

Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

April 1987



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Kudos for Harvest 90 special

Congratulations for the fine December MINISTRY issue dedicated to evangelism and Harvest 90; it is an extraordinary issue that will help significantly in contributing to the success of Harvest 90.—Carlos Aeschlimann, Ministerial Association Associate Secretary for Evangelism and Harvest 90.

■ After picking up your special December issue on Harvest 90, I was hooked! It was one of the most provocative and engaging documents I have read on the subject. I read it from cover to cover in one sitting.

I come from a pastoral/evangelism background, and after reading this issue, I reaffirmed a personal commitment to remain involved in some type of evangelism. . . .

I hope this special issue was as meaningful to others as it was to me. You, your staff, and the world leadership are to be commended.—Delbert W. Baker, Editor, *Message Magazine*.

■ Enjoyed your December MINISTRY, as I usually do, but was surprised to notice on page 26 that your designers left out Baja California and Sonora (part of Mexico and the IAD) from the Inter-American Division. It looks as if they included Baja California with the North American Division.

Then on pages 20 and 21 I noticed that John Leenhouders gave statistics on SDA Church members in 1983 for 11 countries that were not included in the Members per Thousand Inhabitants section. Then in the second chart he did calculations for nine countries that were not included in his first chart.—E. T. Burley, Stone Mountain, Georgia.

You have keen eyes. We simply reproduced what the author had done. When we tried to contact him, we discovered that he was working in a remote part of Africa and were unable to get his input in time to publish it. Eds.

On women's ordination

Thank you for "Women: Ministry Without Ordination" (October 1986). I don't consider myself a male chauvinist, but Dr. Bacchiocchi has said what I wanted to say—and what many people,

men and women, would like administration to hear. The pressure is coming from the "women's libbers," who are in the minority. As the final witness to the world, we cannot afford to ignore Scripture.—Leonard Klein, Publishing Director, Zimbabwe.

■ Rather than argue about the "social condition" of the canonical writers, Dr. Bacchiocchi gives clear *theological* reasons for opposing the ordination of women. It is my prayer (and I believe the desire of the vast silent majority of Adventists) that such biblically based wisdom may soon prevail and that this controversy may soon be laid to rest, sparing our church a departure from the faith once delivered to the saints.—Kenneth J. McNulty, Church Elder, Haverhill, Massachusetts.

Rejoicing in the gospel

I thoroughly agree with every point made by H. D. Schmidt (Letters, MINISTRY, September 1986). We need more articles on the same theme as that of Carlyle B. Haynes, to which Brother Schmidt refers. I love this church, but I sometimes fear for its future when I am made aware that so many do not understand the true meaning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. How I long to see our people grasp the concept that the only effective and legitimate motivation for good works is the joyous realization that our salvation is complete, total, and assured by our acceptance of what Jesus has done by His amazing grace and love.

Brother Schmidt says that most of the sermons we hear from Sabbath to Sabbath are of the early Haynes type. Why is this so? My assessment is that since Glacier View there has been an unwarranted swing of the pendulum toward maintaining the status quo and traditionalism, which results in an overemphasis of works. Traditionalism is satisfied with preaching that explores a very narrow path. Traditionalism enjoys being told that we are right because someone else said so, not that we should intelligently explore the doctrines we believe. Traditionalism tends to reject those who are thoughtful and open-minded—those who are willing to be unthreatened by dissenting voices and to

accept people with differing ideas. Traditionalism will only accept progress in the narrow path of its own definition.

Conversely, the gospel is open and accepting, joyous and broad in its grasp of truth. The gospel is unthreatened by some difference of opinion on matters that are not wholly necessary for salvation. The gospel reaches out in divine love to all. The gospel recognizes that people are much more important than theories and the status quo.

I recognize that there are dangers in going from one extreme to the other, but we seem so fearful that we hold ourselves back from the joyousness of Romans 5:1, 2; 8:31-39; and many other scriptures.—K. R. Miller, Taree, N.S.W., Australia.

Salvation comes from God

Robert Larsen is correct that man is able to respond to God's offer of salvation (Letters, MINISTRY November 1986.) But it is crucial to understand that this ability is not ours by nature. It was supernaturally implanted in humanity by the Redeemer at the time of Adam's fall (Gen. 3:15). Without this endowment of enmity against Satan we would be joined with Satan in total hatred of God.

Every part of salvation comes to us from the Redeemer. By conveniently forgetting that our capacity to respond to God was imparted as a free gift, we think that "our faith" contributes to our standing before God. Faith is not our savior; it, too, is a gift.

God's agape love creates all the value we have. Natural man overrates himself as a worm instead of what he really is—an enemy bent on driving God from His world (Rev. 19:19). But while we were His enemies, God, through the cross, made us of value (Rom. 5:10). Though I might be the only sinner, Christ on the cross became the worm that I am (Ps. 22:1-21). Why then should I struggle to make my faith a bit of wormy worth when "this sacrifice was of such infinite value as to make a man who should avail himself of it more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir" (*The Story of Redemption*, p. 49).—Norman L. Meager, Akron, Ohio.

In this issue MINISTRY prints the full text of three significant documents: "Methods of Bible Study" and "Use of Tithe," voted by the 1986 Annual Council; and "Jewelry: Clarification and an Appeal," voted by the North American Division year-end meeting.

Some feel that the use of the historical-critical method is at the root of much of the theological controversy in the church. The first document seeks to introduce an alternative to this method. We'd like to hear from you as to how well you think it has succeeded.

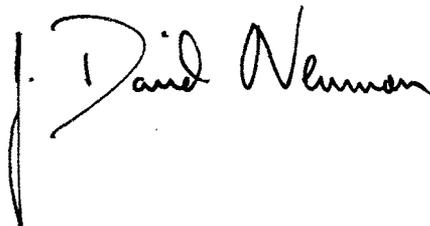
Part of our church's foundation is the tithing system. The theological base for the paying of tithes has never been seriously questioned. However, to whom it should be paid and for what it should be used is coming under increasing attack. Thus the Annual Council made some modest revisions in the policy. One of the laymen on the subcommittee making recommendations to the Annual Council is Jerry Bartram. He makes some insightful comments on what he considers problems with the system. MINISTRY welcomes discussion on this topic.

The third report, while by far the shortest, will probably bring the greatest discussion. Though "How to Study the Bible" and "Use of Tithe" rank far higher on the scale of importance, there is nothing quite like the subject of jewelry, and in particular the wedding ring, to keep discussion going till midnight. Our readers outside North America will smile at the amount of heat and the little light that is often generated.

We trust that you will not become so engrossed, bored, or infuriated with these actions that you will fail to notice some other very significant articles. Read about the wonderful evangelism council held in North America. Be sure to order some of the taped presentations. They will ignite or rekindle in you a fire for saving the lost.

Demons have always been a problem, and still are. You will want to read what Lyndon McDowell, a pastor, has to say as he wrestles with this subject. "Some Call It Heresy" is the story of one young minister's search for truth within the church. Our Health and Religion article features scientific backing for our health message. And ShopTalk features a Home Study course for new Adventists.

Next year, 1988, will be the centennial of the famous Minneapolis conference. We are looking for well-researched and well-reasoned articles on the subject of righteousness by faith and the future of the Adventist Church. They should be double spaced with one-inch margins and from 6 to 14 pages in length. We are interested more in the present and the future than the past, except as the past sheds light on our present condition.



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VOLUME 60 NUMBER 4

Demons and deliverance

Lyndon K.
McDowell

Does the church need
a deliverance ministry
today?



Lyndon K. McDowell
pastors the Olney,
Maryland, and the
Pennsylvania Avenue,
Washington, D.C.,
Seventh-day Adventist
churches.

Is devil possession a reality in the twentieth century? Or has our advanced understanding of the brain and psychological disorders explained away what was once blamed on supernatural manifestations?

Do demons still exist? Do they still take possession of human lives? If so, what is the church's mission? Should we hire trained exorcists to lead every congregation in an active deliverance ministry? Is a yearly sermon decrying the evil of Ouija boards all that is needed? Or does the proper course lie somewhere between these two?

In this scientific age it is surprising to discover that there is still an active debate in psychiatric circles about the existence of demons. While some psychiatrists would dismiss belief in demons as a relic from the Dark Ages, others have continued to study the phenomena that historically have been attributed to the supernatural, and have refused to write them off as mere fruits of disturbed minds.

In the nineteenth century, missionary John L. Nevius described his encounters with the scientifically inexplicable in his book *Demon Possession*. "I brought with me to China a strong conviction that a belief in demons, and communications with spiritual beings, belongs exclusively to a barbarous and superstitious age, and at present can consist only with mental weakness and want of culture,"¹ he wrote. But, like many other missionaries to China, he was confronted with evidence that forced him to recognize that what the Bible says about demons and deliverance is still relevant today.²

Just what do the Scriptures have to say about demon possession? The Old Testament says surprisingly little but does make it clear that demons were alive and well all through the Old Testament period. In Psalm 106 we read that Israel "mingled with the Gentiles and learned their works," which led them to "sacrifice their sons and their daughters to demons" (verses 35, 37, NKJV). It seems incredible that God's people would fall so low as to sacrifice their children to demons, but the demonic and social pressure must have been strong. Evidence from Carthage, a satellite city of Israel's neighbor Tyre, shows how widespread child sacrifice was. Hundreds of urns containing the remains of children have been discovered. The horrible custom was practiced even in the city's heyday.³

King Saul was controlled by an evil spirit toward the close of his reign. The record speaks of "an evil spirit from the Lord" that came upon him. Ellen White says that Saul "gave himself up to the control of the wicked spirit that ruled over him," and she speaks of him plunging "into a fury of passion" and then passing "into a state of despondency and self-contempt," when "remorse would take possession of his soul."⁴

If he were alive today he would likely be labeled a manic-depressive personality. Manic-depressives display impatience and intolerance when their wishes are not immediately gratified, and they indulge in impulsive and ill-considered actions. A patient can be "transformed instantly to the most vicious anger if he is crossed or ignored."⁵ But the fact that symptoms can be given a name does not mean that demons were not involved in causing them. More will be said about

the difficulties of differential diagnosis later.

Demons in the New Testament

In Jesus' time demon possession seems to have been particularly prevalent. Even the Pharisees had their exorcists. Jesus empowered His disciples to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons" (Matt. 10:8, NKJV). He thus made a clear distinction between the sick, the lepers, and the demon-possessed. But it is also evident that Jesus saw the influence of Satan in ordinary physical disease, and that in healing diseases He was pushing back the frontiers of Satan's kingdom. He "healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils" (Mark 1:34). "And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils" (verse 39). "For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God" (Mark 3:10, 11).

The most fully recorded example of demon possession in the New Testament is found in Mark 9:14-29, the story of the boy from whom the disciples were unable to drive out a demon.

The father described his son as being possessed by a spirit that had robbed him of his speech. He had periodic seizures, falling to the ground, foaming at the mouth and grinding his teeth, then becoming rigid. Jesus gave the command "You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him, and enter him no more" (verse 25, NKJV). The spirit then shrieked, convulsed the boy violently, and came out of him. The boy was left exhausted. Matthew says the father described the boy as a lunatic (moon-struck), which the NIV translates as "epileptic" (Matt. 17:15).

Dr. John Wilkinson goes so far as to make a diagnosis: "The boy suffered from the major form of epilepsy. This, however, is not the final diagnosis, for epilepsy is a symptom, not a disease. It is due to a sudden disturbance of the nerve cells in the brain and may have many causes."⁶ Dr. Frank Ervin describes epilepsy as "that state of impaired brain function characterized by a recurrent, periodic, paroxysmal disturbance in mental function with concomitant alterations in behavior or thought processes."⁷

Was the boy suffering from epilepsy as the NIV suggests, or was he possessed by a demon? If one accepts the New Testament evidence there can be no question that the boy suffered from demon possession, but it is also clear that the demon had worked upon the nervous system to produce what could be clinically diagnosed as epilepsy. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* puts the matter clearly: "So far as Inspiration has indicated, the various manifestations of physical and mental disorder that marked the demon possessed, were, in and of themselves, no different from similar manifestations attributable to natural causes. Apparently the difference lay, not in the nervous and physical symptoms displayed, but in the agency that caused them."⁸

Symptoms

The fact that demon possession has very real psychological symptoms makes it difficult for anyone interested in a deliverance ministry to know whether a problem is caused by a demon or by psychopathologic or physiopathologic difficulties. Dr. John White, associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Manitoba, defines the dilemma thus: "I can conceive of no demonic state which cannot be explained by a nondemonic hypothesis. *I can likewise conceive of no experiment to give conclusive support to demonic rather than parapsychological hypotheses.*" Then he adds this warning: "It also seems to me that Christians should not be found floundering in the steps of J. B. Rine,"⁹ that is, delving into parapsychology.

To add to the difficulty is the prevalence of both willful and unintentional deception. Not only is the devil a master of both simulation and imitation, but people themselves intentionally or unintentionally resort to deception. Nevius, who had considerable experience in China with demon-possessed people, remarks that "even if referable to or accompanied by well-known symptoms of disease, simulated manifestations, as well as automatic, may naturally be expected."¹⁰

Another problem must also be mentioned. There is a tendency on the part of anyone interested in demonology to see a demon behind every abnormal condition. Ellen White repeatedly encountered and denounced overuse of exorcism. In 1908 she warned against the work of those who went about

Was the boy suffering from epilepsy or possessed by a demon?

"declaring persons possessed of the devil, and then praying with them and pretending to cast out the evil spirits." She called their actions "fanaticism which will bring into disrepute any church which sanctions such work."¹¹

In reality physicians and psychologists who believe in demon possession find that genuine cases are rare. William Wilson, professor of psychiatry at Duke University, states that he has seen only two cases that "meet the rigid criteria of Nevius for demon possession," and only three patients whose symptoms suggested demon possession.¹² John Newport, professor of philosophy of religion, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, believes that "demon possession is quite rare. It is most likely after considerable and persistent moral decay has taken place."¹³ This accords with a statement in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*: "Wherever Inspiration points out the cause, it declares that demon possession comes about as the result of wrong living."¹⁴

Ellen White says of the demon-possessed man in the synagogue: "The secret cause of the affliction that had made this man a fearful spectacle to his friends and a burden to himself was in his own life. He had been fascinated by the pleasures of sin, and had thought to make life a grand carnival. He did not dream of becoming a terror to the world and the reproach of his family. He thought his time could be spent in innocent folly. But once in the downward path, his feet rapidly descended. Intemperance and frivolity perverted the noble attributes of his nature, and Satan took absolute control of him."¹⁵

Some Christians develop an excessive demonology interest that can be harmful both to them and to others. Such interest may also indicate a personal problem. Basil Jackson remarks: "I have noted that there is an increased tendency for attraction to the occult in those Christians who have a basic paranoid

How can one distinguish between the supernatural and the purely psychological?

personality structure," and that "this type of Christian is often particularly attracted to involvement in the deliverance ministry."¹⁶ He goes on to warn that "a frequently stated objection to dabbling in the occult is that such an activity tends to make the individual more susceptible to invasion by outside agencies. . . . I always encourage Christians to stay away from this kind of activity."¹⁷

For Adventists the tragic story of Moses Hull, the Civil War era evangelist who first debated with spiritualists and then joined them, should serve as an eloquent warning of the dangers. Early in my own ministry an interest in reading spiritist papers and corresponding with spiritist people, purely for evangelistic purposes, had to be terminated decisively.

Diagnosis

In the light of the diagnostic difficulties, how can one distinguish between the supernatural and the purely psychological? There are no easy answers, but there are several factors that must be considered. First of all, proper diagnosis may require the counsel of several individuals. Specialists in psychopathology, medicine, and pastoral care may each need to make an independent evaluation of the patient.

