

# Ministry

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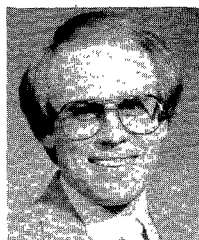
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## Voice of God?

"The Church: Voice of God?" by George Rice (December 1987), is a timely and, in fact, overdue article on an issue hotly debated in many places in the church today.

I believe there was one technical detail in error in the article. It is not quite correct to say that A. G. Daniells was elected president of the General Conference in 1901, for the General Conference had no president between 1901 and 1903. During that period the chairman of the General Conference Committee was the chief executive of the church, and it was that position that A. G. Daniells occupied. —Edwin E. Reynolds.

■ Dr. Rice says that "from 1901 on, Ellen White spoke positively regarding the future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church" (p. 6). While true, this statement does not present a balanced picture. On several occasions after 1901 Ellen White also spoke negatively—in no uncertain terms—on the future of the Adventist Church. She stated:

- that the leaders were not obeying the Testimonies, that the Holy Spirit could not come on the work (a reference to the situation at Nashville and in the Southern field); and that she had lost confidence (letter 263, 1902).

- that the leading men were blind, that the future looked hopeless, and that she feared greatly and had little courage (letter 288, 1903).

- that Jesus' words over Jerusalem as He left the Temple were appropriate for the church since the last General Conference session and that the church was under God's frown (letter 43, 1903).

- that she wondered why judgments from God had not fallen on the General Conference (manuscript 26, 1903).

- that many were still blind since the 1901 GC session and had not repented, that many wrongs were still uncorrected, that men in high positions were perverse, and that dishonesty, oppression, and selfishness were too evident.

I do not want to destroy the church; neither do I believe that it is Babylon. But I know of some who do—and they

publish these statements. In defense, we need to acknowledge their existence and make sure we give a balanced picture of what Ellen White said about the issue. —Ross Winkle.

■ The recent article in MINISTRY on Ellen White's relationship to the authority of the General Conference is the most frightening presentation I have ever come across in an Adventist publication.

Our theology clearly states that we are one-on-one with God, with Christ as our only intermediary. In the final judgment I will not be represented by the General Conference legal staff, and if I have not thought things out for myself with God, but simply relied on General Conference study commissions to decide what I will believe, I may very well be in big trouble with my Maker.

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is neither as good nor as bad as many people would like us to believe. It is not infallible, but neither is it Babylon. It is composed of leaders who share all of the strengths and weaknesses of the people they lead. For the most part they are hardworking, dedicated people who spend long hours struggling with complex problems for which there are no easy right and wrong answers. They receive a modest salary and a lot of crank mail. They deserve our respect but not our adulation.

I am first and foremost a Christian, a person who has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Second, I subscribe to the belief system of Adventist theology as the best explanation of present truth that I have found so far in my life. A part of this theology states that as long as I live I have an obligation to continue to study and search and seek God's guidance to grow in my relationship to Him and to understand truth as He reveals it to me. My third priority is to an organized church that serves as a means of fellowship with other believers and a way of reaching nonbelievers for Christ. The church is only a means to an end, never an end in itself. Any person or church that doesn't keep that order of priority clearly in focus loses

their sense of mission and is ultimately doomed. Unity is a spiritual quality achieved as people grow closer to Christ, not an organizational quality achieved as people bow to hierarchical institutional authority. —Susan Sickler, Dayton, Ohio.

## Survey on women in ministry

Re the letters in the December issue regarding the survey on women in ministry: Dr. Anderson criticizes the survey for not following up on a 72 percent return on the onetime mailing, saying that it leaves a "very real possibility of nonresponse bias." It seems that he fails to recognize the obvious: the positive answer from better than 80 percent of the respondents means that even if all 28 percent of the nonrespondents viewed the question negatively (which is highly unlikely), at least 57.6 out of every 100 respondents viewed it positively. That seems to be very significant and implies that the nonresponse bias that Dr. Anderson refers to is highly insignificant. —David L. Reynolds, Canby, Oregon.

## Illegitimate parents

In the April 1987 MINISTRY, page 28, Professor Herbert Kiesler refers to Ludwig R. Conradi as the "illegitimate" son of his parents. Now, I well know that within the British-North American culture innocent little children are (arrogantly?) described as illegitimate, a description that places them below such children as have married parents. This is, allow me to suggest, a mistake. Adventist writers ought not to follow this trend, however widespread it may be. Little Ludwig's parents were illegitimate. He was not. —Leif Kr. Tobiassen, Trondheim, Norway.

## Rotate the personnel

We certainly share Freddie Russell's concerns ("When It's Time to Move On," December 1987) about administrative longevity, and have discussed this particular issue at length at constitution committee meetings. However, he missed the main point of the prob-

(Continued on page 28)

In a sense, the date 457 B.C. is foundational to Adventism. It marks the beginning of the prophetic period that reaches to 1844, the prophetic period that provided the impetus for the Millerite movement, out of which the Adventist Church grew. In a short, easy-to-read article L. P. Tolhurst reveals the bedrock on which this foundation is laid.

In "Christ and the Imprisoned Spirits" John Brunt digs into three problem passages. His concern is not merely to deal with the difficulties but to find in the passages the messages they convey concerning our spiritual life. Whether or not you agree with his conclusions, you will find his article stimulating and informative.

