Theophilus. The church believed that dreams and visions signaled the divine origin of a message, and such a claim would have added authority to his Gospel.

2. While Luke identifies a group who were eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry, he does not include himself among them.

If Luke was not an eyewitness and if he did not receive information on the life of Jesus from dreams and visions, one is justified in asking from where he derived his information and what he has to say about the formation of his Gospel. Four points from verses 1-4 attract our attention.

1. Luke identifies the eyewitnesses as being one of his primary sources. In this group we can include apostles, disciples, people who heard Jesus speak, people who were healed and those who saw others healed, as well as Jesus' family.

2. Luke's second primary source was the *hupēretai* ("ministers of the word"). Willard M. Swartley has suggested that these *hupēretai* were chosen by a religious community to memorize the cultic beliefs for the purpose of indoctrinating new converts. Among Christians, these *hupēretai* were selected to commit to memory the sermons, parables, and miracles of Jesus. They then repeated segments of what they had memorized on occasions of worship and instruction. Swartley points out that Acts 13:5 identifies John Mark as a *hupērēten*.⁶

3. From Luke's prologue we infer that the authors of the other Gospels received their information about Jesus in the same way he did—from accounts given by eyewitnesses and *hupēretai*.

4. Luke told Theophilus that he had prepared an orderly account of Jesus' life. However, when we compare Luke with Matthew and Mark, it becomes clear that Luke is not speaking of a chronological account. Rather, the sequence of miracles and sermons suggests a thematic order that conveys insights into Jesus' ministry that Luke wished to share with Theophilus.

What Luke is saying about the way his Gospel was put together is clear. He learned all he could about Jesus' life and ministry from the eyewitnesses and *hupēretai*—his primary sources. Then he composed a thematic account of Jesus' life on the basis of this research. Therefore, we can safely say that as Luke wrote, he was working as an author and a theologian.

The model of inspiration that Luke outlines here complements the prophetic model that we all know so well. The two can be found side by side in many of the biblical books. I have chosen to call it the Lucan model of inspiration.

Inspiration in the research model

But how does inspiration work in a research model, and is it safe to look upon such writers as Luke as authors in their own right?

Ellen G. White has clearly answered our first question. The Holy Spirit "guided the mind in the selection of . . . what to write."⁷ If we accept at face value Luke's statement that he had "followed all things closely," we are forced to conclude that he was in possession of much more information than he recorded. He was guided by the Spirit as to what to report and what to

Luke does not claim dreams or visions as sources of his information about the life and ministry of Jesus.

leave out.

However, this activity of the Spirit did not interfere with Luke as an author. He had something to say about Jesus for the benefit of Theophilus, and the Spirit helped him say it. Some feel uneasy when we speak of a Bible writer, like Luke or Matthew, as an author. Their fears rest in the mistaken idea that if we say these men were authors, we are saying that what they penned came from their own imaginations. However, this fear is as groundless as the fear that the changing of the chronological order of events rendered these events nonhistorical.

It is clear that Ellen G. White looked upon all Bible writers as authors. Consider what she says about these men:

1. Their books present "the characteristics of the several writers."⁸

2. Coming from "men who differed widely in rank and occupation, and in mental and spiritual endowments, the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded."⁹

3. "Different forms and expressions are employed by different writers."¹⁰

4. "One writer is more strongly impressed with one phase of the subject; he grasps those points that harmonize with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation; another seizes upon a different phase; and each, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind—a different aspect of the truth in each, but a perfect harmony through all."¹¹

5. "Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind."¹²

We see Luke sitting at his desk, sifting through piles of 4 x 6 cards upon which he has collected information about Jesus.

6. "He [God] gave it through different writers, each having his own individuality, though going over the same history. Their testimonies are brought together in one Book, and are like the testimonies in a social meeting. They do not represent things in just the same style. Each has an experience of his own, and this diversity broadens and deepens the knowledge that is brought out to meet the necessities of varied minds."¹³

7. "The miracles of Christ are not given in exact order, but are given just as the circumstances occurred, which called for this divine revealing of the power of Christ."¹⁴

As a student of the Synoptic Gospels, I have found the latter quotation most helpful in understanding how they were composed. I had read this statement many times over the years but never fully comprehended what it was saying. It was not until I began to wrestle with the theologically motivated variant readings that appear in Luke's Gospel in the Western manuscript Codex Bezae that I began to understand this statement and to get a feel for what the original writers of the Synoptic Gospels had done.

Ellen G. White tells us two things about our Gospels that clearly indicate she saw their writers in the role of authors. First, she says that they did not record the miracles of Jesus in chronological sequence. That does not mean that the bare bones of chronology are not present. There must be a birth before a death, a childhood before an adult life, et cetera. But when it came to putting the flesh upon the bare bones, each Gospel writer did it in a different way, often following a different order.

Second, she states the reason for this phenomenon: "But [the miracles] are given just as the [literary] circumstances occurred [in the process of writing their

Gospels], which called for this divine revealing of the power of Christ [in order to establish or illustrate a point that they were developing]." I hope no one will take offense at my bracketed explanations. I believe that the latter part of her sentence supports her statement about the order of the miracles, and portrays the Gospel writers as authors and theologians in their own right.

Luke the researcher

Taking Luke at his word and understanding what the Spirit of Prophecy says about these men as authors, we can now build a scenario as to how Luke wrote his Gospel. We see him sitting at his desk, sifting through piles of 4 x 6 cards upon which he has collected information about Jesus. As he thinks of the various aspects of Jesus' ministry, the Holy Spirit guides his mind in the selection of what to write.

He sees that the appearance of the angels to the shepherds will better illustrate the theme of salvation he wishes to develop in his Nativity narrative than will the visit of the Wise Men from the East. The Wise Men fit better into the theme of kingship, a theme Luke was not interested in at the beginning of his Gospel. So Luke sets the card with the story of the Wise Men to one side.

Throughout his narration of the ministry of John the Baptist, Luke adds information and details that cannot be found in Matthew and Mark. A careful examination of this unique material shows that it highlights the theme that salvation is not only for the Jews but for all mankind (chap. 3:6).

Luke reverses the order of the last two of Jesus' wilderness temptations and shows that it was in Jerusalem—the very heart of resistance to Jesus' ministry in Luke's Gospel—that He, at the beginning of His ministry, defeated His greatest antagonist.

Early in his Gospel, Luke introduces the theme of rejection by using the words of Simeon to Mary, "And a sword will pierce through your own soul also" (chap. 2:35, RSV). He then brings this theme out boldly in his narration of Jesus' first visit to Nazareth after His baptism, which only he records.

The evidence of Luke's work as an author goes on from event to event. But he is not only an author; he is a theologian, as well. For each event he records is a theological statement about

Jesus, the kingdom, discipleship, the eschaton, or some other theme.

Even a cursory survey of the Synoptic parallels is enough to convince a person that the prophetic model cannot explain what we see in these three Gospels. And a detailed examination of the parallel passages, which uncovers the fact that each Synoptic writer added, changed, or deleted material, makes inescapable the conclusion that these men were writing under a model of inspiration other than the prophetic model. (Alden Thompson has shown, in a recent series on inspiration appearing in the *Adventist Review*, that the phenomenon witnessed in the Synoptic Gospels can be seen in Old Testament books, as well.)¹⁵

Luke 1:1-4 rounds out our understanding of inspiration. This passage helps us to see that Bible writers who did not receive dreams and visions, who did not write under the prophetic model, prepared their books under a second model of inspiration, a model in which the Holy Spirit operated just as certainly and which just as surely rendered these books a part of the authoritative Word of God.

A detailed look at some examples of how the Synoptic writers worked as authors and theologians under the Lucan model of inspiration will be presented in the concluding article in this two-part series. (MINISTRY will publish the second article in the August, 1986, issue.)

¹ Paul J. Achtemeier, *The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), p. 30.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 30-32.

³ Eduard Schweizer, "Theopneustos," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Vol. VI, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1968), pp. 453-455.

⁴ See especially Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), book 1, p. 21.

⁵ See my book *Luke, a Plagiarist?* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1983) for a further development of this model.

⁶ Willard M. Swartley, *Mark: The Way for All Nations* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1979), p. 28.

⁷ White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 26.

⁸ ———, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1950), p. v.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² ———, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 22.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁵ "Adventists and Inspiration," Sept. 5, 1985; "Improving the Testimonies Through Revisions," Sept. 12, 1985; "Questions and Perplexities Without End," Sept. 19, 1985; "Letting the Bible Speak for Itself," Sept. 26, 1985.

Harvest 90— administrative slogan?

Is Harvest 90 just another slogan, motto, or current catchword? Find out how it is a process and not a program.

The fifty-fourth Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, meeting in the New Orleans Superdome from June 27 to July 6, 1985, adopted as its major theme for the coming quinquennial Harvest 90. What is the significance of this theme? Will Harvest 90 make a difference in the growth of the world church? Is it just another program? Is Harvest 90 just a slogan or is it a concept rooted in Scripture with compelling power to motivate the entire church membership to accomplish great exploits for God?

Five key words suggest themselves as we study the biblical concept of harvest. They are *commission*, *process*, *unity*, *diversity*, and *urgency*.

Commission

It is the Lord of harvest who has sent laborers into His vineyard (Matt. 20:1-10). He has assigned the task. It is the Lord of harvest who says, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" The Lord of harvest calls the church to action. The harvest motif is a biblical concept that speaks of a commission given, a work to accomplish, and a goal to achieve. Harvest speaks of activity. In a secular society that is becoming increasingly materialistic, affluent, and pleasure-seeking the church has received a mandate from the Lord of harvest. This mandate is a clarion call from the Lord to

arise and reap. He emphatically declares, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

God's central desire for this world is that lost men and women be saved. (1 Tim. 2:3,4; Luke 19:10). The church is unfaithful to its Lord unless it is an active participant in reaping earth's final harvest.

The outstanding book *In Search of Excellence* (a study of leading corporations in America) opens with a chapter entitled "A Bias for Action." The authors observe that those corporations that are action oriented are significantly more successful than those that focus too heavily on planning. They state, "There is no more important trait among the excellent companies than an action orientation."¹ A bias for action, a preference for doing something—anything—rather than sending a question through repeated cycles of analyses and committee reports, is a vital principle of success.

Although plans, concepts, and ideas are extremely important, the biblical concept of harvest is one of aggressive action. Thus, Harvest 90 is not so much a philosophy to contemplate as it is an earnest appeal to action. It beckons people to distribute literature, give Bible studies, to hold evangelistic seminars, to preach sermons, contact the lost, and to harvest men and women for Christ now! The Lord of harvest compels the reapers by shouting the command "Go ye."