These specialists will need to have a thorough medical, social, and personal history of the patient. The background information should include facts about alcohol and drug usage, accidents resulting in concussion or shock, any traumatic experiences, relationships with family members, and most particularly whether there has been any involvement with the occult. This latter heading should include use of an Ouija board, consultation with palm readers or faith healers, and possibly even overemphasis on the importance of glossolalia in religious experience.

Sometimes insight may be gained by an examination of the individual's writ-

ing or drawing. On one occasion a young man who had demonstrated abnormal behavior patterns showed me his scrapbook. Incongruous pictures alerted me to possible schizophrenia. After hours of counseling at a medical clinic he finally agreed to hospitalization. With medication he was able to live a normal life. A second case did not end so happily. The person having problems showed me a painting that revealed some bizarre concepts. He agreed to see a psychiatrist, but failed to keep his appointment. He was later forcibly hospitalized after a fracas in a restaurant.

Social dynamics

Demon possession was especially widespread when Christ was on earth. The spiritual reasons for this are suggested in *The Desire of Ages*, page 257, but there were also sociological factors that seemed to predispose people to involvement with the occult. The masses of people were poor, unschooled, and superstitious. The bondage of Rome aroused restiveness and a nostalgia for the days when prophets were among them and God ruled in their midst. The upper classes longed for a political charismatic who would reinstate the kingdom of Israel. Restlessness, fear, superstition, expectation, and a longing for national vindication provided a fruitful ground for occult ascendancy.

At other times in history similar conditions prevailed. In those times interest in witchcraft and demonology blossomed, and along with the interest there no doubt came an increase in actual demon possession. Dabbling in spiritism often yields vile fruit. In Europe from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries there was little growth in witchcraft or interest in demonology. The emotionally disturbed were cared for as a community responsibility.¹⁸ Edith Wright maintains that, at least in France, psychosis was looked upon as a curable illness, caused primarily by an emotional upset.¹⁹ The Canon Episcopi, incorporated as part of the decretals for church law in the mid-twelfth century and made required reading for inquisitors, condemned witchcraft theory.²⁰ Between 1320 and 1420 there were only 13 treatises on witchcraft and only 12 witchcraft trials in France. But the next 50 years saw an increase in plagues and famines. During that half century there were 28 treatises and 120 trials.²¹

In the 1480s Johann Sprenger and

Heinrich Kraemer, two Dominican monks, published a book called *Malleus Maleficarum* ("The Witches' Hammer"), which recognized demonology and also linked it with mental disease. The book has been called a handbook of sexual psychopathies because of its detailed sexual descriptions. It became the standard reference work for both church and state in regard to indictment, trial, and punishment of alleged witches.

The book is not recommended reading, but it does give an insight into the thinking of that era. Zilboorg comments on the social situation of that period: "We must not forget . . . that the whole problem of witchcraft . . . was not the exclusive result of a miscarried psychopathology or of a psychopathological bent in theology. There was a restlessness in the body social and politic of Christian Europe; the *Malleus* was a reaction against the disquieting signs of growing instability of the established order. . . . The sort of 'persecutory mania' which was displayed by the church and the state during the period under consideration was undoubtedly due to the sense of insecurity and the growing awareness that new social forces and new spiritual ideals were about to rise and to threaten the very heart of the regime which ruled medieval Europe."²²

Although the *Malleus* was designed to describe demon possession, Dr. John Nemiah describes it as "one of the great textbooks of psychopathology of its time, and in its numerous case histories one can read accurate descriptions of clinical syndromes that are familiar today."²³

Interest in demons and the practice of witchcraft disappeared when better religious instruction became available to peasants and when intellectual skepticism increased among the ruling classes. Robert Mandrou states that "the disappearance of Satan was also, and perhaps most important, a disappearance of fear."²⁴

Once again we live in a world of fear. The threat of war, the increase of crime, the failure of science to provide an answer to our problems, and a realization of our own insignificance all provide a fertile field for renewed interest in the supernatural.

Within the Adventist Church, along with recent theological crises has come, among some, a longing for new evidence of supernatural intervention. A vague myth persists that when Ellen White was alive there was constant evidence of

God's immediate and continuing intervention guiding the church through every problem. This divine intervention set the church apart from every other denomination and gave evidence of its mission. Even a cursory study of Adventist Church history would explode this myth,²⁵ but fear, uncertainty, and a nostalgic longing for a mythical past, mixed with a basically paranoid personality, can easily develop pathological interest in exorcism and pseudoprophetic gifts.

Historically Anna Rice Phillips no doubt supplied a felt need when Ellen White was in Australia and the church in Battle Creek was left without a prophet. She is one example of how a person can become self-deceived.²⁶ Were it not for correspondence and counsel arriving from Australia providentially on time, she would no doubt have received a good following. The Sanctuary Awakening movement and the infamous Todd tapes are more recent illustrations of how easily people can be misled. Paul Tournier defines the motivating factors: "Modern man, despite appearances, is less aware of his own nature and motives, and is lonelier as he faces them. We pity the savage amid his mysterious, menacing spirits, but at least he shares his fears with all his tribe, and does not have to fear the awful spiritual solitude which is so striking among civilized people. And the primitive tribe does at least lay down a certain magical interpretation, which, however mistaken, is satisfying because it is unquestioned. In the same way, the modern fanatic, who unquestioningly accepts all the dialectic and the slogans of his party, is happier than the skeptic. And this explains the strange resurgence of the primitive mentality which we are witnessing today."²⁷

Christ's warnings in Matthew 24 about false prophets appear to be quite pertinent to the Adventist ministry and laity in our day.

Wider aspects of deliverance

Those interested in a deliverance ministry should be aware that deliverance covers a very wide spectrum of spiritual needs. Healing can come from repentance and confession on the part of the individual, and genuine interest and concern on the part of the minister.²⁸ Exorcism may rarely, if ever, be necessary. It is instructive to note the vocabulary that Ellen White uses in speaking of demon possession:

If permitted, evil spirits can "distract our minds."²⁹ They can "disorder and torment our bodies."³⁰ "The senses, the nerves, the passions, the organs of men" can be worked by "supernatural agencies in the indulgence of the vilest lust."³¹ This type of possession calls for recognition and repentance, not exorcism, and who can doubt that this possession is happening on a worldwide scale today?

The merciless crimes that shock the world, pointless terrorism, and drug abuse are evidences of demonic control of men. Can we question that those who are led to revere so-called mystics who preach self-indulgence and unbridled lust are yielding to the control of evil spirits? In a more veiled form, demon influence is seen in violent outbursts of temper, in obsessions, in perversions, in heresies, and in compulsive criticism of church leaders. Here is a fruitful field for a deliverance ministry. "Intensity is taking possession of every earthly element. With a subtlety gained through centuries of conflict, the prince of evil works under a disguise. He appears clothed as an angel of light, and multitudes are 'giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.'³²

Multitudes today need deliverance from racial and national animosities that so aptly illustrate Matthew 24:7 and that will eventually lead to the conditions that obtained when Jerusalem was reduced to ruin. And if Jerusalem is too distant, think of Hitler in his bunker in Berlin, surrounded by the ruin that his madness had wrought. One commentator wrote that "the inability of America and the nations of Western Europe to recognize the demonic made it impossible for us to assess the significance of Hitler and the Nazi movement realistically." We could not "even see Hitler or the destructively demonic reality he represented."³³ What a tragedy if we should be just as blind to demonic political movements today. What a challenging opportunity to reach across the abyss of hatred and clasp hands to bring healing and wholeness!

What a challenge to the ministry to be free and to provide freedom to those caught up in the flood of hatred that is engulfing the world. Social or political change will never bring freedom until the hearts of men and women are won to the Lordship of Christ and the demons of hate are exorcised by the love of God. This is true twentieth-century deliverance ministry.

¹ John L. Nevius, *Demon Possession and Allied Themes* (Chicago: Fleming and Revell, 1894), p. 290.

² Kenneth McAll wrote, "I was afraid of the whole subject, dismissing it as 'primitive.'" But he found himself "quite shaken by the transformation of some of these people who were obviously in the grip of evil and by the fact that it was our prayers which had initiated the cure." "Taste and See," in John W. Montgomery, ed., *Demon Possession: A Medical, Historical, Anthropological, and Theological Symposium* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1976), p. 269.

³ Lawrence E. Stager and Samuel R. Wolff, "Child Sacrifice at Carthage—Religious Rite or Population Control?" *Biblical Archaeology Review*, January/February 1984, pp. 30-51.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1958) pp. 650, 651.

⁵ Robert Cohen, "Psychotic Disorders," in Alfred M. Freedman and Harold I. Kaplan, *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry* (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins Co., 1967), p. 682.

⁶ Gregory Zilboorg, *A History of Medical Psychology* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1941), p. 163.

⁷ Frank Ervin, "Brain Disorders Associated With Convulsions," in Freedman and Kaplan, p. 796.

⁸ *The SDA Bible Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1980), vol. 5, p. 577.

⁹ John White, "Commentary on Psychological Observations on Demonism," in Montgomery, p. 253. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁰ Nevius, p. 290.

¹¹ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), book 2, p. 46.

¹² W. P. Wilson, "Hysteria and Demons, Depression and Oppression, Good and Evil," in Montgomery, p. 342.

¹³ John Newport, "Satan and Demons: A Theological Perspective," in Montgomery, p. 342.

¹⁴ *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 575.

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 256.

¹⁶ Basil Jackson, "Reflections on the Demonic," in Montgomery, p. 259.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

¹⁸ Franz G. Alexander and Sheldon Selesnick, *The History of Psychiatry: An Evaluation of Psychiatric Thought and Practice From Prehistoric Times to the Present* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 53.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁰ E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 17.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²² Zilboorg, p. 153.

²³ Cited by Zilboorg.

²⁴ Cited by Monter, p. 62.

²⁵ George Knight, *Myths in Adventism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985).

²⁶ For a brief account of Anna Rice Phillips, see R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1979), p. 256.

²⁷ Paul Tournier, *A Doctor's Casebook in the Light of the Bible* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 104.

²⁸ See, for example, the experience of Richard Trates in *Collegiate Quarterly*, First Quarter, 1986, p. 27.

²⁹ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1950), p. 517.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 36.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 257.

³³ Rollo May, *Love and Will* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1969), p. 130.

Some call it heresy

From belief to doubt and back again. MINISTRY editor J. R. Spangler interviews Martin Weber about how he found faith again in the church's understanding of the sanctuary and judgment.



Martin Weber

Editor's Note:

Martin Weber, assistant to George Vandeman, director and speaker of the It Is Written telecast, is an ordained minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. During his 12 years of service he has been a conference evangelist and pastor of several churches. He currently does research, writing, traveling, and speaking for the It Is Written telecast. Martin's struggle with doubts over certain church doctrines led him to a thorough reexamination of the scriptural support for these doctrinal positions. Several of his friends went through the same struggle and unfortunately left the ministry and the church. Martin's struggle and findings of his studies have been documented in his book Some Call It Heresy. This faith-building volume needs to be placed in the hands of everyone who doubts the church's doctrinal position on the sanctuary and related beliefs. He also helped prepare the books What I Like About . . . and The Rise and Fall of Antichrist, by Vandeman. In the following interview Martin places in capsule form his journey from doubt to belief.

Spangler: How did you come to question church teachings?

Weber: It began during a summer workers' retreat. Several young pastors in our conference invited me to study the Bible with them. And I was happy to join them. Being conference evangelist, I wanted to get close to them so we could work well together in our meetings.

I soon discovered that they were into some pretty deep water. They had some fundamental doubts about church teachings. I saw where they were headed with their heresy and tried to help them. But instead of helping them, I myself became confused.

Soon my mind was boiling over with doubts. I couldn't understand what was happening. I had been happily baptizing people into the Adventist faith I loved. I never imagined I would ever disbelieve our teachings.

At first I tried to dismiss my questions, but couldn't. I had to be honest with myself—I had always told our audiences that there is only one reason to belong to a church: all its teachings must be found in the Bible. So I had to get to the bottom of this for my own peace of mind.

Spangler: Did the conference administration know what was going on?

Weber: Yes, I told them about our study group and the questions we had. By this time we were meeting regularly in motel rooms to study before workers' meetings. Naturally the conference administration became alarmed. The president asked us to stop studying together, and admonished me to stay in the mainstream. He told me not to chase the devil's doubts, but to keep preaching the message and leave the questions for others.

Spangler: How did you respond?

Weber: I wanted to cooperate. I agreed to stop our Bible studies, but explained that I could not preach the Adventist message if I didn't believe it. As far as the mainstream was concerned, I told him that something could be wrong with the mainstream, since all these years had passed and Christ had not come.

The president became really worried about me. He sent me to the White Estate to get straightened out. The brethren there were very kind and eager to help me. But nobody seemed to

understand that I had to get my questions settled from the Bible, not the writings of Ellen White.

Outside the White Estate building I told my ministerial director that unless I could defend my faith from the Bible, I would have to turn in my credentials. That hurt both of us deeply.

Spangler: *What happened next?*

Weber: I searched everywhere for answers. About this time there was a ministerial conference in Takoma Park. Some of the ministers invited me to a secret meeting with Desmond Ford. He had an apartment on Carroll Avenue, right around the corner from the General Conference, where he was preparing his Glacier View manuscript. About a dozen crowded into Ford's living room, there in his basement apartment.

Spangler: *What did he tell you?*

Weber: Dr. Ford declined to discuss our questions on the sanctuary. He said he had promised the brethren to keep quiet on the subject until after Glacier View. He wanted to honor his word. He did agree to talk about anything else on our minds.

We asked him for advice about resigning from the ministry. He encouraged us to stay in our work unless we were made to leave. He said that at the same time we should keep studying until these matters were clear to us.

Spangler: *Did you take Ford's advice?*

Weber: Not entirely. I thought it made sense to stay in the ministry as long as I was searching for answers. But if I became convinced that the church was wrong, I would leave without being forced out. I didn't think I deserved to be supported by Adventist tithe dollars unless I believed Adventist doctrine.

During our time in Takoma Park several of us visited you at the General Conference, if you recall. We opened our hearts about some of our questions. You encouraged us to keep studying. You told us that every Adventist doctrine could be proved by the Bible and that if we would be patient and keep studying we would see it. That helped me quite a bit.

Spangler: *Just what were the doctrinal questions bothering you?*

Weber: First, why would God jeopardize the security of believers by subjecting them to a judgment? What is the purpose of judgment, since God already knows those who are His?

I also had doubts about our time prophecies. The New Testament seemed to teach that Christ was prepared to come in the first century, not after waiting 18 centuries for 1844. And our proof of the day/year principle seemed pretty fragile.

Also, the book of Hebrews puts Jesus already at the throne of God within the veil. I saw nothing to indicate two separate apartments in heaven. Besides, if atonement took place at the cross, how could we say that the Day of Atonement didn't find fulfillment until centuries later?

Spangler: *How did you get your answers?*

Weber: Well, I took my family to the Lake Union Soul-Winning Institute in Hinsdale. I knew that if anyone could help me, it would be Mark Finley, director of the institute.

I asked Mark if he would come to our apartment and go head-to-head against a doctoral student from the seminary who had already given up church teachings. Mark was not one for debating, but he agreed to a series of private discussions in order to help me.

I'll never forget those Saturday night Bible conferences. I still have my notes from their discussions.

Mark was pretty impressive. He proved from the book of Daniel that the prophecies stretched till the "time of the end"—not the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. He also exposed Ford's teachings as a kind of preterism.

Spangler: *So that's how you regained confidence in the church?*

Weber: I was beginning once more to see light in Adventist teachings. But still I had some basic questions. I could not comprehend the meaning of the pre-Advent judgment.