For years Willard Santee maintained an independent ministry known for its criticism of the church. The accepting, unconditional love of a pastor, a retired church employee, and a former college teacher brought about a change of heart, and now he pastors in the Pennsylvania Conference. He tells his story in "From Bitterness to Reconciliation."

Kathy Lewis, who is not an Adventist but works with the chemically dependent in an Adventist setting, writes of the barriers to recovery from addiction that exist within the church. Her article will challenge you to encourage your church members to be less judgmental and more supportive.

Other articles in this issue contain practical pointers and inspiration. All in all, there's something for everyone here.

*David C. James*

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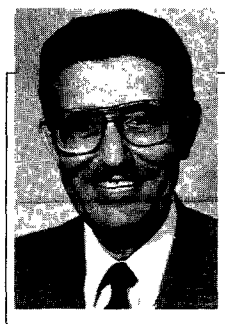
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VOLUME 61 NUMBER 4

# God's fire in evangelism

Salim Japas

**Is our church on fire or lukewarm? What is the secret to rekindling the fire of God for evangelism?**



*Salim Japas, a highly successful evangelist, is ministerial secretary of the Inter-American Division of the General Conference.*

**I** am convinced that to dream dreams and see visions in relation to our evangelistic task is an urgent necessity of the Adventist ministry. In this crucial hour, divine wisdom impresses us with the truth that no one can accomplish an evangelistic task beyond his vision and dream. George Deakin said that "a vision without a task makes a visionary; a task without vision, a scoundrel with neither occupation nor benefit; but a vision with a task, a perfect missionary."<sup>1</sup>

The apostle Paul had his missionary vision renewed after the Holy Spirit prevented his trip to Bithynia (Acts 16:7). His vision of the Macedonian man (verses 9, 10) was three-dimensional. It was a *vertical* vision, for he realized that the "Lord had called us" and that this call was for a specific evangelistic task. It was an *inner* vision that showed him that the evangelistic tasks he was endeavoring to carry forward were too narrow. He needed to move into new territory, to broaden his understanding of God's call to spread the gospel. It was a *horizontal* vision, for he saw Macedonia, and Europe beyond. He saw the empire, he saw the world, he saw clear down to our day. The frontiers of the task of God went beyond the immediate call to "come over into Macedonia, and help us." The gospel had to go to all the world.

In response the apostle moved in the direction of duty. Thanks to his unshakable conviction, his intense compassion, and his undivided consecration, the apostle came to be an instrument of

power in the hand of God. His loyalty to the evangelistic task assigned to him was a decisive factor in assuring that the saving message would reach all of the world, including us.

Ours is an age that is relatively secure in its techniques and knowledge, but confused when it comes to goals and destiny. Bombastic when it comes to power, but fearful when it comes to weakness. A society relatively rich materially, but spiritually bankrupt. We need, therefore, the vision of God in order to advance beyond our own vision. Without vision there is no life. The best we can do with a man when the last of his missionary dreams is dead is to bury him.

It is possible that the personal tasks of some ministers may be impeding the evangelistic task that we must accomplish. There is no possibility of haggling when it comes to the renewing of the vision and pushing the limits of the kingdom toward more distant frontiers. No, there are no options; the challenge of the evangelistic task demands that we decide between burying ourselves in conformism, negativism, and pessimism, or dreaming dreams of grandeur.

Evangelism is more than a program, more than a strategy, more than a methodology; it is a passion that crystallizes in rescue: "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away" (Isa. 49:25). This is a rescue that demands urgency because "the increasing wickedness is such that multitudes are rapidly approaching a point in their personal experience beyond which it will be exceedingly difficult to reach them with a saving knowledge of the third angel's message."<sup>2</sup>

## What do we lack?

I have asked myself sometimes, What are we lacking to complete our task of proclaiming the message of the third angel here and then going to our home up there? We have money, time, an effective ecclesiastical structure, a brilliant program, a beautiful message centered in the person of Christ. Perhaps what we lack is to be the *man*, the believer, filled with enthusiasm to advance the task (see Eze. 22:30). Fervent love for God and for His task is the secret of success in evangelism. Any undertaking not founded on love is a dead enterprise. Successful ministers are those who have maintained the fire burning on the altar of enthusiasm and have advanced with faith, even against all hope.

When D. L. Moody, the great evangelist, heard the English minister Mr. Varley say, "Moody, God expects to demonstrate to the world what He can do with a man that is totally consecrated to Him," he later declared, "By the grace of God, I will be that man." Does your heart respond to this call too?

It seems to me that the Adventist Church, at least in some regions, has limited the power of its Christian testimony by its defective concepts. It has been too pulpit-centered. The biblical principle of the universal priesthood of the believers (1 Peter 2:9) has not been understood or acted upon. Hence evangelism has come to be regarded as the task of a few specialists.

The minister who is so involved in his ministerial tasks that there is no time left for the salvation of souls is not fulfilling his task as a minister. The work of evangelism is not separate from pastoring.

Every minister who has been called by God to minister in this church can use his or her gifts and capabilities to attract souls to the foot of the cross. A minister who cannot do this is not truly able to be a minister. It is important to remember that the very center of the ministry is the salvation of souls; if there is failure in this point, no other success can be acceptable.