The second key concept in the harvest



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theme is *process*. A harvest does not occur automatically at the end of the growing season. There is a process or cycle that must be followed to ensure an abundant crop. Farmlands must be plowed, soil fertilized, seeds planted, crops cultivated, fields irrigated, and growing plants weeded to reach the full potential of the harvest. A farmer must plant in the spring, cultivate in the summer, reap in the autumn, and sow a cover crop for winter. It's a cyclic process. Harvest 90 involves a process of sowing and reaping. It calls for church members to develop relationships with friends, neighbors, and working associates. It challenges Seventh-day Adventist churches throughout the world to become centers of love and redemption for their community.

In his excellent little book on witnessing, Arthur McPhee is correct when he says, "The caring evangelist is concerned for persons, their backgrounds, their hurts, their needs."² He then astutely adds, "We have to earn a hearing, which necessitates building relationships. And to build relationships you must associate and identify."³ As the felt needs of men and women are met, their walls of prejudice come tumbling down, and they are more willing to listen. Harvest 90 focuses on the process of cultivating friendships. It invites members to make friends, to lead those friends to become Christian friends, and to lead those Christian friends to become Seventh-day Adventist Christian friends.

There is a cycle in soul saving, a process. The move from secularism to Christianity is sometimes gradual. A growing church uses a wholistic approach to reach its community. Men and women throughout the community are at varying degrees of spiritual interest. The growing church recognizes that the process of harvest is cyclic—some fruit ripens earlier, some ripens later. The focus is both on sowing and reaping. From smiles and handshakes to invitations to dinner, to shared personal testimonies, to loaned books, to Bible studies, to invitations to evangelistic meetings—the process continues. Evangelism in the growing church is not relegated to a series of public meetings, it is a way of life. Harvest 90 urges members to develop the kind of relationships with their neighbors that will allow them to feel perfectly comfortable in inviting the neighbors to church. It speaks of an

ongoing process of evangelism on Sabbath morning, in midweek services, and during regularly scheduled evangelistic services. It is a continual process in the growing church.

Unity

The third word that harvest suggests is *unity*. Every successful harvest presupposes a measure of united labor among the harvesters. Jesus reminds His disciples of this unity among workers with these words: "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together" (John 4:36). Harvest 90 calls for an integrated team approach. It appeals for unity between pastors and laity, between medical workers and ministerial workers, between administrators and field workers, between teachers and students. The work is so vast, the challenge so great that unless all the resources of the church focus upon its accomplishment, the goal of worldwide evangelism cannot be achieved. Although the church in the Book of Acts began small, it grew. In a secular, materialistic Roman society, the Holy Spirit working through the early disciples touched thousands. Why? Scripture declares in Acts 1:14, "These all continued with *one accord*." In Acts 2:1 Dr. Luke adds, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with *one accord in one place*." *The Acts of the Apostles* says: "The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship."⁴

Harvest 90 is an earnest appeal for a deep spiritual relationship which in Christ breaks down barriers. It is a call for unity. In recent years some have been more interested in kicking theological footballs between opposing sides than in winning souls to Christ. With a world longing to know saving grace, many were like spectators in the stands applauding when their side scored points. Harvest 90 is a call for all of Adventism to participate in reaping earth's final harvest. It is a call for the 4.5 million Adventist men and women of all races and nationalities to unite in heralding earth's final warning. No harvest can be reaped while the workers are debating about what methods of reaping to use,

In recent years some have been more interested in kicking theological footballs between opposing sides than in winning souls to Christ.

who is to perform what task in the reaping process, and whether or not the harvest is ripe. Only as all the workers unite on the focused task of reaping will the harvest be effectively gathered.

Harvest 90 is not a straitjacket approach to methods, with no room for differences. It recognizes that there will be different methods of labor among workers. It also acknowledges that individual workers may view things differently at times, and it respects individuality of opinion among varying groups within the church. Yet it maintains an inherent unity on our mission and the uniqueness of the fundamental principles of Adventism.

A variety of gifts imparted by the Spirit, creatively channeled into wholistic ministries, meeting the needs of men and women in the community, will enable the church to grow rapidly. Harvest 90 is an earnest appeal for a unified focus on the redemption of the lost.

Diversity

This leads naturally to the fourth concept of harvest revealed in Scripture—*diversity*. Throughout Scripture, varying elements combine to produce the harvest. Sunshine, rain, planting, cultivating, and harvesting all have their part (Deut. 33:14; Joel 2:23-26; Isa. 61:11; Luke 13:6-9; Ps. 126:5,6). An abundant harvest depends upon an

amazingly diverse variety of factors! Alone each may seem insignificant, but combined they are a vital part of the production process. God has placed a variety of gifts within the church (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4). Directed into creative ministries, these Spirit-imparted gifts enable each church member to discover the sphere of service where he or she can be most effective in ministry for Christ. For a local church to grow, its members must discover their gifts, be equipped to use them, and channel them into service.

Unity must never lead to conformity. Harvest 90 is not a one-method, single-track approach. It does not superimpose plans or goals upon individuals or local congregations. It allows latitude. All the gifts, talents, and abilities that God has given are focused on the one task of reaching the lost for Christ. Some may develop hospitality ministries—sharing bread, soup, and loving concern for their neighbors. Others may give out literature; many may actively give Bible studies. Still others might be involved in a variety of health ministries and others in youth outreach programs—but the goal of it all is souls for Christ. God has placed a variety of gifts in the church to meet a variety of needs in the community. These varying ministries reach more people than if there were only a single-track approach to the community. As churches develop wholistic, multi-faceted ministries to the community, the churches will grow.

Jesus was a master at meeting the felt needs of men and women. He never lost sight of the individual. To Jesus, the person was more important than the method. John 1:38 records that Jesus asked the two disciples who came to Him, "What seek ye?" This reflects Jesus' ministry well. He was constantly asking men and women, What do you seek? What are your needs? What do you desire?

The first six chapters of John illustrate Jesus' need-centered approach clearly. John 2 tells how Jesus met a social need. The wine had run out at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, and Jesus miraculously produced the pure juice of the grape. John 3 tells of Nicodemus' meeting with Jesus. His need was obviously spiritual. Jesus emphatically declared, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (verse 3). In John 4 we find the story of a lonely, fearful woman whose life Jesus

changed. She was a social outcast who needed love, acceptance, and forgiveness. Jesus met her need by revealing Himself as the water of life. The Samaritan woman discovered in Him the one able to satisfy the deepest longings of the soul.

On another occasion, as recorded in John 5, a weary sufferer who had sought deliverance for thirty-eight years painfully requested help. When Jesus saw his physical need, He met it. He didn't begin with a Bible study! Nor did He condemn the man for the sin that to a great degree had led to the disease. And finally, John 6 recounts how when the multitudes had listened to Him all day and were hungry, Jesus met their need by multiplying the loaves and fishes. The crowd became so enthusiastic about Christ's ministry that they wanted to make Him king. At that moment Jesus was on the verge of national greatness. He had so met their needs that they sensed He was indeed the Messiah. It is quite true that they considered Him to be a national messiah; nevertheless, the conclusion is striking. Jesus used a variety of approaches to meet a variety of needs. Thus the multitudes praised Him as king.

As the church today uses the methods of Christ it will grow rapidly. "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow me.'"⁵

Urgency

The fifth word that reveals an important aspect of Harvest 90 is *urgency*. There is an immediacy about reaping. Jeremiah 8:20 declares, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." In the natural world there is a temporal aspect to harvest. There is a time to reap. If mature crops are not reaped, they rot on the vine. Reaping time is soon over—and when it is over, it is over. Crops not reaped today may be past reaping tomorrow. Thus, there is an urgency about harvest. When harvest-time comes, reaping must have priority.

The Book of Revelation reveals this same urgency about the harvest. Revelation 14:14-20 describes Jesus' return on a cloud with a sickle in His hand to reap earth's final harvest. That harvest includes both golden grain for the garner

Crops not reaped today may be past reaping tomorrow. Thus, there is an urgency about the harvest.

of God and red grapes to be trod out in the winepress of His wrath. Men and women are saved or lost. They go to heaven or hell, eternal salvation or eternal damnation. The far-reaching consequences of their decisions indicate the urgency of the church's task.

So the church in this quinquennium must give priority to reaping. Some men and women will never accept Christ unless we confront them with the claims of the everlasting gospel now. They are ready to respond now! This is not the time for a foggy focus. It is not the time for a vague vision. Now is the hour for laity and pastors, for evangelists and administrators, for educators and medical personnel to unite their efforts in reaping earth's final harvest. Only one thing will matter in the kingdom of God—souls won for Christ. Harvest 90 speaks of priority. It calls the church to focus its energies on the winning of the lost now, for if we do not do it now the opportunity for many will be forever gone.

¹ Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr., *In Search of Excellence* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), p. 154.

² *Friendship Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1978), p. 51.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 37.

⁵ ———, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), p. 143.

Christ's human nature: an alternate view

The science of salvation will be the study of the redeemed through all eternity. Here is a glimpse of what that study will be like.

to call His brethren—and no others. “It is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants” (Rom. 9:8, R.S.V.; cf. chap. 8:29; *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 77, 78). The unregenerate are not “sons of God” but are “children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3; cf. John 8:44). And there is no third category.

But we read in Hebrews 2:17 that Jesus was “made like his brethren [the born-again, sanctified ones] in every respect.” I suggest it is not doing harm to syntax to make this connection, and furthermore, we are simply applying the rule of first mention. This is merely the common-sense assumption that a stated or implied meaning given a word the first time it is used in a passage is the meaning to be maintained throughout the passage, unless otherwise indicated.

In light of the foregoing we may conclude that there was something important about the incarnate nature of Christ that was like born-again people but unlike unregenerate people. I suggest that in this idea is a concept that could bring together the two viewpoints discussed in MINISTRY.

Only the framework can be presented here; thus misunderstandings are possible. I have discussed the concept at some length in my book *Was Jesus Really Like Us?*¹

In discussing how Jesus would be “like his brethren in every respect,” we must add “except for sin.” For the regenerate are linked with the unregenerate in that

There is an alternate understanding to the two viewpoints of the human, incarnate nature of Christ championed by Drs. Douglass and Gullely. This view could provide a bridge between those positions and resolve a number of problems that arise in each of them. I can only outline the third viewpoint here.

We may use as a point of departure a quotation from *The Great Controversy*, page 477: “Through Jesus the fallen sons of Adam become ‘sons of God.’ ‘Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren’ (Heb. 2:11).”

Here Ellen White equates the “sons of God” with those who “are sanctified,” and who, additionally, are called the brethren of Him “that sanctifieth”—Jesus. Paul refers to “those sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1 Cor. 1:2, RSV).

It is a particular group—those who are being “sanctified”—who are referred to as Christ’s brethren. Who are these people?

Romans 6:22 tells us: “But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life” (RSV). No proof is required to state that those “set free from sin” are those who have been regenerated, born again. It is, then, those born-again ones, those being sanctified, whom Christ is not ashamed



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"all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23).