Right at this time Mark became ill for several days. Now, he is quite a health-minded man, who doesn't often get sick. But for several days he was flat on his back with the flu. He used the time to study the Bible. And when he came back to class, he had found the basic answers I needed.

We asked him for advice about resigning from the ministry. He encouraged us to stay in our work unless we were made to leave.

Spangler: *What did Mark show you?*

Weber: He explained that the meaning of judgment, to the Hebrews, was vindication. Judgment was not a threat, but a favor, a way to deliver the accused from condemnation. I can't tell you how much this simple insight helped regain my confidence in our church teachings.

Further study showed me that in Old Testament times judges themselves served as defenders of the accused. There were no lawyers in the Hebrew legal system. Witnesses of the crime pressed charges, and judges defended the rights of the accused. Today our judges remain strictly neutral while the prosecuting and defending attorneys do battle. But back then judges were required by law to be biased in favor of the accused.

Of course, the judge still had to maintain justice. If the evidence required it, he would reluctantly abandon the defendant and execute punishment. But the whole Old Testament system was predisposed toward vindication, not condemnation.

You can see how this helped me accept a pre-Advent judgment. For the first time I realized that God is not questioning our salvation but defending His relationship with us against the accuser of the brethren. The celestial judgment does not jeopardize our security in Jesus, but rather, manifests and ratifies our assurance.

I discuss all this in chapter 4 of my book.

Another thing that Mark showed me was a list of exciting parallels between the judgment scenes of Daniel 7 and Revelation 4 and 5. I had never seen this before. I consider this parallel the strongest New Testament proof of the

timing of our sanctuary message.

Once I understood this connection between the judgment scenes of Daniel and Revelation, that was it. I had turned the corner. I was born again into the Adventist faith. Other questions remained to be answered, but I knew then that everything would work out. Chapter 12 of my book explains all this in detail.

You can imagine how happy I was to rejoice once more in the truth. I felt on fire, like a new convert.

Spangler: *What about your friends in your home conference?*

Weber: While I was away at Hinsdale they were drifting away from the church. A couple of them began quietly scouting around for other jobs.

I did my best to share with them the good news I was learning from Mark. I even bought a ticket for one of them to fly to Hinsdale and study with us. He came, but he was unable or unwilling to see the light. I couldn't save him for the church, no matter how hard I tried.

Each of my friends resigned or was removed from the ministry. And all of them left the church. One started his own "gospel" church right there in his former district. The fellow I flew up to Hinsdale, my best friend, left his wife and family and gave up religion entirely.

As you might expect, my friendship with the group came to an end. They accused me of compromising my commitment to the gospel by staying with the church. That hurt.

Spangler: *When did you decide to write your book?*

Weber: After getting back on my feet in Hinsdale, I was called to pastor a church in California. Soon after I arrived, a former associate pastor returned to town to set up one of the so-called gospel fellowships.

We had quite a struggle for the souls of some of our members. I was thankful that because I myself had wrestled through these problems, I could help my people. So they could understand the issues, I wrote the things I had learned in a little manuscript. Several church leaders read it and encouraged me to develop it into a book. And eventually *Some Call It Heresy* was published by the Review and Herald.

You know, the sanctuary crisis came and went, leaving most of our members scratching their heads, wondering what really happened. Many wonder just what went on in those "gospel" study groups. I thought I owed it to them to share my firsthand perspective.

Spangler: *Tell us more about the book.*

Weber: The first chapter is the story of my struggles. The next couple of chapters take another look at Adventist history. Then comes the meaning of judgment. After that I trace the judgment unfolding in Daniel, Revelation, and Hebrews.

In one of the later chapters I wrestle with the question of Ellen White. How can we live by the Bible and the Bible only, yet honor and benefit from her ministry?

Spangler: *Looking back at your experience, what would you have done differently?*

Weber: When conference leaders tried to dismiss our questions, my friends and I became frustrated. We developed a "we

versus they" attitude, along with a persecution complex. I regret that very much.

Even so, during those six months of crisis I wasn't looking for conflict. I was looking for hooks to hang my faith on. I was praying for answers, and I embraced them as soon as they came my way.

Spangler: *What do you wish the church had done differently?*

Weber: I'm glad there were those who did not question my commitment because I had doubts, but instead helped me find answers.

Back then, most of the material the church published dealt with the crisis from a historical, not from a theological, perspective. All those warnings about Ballenger and Kellogg frightened me, but did not provide Bible answers for my questions.

Of course, since 1979 much excellent material dealing with the judgment from a biblical perspective has been published by our church. For example, I think of the October 1980 edition of *MINISTRY*. It helped me much in preparing my book.

One book I bought way back in 1973 would have helped me in 1979 if only I had read it—Dr. Heppenstall's *Our High Priest*, a marvelous book.

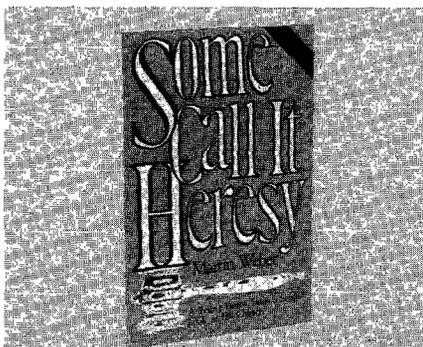
Spangler: *What has your life been like since your crisis?*

Weber: I've lost contact with my former friends who left the church. I've tried to write to them, but they haven't answered my letters. I exchanged a number of letters with Dr. Ford, but none lately. In his last letter he said that Hebrews 9:23 does not involve the cleansing of heaven's sanctuary. I say it does. And that's where it stands.

My understanding of the sanctuary has not changed in the past six years. It has deepened, but not changed. I marvel again and again to see new dimensions in this special truth that God gave our church.

I'm happy to say I enjoy good fellowship again with my former conference officials. They invited me to give my testimony at camp meeting. It was a delight to work again with those dear men.

At present I'm with *It Is Written*, assisting in Elder Vandeman's exciting ministry. What a privilege!



Save \$2

In *Some Call It Heresy* Martin Weber tells the story of his spiritual detour. From believing and preaching the church's teachings on prophecy, the sanctuary, and the investigative judgment, he descended into doubt—and then returned to a stronger faith.

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Successful counseling

Ellen Bresee

Five secrets to good counseling.



Ellen Bresee is associate coordinator of Shepherdess International.

If you are a caring person, you counsel. If you say, "I could never counsel!" you are really saying you wouldn't listen to some heavyhearted person who comes to you for help. You may be shy. You may feel inadequate. But Christians desire to be caring people, and caring people reach out to hurting people rather than hiding from them, even if it means sharing their pain. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" (1 Thess. 3:12).

Caring persons counsel successfully. Researchers conducted an experiment on a university campus comparing the relative effectiveness of counseling done by professional counselors and that of regular teachers. They found that the professional counselors had no more success in helping troubled students than the average teacher. The professional counselors knew more. Their techniques may have been better. But students who counseled with teachers chose them on the basis of an ongoing relationship. They came to those they knew best, trusted, and whom they felt cared most.

People who choose to counsel with a pastor, and especially with a pastor's wife, usually choose him or her on the same basis. Such counseling tends to be successful.

"The journey through life is a series of crises some of which are predictable and expected and some of which are total

surprises," says Norman Wright in *Crisis Counseling*. Some of these crises send people to their extended family for help. Christian friends who will listen and still love them provide reassurance and support.

Let me share five secrets to good counseling:

1. Learn to listen. Many good things happen when you listen to the counselee—especially at the beginning of your first session:

- *You show the counselee that you care.* Listening flatters. It says that what the counselee thinks and feels matters. It proves you care, and troubled people desperately need to know someone cares.

- *Talking clarifies the problem for the counselee.* Talking is excellent therapy. By putting their feelings into words, people move from the emotional to a more rational level. Clothes taken out of a washer and placed in a basket are all wadded up, shapeless, and intertwined. But hang them on the clothesline, and individual shapes and colors come clear. Thoughts and feelings, problems and needs, can seem terribly complicated. Putting them into words is like hanging them on the clothesline. Things start coming clear.

- *Listening clarifies the problem for the counselor.* While you're talking you're not learning. When you concentrate too much on coming up with answers, you may misunderstand part of the questions. Listen more to learn more.

You encourage your counselee to talk

Never assume that what you hear from one side is accurate or that the person is deliberately lying.

by smiling, nodding, leaning forward, and looking interested. Most counsees do not feel free to go on talking unless the counselor gives some positive reinforcement. As one professional counselor said when recruiting beginners to assist him in counseling people attending a stop-smoking clinic: "All I want you to know is one word, *Uh-huh*."

During the early stages of a counseling experience you should talk only to clarify what the counselee is saying. Sometimes what you are hearing is not what he is saying. Sometimes what he is saying is not what he is really feeling. Repeat in question form what you think he said. "Do I hear you saying that when your husband works late at the office every night you feel rejected?" The counselee will correct you if you're not really hearing what he is trying to communicate.

• *Be unshockable.* If you show you're shocked by what a counselee reveals, he may feel threatened and withhold further disclosures. Ask God to help you to be accepting of the person even though what he's done may be distasteful to you. On the other hand, you don't need to encourage sordid details.

• *Hear both sides.* Never assume that what you hear from one side is completely accurate or that the person is deliberately lying, but that he is right in his own eyes. The implied flattery that comes with his selecting you as his counselor tends to bias your thinking in his favor. After all, anyone who had the good sense to seek your counsel couldn't be too far wrong! You will tend to take

sides against the other person. If at all possible, talk to that other individual personally.

• *Be as nonjudgmental as Jesus was toward the woman caught in adultery.* And let your grace extend to the "offending" party as well as to the counselee.

I learned a valuable lesson early in my counseling experience. I thought I was saving time by meeting with a husband and wife together on their initial visit. Later the wife called me and told me a completely different story from the one she shared in front of her husband. The whole picture changed. From that time on, I have made it a practice to counsel separately on the initial visit. Your counselee may be intimidated in the presence of a dominating spouse.

2. Concentrate on solutions.

Spend most of your time on *solutions*, not problems! The first half hour of the first session ought to be enough time listening to the problem. Some people go over and over a problem and refuse to work on a solution. They want sympathy more than they want a solution. If they solved their problem, they wouldn't feel important any longer. They'd lose the excuse for coming. Not only are you wasting your time with such people, you are hurting them by oversympathizing. You will become their crutch and may prevent their ever walking.

I like the little story about solutions I once heard Pastor Glenn Coon tell. He and his wife had moved into a new home, and the landscaping wasn't finished. When Glenn tracked mud on their new carpet, his wife wasn't happy. Finally she said that they had a problem. Glenn asked what it was. Her simple answer was "Mud." Immediately they began looking for a solution. The answer they came up with was to place a pair of overshoes by each door for Glenn to wear while working outside. The overshoes could then be slipped off at the door before he came in. The point is that they didn't spend much time on the problem. All it took was a simple, quick explanation of it, and they immediately moved on to the solution!

The Christian way to change others is to change oneself. You can discover whether or not you can really help a person by finding out whether he is expecting to make changes in his own behavior. Too often pastoral counseling consists of a member coming with a black story about a nonmember spouse, fishing

for sympathy. Many times the session ends with a prayer imploring the Lord to change the spouse. That may not be Christian counseling at all! The Christian way to change others is to change oneself.

We don't want to send people out feeling guilty because of all the mistakes they may have made in a relationship. On the other hand, sanctification is growth in love toward both God and man. We help people apply Christianity to their problems when we help them see how Christ can change their own attitudes and behavior and how they can use Christian love in motivating the spouse to change.

Don't try to solve people's problems. Help them to define what the problem really is and then work their way through the process of solving it. Guide them in deciding what change Christ wants to help them make as He works with them in healing the relationship.

Don't do "band-aid" counseling that discourages long-term treatment—especially if you tackle marriage counseling. Heavy surgery may be required! One session does not usually solve marital problems. The danger is that when you help the counsees alleviate the symptoms, they get to feeling better and think all is well.

I have known couples who felt the pressure ease dramatically after two or three sessions with a counselor. Then they said, "Thanks, we don't need any more help." But after several more months they were separated. They had been too embarrassed to come back and say, "It wasn't enough." It usually takes a long time for relationships to disintegrate and a long time to rebuild them.

If a couple insist on ending the counseling, at least leave them with a good self-counseling book. An excellent one is *How to Have a Happy Marriage*, by David and Vera Mace. This outlines a six-week program that helps a couple learn skills in communication, confrontation, and appreciation.

3. Help them choose a plan.

Counsees find it easier to concentrate on solutions if, together, you list various options. Then help them decide which options seem best, and form a plan for putting them into operation. Now your task is largely to encourage them to implement their own decision.

If you have a counselee who constantly phones you and brings up the

Many ministers and their spouses find themselves dominated by the telephone.

same old problem, ask, "Did you try what we decided on?" If he hedges, encourage him to try it before you discuss the problem again. Assure him of your continuing concern, then pleasantly but confidently close the conversation and hang up. If he won't help himself, you cannot help him.

Many ministers and spouses find themselves dominated by the telephone, and valuable hours that could be used in soul winning are lost. If you find this a problem, try a class on assertiveness training. In a paper entitled "Why Do Clergy Wives Burn Out?" Roy Oswald, of the Alban Institute, suggests that clergy spouses often believe the congregation expects them to be passive and to ignore their own needs. Passive behavior eventually leads to losing control over one's life. Aggressive behavior means exploiting or coercing another. Christian assertive behavior is feeling clear about who you are and what you can and cannot contribute. You can be pleasant and receptive to the chronic phone caller and yet not let someone else's agenda dominate you.

4. Know when to refer. While listening, watch for such inappropriate responses as illogical verbalizing, uncontrollable emotions, staring into space or inattentiveness, extreme depression, inability to make simple decisions, belief that others are out to get them, and loss of control in eating and other habits. These can be psychotic symptoms, and people who exhibit them should be referred to a professional counselor or psychiatrist who is trained in treating

severe conditions. Find out what resources are available in your area so you can refer cases you are not qualified to work with. You can usually find help by inquiring at your county mental health department. The Narramore Christian Foundation, 1409 North Walnut Grove Avenue, Rosemead, CA 91770, (818) 288-7000, keeps a list of qualified counselors and will give referrals.

5. Practice strictest confidentiality. When someone opens to you the depths of his heart, you have a grave responsibility to practice the strictest confidentiality! If you cannot keep confidences, don't counsel. It would be better for you to tell the person who comes to you that you have trouble keeping a secret, that it sort of bubbles out at the wrong time. I knew one minister's wife who said she asked her husband and others not to tell her any secrets. That way she didn't accidentally give them away.

Beware of the busybodies. They tend to go fishing a lot. For instance, one might say to you, "I understand Mary is thinking about a divorce." This busybody saw Mary counseling with you in the church office, and she's noticed Mary's husband hasn't been around much lately. She doesn't really know that Mary is thinking about a divorce, she's only hoping to find out! If you surmise she knows and answer yes, you've blown it.

Don't be surprised if a person whom you counseled avoids you later. Your relationship has changed. This is especially true of a person who has seldom shared his feelings with another human before. I remember one lady who would cross the street when she saw me coming. I wondered whether I had offended her. Later she told me how much she had appreciated my help. She was just embarrassed because she knew that I knew.

Offer to pray with the person you are counseling. Prayer focuses his attention on the real Source of help—God.

If you care, develop good counseling skills, and have time for counseling, you can be a great help to your husband. The counseling you do just might mean a lighter load for him. Perhaps you can bargain with him, getting him to agree to spend with you and your family some of the time you save him by counseling members. If counseling is a gift God has given you, use it to glorify Him.