The preachers in some Adventist pulpits today are intellectual, up-to-date, and theological. But I ask myself whether their approach is adequate for the challenge of the hour. As someone has said: "Rather than deal with subjects of the moment, we should deal with themes of eternity"; or as the Spirit of Prophecy has indicated: "The preaching of the Word should appeal to the intellect and impart

knowledge, but it comprises much more than this."<sup>3</sup> If my observation is correct, we must recognize that the missing note is evangelism. If the world is to be warned, moved, and attracted to the foot of the cross, every Adventist minister and every member of the church must enlist voluntarily in the evangelistic proclamation.

## Theology versus evangelism?

The church suffers a great loss when we try to separate theology from evangelization. This separation is a theological aberration. The two are never separated in the Scriptures. Paul, the major theologian of the apostolic church, was also the evangelist par excellence. We cannot find in the biblical account even one example of someone who dedicated himself to theology independently or exclusively. All of the apostles were fervent witnesses of Christ, and their first and most important task was not speculation or investigation, but proclamation. The message they proclaimed, the evangelistic kerygma, was filled with revealed theological content, but their chief efforts were bent toward saving souls.

If God in His infinite mercy poured out His Spirit in pentecostal fullness when the church was born, He can do the same at the culmination of its history. But we have a daring enemy against whom we must struggle. His name is apathy.

It seems that the desire for recognition and acceptance has driven the church into formalism. Where form and liturgy become central to worship, the church becomes lethargic. The ideals that best express the nature of the church sleep, and apathy robs us of the love for evangelism. We have the wick, but it is not lit; we lack the spiritual force to lead the people of God toward the frontier, the place where the kingdom of God can be extended. In some of our churches the language of Zion is no longer spoken with clarity. We do not speak; we go to church to sleep. The pillars of the church have been converted into pillows. We sleep and the voice of God is not heard; the revival and the power are delayed.

But even now there is hope. God is awake, and "when we bring our hearts into unity with Christ, and our lives into harmony with His work, the Spirit that fell on the disciples on the day of Pentecost will fall on us."<sup>4</sup>

We need God's fire to finish the task. We have a mission we cannot and must not renounce. Evangelization is a chal-

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**Paul, the major theologian of the apostolic church, was also the evangelist par excellence.**

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lenge without options: the saving of souls must take priority. In some areas of the world the ministers are on fire, the church is burning, and the gospel is advancing. But in other areas the church is lukewarm, because the ministers are not on fire. There is power, but it is limited; only the power of God is infinite. As an ecclesiastical structure we can make plans and select strategies, but God has the sum total of power, and He can grant it to the church. "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," Jesus said (Acts 1:8).

In a certain measure we are the architects of our own weakness, because we depend upon ourselves. We illuminate ourselves with the dying glow of our own light. But if we are to receive the pentecostal power, we must submit ourselves to God. "When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God."<sup>5</sup>

My conviction impels me. We must seek fervently the baptism of fire. If our people were as eager to receive the baptism of fire as they are to receive the baptism of water, we would open the way to a fervent, dynamic church filled with pentecostal charisma. Then our testimony would be a voice and not an echo. A voice that proclaims the greatness of God and the imminence of His return. ■

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<sup>1</sup>Leonard Ravenhill, ed., *Why Revival Tardies* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1959), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 209, 210.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 697, 698.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 699.

# Establishing the date 457 B.C.

L. P. Tolhurst

**The date 457 B.C., the base date for the prophecy that reaches to 1844, is firmly established in both Scripture and history**



*L. P. Tolhurst is a professor of theology at Pacific Adventist College, Boroko, N.C.D., Papua New Guinea.*

**S**eventh-day Adventists believe that “the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” (Dan. 9:25) marks not only the beginning of the 70-weeks prophecy of that passage, but also the beginning of the 2300 days mentioned in Daniel 8:14. We believe that this latter prophecy reaches down to 1844, and thus points us out as the people God raised up on time to proclaim the last message of warning to the world. If we are correct, we ought to be able to justify our claim by producing evidence that will support it.

Three Persian decrees played roles in the restoration of God’s people from the captivity the Babylonians had instituted.<sup>1</sup> Confirming our interpretation of these important prophecies of Daniel depends on identifying and dating the decree with which God intended the time calculations to begin.

Cyrus issued the first decree in the first year of his Babylonian reign, which was 538/537 B.C. (see Ezra 1:1; 6:1; and 2 Chron. 36:22, 23). The Bible does not indicate when in the first year of his reign this decree was given, so we do not know whether the year involved was 538 or 537 B.C. Nor does the Bible tell us when Zerubbabel’s party left Babylon and when they arrived in Jerusalem, so we do not know when this decree became effective. The Bible’s vagueness about these details argues against this being the all-important decree. Furthermore, Cyrus’s decree says nothing about the restoration of the city. It speaks only of the rebuilding of the Temple.

Another evidence that this is the wrong decree is that it simply doesn’t work with the Daniel 9 prophecy of the time of the arrival of the Messiah, the anointed one. With the date of this decree as a starting point, the 483 years Daniel spoke of do not reach anywhere near Jesus’ time, never mind identifying the year of His baptism—His anointing—which took place in A.D. 27.