The likeness between Christ and His "brethren" can be understood only as we realize the radical change experienced by the person who has been born again (2 Cor. 5:17). With the new-birth experience one becomes a "partaker of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). "In Christ divinity and humanity were united, and the only way in which man may be an overcomer is through becoming a partaker of the divine nature. . . . Divinity and humanity are blended in him who has the spirit of Christ." ² This commonness with Jesus "none but His loved ones know."

"[The true Christian] is a living representative of the truth which he professes. Of these true-hearted followers, Jesus declares that He is not ashamed to call them brethren." ³

Blending is a mystery

Regarding the blending of the human and divine in Jesus, Ellen White comments, "It can never be explained. Man must wonder and be silent. And yet man is privileged to be a partaker of the divine nature, and in this way he can to some degree enter into the mystery." ⁴ I would suggest there is seed for some profound contemplation in this statement.

Let us press home the similarity between the attitude and experience of

the regenerated individual and the Great Exemplar, Jesus. The following quotation describes the truly born-again person: "The new birth is an experience which brings a total renunciation of self and a willing abandonment to God, permitting the Holy Spirit to pervade fully and direct completely the life. It brings an attitude of heart and mind in which God's way is happily sought and contentedly followed, of the individual's own volition as well as from a sense of loving obligation. In it is experienced a shunning and increasing abhorrence of sin in every known aspect. In the born-again person there is a recognition that full dependency on God is vital for sustained and complete victory.

"It is an experience in which . . . humanity and divinity have met in an individual." ⁵

Now, I suggest that this quotation be reread, but that where a noun or pronoun is used referring to the individual, one referring to Jesus be substituted. The comparability of the "mind" and heart of the regenerated person and Jesus will become apparent.

This brings me to my main emphasis. To develop my thesis, I stated, some paragraphs back, that "there was something important about the incarnate nature of Christ that was like born-again people." Now I give it the proper

perspective by rewording it thus: There is something about born-again people that is like the incarnate Christ. This, I believe, is the better viewpoint, rather than the more common one—one that is sometimes given short shrift—that Jesus was "born born-again." (It might be observed that the difference here is in perspective.) ⁶

Jesus, then, became man with a fully human nature (while also being fully God). Thus, of the flesh, He had the weaknesses of humanity, torn by temptations as we are, with the possibility of sinning. But in that condition He had an unfallen mind, heart, and will, and was totally and continually attuned to the Father and directed by the Holy Spirit. In this way He was like the unfallen Adam. And it is at this point that, I believe, the regenerate and Jesus meet on common ground.

"In Christ dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily. This is why, although He was tempted in all points like as we are, He stood before the world, from His first entrance into it, untainted by corruption, though surrounded by it. Are we not also to become partakers of that fullness, and is it not thus, and thus only, that we can overcome as He overcame?" ⁷

The Saviour "came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might

More letters on the nature of Christ

What Adam didn't give us

It appears from the Genesis account that when Adam sinned, the Shekinah of the Spirit, which covered him as a garment, departed, leaving him naked. It was this nakedness that we inherited from our first father. That which Adam transmitted to us was not a plus (sin in the genes), but a minus (birth without the Spirit's covering). It is not something Adam gave us that made us sponges born into the sea of sin, as it were; rather, it was something he *didn't* give us that made us sinners. As his offspring, we are all born naked, without the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit. For us, then, sin was unavoidable.

Jesus, however, while He inherited a body in all respects the same as ours, with all the results of sin passed on to Him by His mother, was born of the Holy Spirit at His *first* birth. While He received a post-Fall body, He was born with Adam's pre-Fall relationship with God. Conse-

quently Christ was the only child ever born into this world with an already established relationship with God. It was a relationship that matured as He grew up, but the bond was there from conception. He was always under divine control and consequently sin always repelled Him, and vice versa.—Pastor R. E. Way, Avondale, New Zealand.

Christ not a sinner

"Christ had a sinful human nature." See opening remarks under Benjamin Rand's article (June, 1985). I have never yet met a person who believed or taught this. I feel there is an overstatement here that would impart to the other side something they do not believe; what is believed is that Jesus *took* a fallen human nature but was nevertheless sinless in both His natures. Scriptures and quotations from Ellen G. White on the sinlessness of Christ are often quoted to prove Jesus took an unfallen human

nature. However, these statements tell us only what kind of man Jesus was, not what kind of nature He took—namely "likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). What we see here is a biblical paradox, of which there are a number in the Bible, and also a moral miracle that defies human logic. "It is a mystery that is left unexplained to mortals that Christ could be tempted in all points like as we are and yet be without sin."—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on John 14:30, pp. 1128, 1129.—A. F. Jackson, Hokitika, New Zealand.

Throughout his article (MINISTRY, June, 1985) on the nature of Christ, which he claims to be unfallen, the author emphasizes that those who believe that Christ took our fallen nature are teaching that Christ was a sinner. This charge is false. I feel certain that no Adventist has ever taught that, yet

be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them [His disciples]. Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was."⁸

The Christian, then, has "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). Being born again (1 Peter 1:23), he has the spiritual intent of Christ. Or, as the *Expositor's Greek Testament* puts it, "Christ lives and thinks" in the born-again person.⁹ The regenerated individual sees things from Christ's viewpoint, not the world's. He "unites his weakness to Christ's strength, his emptiness to Christ's fullness, his frailty to Christ's enduring might. Then he has the mind of Christ."¹⁰

without any evidence whatsoever our detractors constantly hurl this false charge against us. Since we have never taught that, to charge us with saying it is dishonest.

In 1905 this subject was raised. The *Review and Herald* answered a questioner by saying, "The flesh which Jesus took and in which He was tempted, was the same as the flesh of the other members of the human family, sinful flesh" (Nov. 9, 1905). In further articles on December 7 and 21, the editor, using Hebrews 2:14-17, pointed out that the flesh of man is sinful. In order to be "in all things" like unto man, it was necessary that Jesus should take human flesh. . . .

Our Sabbath School quarterlies for more than a quarter of a century before Ellen G. White died emphasized that Christ took our fallen nature, and although she studied them, as she advised others to do, she never spoke out against their emphatic teaching on the subject. Note the quarterly for the second quarter, 1909, page 8: "The divine seed could manifest the glory of God in sinful flesh, even to absolute and perfect victory over any tendency in the flesh." Again, in the teaching notes, October 29, 1893: "Although His nature was like ours, His character was different from ours. He kept it sinless."—R. R. D. Marks, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

Pre-Fall nature impossible

The Scriptures teach that Christ

In that spiritual milieu the born-again person has died with Christ (Col. 3:3), and the life he lives as a Christian is by virtue of the indwelling Christ (Gal. 2:20); the Spirit that dwelt in Christ dwells in him (Rom. 8:9); he knows himself to be not of this world, as Christ was not of the world (John 17:16); like Christ, his desire is to do the will of the Father (chap. 4:34); like his Master, he recognizes that in his humanity he can do nothing of himself (chap. 5:19). Other parallels could be drawn.

It is highly significant that Ellen White writes that at conversion "the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteous-

"took on him the seed of Abraham, Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Heb. 2:16, 17).

If Christ had come in the nature of Adam before the Fall, man would have fled from His presence. Sin robbed Adam of his glory and he knew that he was naked.

Moses' face glowed with a tiny portion of the purity and glory of God, and the people were afraid. He had to veil his face.

When Jesus comes in His glory, which was veiled in humanity when He walked among men, many will call for the rocks and mountains to hide them from Him. That glory will destroy the wicked.

God dwelt in a nature like mine and withstood every temptation. He can do the same for me by dwelling in my heart by His Spirit. Bless His holy name.—Ethel Wildes, Simi Valley, California.

Both correct

I believe that both writers are correct! To put it more simply: To answer the question Did Jesus take the nature of Adam before or after the Fall? I would answer Yes!

Could not such a statement as this—Christ took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature—reconcile the two views?

I am thankful that Jesus is my Saviour from sin and that He is "able to keep you [me] from falling; and to present you [me]

ness."¹¹

We must never, not by the slightest hint, appear to detract from the total deity of Jesus Christ. He is always God, always divine.

But—and here we are involved in an insoluble mystery—we must also never detract from the total humanity of Christ. Our salvation depends on His divinity. That being fundamental, it also depends on His humanity. And in that humanity He was a true human being, living, wrestling, trusting, overcoming, as, in His strength, His "brethren" may overcome.

¹ Thomas A. Davis, *Was Jesus Really Like Us?* (Hagerstown, Md: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985.)

² Ellen G. White, *Sons and Daughters of God* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1955), p. 24.

faultless before the presence of His glory" (Jude 24). Praise His wonderful name! —Pastor Roscoe K. Nelson, Lakeview, Michigan.

Ellen White clear?

Do we really have to bring Ellen G. White into this biblical controversy to support both sides? Are her writings not clear enough to show which side she took as regards the fallen or unfallen nature? To show which side she took is it fair to use *Questions on Doctrine* (1957), *Movement of Destiny*, (1971), or any other book outside her own works?

Can we challenge the White Estate or MINISTRY to furnish a compilation of her views? I have a piece of research on her views from 1858 to 1915 regarding the nature of Christ. The consensus is that she believed that Christ took man's fallen nature. I would like to challenge all able-bodied Adventists to do this piece of research first before reading the opinions of others.—Ron Henderson, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, West Indies.

Confused

I am a church employee who has access to MINISTRY magazine through our library. I noted with interest the recently published articles on the nature of Christ. As I read, however, both articles appeared to be Bible-and Spirit of Prophecy-based, both appeared to be of sound theology; but both couldn't have been right; could they?

³ Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, March 9, 1882.

⁴ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Col. 1:26, 27, p. 904. (Italics supplied.)

⁵ Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 89, 90.

⁶ There are respected theologians who have given credence to the "born-again" concept. For example, Nels Ferré takes up the idea in his book *Christ and the Christian*. This work is quoted in *Man's Need and God's Gift* (Baker Book House), p. 304. Although we would have problems with his particular application, the concept is there. And Donald Baillie uses Hebrews 2:11 as we have (page 285), and notes that "Christ can be thus regarded as in some sense the prototype of the Christian life."

⁷ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, on Col. 2:9, 10, p. 907.

⁸ White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 664.

⁹ G. G. Findlay, *Expositor's Greek Testament*, comments on 1 Cor. 2:16 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.), vol. 2, p. 785.

¹⁰ White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 675.

¹¹ White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1941), p. 312 (Italics supplied.)

A quick response says we care

Adventist Information Ministry helps you find high-grade interests in your area. Some pastors report an almost 50 percent rate of success in establishing Bible studies with people who sent in general interest cards to AIM.



Eugene Hamlin, who works with Adventist Information Ministry, writes from Berrien Springs, Michigan.

If one understanding of Christ's nature is truth, and the other, error, should they be presented as viable alternatives? I had hoped to confirm thoughts gained from my Bible study. Instead I ended up confused.