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NAD evangelism council

Morten Juberg

Evangelism is alive and bursting with energy on Planet Earth.



Morten Juberg is the communication director for the North Pacific Union Conference.

Is public evangelism in the Adventist Church dead? One would not have gotten that impression at the North American Division evangelism council that met recently at Daytona Beach, Florida.

Some 600 evangelists, administrators, pastors, and departmental directors and their spouses convened to discuss public evangelism, the first such far-reaching session in a decade. They studied, prayed, sang, and listened to the cream of Adventist evangelists.

Russell Burrill, a former Upper Columbia pastor, noted, "We would have few accessions to the church if it weren't for the evangelist." Burrill now heads the North American Division Evangelism Institute, based in La Grange, Illinois, which provides additional training in public evangelism for seminary graduates.

Evangelist Ron Halvorsen told the audience that no meeting is a failure in the sight of God. He recalled a large campaign held in New York City's prestigious Carnegie Hall some years ago.

"It was expensive and the baptisms were few," he said. But to those who would criticize such meetings, he pointed out that among the few baptisms were James Londis and Halvorsen himself. Both of the new members went on to become pastor-evangelists, and between them they have brought 5,000 converts into the church.

"Why do we watch the dead, those who have left the church after meetings?" he said. "Why not rejoice over those who were saved?"

This was a time of the best of Adventist preaching, with a morning prayer and praise session getting under way in the early dawn (7:15 a.m.) and with meetings continuing through the evening.

Specialized seminars were held for wives, administrators, and the evangelists, while some 30 exhibitors displayed wares as well as helpful information. The planning for the council had its beginnings at the 1985 General Conference session in New Orleans. At that time Charles Bradford, North American Division president, met with evangelists in attendance to plan the meeting.

Good humor sparked many of the presentations. Frank Sherrill, president of the Arizona Conference, told how he was called out of a church service by police who needed his help.

"We picked up a man walking naked on the turnpike, and he refuses to put his clothes on until he talks to an Adventist preacher," they told him.

Sherrill related how he visited with the man, who did don his clothes. He was sent to the state hospital for observation and treatment. Later he was released and was baptized along with his mother, sister, and her husband. "Because of the shame of my nakedness," he told Sherrill, "they all joined the church."

Canadian evangelist Henry Feyera-bend said that as a youngster he prayed for a handsome face like George Vandeman's and a voice like that of H.M.S. Richards, Sr.

"Somehow the order got mixed up," he said. "A friend told me that he had a burden for me to be on the radio."

"But I don't have a voice for radio," Feyera-bend replied.



Seating was at a premium in the evangelism council meeting hall.

"You do have a face for radio," the friend responded.

In a challenging presentation, those in attendance heard from Carl George, a church-growth consultant from Fuller Theological Seminary, who has made a study of Adventists. He called Adventists the "silent kingdom," not generally understood by other denominations, and chided those present for failure to take full advantage of the blessings God has given.

"You have the same dangers of being institutionalized as other churches that have lost their first flush of enthusiasm," he said. "Your reward system causes people to look toward a higher level than the local church, and you are siphoning off key staff to local and union conferences."

He noted that the church has been inconsistent in handling Ellen G. White, saying, "You have a prophetess, but you put her writings in the same status as Scripture."

Referring to the continuing controversies about Mrs. White, he added, "You need to stop arguing and look for Jesus' coming."

Dr. George commended the denomination for five main points of belief, including the Sabbath, biblical diet, tithing, Christian education, and the

doctrine of grace.

Pointing to the Adventist diet, he said, "If you have the moxie and guts to eat the right way, why apologize for it?"

One of the more provocative presentations—"Slogans and Myths That Are Killing Public Evangelism and What We Can Do About It"—was given by Lenard Jaecks, president of the Washington Conference. Among the myths he referred to is the one called "It Is Hard Here."



Music coordinator Raymond Saunders from the Northeastern Conference leads forth with gusto.

"Have you ever held meetings in a place where the people said, 'It is easy here'?" Jaecks asked. "We don't let the hardness of the territory influence the program. It's hard anywhere. The devil will make sure of that."

North Pacific Union president Bruce Johnston, who chaired one of the sessions, told the audience that he gained three impressions from attending the meetings.

"I am impressed with how early evangelists like to get going in the morning [he was referring to the early meeting time]. I'm glad to see the number of young evangelists coming on the scene, and I'm impressed with the number of wives in attendance."

Though now in administrative work, Johnston told the audience that he held his first public meeting 40 years ago and that he has held an average of two crusades each year since then.

Russell Burrill concluded his presentation, "The Process of Public Evangelism," with a five-part challenge.

"We need to increase the number of people brought to meetings by members. Advertising isn't the main means of attracting visitors," he said. "We must develop plans by which members make friends of those attending the meetings."

Burrill said that the church needs to be

constantly evangelizing in the community and should not depend on the evangelist to do all of the work.

"We must emphasize to members that evangelism is a way of life and not a special program," he added and, turning to the administrators present, concluded, "You must be willing to fund evangelism as a process and not a special crusade."

There were constant references to the blessings of public evangelism. Jack Bohannon, now secretary in the Chesapeake Conference, told of two campaigns that could be regarded as failures. As a 13-year-old boy in Titusville, Florida, he watched a tent being pitched by William Hatch and attended the meetings.

"I had never heard of Adventists before, and I was the first candidate baptized," he recalled.

In the same year another evangelist holding meetings in Plainview, Texas, had only one nonmember in attendance.

"He brought his three kids to the meeting, and they were all baptized, including his daughter Donna, who later became my wife," Bohannon said. "I don't call these failed campaigns."

Kenneth Cox, from the Southeastern California Conference, drew lessons from the story of Jesus' calling Simon Peter to be a fisher of men.

Speaking on the practicality of public evangelism, he said, "You'd better be learning what fish do. There is no greater science than that of soul winning. Study men and women."

Charles D. Brooks, general field secretary of the General Conference and speaker for the *Breath of Life* television series, called evangelism a gift of God that has to be exercised.

"Peter wasn't ready for the sermon on the day of Pentecost until he had the Pentecostal experience," he noted.

With the topic "The Prerogative of Public Evangelism," Brooks affirmed his belief in the message of the church.

"Every time I go to preach this truth, I feel grateful." Then he asked, "Could the foundations suddenly turn rotten? I answer to myself, No! A thousand times no! In the vernacular of what I read in a sports magazine, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.'"

Is public evangelism dead?

Judging by the reactions of those present, and by plans revealed for the future in local conferences, public evangelism in the Adventist Church is alive.

Get the inspiration and the information!

You can get audiocassette recordings of the seminars conducted at the North American Division evangelism council. The cassettes are \$3 each or \$104.50 for the entire set (a discount of almost 10 percent).

Order from: Ministerial Association, Mid-America Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, P.O. Box 6127, Lincoln, NE 68506. Include a check or money order with sufficient funds to cover the cost of shipping and handling, as well as of the cassettes. All payments must be in U.S. funds.

For shipping via UPS (the recommended mode within the 48 states): add \$2 per "ship to" address for orders up to \$25, add \$3 per address for orders of \$25.01 to \$50, \$4 for orders of \$50.01 to \$100, \$7 for orders of \$100.01 to \$200, and \$10 for orders of \$200.01 or more.

For shipping via the postal service: Library rate (U.S.A. only): 1 cassette, \$.75; 2-9 cassettes, \$.50 for the first and \$.25 for each additional; 10 or more cassettes, no shipping charge.

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Seminars for Evangelists

SE1	Training Laity to Minister in Preparation for Meetings	Don and Marge Gray
SE2	Marketing Public Evangelism to the Secular Mind	Jac Colon
SE3	How Marketing Methods Can Ensure Soul-winning Efficiency	K. Netteburg, Roger Dudley
SE4	Proclaiming the Rise of the Remnant Church in Eschatology	G. Damsteegt
SE5	Presenting the Law and the Gospel in Public Evangelism	Ivan Blazen
SE6	Preparing Candidates for Baptism and Active Church Membership	Jay Gallimore
SE7	Presenting Eschatological Events to the Dispensational Mind	Samuele Bacchiocchi
SE8	Making Effective Calls That Motivate People Toward Decision	K. S. Wiggins
SE9	How Demographics and Advertising Can Help the Target Audience	W. Benny Moore, George Powell

Seminars for Evangelists' Spouses

SES1	Developing a Support System for Itinerant Families	Marie Spangler
SES2	Meeting the Special Needs of Children Who Travel	Ted and Darla Struntz
SES3	Equipping Laity as Support Staff for Public Meetings	Armedia Brown
SES4	Coordinating a Child Evangelism Ministry With Public Meetings	Ida Faber
SES5	The Evangelist's Spouse as a Role Model for Ministering Women	Lois Y. Scales
SES6	Using Personal Soul-winning Skills in Public Evangelism	Rosalie H. Lee
SES7	Integrating Health Evangelism Into Public Evangelism	Gwen Foster
SES8	Developing a Musical Program to Support Public Preaching	Bernie Paulson

Seminars for Soul-winning Administrators

SSAD1	Developing Laity Support for Public Evangelism in the Conference	Cyril Miller
SSAD2	Improving Working Relationships Between Pastors and Evangelists	John Rhodes
SSAD3	Impact Evangelism as an Alternative to Church Growth Evangelism	Ken Cox
SSAD4	Meeting the Unique Scheduling and Financial Needs of Evangelists	Lee Allen
SSAD5	Developing and Training Future Public Evangelists	Jim Criss
SSAD6	Capitalizing on Our Greatest Opportunity—Developing Outreach Ministries to Hispanics	Manuel Vasquez
SSAD7	Encouraging Pastors to Lead Their Members in Evangelism	T. A. McNealey
SSAD8	Church Growth and Evangelism: A Marriage to Support Our Mission	Don Jacobsen

General Sessions and Seminars

DGS1	The Priority of Public Evangelism	C. E. Bradford
DGS2	The Primacy of Public Evangelism	Ron Halvorsen
DGS3	The Purpose of Public Evangelism	E. E. Cleveland
DGS4	The Process of Public Evangelism	Russell Burrill
DGS5	The Possibilities of Public Evangelism	W. C. Scales, Jr.
DGS6	The Prerogative of Public Evangelism	C. D. Brooks
DGS7	The Promise of Public Evangelism	C. E. Bradford
DGS8	What Seventh-day Adventists Can Offer and What Seventh-day Adventists Can Learn	Carl F. George
DGS9	Utilizing the Church's Resources to Assimilate New Members	Lynn Martell
DGS10	Recollections of Public Evangelism	Frank Sherrill
DGS11	Slogans and Myths That Are Killing Public Evangelism and What We Can Do About It	Lenard Jaacks
DGS12	The Privilege of Public Evangelism	Henry Feyereabend
DGS13	The Practicality of Public Evangelism	Ken Cox



Are our tithe policies important?

Tithe goes only for the support of the gospel minister! This is what I thought and taught in the early years of my ministry. Actually, I gave little thought to the source of operating expenses for the local, union, and General Conference offices. I was surprised when I found that the tithe was used for virtually any and all conference expenses, including maintenance and the truck drivers' salaries.

Another surprise came when I learned about tithe exchange. In this process a conference with excess tithe funds exchanges some of the tithe it receives for nontithe funds through the General Conference office. The conference would then be free to use these nontithe funds for building churches, paying school subsidies, and so forth. In the seventies, lively discussion at an Annual Council revealed that accurate figures were not being kept on tithe exchanges. This revelation led to a monitoring system to ensure accuracy.

When we view carefully the church's financial situation, we must admit it has faced, is facing, and may in the future continue to face serious problems. The Davenport predicament, the Harris Pine Mills bankruptcy, the Lake Region Fiasco, the large and perhaps excessive indebtedness of some of our medical, publishing, and educational institutions, are a real concern to leadership.

In an article in the *Adventist Review*, our General Conference president made an appeal (under the subhead "Lesson to Learn") that touched a responsive chord in many hearts. He wrote, "I have to honestly confess to you that I am deeply

troubled by the indebtedness that has overtaken this denomination, especially in North America. We live in an age when debt has become a way of life for individuals and companies. Borrowing is made easy and appears so attractive . . . As we start this new year, as we think of the theme of renewal, I am calling for Seventh-day Adventists, both personally and corporately, to change their ways. I am calling for us to break off the shackles of debt that are holding us at risk, personally and as a denomination."¹

As I read this appeal, questions haunted me. Could the way we as a church handle the sacred tithe be in any way related to the financial problems we face? Do not the guaranteed blessings and cursings involving tithing apply to the corporate structure as well as to the individual?

Our General Conference archivist says that research shows that in the late nineteenth century, tithe reform seemed to be related to financial crises in the world and/or in the church. If this is true, as ministerial leaders we should become acquainted with the policies that govern the use of tithe.

Early Adventist tithe-use practices

What did our church in its early years understand about how the tithe was to be used? Apparently their understanding of the basis on which believers gave tithes and offerings and of the precise use of these funds underwent a gradual development. We can summarize by saying, though, that in our early years both tithes and offerings were channeled almost exclusively toward ministerial support.

The form of systematic benevolence

first adopted by Sabbathkeeping Adventists (in 1859) consisted of the setting aside of a weekly offering of from 5 to 25 cents for men and from 2 to 10 cents for women.² In 1864 this system expanded to include a weekly gift of 2 cents for each \$100 worth of property each member possessed. It was not until the late 1870s that emphasis was placed on giving the tithe as a percentage of income.

Prior to 1880, the instruction we have from the Spirit of Prophecy does not delineate precisely how systematic benevolence was to be used—nor were restrictions imposed until later years. We do know, however, that in the church's infancy, neither the medical, the publishing, nor the educational branches of the work were regular recipients of tithe funds.

(However, Ellen White did write a testimony in 1879 in which, referring to the erection of churches and the establishing of schools and publishing houses, she said: "These institutions are ordained of God and should be sustained by tithes and liberal offerings."³ This testimony gives an overall view of God's requirements in the area of stewardship. Giving was to far exceed the tithe. Ellen White refers to a "conscientious few" in Old Testament times who gave one third of all their income.)

In the January 15, 1880, *Review and Herald*, James White wrote, "A tithe is the Lord's. Since the Fall of man it has been necessary that there should be men devoted wholly to the service of God. It appears that from the very beginning the Lord taught His people to devote one tenth to the support of His ministers."⁴

An action taken at the General Conference session that same year indi-

cates that some local churches were using tithe funds for church expense. The action reads: "Resolved, That no church should devote any portion of its tithe to the erection or repairing of its church, without the free consent of the state conference committee."⁵

Butler liberalizes tithe policy

While the concept of the use of tithes was evolving, it was generally understood at this time that tithe funds were to be reserved for the gospel ministry. Shortly thereafter, this practice was liberalized. According to an undated pamphlet (possibly 1884), General Conference president G. I. Butler believed that the many demands facing the church legitimized using the tithe for auditors, tract and missionary state secretaries, colporteurs, and so forth. Butler acknowledged that in some cases the gospel ministry suffered because of a lack of funds, but concluded, "We believe the tithing is designed of God for the support, as far as it will go, of all laborers who are called by the cause of God to give their time to His work. We know of no other special system for this purpose."⁶

The extent to which Butler's opinions affected the working policies of the church is a matter of conjecture. However, some time thereafter in a special, separately published pamphlet, Ellen White clarified the use of tithe: "The light which the Lord has given me on this subject is that the means in the treasury for the support of the ministers in the different fields is not to be used for any other purpose."⁷

She spoke against the practice of some church leaders in using the tithe for other expenses: to keep up the meetinghouse or for some charity. Instead, she urged that "house-to-house labor be done in setting before the families in Battle Creek and Oakland their duty in acting a part in meeting these expenses, which may be called common or secular, and let not the treasury be robbed."⁸

Yet she allowed for exceptions: "There are exceptional cases, where poverty is so deep that in order to secure the humblest place of worship, it may be necessary to appropriate the tithes."⁹

The next year Ellen White unequivocally restated the concept that tithe is to be used for the gospel ministry. "God's ministers are His shepherds, appointed by Him to feed His flock. The tithe is His provision for their maintenance, and He

The White Estate lists four papers that are available to those wishing to study this question more completely:

"Highlights of the Beginnings of the Tithing System," 28 pages, \$.80.