Scripture gives no date at all for the second decree, that of Darius the Great. All we know is that it was given in the early years of his reign, because, as a result of it, the Temple was completed and dedicated.<sup>2</sup> And, like Cyrus’s, Darius’s decree was concerned with the restoration of the Temple, not of the city. Obviously, for establishing a starting point for the prophecy this decree is not of much use either.

If God intended either of these decrees to mark the beginning of a time prophecy as important as that of the 2300 days, then certainly He would have seen that the details needed were recorded in the Bible.

## **Artaxerxes’ decree**

It is in connection with the third decree—that of the seventh year of Artaxerxes, recorded in Ezra 7:8, 9—that we have the information necessary to locating in time this important prophecy. Regarding this decree we are told that Ezra left Babylon on the first day of month 1 of the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, and that he and his group arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of month 5 of the same year. For no other decree is such detail given. This itself should alert us. Surely God is saying something to us

**Figure 1—Accession Year**

468	467	466	465	464	463	462	461
Xerxes' 17 <sup>th</sup> Year	18 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup> Artaxerxes' Accession Year	Artaxerxes' 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Double lines mark the division between years.

Xerxes' Death

when His Word is so explicit regarding this decree and so vague regarding the other two.

Furthermore, this decree provided for the restoration of local government on a scale not mentioned in the other decrees (note Ezra 7:21-28). It empowered the judiciary to punish wrongdoers, even granting the authority to impose the death sentence. And as a result of this decree Ezra began to build the city—see the letter to Artaxerxes in Ezra 4.

However, perhaps the strongest argument of all is that when we calculate the Daniel 9 prophecy using the date of this decree, 457 B.C., as marking its beginning, the prophecy reaches exactly to the baptism of Jesus. In fact, Daniel 9:24 suggests that the events that take place within the 70 weeks set God's seal of approval on the whole of the prophecy. They show that the prophecy was divinely given, and thus absolutely dependable. And no other date even begins to satisfy the demands of this prophecy.

Obviously, then, the decree God intends us to use is that of Ezra 7—the one issued in the seventh year of Artaxerxes. God has given us details about when it was issued and when it went into effect. And the precision with which it relates to Jesus' baptism marks it as authentic. It is just too accurate to be wrong!

Having determined that it is Artaxerxes' decree that marks the beginning of these prophetic periods, we must now establish that the year in which he issued his decree actually was 457 B.C.

### Babylonian and Persian dating methods

In the time of the Persians, all events and documents were dated in terms of the day number, month name or number, and year number of the current king's reign. For example, as we have already noted, Ezra says that he left for Jerusalem on the first day of month 1 of Artaxerxes' seventh year, arriving there on the first day of month 5 of the same year.

When a king died and a new one took the throne, the remaining portion of that year was considered the *accession year* of the new king and was not counted as or called the first year of the new king's reign. Only the first full calendar year of a king's reign was called his first year (see Figure 1). As can readily be seen, the accession year could be long or short, depending on when the new king came to the throne.

To establish the date of an event in terms of our calendar, scholars first had to determine the succession of the kings and the length of their reigns. The lists of kings that ancient writers provided are one source of such information. Another is the method that Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein developed as they gathered the information published in their useful book *Babylonian Chronology: 626 B.C.—A.D. 75*. Parker and Dubberstein's method grew out of the fact that thousands of tablets dated by their authors to the reigns of ancient Near Eastern kings have been found. These two men suggested that by finding the three or four tablets bearing the latest dates from each king's reign and the three or four tablets bearing the earliest dates of each successor's, the transition points between each reign might be pretty well established. Using this method, scholars can calculate the month and sometimes almost the day of the month that a king died and his successor took his place. In

this way they have been able to compile a list of the Babylonian and Persian kings together with precise details as to when each came to the throne and how long each ruled.

To assign B.C. dates to the reigns of these kings, scholars had to take one more step; they had to find a way to link the reigns of the kings to our B.C. scale. They established this link by means of the tablets that record and date the eclipses that occurred in the days of those kings. Most of these tablets describe in detail eclipses that had already occurred, but at least one predicts an eclipse at that time yet future; it was to occur in the seventh year of Cambyses. That they were able even to predict eclipses reveals the high standard of astronomical science these ancient people practiced.

As archeologists have found and translated tablets describing eclipses, astronomers have been able to calculate when in terms of our calendar those eclipses took place. Thus guesswork has been eliminated and precise dates given to the reigns of these ancient kings. In terms of chronology, the Babylonian and Persian periods are among the very best documented periods of history. (The table below lists some of the eclipses the tablets describe.)

### The date for the seventh year of Artaxerxes

With such a wealth of information re-

### Dates of Some Eclipses of the Babylonian and Persian Periods

The following list notes some of the eclipses of which we have records from the period of history with which we are concerned in this study:

King	Year of Reign	B.C. Date of Eclipse
Nabopolassar	5th	April 22, 621 B.C.
Nebuchadnezzar	37th	July 4, 568 B.C.
Cambyses	7th	July 16, 523 B.C.
Darius I	20th	November 19, 502 B.C.
Darius I	31st	April 25, 491 B.C.

## Figure 2 — The Spring-to-Spring and Fall-to-Fall Years

Spring-to-spring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Fall-to-fall							7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6						

The seventh month of the spring-to-spring year is the first month of the fall-to-fall year, but retains both the name (Tishri) and the number (seven) by which the Jews identified it.