What nature did Christ have? Or isn't it important?—Val Charlton, Thornleigh, N.S.W., Australia.

Too open-minded

What bothers me deeply are the two articles you have been running on the nature of Christ. This is a fair-minded approach, presenting both sides. It placates the close followers of Elder Froom and his arguments in *Movement of Destiny*. But I wonder if we know all the reasons why that was written.

You could, and I hope you are not planning to, present the reasons why we should keep Sunday instead of Sabbath. This too would be fair and open-minded. God forbid such a plan. But I don't see much difference in what you have done.

God has told us by inspiration what is truth on the above subjects, and it only shows how far we have come out of papacy to quote what Waggoner says on these topics.—Ben D. Wheeler, Westminster, South Carolina.

There is a difference. There is no controversy in the Seventh-day Adventist church regarding which day is the Sabbath, but there is on the nature of Christ. Until this is as settled as the Sabbath we need to publish the various views.—Eds.

A

s you sort interest cards into follow-up categories, it is hard to know which people might become members of your church. Because your time is limited, you want to visit people who show the greatest potential for baptism. And you want to reach them before their interest wanes. That's why the goal of Adventist Information Ministry (AIM) is to call you within twenty-four hours about home Bible study requests that have come from your community. After people watch *Breath of Life*, *Faith for Today*, or *It Is Written*, they can phone AIM. When viewers want to study the Bible, an AIM chaplain will call you ASAP—as soon as possible.

If any pastoral visit is urgent, chaplains attempt to set up a three-way conference call so the person can make an appointment with you immediately.

"With AIM I can get a referral faster, ask questions, and get more details," says Don Miller, pastor of the Valdosta, Georgia, church. "Besides, it's more personal." When you are able to contact people within a short time after they have requested a visit, it lets them know that you care.

John Goss wanted a pastor to visit him, so he called AIM. After Goss hung up, his request was relayed to Henry Zollbrecht, pastor of the Payette, Idaho, church. Within ninety minutes of the time Goss had called AIM, Zollbrecht

AIM operators are on duty twenty-four hours a day to refer requests to you as soon as possible.

met with him to answer his questions about why Adventists worship on Sabbath. When the pastor invited Goss to attend church the next day, he accepted. Three and a half months later, after a Revelation Seminar, Zollbrecht baptized the six-foot-four ex-Marine.

AIM operators are on duty twenty-four hours a day to refer Bible study or pastoral visit requests to you as soon as possible. However, general interest cards are sent by first-class mail to your conference office within several days after they have come to AIM. Included on some of these cards are comments that help you understand special needs or problems that an interest is experiencing.

Robert Ammons, pastor of the Omaha Memorial church, is able to start Bible studies with nearly half of the people from his area who send in general interest cards. Because he files his interest cards, Ammons can see how many times an *It Is Written* viewer has called AIM for Pastor Vandeman's books. After a viewer has received at least three books, Ammons or one of his laymen visits the viewer and suggests Bible studies.

Coupons placed in the *Signs of the Times*, *Adventist Review*, *Happiness Digest*, and *Cosmic Conflict* stimulate readers to call or write AIM for Bible studies or a pastoral visit. Because the AIM chaplains want to make sure that people understand that you will come to their homes for studies or a visit, they call the persons who mailed coupons to evaluate their interest level before referring the requests to you.

Responses yield results

A *Signs of the Times* magazine was given to Martha Carroll during a Revelation Seminar. As she read the magazine Carroll found AIM's 800 number in a coupon that invited her to call for more

information. Because Carroll wanted to know more about Adventists she phoned AIM. After listening to her, an operator suggested that a representative from the magazine could answer any questions she might have. Because Carroll agreed to have someone visit her, an AIM chaplain referred her request to Linda Walker, a Bible worker in Philadelphia.

Walker studied the Bible with Carroll as she continued to attend the seminar. When the meetings concluded, Carroll was baptized—just 19 days after her phone call to AIM.

There is another way you can find Bible study interests in your community. AIM has a People Helping People (PHP) postcard that you can include with any literature that your members distribute. If people want to study the Bible, they can mail the PHP postcard to AIM. When the postcards arrive, AIM chaplains confirm the interest of people who have requested Bible studies by calling them. They also ask about a convenient time for you to begin the studies. Then a chaplain calls you as soon as possible.

Olivia Williams mailed a PHP postcard to AIM from Staten Island, because she wanted a pastor to study the Bible with her. When a chaplain called Williams, he learned that she had completed the *New Life Bible Guides* from the *Voice of Prophecy*. And he also found that she watched the *It Is Written* telecast. He called Pastor Stephen Bauer, of the Staten Island church, who started Bible studies with her and soon baptized her.

PHP postcards are available to you at a

cost of \$5 per one hundred. The charge covers some of the telephone evaluation that each card receives from an AIM chaplain before it is referred to you. You can place your order by calling AIM's toll-free number, 1-800-253-3000.

People in your community may call AIM's 800 number to register for Revelation seminars. Before you place the toll-free number in your brochures, however, you should call AIM to make arrangements. You will be charged \$1.20 for each phone call that AIM answers for you. For that small fee, AIM will answer your phone calls twenty-four hours a day and then mail you interest cards for all the people registered for your seminar.

You can use AIM's number for other evangelistic projects: You can reach remote populations and establish new churches. AIM will follow up the people who respond to your radio program. You can use the 800 number in your newspaper advertisements.

When a man could not reach a Kentucky pastor on a Friday afternoon because the pastor's telephone was knocked out by a flood, AIM put him in touch with the first elder. The ex-coal miner visited the church the next day and continued to attend regularly. Several months later Pastor Paul Hoover baptized Tivis Lyon and his wife, Kay.

After the Lyons' baptism, Mrs. Paul Hoover concluded a letter to AIM by saying, "Without your work this story could have turned out very differently. Today a young church in Appalachia has a very active couple and two sweet children in its midst."



AIM staffers answer phones 24 hours a day. When a caller expresses an interest, the local conference office will receive a card within a week.

Making Sabbath special

Sabbaths aren't always a perfect delight—in fact, they can turn out to be a hassle. But the right balance among ritual, planning, and flexibility can help.

Soup on Friday evening began for us in the seventies when I received a soup tureen as a Christmas gift. Later we added fresh-baked bread, salad, and cheese, and created a family tradition.

Friday night candlelight began much earlier, even before we became parents. When children arrived we went through a period when they showed their bravery by putting their fingers through the flame, and vied (fought, really) for the privilege of blowing it out. The candlelight tradition is centuries old. It goes back to our spiritual forefathers who prescribed that candles be lighted eighteen minutes before sundown, and commissioned the mother to do the lighting.

Celebrations ordained by God can often be enriched by ritual, and Sabbathkeeping is no exception. Two other ingredients that can help make the day a joy are planning and flexibility.

Nehemiah's attitude toward the Sabbath remains instructive: " 'This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep.' For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. . . . 'Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength' " (Neh. 8:9, 10).

In our less-than-perfect world, Friday night for a minister's family often includes sermon polishing, preparation for Sabbath school, and perhaps a public meeting or Bible study. Sabbath ushers in a spate of duties that do not fit my

picture of the placid Palestinian family, bathed in the warm glow of candlelight, welcoming God's presence. Precious little ritual, planning, or presence of God may be evident on hectic weekends. Yet the blessings of the Sabbath have come to our family, almost serendipitously at times.

Daughter Marti's call one Friday evening from college reminded me of this. "We just had supper and worship at a professor's house—candlelight throughout the house; it made me so homesick," she said. We both cried a little, but I rejoiced that the faculty members on her campus are continuing a tradition that has significance for my daughter. The ritual enriches the observance.

Uninvited guests

Another Sabbath ritual that began early in our children's lives sprang from a discussion with two other young mothers. We emerged from the mothers' room after church, all of us clutching babies and reaching for toddlers' hands. Our eyes met after we watched guests drive off, uninvited to dinner. "Well, I didn't have anything for a salad or dessert," I offered meekly.

"I have a casserole dish, but not enough for four more people," Alice said.

"We're just having potato salad and soup today," Irene admitted.

But we all felt guilty about the uninvited guests. Over an impromptu meal in the park, Irene, though recently baptized, was the one who came up with a plan: "What if we took turns making a salad, entrée, and dessert each weekend for the rest of the summer? Then the three of us could be ready to invite



Edna Maye Loveless is an associate professor of English at Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland.

The fireplace and a good book often beckon me on Sabbath afternoon, but then what about the children?

church guests for a picnic dinner in the park," she suggested. I have a snapshot record of some of those meals in the park: fathers pushing small people in the swings; little ones napping safely in a portable playpen while we enjoy fellowship with church guests.

Beyond the Sabbath hospitality came another blessing: Irene's and Alice's families became a surrogate extended family and would inquire after the progress and welfare of my family. Sociologists studying prevention of delinquency have concluded that in homes where the extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins) is absent, other families can perform the function of extended family members. Their regular social interaction (celebrating holidays and birthdays, attending graduations and weddings) provides a stabilizing influence that is especially helpful at times when children feel alienated from their parents. Our regular Sabbath outings became an oasis for mothers needing adult talk, children needing relief from mothers, and a minister's family needing, like Jesus, some friends of the Mary-Martha-Lazarus type.

Sabbath in the real world

Preaching Sabbath observance is easier than practicing it. Just when you are busiest, the children are often underfoot and sometimes embarrassingly audible and visible. One of my husband's most graceful Sabbath acts came as we knelt to pray before he left for church. A small daughter discovered how to remove the top of her bottle at just the right moment and gave Dad's preaching suit a thorough anointing with milk. As she wailed over her loss, he gave her a quick hug, rose

with considerable self-control, and changed into his only alternative, a light-gray summer suit. As I remember it, the prayer was never finished. Flexible response saved the joy of the Sabbath.

The fireplace and a good book often beckon me on Sabbath afternoon, but then what about the children? One particular Sabbath stands out in my mind. Father was off saving the world, and I was wondering how the priest was supposed to fit into the family picture. Then a beautiful thing happened. The children brought in their neighbors, lined up chairs in front of the fireplace, and brightly announced, "We're going to have Sabbath school." And "Mother will tell us a story."

"Give me some time to think," I said, thankful that any Bible story would be new to these neighbor kids. My children began teaching their friends the songs from Sabbath school, and by the time Dad arrived, they had a rehearsed choir ready for his approval. Since he likes to direct, he insisted on getting into the act and waving his arms wildly while they performed the songs. I was surprised when the neighbor called for her children to come home because it was getting dark. In the end my laid-aside plans seemed unimportant.

Later I negotiated with the preacher: "These children need you on Sabbath. Did you see how they turned on when you came in?"

"Aren't they always turned on?" he asked warily.

"No," I insisted, "you have some special electricity with them."