"Mrs. Ellen G. White and the Tithe," 20 pages, \$.80.

"The Use of the Tithe," 18 pages, \$.70.

"Ellen G. White Comments on the Use of the Tithe" (most recent document), 14 pages, \$.75.

You may obtain these by ordering them from: The Ellen G. White Estate, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20012. (Prices include postage.)

designs that it shall be held sacred to this purpose."¹⁰

Six years later she reaffirmed this clear position: "The tithe is to be used for one purpose—to sustain the ministers whom the Lord has appointed to do His work."¹¹ This counsel included both men and women. In 1899 she wrote: "The tithe should go to those who labor in word and doctrine, be they men or women."¹²

In statements that appeared in late 1900, she advocated using tithe for Bible teachers in our schools. She wrote: "Those who minister in our schools, teaching the Word of God, explaining the Scriptures, educating the students in the things of God, should be supported by the tithe money. This instruction was given long ago, and more recently it has been repeated again and again."¹³

Emphasizing the Bible teacher's role as a minister, she said: "The best ministerial talent should be employed in teaching the Bible in our schools. Those selected for this work need to be thorough Bible students and to have a deep Christian experience, and their salary should be paid from the tithe."¹⁴

As to the maintenance of church schools, she advocated, with qualifications, using a second tithe.¹⁵

Finally, she wrote a very significant statement on the use of tithe in 1904,

portions of which were to form a part of the counsels that eventually were published in *Testimonies* under the title "Faithful Stewardship." One paragraph reads: "One reason that the tithe may be applied to school purposes. Still others reason that canvassers and colporteurs should be supported from the tithe. But a great mistake is made when the tithe is drawn from the object for which it is to be used—the support of the ministers. There should be today in the field 100 well-qualified laborers where now there is but one."¹⁶

Much more could be written on this important subject. Several documents are available for study from the Ellen G. White Estate (see box).

As editors we felt it expedient to share with our church leadership the latest Annual Council voted policy on the use of tithe. Over the past several years, an enormous amount of time on the part of committees and individuals has been invested in a study and revision of our use-of-tithe practices. The most recent committee, composed of 35 to 40 administrators, treasurers, departmental personnel, pastors, and laypeople, refined the document that was passed at the 1985 Annual Council and appears following this article. We trust our readers will carefully and prayerfully examine its contents.

It is unfortunate that we did not present this material several years ago, asking for readers' input. However, we still solicit any helpful comments and concepts for future reference.—J. R. Spangler.

¹ Neal C. Wilson, "The Loss of Harris Pine Mills," *Adventist Review*, Jan. 1, 1987, p. 8.

² I have gleaned this and most of the following data from Arthur L. White's paper "Highlights of the Beginnings of the Tithing System." This paper is available from the White Estate—see box accompanying article.

³ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 644.

⁴ "Tithes and Offerings," *Review and Herald*, Jan. 15, 1880, p. 35.

⁵ "General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Nineteenth Annual Session, Oct. 6, 1880," *Review and Herald*, Oct. 14, 1880, p. 252.

⁶ G. I. Butler, *An Examination of the Tithing System From a Bible Standpoint* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald, n.d. [c. 1884]), p. 72.

⁷ *Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers*, Series A, No. 10 (n.p., n.d. [1897]), p. 18.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁹ Manuscript 24, 1897.

¹⁰ Manuscript 139, 1898.

¹¹ Manuscript 82, 1904.

¹² *Evangelism*, p. 492.

¹³ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 215.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 135.

¹⁵ Manuscript 67, 1901; see also letter 167, 1904.

¹⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 248, 249.

CPA expresses opinion on tithe policy

One member of the General Conference *ad hoc* committee dealing with the use of tithe was Jerry E. Bartram, an Adventist certified public accountant who spent considerable time studying the question of how the tithe should be used. He recruited a retired minister to help him in his research. After reading his personal testimony and studying our present policy, others may have convictions as to whether or not any further changes are needed. We invite you to send in your succinct comments and we will publish as many as we have space for.—Editors.

Although the invitation to be on the Use of Tithe Committee came during a crucial time in my practice—the middle of tax season—I took off a couple of weeks and dived into this thing head-first. I searched the Loma Linda University library for everything I could find on tithe. I read materials from the General Conference archives. The more I got into it, the more convicted I became that this was an area of tremendous importance. One historical study showed that in the late nineteenth century tithe reform seemed linked with financial crises in the world and/or within the church.

My understanding is that the Ellen White statements regarding the use of tithe and the diversion of tithe funds were intended to ensure that there would always be ample funds in the treasury to pay the ministers adequately and to support a strong evangelistic thrust throughout the world. For instance, she wrote: "There should be an abundant supply in the Lord's treasury, and there would be if selfish hearts and hands had not withheld the tithes or made use of them to support other lines of work.

"God's reserved resources are to be used in no such haphazard way. The

tithe is the Lord's, and those who meddle with it will be punished with the loss of their heavenly treasure unless they repent. Let the work no longer be hedged up because the tithe has been diverted into various channels other than the one to which the Lord has said it should go. Provision is to be made for these other lines of work. They are to be sustained, but not from the tithe. God has not changed; the tithe is still to be used for the support of the ministry. The opening of new fields requires more ministerial efficiency than we now have, and there must be means in the treasury" (*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 249, 250).

Statements such as these led me to vote, along with some others on the committee, for revising the current tithe policy. I believe, for example, that neither literature evangelists nor teachers who do not teach Bible full-time should be paid from tithe. However, the majority felt that making these changes would destroy the system. They repeatedly asked, "Where will you get funds?"

But the more I studied, the more evident it was that the little lady who penned so many words on tithe either had an incredibly perceptive mind or she was inspired. Her concepts had the potential to bring a subtle balance and control to the church.

After the first committee meeting, I put in a night of soul-searching. The next day I didn't even show up until noon. Basically I couldn't handle it. When you deal with tax controversies, you keep smiling and banging away; you don't get totally carried away. But this struck a nerve in me. I realized how deeply I cared for my church. What bothered me was that an action was about to be taken that I perceived to be contrary to inspired counsel. Ellen White made statements beginning with the words "I was shown" or "I was shown

by the Lord"—specific things. It appeared to me that some committee members were saying, "We are going to have to qualify Ellen White's statements on the use of tithe."

In my opinion, Ellen White never varied from the position that tithe was to go to support the ministers. That might include the ministers' wives who were involved in Bible work. It might include the publishing directors. You have to study her statements carefully.

According to Ellen White, using tithe for purposes other than supporting the gospel ministry would detract from the ministry. Because there was no chance for employment, qualified men would leave the ministry or not take up ministerial work in the first place. Certainly that has happened. And that makes you sit up and think! This little lady was predicting something way down the street.

As to tithe exchange, I believe Ellen White's concept was that tithe belongs to the ministers in the entire world field. It is not proprietary to a conference, for if a conference was flush and had a lot of tithe, they could put in a lot more men than they could use. Rather than a tithe exchange, there was to be a tithe sharing—the tithe from a rich field was to be shared with a poor field [see letter 81, 1897—Eds.]. But it was to be used for one purpose and one purpose alone: to provide financial support for ministers. This would include anything that would go under the support of the ministers.

No conference could use that money for any other purpose than direct evangelistic work and paying the ministers' salaries. And when they had as many ministers as they could handle, the excess tithe money was to be shared with whatever field needed it. Basically it would be up to the General Conference to allocate it to the world field.

(I understand that tithe sharing on the

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part of the local conferences in North America used to be on a voluntary basis. For several decades now, 20 percent of the local conferences' tithe has been sent on to the General Conference for its use. Undoubtedly, part of this is involved in the tithe sharing.)

Incredible system of checks and balances

How should the church pay for its support system: secretaries, office buildings, and so forth? From what Ellen White says about the Battle Creek church I infer that she believed these needs should be met out of nontithe funds (*Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers*, Series A, No. 10, p. 19).

A council action taken in South Lancaster (found in the *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, Aug. 2, 1905) says: "We recommend that a general fund be allocated to meet the general expenses of the conferences." Clearly someone back then said that there is a difference between what funds pay a minister and what funds support a minister.

When that first hit me, I said to myself, "That will never fly. We can't do it!" And then it suddenly struck me—this lady was under inspiration. It brings in an incredible system of checks and balances.

Every year the church administrative

and departmental personnel on all levels would have to go around and hustle appropriations to pay their own secretaries, to pay the utilities for the office, and to cover the necessary operating expenses, just as the local church congregations have to do.

This would mean that our presidents would have to be out in the field; the church ministries director and everyone else in the office would have to justify to the people who are going to fund them for the next year's operating budget why they were needed. But never at any point would their job be in jeopardy in terms of their salary, because it would be paid for out of the tithe. The subtlety of that check and balance hit me as one of the most beautiful revelations that I have ever heard.

On this point, no one else on the committee agreed with me; I stood alone. I think one agreed that in theory that is what she said. They all agreed it would be a tremendous balance.

I would like to make it clear that I feel there should be no cutting back on our educational system. Rather, a greater part of our schools' financial burden should be carried by our members. This would have the positive effect of causing our schools to be more responsive to the needs of the members who are funding the major portion of their budgets.

Use of Tithe Policy Revision

Voted, To adopt a new policy NAD T 20, Use of Tithe, to read as follows:

T 20 Use of Tithe

T 20 05 Seventh-day Adventist Plan of Church Finance—1. Sources of Funding—God's plan for the support of His work on this earth is through the tithe and freewill offerings of His people. The tithe is the main source of funding for the total proclamation of the gospel to all the world by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This includes a balanced and comprehensive evangelistic outreach to the public and the spiritual nurturing of church members. Because the tithe is reserved for a special purpose, freewill offerings must provide the funding for many functions of the gospel work.

2. Tithing Plan—Through benevolence and liberality the Lord sought to teach His people that in everything He must be first. Building on this in his first letter to the

church at Corinth, Paul gave the believers instruction regarding the general principles underlying the support of God's work on earth (1 Cor. 9:7-14; *Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 65-79; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 335-337). Ellen G. White confirmed that the tithing plan is of divine origin, is for all time, and is anchored in the biblical plan of tithes and offerings.

3. Financial Support—The world task entrusted to the Advent movement calls for both sacrificial and systematic financial support. In recognition of this fact, the church in its formative years was divinely led to adopt the biblical plan of tithing as the financial basis of its outreach "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

4. Storehouse—Only conference organizations are authorized to make allocations from tithe funds. The tithe is the Lord's and should be returned to the storehouse, the conference treasury. "Bring ye all the tithes

into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10). "The tithe is sacred, reserved by God for Himself. It is to be brought into His treasury to be used to sustain the gospel laborers in their work" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 226).

T 20 10 Use of Tithe—1. Philosophy—Through the Bible and the ministry of Ellen G. White, God gives inspired counsel and valuable guidance on many matters. This enables the church to develop sound policies, the application of which will be in harmony with our understanding of God's revealed will.

2. World Mission of the Church—It is essential that the leadership of the church carefully study and apply the principles and concepts involved in the use of the tithe so that the church can effectively meet the needs and challenges of carrying the gospel and in proclaiming the three angels' messages to the whole world. In planning the use of these sacred funds, conferences must continue to regard the gospel outreach in soul-saving evangelism as a priority of the greatest importance. In pursuance of this ideal, this policy for the use of tithe has been adopted.

T 20 15 Purposes for Which Tithe May Be Used—1. Support of Pastors, Evangelists, Ministers—The tithe shall be utilized to support salaried personnel directly engaged in pastoral and evangelistic soul-winning endeavors. "The tithe is to be used for one purpose—to sustain the ministers whom the Lord has appointed to do His work. It is to be used to support those who speak the words of life to the people, and carry the burden of the flock of God" (Manuscript 82, 1904).

2. World Missions—The Sharing of the Tithe Policy (T 10) shall be followed. This policy is the church's response to the biblical principle of the strong helping the weak, and Ellen G. White's counsel on sharing tithe. "More and more we must come to realize that the means that come into the conference in the tithes and gifts of our people should be used for the support of the work not only in the American cities, but also in foreign fields. Let the means so zealously collected be unselfishly distributed. Those who realize the needs of mission fields will not be tempted to use the tithe for that which is not necessary" (Manuscript 11, 1908). The benefits to worldwide missions under this plan have been considerable. Because of the church's worldwide operations, determination of the percentages of tithe contributed as tithe of tithe and additional tithe percentages shall continue to be set by the General Conference/division committees. It is not the prerogative of churches/missions/conferences/unions to decide these percentages unilaterally.

3. Soul-winning Support Personnel—The tithe may be utilized to sustain other personnel who, in a supporting role, directly relate to the work of soul-winning agencies, whether directed by the General Conference, the division, the union, or the local conference/mission. Included with such personnel are departmental directors and their staffs that are engaged in evangelistic and nurturing ministries.

4. Conference/Mission Operating Expense—The tithe may be utilized for operating expenses of conferences/missions and the facilities used by the personnel outlined above (see paragraph 3).

5. Literature Evangelists' Benefit Fund—The tithe is considered to be an appropriate source of subsidy for the conference portion of the Literature Evangelists' Benefit Fund.

6. Subsidies for Specified Activities—The tithe may be utilized for conference/mission operating subsidies for such programs as youth camps and camp meetings, as part of the evangelistic thrust of the church.

7. Evangelistic and Conference/Mission Office Equipment—Tithe funds may be used for the purchase of evangelistic equipment and conference/mission office equipment. All other equipment shall be purchased with nontithe funds.

8. Bible/Religion Teaching and Support Personnel in Schools—(see T 20 20 below).

9. Retired Employees—The tithe may be used for the retirement benefits of denominational employees (except those who are otherwise provided for, e.g., health-care employees).

T 20 20 Use of Tithe for Education—

1. General Principles—
a. In view of the Ellen G. White counsel restricting the use of tithe "for school purposes," our system of education must be funded largely from other sources. Mrs. White does, however, make an exception in connection with Bible teaching in our schools. In the chapter entitled "School Management and Finance," in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 6, pages 206 to 218, there is a section about the opening and operating of schools. It was written about the year 1899 and specifies certain individuals who could be paid from the tithe:

b. "Our conferences . . . should give the schools a most hearty and intelligent support. Light has been plainly given that those who minister in our schools, teaching the Word of God, explaining the Scriptures, educating the students in the things of God, should be supported by the tithe money. This instruction was given long ago, and more recently it has been repeated again and again" (*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 215).

c. Our total school system is religious in its motivation, but it is recognized that Bible teachers exercise a more specifically spiritual and ministerial role by instructing their students in the Word of God and by leading them to the Saviour. Such service is worthy

of tithe support.

d. In her practical counsel for the administration of the church, Ellen G. White often reveals deep concern lest a variety of ways be found to divert the tithe from the special purpose for which it is designated, namely the support of the preaching, pastoral, evangelistic ministry; the priestly duties of the minister of the gospel; and the support of Bible teachers.

e. On the other hand, a careful consideration of the Scriptures and of the Ellen G. White writings seems to indicate that as long as the sacred tithe, which God has reserved for Himself, is faithfully employed for the support of His work, such use is not contrary

to the divine precepts of the Scriptures. It has also been concluded from the Ellen G. White writings that she broadens the use of tithe to permit the support of certain aspects of the educational program.

f. By applying the lessons to be learned from the Bible and the statements of Ellen G. White, we believe that under properly established guidelines, which would safeguard the support of the work of the ministry, tithe funds could be used to support certain activities of selected individuals. These are individuals who serve in a clearly identifiable support role in educating in the things of God and who sustain a relationship to the work of the gospel minister.