Likewise the first month of the spring-to-spring year is the seventh month of the fall-to-fall year, but in both calendars is called Nisan and is identified as month 1.

garding the chronology of this period, we can with confidence ascertain the B.C. date of the seventh year of Artaxerxes' reign.

Xerxes, the predecessor of Artaxerxes, was murdered sometime between December 17, 465 B.C., and January 3, 464 B.C. The tablet bearing the latest known date from his reign is dated to month 9 (which corresponds to December) of his twenty-first year of reign. And the Elephantine papyri from Egypt contain the first known date identified with Artaxerxes' reign—the equivalent of our January 3, 464 B.C. Since this date comes from records originating in Egypt, most scholars agree that Xerxes died before the end of December, as it is hardly likely that news of his death and Artaxerxes' succession would travel from Persia to Egypt in three days. Thus it appears certain that Xerxes' death must be dated in late December, 465 B.C.

While the Jews followed a spring-to-spring calendar for their religious year, in time they came to use a second calendar as well—much as many nations today have a fiscal year as well as a calendar year. Just as the beginnings and endings of our fiscal years differ by six months from those of our calendar years, the Jewish fall-to-fall calendar differed by six months from the spring-to-spring calendar. And much as the months of our fiscal and calendar years retain the same

names, the months of the spring-to-spring and fall-to-fall calendars retained the same numbers. So while the spring-to-spring calendar began with month 1 and ended with month 12, the fall-to-fall calendar began with month 7 and ended with month 6 (see Figure 2).

With this information we can construct a time line for the early years of Artaxerxes and thus arrive at the all-important seventh year of his reign. We calculate that year according to the Jewish fall-to-fall calendar—the calendar Ezra was using when he referred to Artaxerxes' decree (see the box on the opposite page).

Figure 3 shows that Artaxerxes' seventh year began in 458 B.C. and extended into 457 B.C., and that the dates Scripture records in connection with this decree—those for Ezra's departure for Jerusalem and for his arrival there—fall well within 457 B.C.

It is interesting to note that William Miller and his associates used a different method for calculating which of our years corresponded to Artaxerxes' seventh year. Basing their work on Ptolemy's Canon, they came up with the same date we have arrived at above. This certainly is a gratifying reassurance as to the trustworthiness of our position and should help to fortify our faith in the message we bear to the world. As the apostle Peter

declared: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables" (2 Peter 1:16).

<sup>1</sup> A fourth possibility has been suggested: some consider Artaxerxes' acquiescence to Nehemiah's request to return to rebuild Jerusalem (444 B.C., Neh. 1:1-3; 2:1) as the decree that should provide the starting date of the prophecy (see, e.g., Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Pub., n.d.]). However, starting from the date of this incident throws the 70-weeks prophecy way off the date of Jesus' baptism. And whereas the Bible carefully quotes each of the three preceding decrees, in this case it merely says that Artaxerxes granted permission and sent accompanying letters—it gives no indication that he issued a decree. Such offhanded treatment of this "decree" is hardly what one would expect if the Lord wanted to mark it as the starting point of Daniel's important prophecy.

<sup>2</sup> The rebuilding of the Temple Cyrus's decree had initiated had petered out. The Jews began work on the Temple again and then wrote, asking Darius's permission. In his second year, Darius replied, granting that permission. The work continued, and in his sixth year, the Temple was dedicated (see Haggai 2:10-18 and Ezra 6:15).

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## Figure 3 — Artaxerxes' Seventh Year

458 B.C.				457 B.C.								456 B.C.			
	7*	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6			

Ezra reckoned Artaxerxes' seventh year on the fall-to-fall year. He left Babylon on the first day of month 1 of Artaxerxes' seventh year.

Ezra arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of month 5 of Artaxerxes' seventh year.

\*Even when the Jews were using the fall-to-fall year, they retained the month numbering of the spring-to-spring year. The fall-to-fall year, then, began with month 7 and ended with month 6 (see box accompanying article).

# Jewish use of the fall-to-fall year

The calendar by which the Babylonians and Persians reckoned their years was a spring-to-spring calendar. That is, their year began in the spring and ended with the ending of winter. In reckoning their religious year, the Jews also followed a spring-to-spring calendar. But at times they used a fall-to-fall calendar when reckoning the reigns of their own and foreign kings.

Those who ignore or are not aware of this fact may be off by as much as six months in their dating of biblical events, which can throw dates on our B.C./A.D. scale into a completely different year. Reckoning Ezra's "seventh year of Artaxerxes" by the spring-to-spring calendar, for instance, places his dates for the carrying out of Artaxerxes' decree in 458 B.C.—and the climax of the 2300 day prophecy in A.D. 1843 rather than A.D. 1844.

Four lines of evidence—three biblical and one extrabiblical—show that the Jews did use the fall-to-fall calendar.

## 1. The building of Solomon's Temple

Scripture tells us that Solomon began to build the Temple in the fourth year of his reign, in the month Zif, the second month of the Jewish year, and that he finished the Temple in the eleventh year of his reign, in the month of Bul, the eighth month of the Jewish year (1 Kings 6:1, 37, 38). On a spring-to-spring calendar, these dates would comprise seven and one-half literal years, which the Jews would have counted as eight years with their inclusive reckoning.