A preacher is a professional planner. When Dad does accept responsibility for a Sabbath afternoon with the kids, we find that he can rally the whole neighborhood to his ideas, whether he is inviting them to Vacation Bible School or to a bird-watching outing. Bird-watching bouts are well attended because Dad has a lot of bird stories that whip up interest. He admits that he never expects to see any birds except pigeons on such ventures with the children—their excited behavior frightens away any timid birds.

Dad plans afternoons the way he plans sermons: he clips notices from the newspaper and slips them into a file folder. On a visit to a battlefield he tells us the story of the Civil War battle at Bull Run as related by Ellen White, with unseen angels in action, along with all the sightseers from Washington, D. C.,

who had arrived in horse-drawn carriages to view the battle. Other Sabbaths we head for the zoo, the botanical gardens, a waterfall, a wooded trail. Dad initiates a rock-skipping contest at the creek. The lovely thing about these outings is that they renew all of us in spirit and in health. We feel "like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isa. 58:11).

But what about winter? Trying to cope with a restless child, I collapsed on the carpet in the living room. "See how many times you can do this," I said with a tiny burst of energy that produced a pseudo-push-up. Then I served as official counter while my daughter gyrated, somersaulted, and did push-ups. After my mini-rest and her exhilarating exercise, we pulled on our rubbers and coats and made footprints in the snow.

Other ideas for Sabbath activities

For additional ideas on activities you can use to make Sabbaths happy days for your children, see:

Happy Sabbath Afternoons. The Come Unto Me Library. Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1980. Intended for children ages 4-7, this set (storybooks and workbooks for each quarter of the three-year sequence) suggests activities for Sabbath afternoons that supplement the Sabbath school lesson of the day.

Gerita Garver Liebelt. *From Dilemma to Delight: Creative Ideas for Happy Sabbaths.* Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1986. This book suggests ways to prepare for the Sabbath and ideas for making the whole day, including meals, special.

Glen Robinson. *52 Things to Do on Sabbath.* Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1983. This little book suggests activities for tiny tots, older children, the whole family, and large groups. It includes indoor and outdoor activities, Christian service activities, and suggestions of things to do Friday evenings.

Out of print, but worth looking for:

Miriam Hardinge. *Happy Sabbaths.* Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1950.

Eileen E. Lantry. *A Family Guide to Sabbath Nature Activities.* Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1980.

Neighbor children joined us as we progressed around the block.

Back at home the children we've collected know from past experience that we follow singing, stories, and prayers at sundown with sandwiches, popcorn, and hot chocolate. Across-the-street Peggy sings a solo, off-key but gustily. Is anyone aware of the presence of God? I wonder.

Years later it occurred to me that Sabbaths provided time for us to nurture neighbor children we never would have known otherwise. A chance meeting with one of them or their parents now may end, as earlier conversations never did, "Please pray for us."

Indoor Sabbaths

On the quieter Sabbaths when we bypass walks on the beach, trips through a museum, or picnics in the park with friends, we all agree on the joys of reading. To keep a ready supply of good reading at hand, we jaunt to the library twice a month. All of us leave with books up to our chins. I retain the right to veto, with explanation, some of the children's choices. I also impose some of my choices on them. Often I select biographies whose titles, illustrations, and bindings offer no lure to the children, but whose story lines powerfully portray God's created, creative beings. Books about noble people, mission efforts, and animals go on reserve at home for Sabbath reading. The special thing about Sabbath is the absence of deadlines. For several years reading was an oral exercise involving Dad or Mom, and it often generated spirited discussion. Then the children began to read on their own.

Supplementing reading in the early years, we also had a Sabbath box with toys and crafts profitable for creative play. Noah's ark and animals got a thorough workout, with the animals often graduating from the ark to a modern farm. With other items (wig, shawl, cane, artificial fruits and flowers, construction paper, glue, scissors, clay, and felt figures) the children portrayed or acted out favorite Bible stories. Regular restocking with different items kept the contents from becoming old hat. Sometimes the children and their friends considered their dramatic creations so spellbinding that they would get on the phone and invite their parents, who made up the world's most appreciative audience.

When itinerary takes Dad and the sole family car away on a rainy Sabbath, we stay-at-homes don't know whether we miss him or the car more. Such a day calls for something special. Spreading a blanket on the living room floor and eating sandwiches on paper plates provides a picnic in the living room. "Look! No dishes to wash!" the kids exult. A flexible response to circumstances makes our Sabbath a delight.

Sabbath ministry

We also want to cut our children in on a piece of the action in the ministry we perform. Taking them on do-good visits, we find them apprehensive and shy, sometimes even sullen. Invariably, however, their very presence in a sickroom or home where trouble prevails brings a spontaneous response that brightens their own spirits, as when an aging grandmother reached into a cabinet and drew out china dolls that she had collected on trips abroad. Placing a doll in each child's hands, she delighted them with stories of people she had known.

I've learned to save calls on new residents in the neighborhood for Sabbath hours. Taking a plate of cookies or home-baked bread along, the children find something to do with their hands and feel less self-conscious.

Guests in our home bring enrichment too. I finally came to the point where I could comfortably say without apology to unexpected guests, "Hm! I really don't have anything to make a decent salad today."

I'm pursuing a policy of inviting, among others, people who can't reciprocate. The children respond experimentally to a frequent visitor who is blind. Looking upon him as their property, they escort him on a walk. As they set out I cringe at their shouted announcement to the neighbors, "We gots a blind man!" Then I hear his amused chuckle. This plan gives the children a sense of worth in our world and also extends our circle of friends.

Listening emerges as one of the few offices a parent of teenagers can fill without being reminded of ineptness. Long telephone conversations demonstrate that these kids are communicators. But they need a safe setting in which to communicate with the family.

I recall significant listening during memorable Sabbath endings. After one of those wrenching moves that mobile

Dad plans afternoons the way he plans sermons: he clips notices from the newspaper and slips them into a file folder.

families know about, we were responding to the texts that say, And the people did what was "right in the sight of the Lord all the days of the reign of . . ." "That king obviously had a positive impact," preacher Dad observed. "Like . . ." and he told of someone who made a positive impact on him. Each of us in turn named someone who made a positive contribution to our lives. Our 13-year-old recalled Jackie, her teenage Sabbath school teacher in "the last church." She warmed to the subject. As worship ended she ran up the stairs, homesick but coping. "I'm going to write Jackie a letter!" she called back. Plan (Dad's worship design) had produced response, and I perceived the presence of God.

Another time we read about the storm on Galilee and talked about what we think we would have done, given a chance to ride in the boat with Jesus. We also talked about the way we handle storms in our lives: crying, seeking out friends, going for a walk alone—after slamming the door. After such sharing we have something to pray about.

We haven't been in Eden, but when we've visited new baby kittens with one child, walked on an early Sabbath morning with another, listened to a record and talked about it afterward, we've captured something of what it means to share God's presence. When the children take turns going with Dad to churches on his circuit while Mother's duties keep her at one, or when one child rides with Dad to a pastoral call on Sabbath afternoon, role-playing as they drive along ("What's a good thing to say when we see Mr. Riggins?"), we've cut them in on the action, riding "upon the high places of earth," experiencing the blessings of the Sabbath.

Democracy by design

Can a man's or woman's worth be measured in square feet of office space? Major corporations are turning from office sizes graded by status to equal-sized offices for all professional employees—with an upturn in morale.

Because Jesus said, "You are all brothers" (Matt. 23:8, NIV), the church has a semblance of wage parity, and some leaders are urging full parity.

How about office space equality? Should the principles of equality inherent in His words be acknowledged in building General Conference, union, and local conference/mission administrative offices? Should the same principles be practiced in designing offices in worship edifices, educational institutions, publishing houses, and hospitals?

If secular organizations strive to reduce "the intensity of the struggle for status," should the church's Christian perspective lead it to make the same effort? The following article, although not religiously oriented, contains principles that Christian leaders and building committees would do well to consider and practice.—Editors.

In this decade for the first time, white-collar workers comprise more than half of all adult employees. They now make up 53 percent of the work force—a figure expected to rise to 90 percent by the year 2000. The sheer numbers of new professionals have forced planners to come up with new designs—especially for those big rooms at the top.

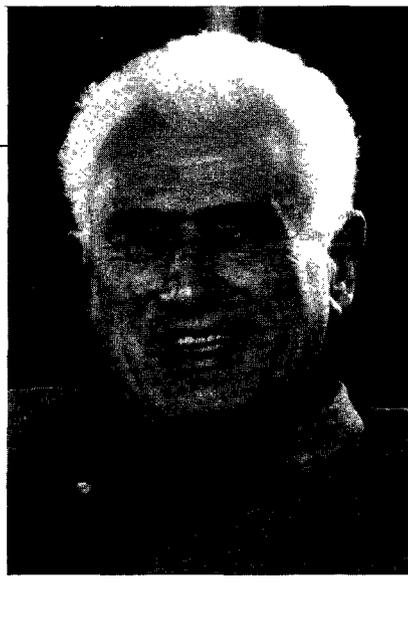
Four years ago Union Carbide joined the effort to deal with the revolution in the composition of the work force. The company moved its headquarters from a soaring fifty-two-story Manhattan tower on Park Avenue to a low-slung \$100 million structure in Danbury, Connecticut, that looks like a mammoth space station ready for takeoff. A mere four stories high, the building spreads over

eighteen acres of woodlands. Consisting of a rectangular central area with fifteen outlying sections, it is designed to provide all professional employees with equal-sized offices—and, as far as possible, with equally pleasant and attractive views of the pastoral surroundings.

Life on Park Avenue had become hopelessly complicated. It was impossible within the vertical dimensions of a skyscraper to dole out the appropriate level of benefits to some two thousand professionals as they climbed the managerial ladder. Office size posed an especially tricky problem. The chief executive officer had a palatial 875 square feet all to himself on the top floor, roughly equivalent to a two-bedroom apartment. Depending on rank, lesser workers toiled on lower floors within areas of 375, 300, 225, 150, or 100 square feet.

The system had already begun to crumble when a decision to break the expanding seven-hundred-employee Chemical and Plastic Division into eight product divisions produced a frenzy of status-seeking. The change immediately created seven brand-new division presidents, all of whom expected appropriately larger and higher-story offices for themselves—and, of course, special offices close by for their new vice presidents and so on down the line. No amount of space-shuffling could ever have satisfied the forty-odd executives involved.

Puzzles like this one inspired Union Carbide's top management to forge ahead with plans to move into new quarters in Connecticut—and to take a hard look at offices from the standpoint of function rather than prestige. The architectural firm of Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates held hour-long



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interviews with 184 employees at all levels to confront the key question: How much space does an individual really need? How much space does one person require for a desk and working surface, ample storage, and table and chairs for informal meetings?