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- our homes
- our churches
- our world

will be revolutionary evangelism

"If we would . . . be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be 100 conversions to the truth where now there is only one."—Ellen G. White.

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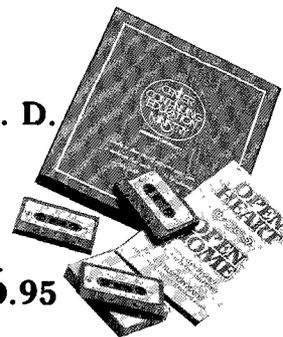
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2. Use of Tithe in Schools—The tithe may be used in support of the various levels of the church's schools, as follows:

a. Elementary Schools—Subsidies of up to 30 percent of the total salaries and allowances of principals and teachers may be granted by conferences from tithe funds. It is believed that this figure should be a maximum because it represents a reasonable basis on which to evaluate the time devoted by elementary teachers to Bible instruction and spiritual nurture. To increase this percentage would detract from the use of tithe for its primary purpose, the evangelistic ministry.

b. Secondary Schools—The equivalent of the total salaries and allowances of Bible teachers, residence hall deans, and principals may be granted by conferences/missions/unions from tithe funds.

c. Colleges and Universities—An amount equal to the total cost of Bible departments, residence hall deans, presidents, and deans of students may be granted by unions/divisions/the General Conference from tithe funds.

T 20 25 Purposes for Which Tithe Shall Not Be Used—1. Capital Expenditures for Buildings and Facilities—Capital expenditures for buildings and facilities shall be drawn from nontithe funds. This includes such items as conference/mission offices, camp meeting facilities, youth camps, elementary schools, academies, church buildings, welfare centers, and college and university facilities.

2. Equipment—All equipment except evangelistic and conference office equipment shall be purchased with nontithe funds.

3. Local Church Operating Expense—Maintenance and other operating expenses, including the local church employees, such as secretaries, maintenance personnel, bus drivers, and others whose remuneration is being funded by the church, are to be provided from church expense funds. "The tithe is not to be consumed in incidental expenses. That belongs to the work of the church members. They are to support their church by their gifts and offerings" (letter 81, 1897). All tithe shall be paid into the conference/mission treasury, and under no circumstances is it to be retained in the local church for its use.

4. School Operating Expenses—The maintenance and other operating expenses of elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions shall be funded from nontithe sources.

T 20 30 Continuous Monitoring of Tithe Use—Administrators on General Conference, division, union, and local levels, accountable as they are to God for their stewardship, shall give continued earnest study, in the light of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy counsels, to the purposes and proportions in which tithe funds are being used in the organizations for which they are responsible.

Methods of Bible Study

Action voted at the 1986 Annual Council.—Editors.

VOTED, To record the Methods of Bible Study committee (GCC-A) report approved by the 1986 Annual Council, which reads as follows:

Bible Study: Presuppositions, Principles, and Methods

1. Preamble

This statement is addressed to all members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the purpose of providing guidelines on how to study the Bible, both the trained biblical scholar and others.

Seventh-day Adventists recognize and appreciate the contributions of those biblical scholars throughout history who have developed useful and reliable methods of Bible study consistent with the claims and teachings of Scripture. Adventists are committed to the acceptance of biblical truth and are willing to follow it, using all methods of interpretation consistent with what Scripture says of itself. These are outlined in the presuppositions detailed below.

In recent decades the most prominent method in biblical studies has been known as the historical-critical method. Scholars who use this method, as classically formulated, operate on the basis of presuppositions that, prior to studying the biblical text, reject the reliability of accounts of miracles and other supernatural events narrated in the Bible. Even a modified use of this method that retains the principle of criticism, which subordinates the Bible to human reason, is unacceptable to Adventists.

The historical-critical method minimizes the need for faith in God and obedience to His commandments. In addition, because such a method deemphasizes the divine element in the Bible as an inspired book (including its resultant unity) and depreciates or misunderstands apocalyptic prophecy and the eschatological portions of the Bible, we urge Adventist Bible students to avoid relying on the use of the presuppositions and the resultant deductions associated with the historical-critical method.

By contrast to the historical-critical method and presuppositions, we believe it to be helpful to set forth the principles of Bible study that are consistent with the teachings of the Scriptures themselves, that preserve their unity, and are based upon the premise that the Bible is the Word of God. Such an approach will lead us into a satisfying and rewarding experience with God.

2. Presuppositions Arising From the Claims of Scripture

a. Origin

1) The Bible is the Word of God and is the primary and authoritative means by which He reveals Himself to human beings.

2) The Holy Spirit inspired the Bible writers with thoughts, ideas, and objective information; in turn they expressed these in their own words. Therefore the Scriptures are an indivisible union of human and divine elements, neither of which should be emphasized to the neglect of the other (2 Peter 1:21; cf. *The Great Controversy*, pp. v, vi).

3) All Scripture is inspired by God and came through the work of the Holy Spirit. However, it did not come in a continuous chain of unbroken revelations. As the Holy Spirit communicated truth to the Bible writer, each wrote as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the aspect of the truth that he was led to stress. For this reason the student of the Bible will gain a rounded comprehension on any subject by recognizing that the Bible is its own best interpreter, and when studied as a whole it depicts a consistent, harmonious truth (2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1, 2; cf. *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 19, 20; *The Great Controversy*, pp. v, vi).

4) Although it was given to those who lived in an ancient Near Eastern/Mediterranean context, the Bible transcends its cultural backgrounds to serve as God's Word for all cultural, racial, and situational contexts in all ages.

b. Authority

1) The 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are the clear, infallible revelation of God's will and His salvation. The Bible is the Word of God, and it alone is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested (2 Tim. 3:15, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 2 Thess. 3:14; Heb. 4:12).

2) Scripture is an authentic, reliable record of history and God's acts in history. It provides the normative theological interpretation of those acts. The supernatural acts revealed in Scripture are historically true. For example, chapters 1 to 11 of Genesis are a factual account of historical events.

3) The Bible is not like other books. It is an indivisible blend of the divine and the human. Its record of many details of secular history is integral to its overall purpose to convey salvation history. While at times there may be parallel procedures employed by Bible students to determine historical data,

the usual techniques of historical research, based as they are on human presuppositions and focused on the human element, are inadequate for interpreting the Scriptures, which are a blend of the divine and the human. Only a method that fully recognizes the indivisible nature of the Scriptures can avoid a distortion of its message.

4) Human reason is subject to the Bible, not equal to or above it. Presuppositions regarding the Scriptures must be in harmony with the claims of the Scriptures and subject to correction by them (1 Cor. 2:1-6). God intends that human reason be used to its fullest extent, but within the context and under the authority of His Word rather than independent of it.

5) The revelation of God in all nature, when properly understood, is in harmony with the written Word, and is to be interpreted in the light of Scripture.

3. Principles for Approaching the Interpretation of Scripture

a. The Spirit enables the believer to accept, understand, and apply the Bible to one's own life as he seeks divine power to render obedience to all scriptural requirements and to appropriate personally all Bible promises. Only those following the light already received can hope to receive further illumination of the Spirit (John 16:13, 14; 1 Cor. 2:10-14).

b. Scripture cannot be correctly interpreted without the aid of the Holy Spirit, for it is the Spirit who enables the believer to understand and apply Scripture. Therefore, any study of the Word should commence with a request for the Spirit's guidance and illumination.

c. Those who come to the study of the Word must do so with faith, in the humble spirit of a learner who seeks to hear what the Bible is saying. They must be willing to submit all presuppositions, opinions, and the conclusions of reason to the judgment and correction of the Word itself. With this attitude the Bible student may come directly to the Word, and with careful study may come to an understanding of the essentials of salvation apart from any human explanations, however helpful. The biblical message becomes meaningful to such a person.

d. The investigation of Scripture must be characterized by a sincere desire to discover and obey God's will and word rather than to seek support or evidence for preconceived ideas.

4. Methods of Bible Study

a. Select a Bible version for study that is faithful to the meaning contained in languages in which the Bible originally was written, giving preference to translations done by a broad group of scholars and published by a general publisher above translations sponsored by a particular denomination or narrowly focused group.

Exercise care not to build major doctrinal points on one Bible translation or version.

Trained biblical scholars will use the Greek and Hebrew texts, enabling them to examine variant readings of ancient Bible manuscripts as well.

b. Choose a definite plan of study, avoiding haphazard and aimless approaches. Study plans such as the following are suggested:

1) Book-by-book analysis of the message
2) Verse-by-verse method
3) Study that seeks a biblical solution to a specific life problem, biblical satisfaction for a specific need, or a biblical answer to a specific question

4) Topical study (faith, love, Second Coming, and others)

5) Word study

6) Biographical study

c. Seek to grasp the simple, most obvious meaning of the biblical passage being studied.

d. Seek to discover the underlying major themes of Scripture as found in individual texts, passages, and books. Two basic, related themes run throughout Scripture: (1) the person and work of Jesus Christ; and (2) the great controversy perspective involving the authority of God's Word, the Fall of man, the first and second advents of Christ, the exoneration of God and His law, and the restoration of the divine plan for the universe. These themes are to be drawn from the totality of Scripture and not imposed on it.

e. Recognize that the Bible is its own interpreter and that the meaning of words, texts, and passages is best determined by diligently comparing scripture with scripture.

f. Study the context of the passage under consideration by relating it to the sentences and paragraphs immediately preceding and following it. Try to relate the ideas of the passage to the line of thought of the entire biblical book.

g. As far as possible, ascertain the historical circumstances in which the passage was written by the biblical writers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

h. Determine the literary type the author is using. Some biblical material is composed of parables, proverbs, allegories, psalms, and apocalyptic prophecies. Since many biblical writers presented much of their material as poetry, it is helpful to use a version of the Bible that presents this material in poetic style, for passages employing imagery are not to be interpreted in the same manner as prose.

i. Recognize that a given biblical text may not conform in every detail to present-day literary categories. Be cautious not to force these categories in interpreting the meaning of the biblical text. It is a human tendency to find what one is looking for, even when the author did not intend such.

j. Take note of grammar and sentence construction in order to discover the author's meaning. Study the key words of the passage by comparing their use in other parts of the Bible by means of a concordance and with the help of biblical lexicons and dictionaries.

The revelation of God in all nature, when properly understood, is in harmony with the written Word.

k. In connection with the study of the biblical text, explore the historical and cultural factors. Archaeology, anthropology, and history may contribute to understanding the meaning of the text.

l. Seventh-day Adventists believe that God inspired Ellen G. White. Therefore, her expositions on any given biblical passage offer an inspired guide to the meaning of texts without exhausting their meaning or pre-empting the task of exegesis (for example, see *Evangelism*, p. 256; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 193, 595; *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 665, 682, 707, 708; *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 33-35).

m. After studying as outlined above, turn to various commentaries and secondary helps such as scholarly works to see how others have dealt with the passage. Then carefully evaluate the different viewpoints expressed from the standpoint of Scripture as a whole.

n. In interpreting prophecy, keep in mind that:

1) The Bible claims God's power to predict the future (Isa. 46:10).

2) Prophecy has a moral purpose. It was not written merely to satisfy curiosity about the future. Some of the purposes of prophecy are to strengthen faith (John 14:29) and to promote holy living and readiness for the Advent (Matt. 24:44; Rev. 22:7, 10, 11).

3) The focus of much prophecy is on Christ (both His first and second advents), the church, and the end-time.

4) The norms for interpreting prophecy are found within the Bible itself: the Bible notes time prophecies and their historical fulfillments; the New Testament cites specific fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah; and the Old Testament itself presents individuals and events as types of the Messiah.

5) In the New Testament application of Old Testament prophecies, some literal names become spiritual, e.g., Israel represents the church; Babylon, apostate religion, etc.

6) There are two general types of prophetic writings: nonapocalyptic prophecy, as found in Isaiah and Jeremiah, and apocalyptic prophecy, as found in Daniel and the Revelation. These differing types have different characteristics:

a) Nonapocalyptic prophecy addresses

God's people; apocalyptic is more universal in scope.

b) Nonapocalyptic prophecy often is conditional in nature, setting forth to God's people the alternatives of blessing for obedience and curses for disobedience; apocalyptic emphasizes the sovereignty of God and His control over history.

c) Nonapocalyptic prophecy often leaps from the local crisis to the end-time day of the Lord; apocalyptic prophecy presents the course of history from the time of the prophet to the end of the world.

d) Time prophecies in nonapocalyptic prophecy generally are long, e.g., 400 years of Israel's servitude (Gen. 15:13) and 70 years of Babylonian captivity (Jer. 25:12). Time prophecies in apocalyptic prophecy generally are phrased in short terms, e.g., 10 days (Rev. 2:10) or 42 months (Rev. 13:5). Apocalyptic time periods stand symbolically for longer periods of actual time.

7) Apocalyptic prophecy is highly symbolic and should be interpreted accordingly. In interpreting symbols, the following methods may be used:

a) Look for interpretations (explicit or implicit) within the passage itself (e.g., Dan. 8:20, 21; Rev. 1:20).

b) Look for interpretations elsewhere in the book or in other writings by the same author.

c) Using a concordance, study the use of symbols in other parts of Scripture.

d) A study of ancient Near Eastern documents may throw light on the meaning of symbols, although scriptural use may alter those meanings.

8) The literary structure of a book often is an aid to interpreting it. The parallel nature of Daniel's prophecies is an example.

o. Parallel accounts in Scripture sometimes present differences in detail and emphasis (for example, compare Matt. 21:33, 34; Mark 12:1-11; and Luke 20:9-18; or 2 Kings 18-20 and 2 Chron. 32). When studying such passages, first examine them carefully to be sure that the parallels actually are referring to the same historical event. For example, many of Jesus' parables may have been given on different occasions to different audiences and with different wording.

In cases where there appear to be differences in parallel accounts, one should recognize that the total message of the Bible is the synthesis of all of its parts. Each book, or writer, communicates that which the Spirit has led him to write. Each makes his own special contribution to the richness, diversity, and variety of Scripture (*The Great Controversy*, pp. v, vi). The reader must allow each Bible writer to emerge and be heard while at the same time recognizing the basic unity of the divine self-disclosure.

When parallel passages seem to indicate discrepancy or contradiction, look for the underlying harmony. Keep in mind that dissimilarities may be the result of minor

errors of copyists (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 16), or may be the result of differing emphases and choice of materials of various authors, who wrote under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit for different audiences under different circumstances (*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 21, 22; *The Great Controversy*, p. vi).

It may prove impossible to reconcile minor dissimilarities in detail that may be irrelevant to the main and clear message of the passage. In some cases judgment may have to be suspended until more information and better evidence are available to resolve a seeming discrepancy.

p. The Scriptures were written for the practical purpose of revealing the will of God to the human family. However, in order not to misconstrue certain kinds of statements, it is important to recognize that they were addressed to peoples of Eastern cultures and expressed in their thought patterns.

Expressions such as "The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh" (Ex. 9:12); or "An evil spirit from God" (1 Sam. 16:15); or the imprecatory psalms, or the three days and three nights of Jonah as compared with Christ's death (Matt. 12:40) commonly are misunderstood because they are interpreted today from a different viewpoint.