But based on a fall-to-fall calendar, the same dates would yield six and one-half years, which, with inclusive reckoning, the Jews would have counted as seven years—the time Scripture actually specifies for the building of Solomon's Temple (verse 38).

## 2. Josiah's reforms

In 2 Kings 22:3–23:23 we read

about the reforms that Josiah carried out in Judah, and of the Passover celebration with which he capped those reforms. Josiah sent his men throughout his kingdom to call on the people to forsake the worship of idols and to turn to the true God. Places of pagan worship were destroyed, the groves were cut down, and the people were invited to assemble in Jerusalem for the Passover. It is not hard to see that Josiah's men would need a fair amount of time to accomplish all this. It would also take the people some time to travel to Jerusalem, especially those who lived in the farther reaches of the kingdom. Yet Scripture indicates that the reforms were carried out and the people gathered between the beginning of the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign and the time of the Passover that took place in that year.

Since the Passover occurred on the fourteenth date of the first month of the year, if these events were reckoned on the basis of the spring-to-spring year, they would all have had to take place within 14 days *at the most!* However, if we allow that the Jews were using a fall-to-fall year, there would have been up to six and one-half months for these reforms to be carried out before the celebration of the Passover—a much more likely schema.

## 3. Nehemiah before the king

In beginning the account of his work in Jerusalem, Nehemiah says he heard bad news about the condition of that city in the month of Chisleu (Neh. 1:1–4), which is the ninth month of the Jewish year. He continues by saying that as a result of this bad news he was sad in the king's presence in the month of Nisan (Neh. 2:1–8), the first month of the Jewish year. More to the point of our concern here, he dates both his hearing of the bad news and the occasion on which Artaxerxes noticed his sadness to that king's twentieth year. If he were following the spring-to-spring calendar, in which the months proceeded in

numerical order, his sadness before the king would have preceded his hearing of the news that precipitated that sadness! But in the fall-to-fall calendar his dating of the events poses no problem, because in that calendar month 9 precedes month 1 (see figure 2).

Two factors make this instance of the use of the fall-to-fall calendar of particular import for the dating of Artaxerxes' decree. First, while the previous two examples involved dates based on the reigns of Hebrew kings, Nehemiah, like Ezra, was basing his dating on the reign of a Persian king.

And second, Nehemiah was Ezra's contemporary in time and circumstances—both were Jews who were raised in Persia and wrote within a few years of each other after their return to Palestine. We would expect two people with the same background who were writing at the same time and place to use the same dating technique.

## 4. The Elephantine papyri

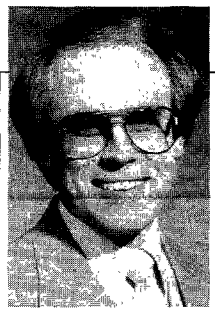
S. H. Horn and L. H. Wood have found extrabiblical evidence for Jewish use of the fall-to-fall calendar during the Persian period. Some of the manuscripts written by Jewish soldiers stationed at the fortress on the Elephantine Islands in the Nile in upper Egypt were dated by two calendars, the Egyptian calendar and the Jewish fall-to-fall calendar. These manuscripts, from around the years 422 B.C. to 419 B.C., offer another evidence of Jewish use of this calendar even when the king upon whose reign the dates were based was a foreigner, in this case the Persian, Darius II. (Kraeling Papyrus No. 6 is of special importance here.) Horn and Wood have provided the details of this evidence in their book *The Chronology of Ezra 7*.

So the probability that Ezra used the fall-to-fall calendar can be established from both biblical and extrabiblical sources.

# From bitterness to reconciliation

**Willard Santee**

**What prompted one pastor to leave his church and form an independent ministry? Why did he ultimately decide to return to church employment?**



*Willard Santee is currently a pastor in the Pennsylvania Conference.*

**I** left the Seventh-day Adventist pastorate determined to reform the church. I started my own independent ministry with the usual circulation of cassettes and pamphlets attacking what I considered abuses in the church.

Why did I leave, you may wonder, and why have I now forsaken the path of self-proclaimed reformer to return to the Adventist pastoral ministry?

How could I, having been born into a Christian home, a descendant of one of the founders of the Adventist Church and an ordained minister, rebel against the brethren with whom I had worked for a decade?

A wise man stated, "All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirits—the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Prov. 16:2, Amplified). I often quoted "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man . . ." (Prov. 14:12), but failed to apply it to myself. And what minister is unaware of Isaiah's call for repentance: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. . . . For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. 55:7, 8)?

While applying these texts to my congregation I failed to apply them to myself. Such is the nature of prejudice—we fail to see in ourselves what we so clearly see in others. The warning "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark. . . . They are shepherds that cannot understand" (Isa. 56:10, 11) was applied to my

fellow ministers whom I felt were obviously not as faithful in their preaching as I.

Where does such self-righteousness begin? Originally it began in the mind of Lucifer, who communicated it to Adam and Eve, who in turn passed it down the generations to each one of us alive today.

## **Roots of my prejudice**

Born in California and reared in the Pacific Northwest, I grew up with the belief that I had the best parents, belonged to the greatest nation on earth, received the finest Christian education, was a true member of the remnant church, had undying faith in the Spirit of Prophecy, and held no prejudices against other ethnic groups.