Karl Gruen, then Union Carbide's assistant director of the new headquarters project, worked closely with the architects to plan down to the last detail: "We made full-scale cardboard mock-ups of furniture arranged in various positions, chalked out areas on the floor, and allowed room for circulation. A total area of 13.5 by 13.5 feet—182.25 square feet—seemed to meet all requirements." Environmental psychologist Franklin Becker of Cornell University speculates that this figure may represent some sort of magic number. Many designers, he says, confirm that the 175- to 200-square-foot range nicely accommodates all the typical jobs that professionals perform.

Still some perks

Utter equality at Union Carbide has not been attained. Although the fifteen highest-ranking officers no longer enjoy such Park Avenue superbennies as private bathrooms, they do have an extra 13.5- by 13.5-foot module—but for meetings, not for private work space. Furthermore, for all the innovative architecture, some locations are more desirable than others, offering panoramic outlooks over the woodlands rather than internal courtyard views—and top-floor offices are still most prestigious.

But in Danbury the conspicuous trappings of status are absent. In Manhattan, top executives displayed their original art and marble-top desks. With the move, every professional could choose from thirty different sets of furniture representing traditional, Scandinavian, and modern styles—all equal in value and each featuring one show piece. (Gruen, for example, has a mahogany desk with roll-top compartments at either end.) Artwork in eleven styles was also available—no originals, but two or three fine prints for each office. The result: variety, a wide range of tastes, and no status markers.

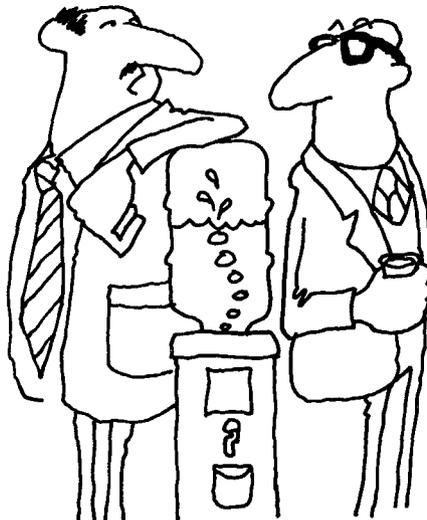
To learn how Union Carbiders are doing in their status-free building, Becker's former graduate student Cynthia Froggatt, now associated with a New York architectural and design firm,

studied employees' reactions. Froggatt conducted an extensive study based on a one hundred-item questionnaire given to 264 professionals. Her most significant finding: The big-man-big-space tradition, dating back to the pharaohs and beyond, could be scrapped without arousing massive resistance. In fact, the response is solidly positive. The overall satisfaction rate with individual work space turns out to be 4.3 on a 1-to-5 scale, unusually high for such surveys. In 1982, a similar survey of 1,500 employees from companies with traditional work-space policies came up with a 3.38 rating for managers.

Union Carbide is the largest but not the only American company to go equal. Austeel, a small steel mill in Auburn, New York, has identical offices for all, measuring about twelve by fifteen feet. When Arnold and Porter, a 200-lawyer Washington, D.C., law firm, moved into a new building several years ago, it offered senior partners first choice of the larger offices. But all the associates' offices are about the same size. According to Gruen, Conoco's recently completed Houston headquarters was designed by the firm that did Union Carbide and with the same principles in mind.

Europe leads the way

These American companies, repre-



"Personally I find anyone with less than 175-½ square feet rather boring, don't you?"

sent what is becoming established practice in Europe. Becker, who has visited more than two hundred office buildings here and abroad during the course of his research, points to Swedish designs as perhaps the most progressive. By law, all employees must have access to natural daylight, which makes for long, narrow Pullman-car buildings with offices on the periphery and file cases and coffee machines along internal corridors. Although upper management in Sweden gets extra space, all other employees, including typists and file clerks, get equal space. Going one better, IBM recently designed a new building just outside Stockholm with identical-sized offices for all.

According to Becker, Germany rates several notches below Sweden on the office-democracy scale. A typical bank in Mannheim, for example, has an upper floor featuring posh offices for a dozen senior managers. Department heads and supervisors have small offices, while their subordinates sit outside in open "bullpen" areas. But Germany too has daylight-access laws, and union representatives are consulted about office space and regularly sit in on top management meetings. Becker rates British companies rather more status-conscious than their German counterparts, with a series of office sizes expressing stronger hierarchical values. But Americans, he says, are the most flagrantly status-ridden. Becker considers U. S. designs the "most autocratic and elitist of all."

Japan represents an entirely different attitude toward work and work space. In some ways it resembles the German pattern of open bullpen areas for most workers and privacy for a select few. But as a rule, employees do not attach special importance to their particular locations, at least not the way Western workers do. Privileged executives regard the offices they occupy as the company's, not their own, and certainly not as symbols of personal prestige. This reflects a tendency in Japanese organizations to think more in group than in individual terms.

"Equal office space looks to be the next step," Becker says. But he hastens to add that these egalitarian notions adopted from the Europeans are not motivated by purely democratic instincts. Techniques that reduce the intensity of the struggle for status can be expected to boost morale and, probably, productivity. "They work better," he says, "and make managing easier."

Burnout in clergy families

We hear a lot about burnout these days. The term is bandied about freely. We even joke about being "burned out" when we really mean only "tired" or even "bored." But burnout is no joke. Ask the husband whose wife just left him and their three children because of it. Or ask the woman whose pastor/husband is in a severe depression as a result of it.

What precisely is burnout? Does it really affect ministers' families? And what can we do about it?

Burnout is a complete exhaustion of one's physical, mental, and spiritual resources. It is not mere stress, though stress (particularly job-related) may precipitate it. Stress is the body's response to the demands made on it. Any change, good or bad, takes its toll on our energy resources. But stress alone, like rainfall, is not bad—it is the intensity or quantity of it that becomes dangerous. A person merely under stress may exhibit some symptoms of burnout but will recover quickly if the stress is removed.

Burnout strikes primarily in the helping professions—medical personnel, psychologists, social workers, and clergy. A 1983 Gallup survey indicated that 29 percent of American clergy have "often" or "occasionally" considered quitting the ministry because of frustrations or disappointments.¹ In 1977 the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health published a study of nine thousand persons admitted to mental health centers in Tennessee. Clergy ranked thirty-sixth among 130 professions represented—ahead of teachers (forty-seventh), policemen (seventieth), and

Ministers are particularly subject to burnout. And there are some indications that wives of ministers may be even more susceptible. But you can prevent it or even reverse its early stages if you are willing to work at it.



Besides being a frequently published author, Madeline Johnston works as a secretary in the Department of World Mission at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. She has an M.A. in developmental psychology and has done further study in the area of counseling.

physicians (106th).²

Roy Oswald, a behavioral scientist with the Alban Institute, estimates that at least one clergyman in four is burned out.³ After administering both burnout rating and life-changes rating tests at seminars he conducted for clergy and their spouses, he concluded that wives of clergy have higher stress levels than either clergymen or clergywomen.⁴

Most pastors and their wives do not burn out. But many who don't may still be functioning at a less-than-optimal level—so let's take a look at the symptoms of burnout.

Burnout symptoms

The symptoms of burnout fall into three categories: physical, emotional, and spiritual.

Joan didn't sleep well, had little energy to cope with her children, and showed little interest in sex. These are some of the physical symptoms. Others include frequent illness, excessive drug use, or motor difficulties.

At the emotional level one might observe apathy, anger, guilt, negativism, irritability, loss of creativity, worry, increasing rigidity, withdrawal, self-preoccupation, paranoid obsessions, loss of humor, loss of playfulness or interest in hobbies, excessive crying, inability to concentrate, feelings of failure and hopelessness, and marital and family conflict.

Emotions spill over into work-related attitudes, which some authorities list as a separate category. Here burnout manifests itself as absenteeism, clock-watching, resisting and postponing contact with clients or employers, loss of positive feelings toward these people (often replaced by cynicism and/or blame), and

avoiding discussion of work with colleagues. Pastor Tom went to the church office later and later each morning, became annoyed at parishioners who needed him, and sniped at the conference leadership more than he ever had before. His wife's concern and perplexity intensified until someone explained burnout to her and led them to seek professional help.

Spiritual symptoms include significant changes in moral behavior or theological positions, loss of interest in personal devotional life, loss of faith in God and the church, moral judgmentalism, perfunctory performance of church responsibilities, and loss of joy and celebration in spiritual matters. In a pastor, of course, even a few of these symptoms can destroy a previously effective ministry.

No one person exhibits *all* of these symptoms, but two or more from each category would usually indicate a burned-out person.

Typically, burnout develops gradually, progressing from mild stress and anxiety to more anxiety and fatigue to complete exhaustion. People in the earlier stages can recover without outside help, but those in whom the problem has become entrenched often need prolonged therapy.

What causes burnout? Several factors may contribute:

1. Stress resulting when the demands of the job tax or exceed the resources of the person. These demands may be either external, from the job itself or the supervisor(s), or internal, from pressure the individual puts on himself/herself.

2. A gap between expectations and reality. Clergy with high expectations of church work may instead meet problems, perhaps even hostility from some of the members.

3. The need of people in the helping professions to feel efficacious. If a minister comes into a church with great plans for change and growth in that church, and then the church doesn't respond as expected, frustrations and feelings of inadequacy may result. Some clergy, instead of reexamining their goals, lose the feeling that their work is meaningful.

4. Methods used to cope with stress. Sometimes people use more and more desperately their same ineffective coping mechanisms, without objectively analyzing and gaining control over their situation.

5. Sometimes *lack* of challenge, or

boredom. People need intellectual stimulation and a feeling that their abilities are being fully used.

6. The structure of the organization. The more centralized and hierarchical the decision-making process, the more a staff person feels like a small, easily replaceable cog in a large machine. A person needs some autonomy and control. Both bureaucratic structure and low salary make one feel less autonomous. This is one for church administrators to note.

7. Individual personality factors. One's response to stress is more important than the stress itself. Clergy, particularly, often possess traits that tend toward poor stress management.

8. Stresses of interrelationships. The pastor suffers all the usual ones, sometimes with more intensity than other people do. Failure to maintain good relationships with fellow staff members, congregation, community, and family will jeopardize both personal life and job. At the same time, the nature of the job often subjects clergy to a unique loneliness and lack of affirmation.

On the other hand, successfully coping pastors usually have a strong sense of self and personal identity. Furthermore, they view stressors as opportunities to grow, rather than as unfair problems or circumstances.

What about clergy wives? They are subject to all of the general factors listed above. Granted, roles are changing, and some clergy spouses today are husbands. But thinking of the traditional role many ministers' wives still fill, consider each of the above factors from their viewpoint: stresses of their role expectations, their anticipation of church/parsonage/members versus reality, their need to feel effective, the coping mechanisms they likely have learned, the challenge (or lack of challenge) to their skills, their position vis-à-vis the decision-making process at home and/or church, their personality traits, and the stresses of their interrelationships. Clearly, the pastor's wife could qualify for the endangered-species list.