A background knowledge of Near Eastern culture is indispensable for understanding such expressions. For example, Hebrew culture attributed responsibility to an individual for acts he did not commit but that he allowed to happen. Therefore the inspired writers of the Scriptures commonly credit God with doing actively that which in Western thought we would say He permits or does not prevent from happening, e.g., the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

Another aspect of Scripture that troubles the modern mind is the divine command to Israel to engage in war and execute entire nations. Israel originally was organized as a theocracy, a civil government through which God ruled directly (Gen 18:25). Such a theocratic state was unique. It no longer exists and cannot be regarded as a direct model for Christian practice.

The Scriptures record experiences and statements of persons whom God accepted but were not in harmony with the spiritual principles of the Bible as a whole, for example, incidents relating to the use of alcohol, polygamy, divorce, and slavery. Although condemnation of such deeply ingrained social customs is not explicit, God did not necessarily endorse or approve all that He permitted and bore with in the lives of the patriarchs and in Israel. Jesus made this clear in His statement with regard to divorce (Matt. 19:4-6, 8).

The spirit of the Scriptures is one of restoration. God works patiently to elevate fallen humanity from the depths of sin to the divine ideal. Consequently, we must not accept as models the actions of sinful men as

recorded in the Bible.

The Scriptures represent the unfolding of God's revelation to man. Jesus' sermon on the mount, for example, enlarges and expands certain Old Testament concepts. Christ Himself is the ultimate revelation of God's character to humanity (Heb. 1:1-3).

While there is an overarching unity in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and while all Scripture is equally inspired, God chose to reveal Himself to and through human individuals and to meet them where they were in terms of spiritual and intellectual endowments. God Himself does not change, but He progressively unfolded His revelation to men as they were able to grasp it (John 16:12; *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 945; *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 21). Every experience or statement of Scripture is a divinely inspired record, but not every statement or experience is necessarily normative for Christian behavior today. Both the spirit and the letter of Scripture must be understood (1 Cor. 10:6-13; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 150; *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 10-12).

q. As the final goal, make application of the text. Ask such questions as "What is the message and purpose God intends to convey through Scripture?" "What meaning does this text have for me?" "How does it apply to my situation and circumstances today?" In doing so, recognize that although many biblical passages had local significance, nonetheless they contain timeless principles applicable to every age and culture.

5. Conclusion

In the introduction to *The Great Controversy*, Ellen G. White wrote:

"The Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' John 1:14" (p. vi).

As it is impossible for those who do not accept Christ's divinity to understand the purpose of His incarnation, it is also impossible for those who see the Bible merely as a human book to understand its message, however careful and rigorous their methods.

Even Christian scholars who accept the divine-human nature of Scripture, but whose methodological approaches cause them to dwell largely on its human aspects, risk emptying the biblical message of its power by relegating it to the background while concentrating on the medium. They forget that medium and message are inseparable and that the medium without the message is as an empty shell that cannot address the vital spiritual needs of humankind.

A committed Christian will use only those methods that are able to do full justice to the dual, inseparable nature of Scripture, enhance his ability to understand and apply its message, and strengthen his faith.

Jewelry: A Clarification and Appeal

Action voted at the North American Division 1986 annual meeting.—Editors.

At the 1972 Annual Council the General Conference officers gave counsel regarding the wedding band in North America. An examination of this statement reveals the following salient points:

1. Ministers were counseled not to perform ring ceremonies since the wearing of the wedding band still "is not regarded as obligatory" or an "imperative" custom in North America.

2. Pastors, evangelists, and Bible instructors were urged to present to candidates for baptism the biblical principles regarding display and ornaments, encouraging careful self-examination concerning the motives involved in deciding whether to wear the wedding band.

3. Baptism was not to be denied to converts who conscientiously felt they should wear the wedding band.

4. Church officers, ministers and their wives, teachers, and other SDA workers were urged to give strong support to the standards and principles that have distinguished the remnant church.

The Annual Council of the same year also stated very clearly its position on personal adornment as follows:

"That in the area of personal adornment, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and rings (including engagement rings) should not be worn. Articles such as watches, brooches, cuff links, tie clasps, etc., should be chosen in harmony with the Christian principles of simplicity, modesty, and economy."

It seems, therefore, that in 1972 the church had a strong desire to maintain a high standard in the matter of personal adornment. Yet it also recognized the simple wedding band as being in a category distinct from that of jewelry worn for ornamental purposes.

The *Church Manual* likewise states the principles involved in the matter of personal adornment (see pp. 145, 146—"Dress"). Included in this particular section is the following statement:

"In some countries the custom of wearing the marriage ring is considered imperative, having become, in the minds of the people, a criterion of virtue, and hence is not regarded as an ornament. Under such circumstances we have no disposition to condemn the practice" (*Church Manual*, p. 146).

During the intervening years large numbers of members who have come from areas in the world where wearing a wedding band is an accepted and necessary symbol of marriage have joined the church in North America. A growing number of employees from such areas have also come to serve the church at all levels. In North America there are many loyal, clear-thinking members who believe that conditions have changed greatly since 1892 when Ellen White's counsel was given and that her statement "In countries where the custom is

imperative, we have no burden to condemn those who have their marriage ring; let them wear it if they can do so conscientiously" is now applicable in North America.

Across the division the position concerning the wedding band has not been uniform, and possibly it never will be. However, there has developed an ambivalence on the part of many, and the lack of consistency has caused embarrassment and even hardship and misunderstanding. It has also obscured the church's position on the wearing of jewelry.

In the light of these and other factors, it is

VOTED, 1. To reaffirm the principles regarding personal adornment as outlined in the *Church Manual*, the 1972 Annual Council action, and the General Conference officers' statement of October 2, 1972.

2. To affirm that the wearing of jewelry is unacceptable and is a denial of the principles enunciated in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy concerning personal adornment.

3. To recognize that, in harmony with the position stated in the *Church Manual* (pp. 145, 146), some church members in the North American Division, as in other parts of the world, feel that wearing a simple marriage band is a symbol of faithfulness to the marriage vow and to declare that such persons should be fully accepted in the fellowship and service of the church.

4. To make an immediate appeal to our people for a commitment to simplicity in lifestyle and by pen, voice, and example to halt the rising tide of worldly attitudes and practices that have made their subtle appearance within the church in recent years.

**Lack of consistency
has caused
embarrassment and
even hardship.**



Is Adventist health reform scientific?

Galen C. Bosley

Through hearing, seeing, reading, and touching, we grow in faith. As Scripture says, we are eyewitnesses. John, the disciple who was closest to Christ, says: "It was there from the beginning; we have heard it; we have seen it with our own eyes; we looked upon it, and felt it with our own hands; and it is of this we tell. Our theme is the word of life. . . . What we have seen and heard we declare to you, so that you and we together may share in a common life, that life which we share with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:1-3, NEB).

After His resurrection Christ appeared to the disciples in the upper chamber. They thought they were seeing a spirit, but Christ's response to their astonishment and fear was "Look at my hands and feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see; no ghost has flesh and bones as you can see that I have" (Luke 24:39, NEB). Through their physical senses the disciples were called upon to evaluate the holy as well as the unholy.

These senses work by way of nerve fibers that lead to and from the brain. "The brain nerves that connect with the whole system are the medium through which heaven communicates with man

and affects the inmost life. Whatever hinders the circulation of the electric current in the nervous system, thus weakening the vital powers and lessening mental susceptibility, makes it more difficult to arouse the moral nature."¹

God gave the health message to prevent the physiological effect of a fleshly electrical communication system being short-circuited, resulting in a weakened moral nature. Inspiration classifies such common indulgences as tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcohol (we would also include street drugs) as agents "that exert a pernicious influence upon moral character. The earlier these hurtful habits are formed, the more firmly will they hold their victim in slavery to lust, and the more certainly will they lower the standard of spirituality."²

Caffeine affects spirituality

This counsel is echoed in present-day scientific studies. Researchers have found, for example, that as coffee users increase in age, their consumption also increases.³ On a spiritual plane, increasing consumption of caffeine accompanies a concomitant decrease in religious involvement. This effect is shown in Table 1.⁴

In social drinkers the use of alcohol seems to cause small amounts of brain shrinkage in the frontal lobes, the center of moral discernment.⁵ When social drinkers are given psychological tests, researchers find that the drinkers' decision-making ability, the higher order of thinking, is impaired even when sober.

The greater the intake of alcohol, the greater the decrease in decision-making power.⁶ Furthermore, as alcohol intake increases, the involvement in religious activities decreases, even at the lowest consumption levels.⁷

Alcohol distorts perception of what is actually occurring. Studies for a number of years were unable to find any problematic effects from one or two drinks of alcohol. Tests on individuals' abilities to do certain tasks requiring the use of the senses showed no difference between abstainers and moderate drinkers. Humans have the ability to concentrate enough mental power on a given task to overcome the degrading effect alcohol has on their senses and coordination as long as they have *only one task to cope with*.

For example, after five or six drinks, experienced airline pilots under simulated conditions can maintain their aircraft on correct flight paths as long as this is their *only task*. When it comes to watching for other aircraft or listening to air traffic controller instructions in addition to maintaining a correct flight path, control begins to come apart. Major errors occur, such as attempting a landing without the landing gear down or turning the plane into the flight path of another plane after the controller has just notified the pilot of the other aircraft.⁸ See Figure 1.⁹

But it doesn't take five or six drinks to do this. As little as one drink can delay and distort the ability to handle and interpret information quickly and

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accurately. The precise mechanism isn't known, although there appears to be good evidence that the distortions are occurring at both the sensory level—the eyes, ears, nose, etc.—and the cognitive level—the brain.¹⁰

Caffeine too causes a distorted perception of the world. Once coffee is ingested, for example, people perceive that they are rejuvenated and ready for action. In reality, the body and mind may still need rest. Anorexics sometimes drink large quantities of caffeine-containing beverages. They use drinks such as coffee and diet colas to maintain a feeling of not being hungry and to pep themselves up when their bodies are actually starving and have little vigor.¹¹

Exercise and decision-making

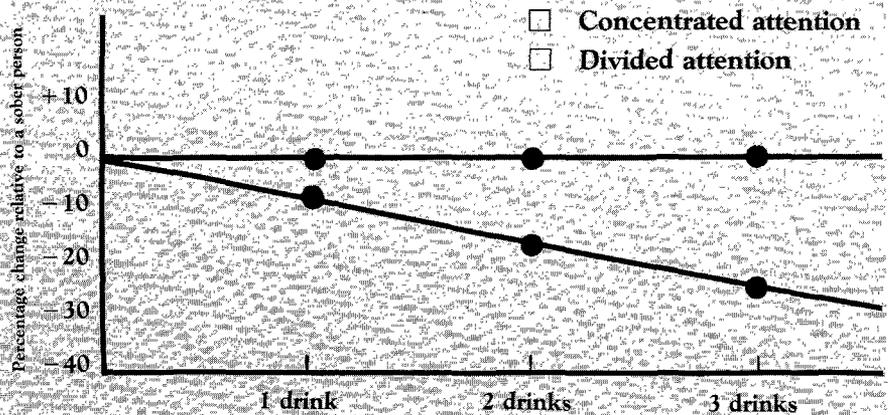
Another example of health habits affecting the ability to think concerns getting proper exercise. In a group of 20 individuals who had exercised three times a week for six months, it was found that not only were they 20 percent fitter but they were also 70 percent better at making decisions than before they started exercising.¹² Ellen White states, "Physical inaction lessens not only mental but moral power."¹³ This may be the reason the Lord said to Adam, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake" (Gen. 3:17). God gave exercise to be a blessing, not a curse, so Adam and Eve could enjoy better health in order to discern spiritual matters more clearly.

Even the ingestion of flesh foods has an effect on spirituality. "A meat diet changes the disposition and strengthens animalism. We are composed of what we eat, and eating much flesh will diminish intellectual activity. . . . A religious life can be more successfully gained and maintained if meat is discarded, for this diet stimulates into intense activity lustful propensities, and enfeebles the moral and spiritual nature."¹⁴

Meat eating promotes hostility

Research bears this out. In tests of vegetarians who were willing to consume meat for testing purposes, during the meat-consumption period anxiety, depression, hostility, confusion, and fatigue increased, whereas vigor decreased. And this effect was observable after the consumption of only three ounces of beef—one hamburger patty—per day.¹⁵ Considering the inverse correlation of these negative moods or dispositions with the positive dispositions in

FIGURE 1
The Effect of Alcoholic Drinks Upon Concentrated and Divided Attention Auditory Tasks



Galatians 5:22, 23, "joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," one can see that even meat consumption can positively affect one's Christian experience.

We are told that flesh was restricted in the diet of the children of Israel for their own good. "God brought the Israelites from Egypt, that he might establish them in the land of Canaan, a pure, holy, and happy people. In the accomplishment of this object He subjected them to a course of discipline, both for their own good and for the good of their posterity. Had they been willing to deny appetite, in obedience to His wise restrictions, feebleness and disease would have been unknown among them. Their descendants would have possessed both physical and mental strength. They would have had clear perceptions of truth and duty, keen discrimination, and sound judgment."¹⁶ In His effort to save every possible soul, God refrained from giving

the children of Israel that which would weaken them physically and therefore interfere with their perception and understanding of spiritual truth.

Results of intemperance

One of the most fearful stories in Scripture concerns the two Gadarene demoniacs. These men were so perverted and wild that Satan had nearly obliterated in them all likeness of man. In like manner Satan wants to debase the whole human race. His method of accomplishing this is to prevent us from listening to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's means to lead us into truth. He is the agency through which we are enabled to obey, able to live a sanctified life.

Yet man is not always receptive to the Holy Spirit. Like the Gadarene demoniacs, we can lose the ability to discriminate between truth and error. Satan uses unhealthy habits and practices to

TABLE 1
Effect of Caffeine Use on Religious Activity

41% of low users	} of caffeine are very or moderately active in religious activity.
34% of moderate users	
26% of high users	
59% of low users	} of caffeine are minimally or not active in religious activity.
66% of moderate users	
74% of high users	

benumb the moral sense. The ability to separate truth from error is of utmost importance to spiritual safety. It is vital for the growth of moral discernment.

Health reform is the avenue by which God preserves His communication lines through the Holy Spirit. The Lord designed that the restoring influences of health reform should be part of the last great effort to proclaim the gospel message.

The health message given to this church is to be a spiritual advantage. The additional benefits of less sickness, less medical-care expense, better health, and a more rewarding and longer life are only part of the blessings of obedience.

¹ Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 209.

² ———, *The Sanctified Life* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1937), p. 28.

³ J. F. Greden, P. Fontaine, and M. Lubetsky, "Anxiety and Depression Associated with Caffeinism Among Psychiatric Patients," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 135, No. 8 (1978): 963-966.

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⁵ L. A. Cala, B. Jones, P. Burns, et al., "Results of Computerized Tomography, Psychometric Testing, and Dietary Studies in Social Drinkers, With Emphasis on Reversibility After Abstinence," *The Medical Journal of Australia* 2, No. 6 (1983): 264-269.

⁶ D. A. Parker, E. S. Parker, J. A. Brody, and R. Schoenberg, "Alcohol Use and Cognitive Loss Among Employed Men and Women," *American Journal of Public Health* 73, No. 5 (1983): 521-526.

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⁸ C. E. Billings, R. L. Wick, R. J. Gerke, and R. C. Chase, "The Effects of Alcohol on Pilot Performance During Instrument Flight," Report FAA-AM-82-4 (Washington, D.C.: Federal Aviation Admin., 1972).

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¹⁰ H. Moskowitz and D. DePry, "The Effect of Alcohol Upon Auditory Vigilance and Divided Attention," *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 29 (1968): 54-63.

¹¹ J. A. Sours, "Case Reports of Anorexia Nervosa and Caffeinism," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 140, No. 2 (1983): 235, 236.