At the beginning of my ministry, blind to my bigotry, I cherished preconceived ideas concerning various people, races, and religions. It is surprising that I ministered as well as I did.

Inner struggles found increasing expression in my preaching. I hammered home the church's need for reform, challenging God's poor beaten sheep to climb higher and higher so that they might find the inner peace and acceptance with God that I so desperately longed for.

Fearing to admit these frustrations, I dared not reveal the existence of feelings of guilt and inadequacy that plagued me. To openly acknowledge such fears could cost me my job. I was a minister with an image to preserve. I was supposed to have all the answers.

I believed the pastor to be God's ambassador, an example in all things, holding high the standard of integrity. A pastor was supposed to love everyone

regardless of race or class, those who support him as well as those who oppose him. He is to be honored and respected by all, and is to provide an example of a life secure in God.

I believed in those ideals, yet realized how little I practiced them. The question haunted me: How could I portray to my congregation something I was not?

### **Coping style**

Although it was not recognized as such at the time, I practiced what psychologists call "transference." Inner fears and guilt were transferred to church members and the corporate body. This brought a strange type of peace for I no longer needed to deal with the dilemma—the problems lay with the church. *They* were guilty before God. Therefore *they* must reform. *They* must change. As long as I lashed out against the church, I did not have to deal with myself.

How I wish I had understood the following warning: "Things will be constantly arising to cause disunion, to draw away from the truth. This questioning, criticizing, denouncing, passing judgment on others, is not an evidence of the grace of Christ in the heart. It does not produce unity. Such work has been carried on in the past by persons claiming to have wonderful light, when they were deep in sin."<sup>1</sup>

That was me! It has taken much conflict and the passing of years to acknowledge this fact. My heavenly Father has revealed such things to me in many gentle ways.

### **Ministry fails**

My ministry was but 5 years old when the curtain fell. Given the option of taking a leave of absence or being terminated, I chose the leave of absence. As a tunnel of darkness entombed my family, I lived the horror that I was solely to blame. Separation from the pastoral ministry only seemed to fuel the frustration. I had believed ever since the age of 18 that God had called me to the gospel ministry, but now I questioned this call.

Bitterness, rejection, guilt, fear, loneliness, and failure seemed to have made a covenant to stay with me, contaminating my wife and children as well as myself. But I was determined to learn from this experience, painful as it was. Two years of misery and searching went by before I felt ready to try again.

I was called to another conference only to discover that while much had

changed, much remained the same. God allowed the same issues to come before me. It was as if the Lord was testing me to see if I had learned my lesson and matured.

### **A second resignation**

Months rolled into years and miracles replaced defeats. Then as quickly as the doors had opened, they closed. I preached my last sermon and taught my last Bible class. I was "burned out" at 35 years of age and given only a few months to live. I had a malignant melanoma.

While this second leave of absence was for health reasons, all the old doubts and questions flooded back into my mind. I felt slighted by the lack of concern expressed by the conference. Again the questioning came—about my call to ministry; the church and its teachings; even if God existed at all. I was indeed at life's crossroads.

How would I relate to my depression, frustration, and guilt this time? Would I again transfer my feelings to others, or would I take them to Jesus and lay them at the foot of the cross? I had preached to others the theory that people must leave their burdens at Calvary, but how different it was when it came to applying the message to my life. The cup seemed too full to drink—I had not yet learned the lesson of casting all my cares upon Jesus.

### **Independent ministry**

I had decided the church needed reforming. I prepared a series of sermons in printed form and on cassettes, and scattered them worldwide. All the problems encountered, all the questions unanswered, all the doubts unresolved, were expressed in these messages. But they provided no answers, for I had none. Yet the messages were cloaked with the garb of religious piety. Once again I had resorted to the method of guilt transference. While using the Bible to justify my actions, I had become so comfortable with this technique that it took God several years to convince me of my errors.

All the while the Saviour waited patiently for me to open my closed, self-righteous mind. For I was being used by another power: "It is the desire and plan of Satan to bring in among us those who will go to great extremes—people of narrow minds, who are critical and sharp, and very tenacious in holding their own conceptions of what the truth means. They will be exacting, and will seek to enforce rigorous duties, and go to great

## **As a tunnel of darkness entombed my family, I lived the horror that I was solely to blame.**

lengths in matters of minor importance, while they neglect the weightier matters of the law—judgment and mercy and the love of God. Through the work of a few of this class of persons, the whole body of Sabbathkeepers will be designated as bigoted, Pharisaical, and fanatical. . . .

"God has a special work for the men of experience to do. They are to guard the cause of God. They are to see that the work of God is not committed to men who feel it their privilege to move out on their own independent judgment, to preach whatever they please, and to be responsible to no one for their instructions or work. Let this spirit of self-sufficiency once rule in our midst, and there will be no harmony of action, no unity of spirit, no safety for the work, and no healthful growth in the cause. . . . Christ prayed that His followers might be one as He and the Father were one. Those who desire to see this prayer answered should seek to discourage the slightest tendency to division, and try to keep the spirit of unity and love among brethren."<sup>2</sup>

The wrong spirit had spoken through me. I knew that "the Master's message must be declared in the Master's spirit."<sup>3</sup> And I am convinced that "the spirit we manifest toward our brethren declares what is our spirit toward God."<sup>4</sup>

It has been hard to admit that my spirit was on the side of the evil one, yet deep down I knew were harbored resentment, bitterness, and hatred toward certain persons in the church.