Stressors clergy wives face

Roy Oswald, of the Alban Institute, has delineated the following stressors, briefly summarized here, that may contribute particularly to burnout in clergy wives:⁵

1. The role expectations (self-imposed or imposed by others) for a

After administering both burnout rating and life-changes rating tests, he concluded that wives of clergy have higher stress levels than either clergymen or clergywomen.

pastor's wife.

2. The lack of pastoral care for herself. To whom can a pastor's wife go with her personal problems?

3. Lack of support. Clergy wives sometimes feel they can have no close friends or confidants.

4. Frequent geographical relocation. Here the wife may provide emotional support for the other family members while stifling her own needs.

5. Parsonage living. Although it may not be the problem in Adventist churches that it is in some others, the clergy wife still may have to deal with the feeling that church members are scrutinizing her housekeeping skills.

6. Finances and having to work. Many men today are having to adjust both their attitudes and their habits to accommodate wives who must and/or want to work outside the home, but for clergymen and their congregations this can be especially difficult. And the wives themselves may suffer conflicts over going out to work.

7. Being surrogate clergy. Parishioners may at times expect the wife to take the pastor's place.

8. Being a conduit for messages to the clergy. Parishioners may ask her to pass messages, especially unpleasant ones, on to her husband, often deliberately to avoid confronting him directly.

9. Disfranchisement. Clergy wives "exist in a sociopolitical system without any form of direct power within that system." They are not to take positions on controversial issues or run for office, but are to sit quietly and dress properly.

10. The strain on clergy marriages. While the husband may find little time for his family, he pays a lot of attention to other women (by the nature of his job) and maintains an adoring public.

11. The ordination of women. In some churches this now adds certain threats to the pastor's wife. Her husband may now be working closely with a woman on his staff and often this woman replaces the wife as "the resident holy woman," who previously enjoyed the respect and confidences of the congregation. This is no reason to withhold ordination from qualified women, but clergy families need to adjust accordingly.

How can burnout be prevented? Basically, by changing either the causes or one's response patterns. If you, for instance, fear burnout from pressures you or your family experience, examine what you can change. If the external demands

of your job are too taxing, eliminate some of them, either by delegating or by explaining your limits to the congregation. Or increase your resources to meet the demands. If your internal demands are too great, remind yourself that you can't do everything.

Don't take responsibility for everyone else. Jesus didn't. Give people choices.

Avoid pushing your own programs in a church.

Learn to develop autonomy where you can. Take control of your life. Plan, organize, respect your limitations and needs. Set clear, specific goals.

Learn to handle anger and conflict.

Learn to relax—take frequent brief vacations; set aside times with your spouse; develop hobbies.

If you suffer from a lack of challenge, find outlets, personal ministries, goals— involvement that will give you a sense of self-confidence and identity.

Nurture yourself—physically, spiritually, emotionally—not out of selfishness, but from a desire to enable yourself to minister more effectively.

Learn to view problems as exciting challenges to grow on.

Build a solid support system. Make friends. You can develop a few special friendships even within the congregation as long as you continue to be friendly to everyone. Find other friends within the larger community, perhaps other pastors' wives. Keep your marriage strong, keep communication open, be vulnerable. Explain your needs to your mate. Work out a role for yourself that is acceptable to both of you. Take time, for real intimacy requires time. Evaluate your relationship periodically. With a solid marriage you can face the rest of the world.

Above all, stay close to God. Be faithful in devotional time. Affirm to yourself God's love for you. Live beyond self-preoccupation; give glory and praise to Him. "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good" (Ps. 118:29).

¹ Religious News Service, "Experts Say Clergy Stress Doesn't Have to Result in Burnout," *Christianity Today*, Nov. 9, 1984, p. 71.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Roy M. Oswald, "Why Do Clergy Wives Burn Out?" in *Alban Institute Action Information*, January-February, 1984, p. 11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-15.

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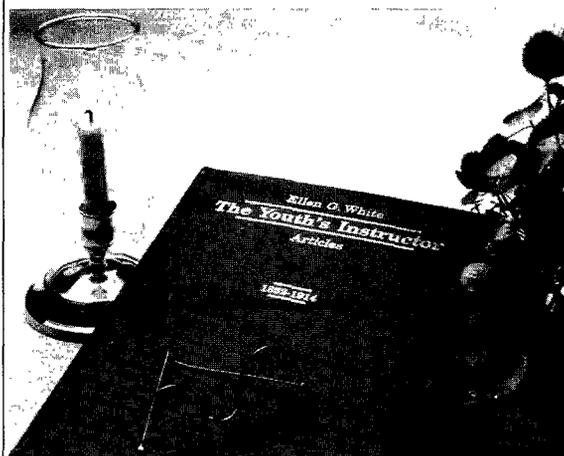
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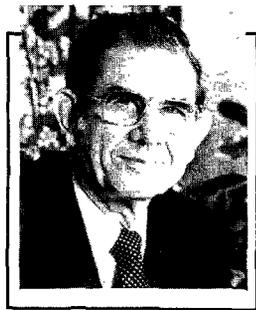
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The Second Coming— two concerns

I believe the coming of Christ is near, very near. The reasons for my belief in His soon return should be obvious. Leaders of government, industry, and science, many of whom are not religiously oriented, speak unanimously of global problems that defy solution. The banking industry, aware of the insurmountable national debts of numerous countries, seemingly lives by faith, hoping for the best while expecting the worst. In the field of medicine, when one disease is conquered, a brand-new one rears its ugly head. In the area of ecology, the world's forests are being depleted to meet industrial demands. It is estimated that a single Sunday edition of the *New York Times* consumes 150 acres of forest land. The cost of the arms race now exceeds the entire annual income of the poorer half of the human race.

Never has Daniel 12:4 been more applicable than now! The equating of the end of time with an increase of knowledge is being fulfilled in every field of endeavor. The past several decades have seen a phenomenal explosion of knowledge. The globe is being flooded with an irresistible flow of scientific developments.

Books could be filled with important signs supporting the predictive words of Jesus in Matthew 24 and Luke 21. No thinking person will challenge the concept that the state of world affairs is perilously close to moral, physical, economic, and political disaster. When I was a young preacher searching the newspaper for events classified as signs of the times, it took months to dig up the material that I can now find in a single issue of an average city newspaper. To put it mildly, the signs of Christ's return are literally shouting at us in deafening decibels. And we can expect this trend

to increase.

How true the song: "Heavings of earth tell the vast, wondering throng: Jesus is coming again! Tempests and whirlwinds the anthem prolong; Jesus is coming again! . . . Knowledge increases; men run to and fro; Jesus is coming again."

However, I have a special concern over two areas related to our preaching on the coming of the Lord. According to some reports, I understand that many of our members would welcome a good sermon on the second coming of Christ. Several of my colleagues inform me that after they preach on the Second Advent at camp meetings, listeners always express deep appreciation for a sermon on this subject. Many add that their pastor is a good man, but that he is virtually silent about the return of Jesus. The blessed hope gave birth to this Advent movement and nurtured it! It is even in our name. We should be thinking, dreaming, eating, sleeping, and talking the "blessed hope." How can we be silent on the subject of Christ's second coming, an understanding of the hope of which "is the key that unlocks all the history that follows, and explains all the future lessons" (*Evangelism*, p. 220)?

This brings me to the second area of concern. It relates to an opposite extreme in a sense. There are those, especially some who are independent of the church structure, who seemingly are thinking, dreaming, eating, sleeping, and talking about the signs of the times, but who say very little about the development of a relationship with the Saviour. They send magazines and newsletters to our members, soliciting funds on the basis of alarming signs of the end with the world collapsing.

This manipulation by fear omits to a great extent the thrilling experience of salvation and having a daily, joyful walk with Christ. The focus of the end-time should not be on coming events but on the coming Redeemer. We dare not

substitute sign-centered preaching for Christ-centered preaching.

The New Testament focuses on Christ's return from the angle of the joy and delight it will be to see Him and to be with Him. Signs are mentioned, but the major emphasis is not on signs but on the contrast between the despair of those not ready to meet Jesus and the joy and delight of those who are ready to meet Him. The purpose of Christ's return is not to fulfill signs, but to receive His own that they may be with Him forever. To preach in a way that focuses the attention of our people on the signs and not the Saviour is doing a disservice to the cause of God.

If I understand the Spirit of Prophecy correctly, the reason for the delay is not because the signs have not been fulfilled, but rather "if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God's unwillingness to have His people perish has been the reason of so long delay" (*ibid.*, p. 694). Again, "I know that if the people of God had preserved a *living connection with Him*, if they had obeyed His Word, they would today be in the heavenly Canaan" (*ibid.*; italics supplied). The question is Will preaching mainly on the signs truly develop a long-lasting motivation for loving and serving the Lord? Do scare tactics produce relationships?

I appeal to our ministers to preach on the blessed hope but to do it from a deep longing for Jesus to return in order to end the physical separation between Him and His people. We need zeal that is Christ-centered. "Zeal for the glory of God moved the disciples to bear witness to the truth with mighty power. Should not this zeal fire our hearts with a longing to tell the story of redeeming love, of Christ and Him crucified? Should not the power of God be even more mightily revealed today than in the time of the apostles?" (*ibid.*, p. 698). A zeal that is born merely of the signs of the time is

based on a fear motivation and not a love motivation.

It may seem easier, for the time, to grip the attention of the people by reciting the latest crime statistics, or predicting the collapse of the financial world, or listing the wars and rumors of wars—these problems have ever been with the human race, as Jesus said in Matthew 24. In fact, He clearly stated that they were not to be alarmed over wars, etc. (Matt. 24:6). His main concern was that we not be deceived by false christs and false prophets. Not be deceived over the performance of great signs and miracles that will almost deceive the very elect. Matthew 24 centers more on warnings against deception than signs in the social, economic, and political world. He talks about the surprise element in His return. Whether we are alive or dead when He returns, it still will be a great surprise. Remember that the last heartbeat is in effect the Second Coming for those who die in Christ.

My fellow ministers, lift up Christ. Let Him be the focus of our worship services.

Letters

From page 2

Christ "took upon Him our sinful nature,"¹ and yet "He was born without a taint of sin."² "On all points except sin, divinity was to touch humanity."³ From His first entrance into the world Christ was "untainted by corruption";⁴ He was "incorruptible and undefiled";⁵ He came to dwell in humanity but received no pollution.⁶ We therefore should have "no misgivings in regard to the perfect sinlessness of the human nature of Christ."⁷

"Be careful, exceedingly careful, as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. . . . Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to, corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption. . . . That which is revealed is for us and for our children, but let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such an one as ourselves; for it cannot be."⁸—E.C. Webster, Director, Bible Correspondence School, Cape Town, South Africa.