¹² "Decision-making: A Boost for Thought," *American Health*, November/December 1983.

¹³ White, *Education*, p. 209.

¹⁴ ———, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1976), p. 389.

¹⁵ F. M. Sacks, A. Donner, W. P. Castelli, et al., "Effect of Ingestion of Meat on Plasma Cholesterol of Vegetarians," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 246, No. 6 (Aug. 7, 1981): 640-644.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1958), p. 378.

Ludwig Richard Conradi, Missionar de Siebenten-Tags Adventisten

Daniel Heinz, *Archives of International History, volume 2*, Verlag Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, Bern, New York, 1986, 131 pages, \$11.00. Reviewed by Herbert Kiesler, *Biblical Research Institute, Washington, D.C.*

Ludwig Conradi, the illegitimate son of Ulrika Elizabetha Conradi, was born in Karlsruhe, Germany, on March 20, 1856. He apparently had a difficult childhood and was frightened by his mother's threats to send him away to America if he didn't live up to her expectations. Finally he became so frightened that he ran away to America on his own.

From these inauspicious origins he went on to become a preeminent Seventh-day Adventist evangelist in North America, Europe, Africa, and South America before breaking with the church and becoming a Seventh Day Baptist at age 76. Daniel Heinz has written, in German, a well-researched and gripping biography of this great man.

It is refreshing to see that Heinz faces the critical issues of Conradi's life, right up to his tragic break with the church, squarely. He makes no attempt to cover up any shortcomings, but he also shares many of Conradi's triumphs. Conradi's monumental accomplishments make us pause and marvel at the mighty work that God wrought through this human instrumentality.

Conradi's connection with the church began with a genuine conversion experience while he was boarding with an Adventist farmer in Iowa. Conradi developed strong devotional habits and wanted to share his faith with others, so he found his way to Battle Creek College and took the ministerial course. After graduation he began doing evangelistic work among the German-speaking people of the Midwest. From there he went on to successful work in many other parts of the world, most notably Europe.

While Conradi had strong convictions on most doctrines of the church, and above all, on the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, he entertained doubts about Ellen White's prophetic mission. After 1898 his thinking took a

decisive turn. A gap began to develop between his understanding of the sanctuary doctrine and the classical Adventist position. Other factors such as his position on bearing arms in World War I also seem to have contributed to his final break with the church. But in spite of the ambivalence that characterized him throughout his life, he has gone down in history as an epoch-making missionary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. And Daniel Heinz has captured Conradi's life well in this biography.

Helping Women in Crisis

Kay Marshall Strom, *Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986, 170 pages, \$7.95, paper. Reviewed by Jerry Lastine, director of communication and trust services, Indiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*

Counseling, especially in a time of crisis, is serious business. Strom says, "Good advice is essential in domestic violence. Bad advice can be deadly. Be careful. Out of ignorance or oversight, we may do more harm than good."

Strom deals with several prevalent crisis problems facing pastors today, sharing the causes and showing how to handle them legally and emotionally. Chapter topics include incest, rape, child molestation, infidelity, suicide, and wife abuse.

The well-chosen examples and lists of materials for further reading, along with lists of do's and don'ts, make this book a valuable ready reference. The author relies on biblical principles in presenting solutions to problems. This is indeed a helpful handbook for helpers.

Slaves, Citizens, Sons: Legal Metaphors in the Epistles

Francis Lyall, *Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1984, 288 pages, \$9.95, paper. Reviewed by Wayne Willey, pastor, Amesbury, Massachusetts.*

This is not a book you will read through at one sitting. In fact, even though I have a graduate degree in law and thus a more than passing interest in law and legalisms, I found the book so tedious that I wondered whether I would ever finish it. After struggling all the way through, I wondered whether my effort

had been worthwhile.

Lyall proposes that one cannot rightly understand the legal metaphors used in the Epistles without understanding the distinctions between Greek, Jewish, and Roman law. While Roman law is seen as the source of most legal metaphors in the Epistles, Jewish law is seen as the source of those metaphors dealing with redemption.

The material in this book may be of value to those who need to understand the finest distinctions in the cultural background of the Epistles, but pastors who have grown up in Western cultures and are familiar with Old Testament imagery should have an adequate understanding of legal terms and would find this book of limited value.

When Religion Doesn't Work

Marvin Moore, *Review and Herald*, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1986, 30 pages, \$1.25, paper. Reviewed by Ella Rydzewski, editorial secretary, MINISTRY.

We have all heard tales of disillusioned church members whose unanswered prayers or unrealistic expectations of other Christians have led them away from the church. Moore shares several tales of woe, then suggests ways in which we can be sensitive in our interactions with others, especially with idealistic new Christians.

In the last chapter the author points to church members' responsibility for the disillusioned. "The reason we share the responsibility for their failure is that without realizing it, in our casual talk about religion, or in our teaching or preaching, we gave them the assumptions that caused their downfall." There is truth in this, but Moore does not give adequate coverage to the influence of various personality factors that may make it more difficult for some people to be understanding and accepting.

The book makes valuable reading for new members to help them see and avoid certain pitfalls, but it ought also to be read by pastors and other members of long standing to help them prevent disillusionment.

Tenderness and 24 Other Ways to Make a Marriage Work

Nelson Price, Fleming H. Revell, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1986, 158 pages, \$9.95, paper. Reviewed by Alberta Mazat, professor of marriage and family therapy, Loma Linda University.

The author is a counseling pastor, a

husband, and a father and has written his book to help improve marriage in Christian homes. He presents a number of ideas in lists that if implemented could solve marriage problems. His lists include five steps to firmer marriage bonding, seven ways to be a winning wife, and six ways to be a huggable husband.

The book demands careful reading in the area of husband and wife roles. It can easily be seen as another emphasis on submitting for the wife and loving for the husband. Unfortunately, the submitting is easier to write rules for and to evaluate than the loving.

I wish that the chapter "The Plan for Man and Woman" could have pointed to the original Edenic equality of man and woman as God's ideal, and made an appeal to return to and grow into this ideal, rather than giving up and settling down into the "second plan."

Price makes a glaring error when he states that only 2 percent of sexual incompatibility cases stem from physical causes, while 98 percent come from mental attitude. This statement could cause some couples to give up on seeking medical help. Some authorities suggest that at least 15 percent of problems may be medically discoverable and treatable.

Recently Published

Building Teen Excitement: A Youth Worker's Guide, Shirley Pollock, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1985, 80 pages, \$8.95, paper.

This is a sequel to an earlier book on successful youth work. For this volume the author gleaned proven things from youth groups all across the country. The activities, worship celebrations, suggestions, and ideas in the book are unique, interesting, and, best of all, have worked. For the youth worker who feels a bit stale and out of new ideas, this book may be just the tonic the doctor ordered.

Ministry With Older Persons: A Guide for Clergy and Congregations, Arthur H. Becker, Augsburg Publishing, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1986, 221 pages, \$12.95, paper.

The author gives extensive space to the dynamics of aging as they relate to the individual, family, church, and pastor. Two chapters give specific suggestions as to how to minister to elderly members. Becker's insights are based on study and practical experience. His footnotes, bibliography, and appendix

are excellent sources for further study on the topic of aging.

Christian Peacemaking and International Conflict, Duane K. Friesen, Herald Press, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, 1986, 304 pages, \$19.95, paper.

With the issue of peace prominent today, this is a worthy book, but it is tedious reading of a scholarly quality. It is thorough and persuasive, but only those who have exceptional interest in the issues it raises would put forth the effort to read it.

Sermons on Prayer, Ronald E. Wall, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986, 176 pages, \$6.95, paper.

This book's simple, nontechnical style has merit for the layperson as well as the minister who desires to study what Christ said about prayer, and also where, when, what, and why He prayed.

East Comes West, E. Allen Richardson, Pilgrim Press, New York, New York, 1985, 212 pages, \$8.95, paper.

This book provides a good overview of four major Eastern religions that are growing in popularity in the United States: the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and Muslim religions. The author's chief interest is to give an account of how these religions are being transplanted through immigration of adherents, rather than with the impact of Eastern religion on Americans.

How Jesus Treated People, Morris L. Venden, Pacific Press, Boise, Idaho, 1986, 142 pages, \$6.95, paper.

Morris Venden has the gift of building picture windows and letting in the light. In this book, doctrines come to life in the spotlighted arena of New Testament experience. For those seeking to do evangelism in the Caring Church way, Venden's book presents the ultimate Model in action.

His Healing Love, Dick Winn, *Review and Herald*, 1986, 374 pages, \$7.95, hardbound.

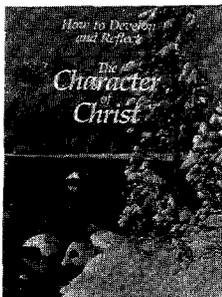
This senior youth devotional book for 1987 is filled with practical applications of Christian principles.

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Adventist Ideals

Joseph Espinosa has prepared an Adventist magazine similar to *Ideals*, the proceeds of which will benefit evangelism directed to the deaf, Jews, and Native Americans.

This issue, entitled "How to Develop and Reflect the Character of Christ," focuses on the primary needs of the people waiting for His return. Its 64 pages feature large print and beautiful colored photos.



The magazines are yours for a tax-deductible donation of \$10 each. Order from North American Missions, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

Establish your new members

As often as there's a baptism, there's a new member added to our church family. And more often than not that new member spends a great deal of time wondering what the rest of us are talking about.

"New members frequently feel estranged," says V. Bailey Gillespie, "simply because they're not yet able to communicate in the same words and phrases used by people who have been church members for a longer period of time." Gillespie is chairman of the Church and Ministry

Department of Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus. "This lack of belonging often leads new members to leave the church within their first year of membership."

Barbara Morgan's experience is typical.

Barbara squeezed into the second row from the front on the left-hand side of the church. She was 10 minutes early. This was the morning she had been waiting for. An extra-big smile lit up her face. It was her first Sabbath as a Seventh-day Adventist.

While the organ was quietly playing a few hymns, Barbara had time to think about the events of the past few months that had brought her to this place. Barbara's next-door neighbor Marcia was an Adventist. Through the years they'd become close friends, often comparing notes on raising the kids, staying healthy, and juggling the responsibilities of family and career. Early this year when Marcia's church held an evangelistic campaign, Barbara accepted Marcia's invitation to attend. During the meetings she decided to join the church.

Last Sabbath had been beautiful. It seemed every single member stayed after church for the potluck. And just about everyone told her how happy they were about her decision. Then the afternoon baptism. She'd never forget it!

Now her first Sabbath as a member. She'd even beat Marcia to Sabbath school. The superintendent stood to begin the program.

That's when Barbara began to have questions.

Within the first three minutes Barbara heard two phrases that were completely foreign to her. One had to do with the GC. The other dealt with the Great Disappointment. Had she slept through something? Had she missed a meeting or failed to read a chapter?

Barbara looked around at the other members. They nodded their heads in complete understanding. Apparently she was the only one who didn't know what the superintendent was talking about.

The mission story introduced another new phrase. And the mission offering brought still another. By the time the lesson study was over, Barbara had begun taking notes, writing down every phrase that was strange to her. By the end of church, her list numbered 12. Someone was going to have to help her understand the unique language of this newly adopted family.

Home Study International is accepting the challenge of helping Barbara and the thousands of other new members like her become better acquainted with some of the unique features of their new Adventist Church family. HSI will soon introduce a new course entitled *Welcome to the Family!* The course, currently under preparation, is a friendly introduction to subjects such as Adventist lifestyle, Adventist heritage, the specialness of the Sabbath, the reward of Adventist education, and the organizational structure of the church. Written in a "popular style," using stories, anecdotes and humor, creative

study guides, and suggestions for further reading, the course will be made available to pastors to help orient their prospective or newly baptized members. In individual Bible studies, prayer meetings, pastor's Bible classes, or baptismal classes, pastors will be able to lead these people into a deepening appreciation of the Adventist Church.

"I think it's a wonderful concept," says Lynn Mallery, pastor of the La Sierra church in southern California. "Last year we baptized 182 people, and I would have used this new course with every one of them. In fact," Mallery continues, "we'll probably order 300 for our church as soon as they're available."

Welcome to the Family! is being written by members of the Church and Ministry Department of the La Sierra campus of Loma Linda University. Contributors include Gillespie, Mallery, Rick Rice, Charles Teel, Reuben Hilde, and Steve Daily. The course will be available from HSI this spring.

"It's our prayer," reports George Babcock, president of HSI, "to assist local church pastors in this delicate and essential work of welcoming new members into the church family."

Strengthening our schools

In the past three years education in the United States has received serious scrutiny by a variety of prestigious organizations. All of the reports have triggered demands for reform.

Like public education, many church-related educa-

tional systems are examining their vitality and viability. In many cases, confrontation with demographic and economic changes appears to threaten their very existence.

With inspired counsel, the educational program of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has grown from its first home school, established in 1853, to a system that now includes 4,450 primary and elementary schools, 901 secondary schools, and 94 colleges and universities.

An ancient philosopher said that "the fate of empires depends on the education of youth." Certainly most of us would agree that our schools are the most important mission field in the world.

We must ever keep in mind that the Adventist educational system is facing most of the serious challenges that confront church-related systems at large. To meet these we must pursue all means that will enable our schools to remain vigorous.

Sabbath, April 25, 1987, the denomination brings the special needs of its educational programs to the church at large and solicits a special offering on behalf of these needs. On that day let's remember the rich heritage of Adventist education and the sacrificial commitments that have made it strong.—Gordon Madgwick, General Conference Department of Education.

Social Security opening for those who opted out

Ministers in the United States who opted out of Social Security can get into that program if they inform the Internal Revenue Service of their change of mind by April 15, 1988.

At the beginning of his ministry, by signing a certifi-

cate to the effect that because of conscience or religious reasons he is opposed to the acceptance of any public insurance that makes payments in the event of death, disability, old age, retirement, or for health care (Medicare), a minister can opt out of the Social Security program.

Some ministers now realize that exercising that option was a mistake. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 has opened a window that enables such individuals to get into the program with

no questions asked as to the basis for their former decision.

A minister who wishes his Social Security work credit to begin with the year 1986 must file IR5 Form 4361 with the Internal Revenue Service and pay the applicable self-employment tax by April 15, 1987. Or if he wishes to delay getting into the program until 1987, he has until April 15, 1988, to complete this.

Ministers in their mid-50s and older should contact their local Social Secu-

rity offices since they may not be able to get in enough quarters of active service before retiring to qualify.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church holds no teaching that opposes plans such as Social Security. We urge all those who previously opted out (for whatever reason) to give serious consideration to obtaining this valuable protection for themselves and their families.—Robert E. Osborn, Associate Treasurer, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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WELCOME!

Have you ever watched a new Adventist try to understand what we're talking about? Or helped a new convert struggle with the practical aspects of being a Sabbath keeper?

Have you ever had to explain why the roots of our "Great Advent Hope" are found in "The Great Disappointment"?

Have you ever assisted a new member meet the financial challenges of an Adventist education? Or searched for the most helpful answer about Adventist lifestyle?

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Home Study International is pleased to announce the creation of "Welcome to the Family," a course designed especially for newly baptized Adventists.

In seven friendly lessons, pastors can now guide new members through topics that often cause confusion and questions.

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"It's about time!" Conference Church Ministries Director

"We'll order 300 of them!" Pastor

"Best new idea of the year!" Conference President

"I could use eight of them this week." Pastor

"It's a breakthrough!" Conference Evangelist

Prepared by the Department of Church and Ministry, Loma Linda University, "Welcome to the Family" is available this spring from **Home Study International**, 6940 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912-4481.

Welcome to the Family

See the article in this issue of Ministry for more information.