Make certain you have a personal relationship with Him and preach with such warmth and appeal that hearts will be softened and made submissive to His will. I like the following statement: "The second coming of the Son of man is to be the wonderful theme kept before the people. Here is a subject that should not be left out of our discourses. Eternal realities must be kept before the mind's eye, and the attractions of the world will appear as they are, altogether profitless as vanity. . . . We are pilgrims and strangers who are waiting, hoping, and praying for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we believe this and bring it into our practical life, what vigorous action would this faith and hope inspire; what fervent love one for another; what careful holy living for the glory of God; and in our respect for the recompense of the reward, what distinct lines of demarcation would be evidenced between us and the world" (*ibid.*, p. 220).

Let the preaching of the second coming of Christ be a focal point in our Harvest 90 program.—N.C.W.

¹ *Review and Herald*, Dec. 15, 1896.

² Letter 97, 1898, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 925.

³ *Review and Herald*, Jan. 7, 1904.

⁴ Manuscript 16, 1890, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 907.

⁵ *Review and Herald*, Jan. 26, 1911.

⁶ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 266.

⁷ *Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1898, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1131.

⁸ Letter 8, 1895, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1128, 1129.

Focus on evangelism

I just received my February issue of *MINISTRY* magazine, and found it very enjoyable. I believe that this is the best issue of *MINISTRY* I have seen in months. It's good to see *MINISTRY* beginning to focus on evangelism, leadership, and the priorities of the church. I believe that these are essential as we seek to inspire our membership to rally to meet the Great Commission that Jesus has given us.—James L. Stevens, Trenton, New Jersey.

Living on one salary

My wife and I make it on one salary. About four years ago we developed and began to follow a budget. Since then we have done much better financially. We broke down our annual costs into

monthly amounts. Each month each account gets a certain amount. We can't spend more than that which is in the account. Some accounts grow from month to month, to be ready when big bills such as car insurance come along.

We don't charge if we don't have the money, and we don't run up bills on credit cards.

I'm not saying that we never have money problems, but we have done 100 percent better since we started our budget.—Pastor Chad McComas, Corvallis, Oregon.

I need help

I really appreciate your magazine and all the many articles, features, and news items about the church. But I need more help. As a young pastor in a small district of two churches, I find myself thrown into the Adventist pastoral greenhouse at the lowest level (not pejorative!): the level of the grass roots—where the people are, and I'm faced with a situation not uncommon to many pastors. I'm in a church needing revival, reformation, and leadership. And I'd like to ask that you publish a series of articles on discipling your members as well as discipling (or disciplining) yourself. Kind of pithy, down-to-earth advice on how to do it. How others have done it and how to begin!

Also, if you could present what it means in terms of commitment, evangelism, and time spent with members, to disciple them as one develops an evangelistic but also a nurturing church, it would be a fantastic boon to me. I hear of developing the evangelistic church, but nurturing and discipling are stuck in on the side, as if throwing a bone to the ones advocating this ministry.

You see, I grope daily with my education and background of theological studies in a real world. The Bible says all are ministers. Yet somehow we cater to the concept and to authors of books on the subject, but hesitate to develop programs, initiate dialogue, and teach pastors how to do this outside of traditional means of evangelism!

Anarchy and chaos are not my goals or desires! The reality of truly equipping our members and trusting them in ministry is the growing edge of God's ministry today. And I need help, *MINISTRY*!—Pastor Dave.

Eds. Are you listening, church administrators? We can't do this by ourselves.

FOR THE PASTORS

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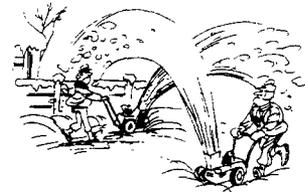
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Real Truth Bible lessons

The Real Truth is an inexpensive, professionally produced series of Bible lessons that is especially suitable for mass distribution or house-to-house use. Originally produced by the North American Division Ministerial Association, some of the lessons are now available in French and Spanish.

The series includes a course on health, one on the family, and three on basic Bible doctrines. Each course has eight lessons. The first Bible course is designed to create an interest in the Bible through study of several important topics. The Advanced I course begins presentation of distinctive Seventh-day Adventist doctrines, and the Advanced II course leads through more truths to a definite appeal for decisions.

Another part of the course is a complete plan for follow-up through a graduation ceremony for those who complete all the lessons. Diplomas are also available.

A descriptive brochure is available from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, North American Division Ministerial Association, 6840 Eastern Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20012.

Courses and diplomas in English may be ordered from the same address *with a conference purchase order only*. Price for the lessons is 35 cents per eight-lesson set. Diplomas are \$10 for 100. All orders will be billed an additional 10 percent for shipping and handling.

Courses available in French and Spanish are the health course, the regular Bible lessons, and the Advanced I lessons. They should be ordered from the Health and Temperance Director, Inter-American Division, P.O. Box 140760, Miami, Florida 33114-0760.

Who's new in town?

If you've ever wished you could contact all the people in your community who have recently purchased a home, Reaching the Newcomer may be able to supply you with a valuable service. Their service is not cheap (\$495 per year plus a one-time setup fee of \$25), but they can supply you with a monthly computer printout of all the people in your county who purchased a home that month, plus an indication of the cost of the home. They also offer a free one-month trial subscription. Write to Reaching the Newcomer, P.O. Box 640, Grapevine, Texas 76051.

Church musicians' workshop

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Musicians' Guild invites you to attend "Dimensions in Music and Worship" June 17-21 on the La Sierra campus of Loma Linda University. The program has been planned with a strong emphasis on the needs of both the professional and the local-church musician.

Workshops for choral directors, organists, handbell choir directors, pianists, and children's choir

directors are among the features. Workshop directors include Harold Swan, Marilyn Keiser, Ardis Freeman, Morris Taylor, and Marvin Robertson.

Special features include daily creative worship services led by C. Mervyn Maxwell, of the Theological Seminary, an organ concert by C. Warren Becker, and a choral concert by the John T. Hamilton Chorale.

For more information, call Douglas Macomber, convention chairman, at



(303) 744-8389. The registration fee of US\$70 should be sent to "Dimensions in Music and Worship," c/o Marge Rasmussen, 36634 Angeline Circle, Livonia, Michigan 48150.

Adventist Roots

The Adventist Roots Countdown program, a 10-part series originally advertised in *MINISTRY* in August of last year, has been a great blessing to many congregations. It is designed for use in the midweek service.

Similar in many respects to the Testimony Countdown programs of several years ago, this program is

based on volume 1 of Arthur White's six-volume biography of Ellen G. White.

Pastor's kits with sample materials and complete instructions are still available free! Write to Shirley Welch, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.

Ministry to Jews

Two new books by Robert L. Odom, who was for many years editor of *The Israelite* magazine, are now available from Israel Heritage Institute. *Israel's Pre-existent Messiah* deals with the Hebrew understanding of the preexistence of the Messiah as it is revealed in both biblical and extrabiblical sources, and concludes with an appeal to be loyal to the Messiah who has been revealed to Israel.

Israel's Angel Extraordinary is a study of the Old Testament concept of Michael. It leads into a study of the heavenly sanctuary and our heavenly High Priest. The books are available for \$3 each, or \$100 for a box of 50 from Israel Heritage Institute, P.O. Box 1368, New York, New York 10475.

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Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women

Willard M. Swartley, *Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, 1983, 366 pages, \$15.95, paper. Reviewed by Wayne Willey, pastor, Amesbury, Massachusetts.*

This book provides an excellent introduction to the principles of biblical interpretation. But the author's effectiveness at applying these principles to four specific issues is not uniformly strong.

When dealing with slavery, which most consider a settled issue, Swartley provides a clear application of the biblical principles. But his handling of the Sabbath issue is disappointing, and his treatment of war is even worse, considering the rich tradition of Mennonite exposition on that issue. His treatment of the place of women in the church is the least adequate of all.

In spite of these inadequacies, Swartley's work does provide a good overview of the principles of biblical interpretation. It raises the issues, and then calls us to deal with those issues from a biblical perspective.

Overcoming Barriers to Witnessing

Delos Miles, *Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1984, 131 pages, \$4.95, paper. Reviewed by Dennis Smith.*

This is a practical book that could be of help to a pastor conducting a witnessing class or preparing a sermon on witnessing. It is written primarily for lay Christians who want to overcome the barriers that keep them from witnessing. The barriers dealt with are fear, lack of perfection (I'm not good enough to witness), lack of gifts (I don't have the right gifts), professional (that's the minister's job), model (I'm no Billy Graham), time, knowledge, lack of power, theological (I don't believe . . .), age, friendship (I'm too close to . . .). The book gives practical suggestions for dealing with each barrier.

Balanced Church Growth

Ebbie C. Smith, *Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1984, 178 pages, \$5.95, paper. Reviewed by Patrick Boyle, Stewardship and Sabbath School director, South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*

This book is refreshing because it applies the insights of behavioral science and business techniques to church growth, but not on a secular basis. These techniques must be submitted to and tested by the biblical standards. The author plainly underlines the fact that the mission and responsibility of the church is the salvation of the lost. He perceives church growth as Christians working to win those outside of Christ and to engage them in extending and repeating the process.

The Christian Legal Advisor

John Eidsmoe, *Mott Media, Milford, Michigan, 1984, 578 pages, \$21.95. Reviewed by Pastor Wayne Willey, Amesbury, Massachusetts.*

This volume should be in every pastor's library. Eidsmoe, professor of law at Oral Roberts University, deals with important issues such as the priest-penitent privilege, clergy malpractice, and areas of potential church-state conflict such as private schools and home schools. If ever you are called into court to testify or stand trial on any of these issues, you or your attorney will find Eidsmoe's volume of inestimable value.

Recently Published

Church, Ministry, and Sacraments in the New Testament. C. K. Barrett, *William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1985, 112 pages, \$6.95, paper.*

The author, a noted New Testament scholar, deals with these three themes in a nontechnical manner. Writing to set the stage for contemporary issues of ecumenism, he sets forth the New Testament understanding of these concepts clearly and forcefully. He shows that each of these has central and peripheral aspects, and that each has temporal, provisional, and ordinary features. He points out that what is essential is not things—the church, the ministry, the sacraments—but Jesus Christ.

The Controversy: Roots of the Creation/Evolution Conflict. Donald E. Chittick, *Multnomah Press, Portland, Oregon, 1984, 280 pages, \$12.95.*

This is one in a series of books discussing current issues facing the evangelical Christian. The author gives an overview of the controversy, approaching the subject from the perspective of "scientific creationism." Readers should keep in mind that evangelical Christians have other interpretations of the same data, and should supplement this book with writers who approach Creation from a more theological slant.

Well-intentioned Dragons. Marshall Shelley, *Word, Waco, Texas, 1985, 153 pages, \$8.95.*

Dragons are alive and well in the twentieth century. They show up as church members who are deeply loyal to the church, well meaning, and convinced that they are serving God. But they question the pastor's sincerity, loyalty, and vision. It is not pleasant ministering under attack, but using a variety of case histories, the author gives strategies for working with dragons without becoming one.

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