### **Reconciliation**

I had been given six months to live, but the Lord graciously spared my life. A period of recovery gave time for reflection. At this time the Lord brought me in contact with three people who demonstrated the unconditional love of God as I had never known it before. They dared to reach out and embrace my ugliness without fear of contamination or concern for

what others might think. They accepted me just as I was—bitter and self-righteous.

The first special person was a young unordained pastor who never argued with me no matter how I challenged him. I used every trick I knew to get him to debate and defend the church, but he ignored all the side issues hurled at him. Time and again he refused to take stands, which I interpreted as cowardice. Yet he never wavered from his mission to demonstrate that he truly cared for me as a person.

I was unprepared to handle this type of love, for I had never before experienced it. There was no argument that could stand up against it. If I could have such love, I thought. I would never be the same again. Even while longing for it, outwardly I continued to fight it.

Throughout my ministry I had shied away from a gospel of love, which I believed to be shallow and without real meaning. Perhaps there is a type of shallow learned behavior mistaken for love, but I realized that what I was fighting was something that could not be taught, legislated, or commanded. But thankfully it can be experienced. Encountering such love awakens love.

A semiretired conference employee was the second person to demonstrate this unconditional love. He could have been enjoying retirement, but he chose instead the ministry of reconciliation in which he found far more joy. This man considered me a brother from the first time we met. My negative stance did not seem to bother him. On the contrary, he acknowledged many mistakes the church had made and shocked me by adding others I knew nothing about, yet he still spoke well of his brethren.

How could such a man of God with such high principles love me? Was there really room in God's church for all of us? Could I still belong?

We visited many times. He was there during critical periods to pray with me and give assurance that our friendship was genuine. His love was unconditional.

A former college professor was the third special person who entered my life. We were drawn together because of our mutual desire to find answers that worked. Together we made a spiritual journey, searching the pages of Scripture. Some of my questions were also his.

One evening as we sat studying to—  
(Continued on page 17)

# Conduct an annual church planning session

**Lawrence G. Downing**

**If your board is suffering from the church board blahs, an annual planning session can add new life to your meetings.**



*Lawrence G. Downing was pastor of the Green Lake church in Washington when he developed this article. He now pastors the Anaheim church in California.*

**M**r. Chairman, look around here. Not even half the board members are present tonight, and I have to say I don't blame them. All we do is re-

hash the same old stuff. Who cares what color somebody paints the halls? Aren't there more important things to do than argue about whether we should spend \$50 on new locks for the Dorcas room? What's our job, anyway? Perhaps it would be better if I resigned my office."

"Pastor, I'm willing to serve as an elder, but I would rather not come to board meetings. As you know, I have so few evenings free that I don't see how I could find time for another meeting. And Pastor, to be honest, I can't get too excited about spending an evening trying to find a substitute assistant pianist for the Sabbath school. I know it is important to keep the wheels turning, but I wonder if we could perhaps use board meeting time more effectively."

These statements, and others like them, came from competent, dedicated, caring people. They indicated to me that my board members were suffering from a common malady called church board blahs.

While not usually fatal, the malady's symptoms, including low attendance at meetings, long debates over trivial issues, and board member malaise, can hamper the board's effectiveness. Even the pastor is not immune to this disease. I have suffered from it myself, and I do not like what it does to me.

Qualified people who are willing to accept a church office and serve on the

board are a precious commodity. Careful, reasonable, creative thinkers on a church board are invaluable, and I want to keep every one I can find. Even though I am not the board chairman, I feel a responsibility for how the church board functions. When board meetings become a bore or we find ourselves spending inordinate amounts of time on trivial pursuits, we are in trouble. And when the board is in trouble my ministry is in trouble.

When I went seeking a cure for the blahs, one suggestion stood out above the rest: the annual church board planning session. What follows is an elaboration of the rationale for an annual planning session, a sample program, and a description of some of the problems that you might encounter in trying to implement the proposal in your church or district.

First, I learned that not everyone shared my enthusiasm for a weekend planning session away from the church. The most common response to the proposal was Why can't we do it right here at the church after the worship hour? What's the point in going away? In response I put together a short statement that included the following:

1. There would be opportunity for people to become better acquainted. Even those who have known each other for years may not have had an opportunity to share ideas and information in a guided and nonthreatening way.

2. There will be time for uninterrupted work, play, and talk.

3. Leaving familiar surroundings enhances attention to a specific task.

4. Meals will be provided. (The women caught this one right away.)

5. Child care will be available. (Also a favorite with the mothers.)

Prior to the board meeting when I brought up the planning session concept, I made it a point to talk with certain key leaders. Each board member has an equal vote, but every board has thought leaders whose influence extends beyond their vote, so I shared the concept with several of these people and sought their input.

These private discussions indicated that people were not certain what the purpose for church planning sessions should be, and since I did not feel I had all the answers to specific questions, I purchased several copies of Lyle Schaller's *Effective Church Planning* and suggested that each board member read it.

Schaller makes a powerful statement for church planning and presents reasons why it is important for the board to lay a strong philosophical framework to serve as a foundation for all church programs.

The book made a positive impression on those who read it.

At the next meeting, the board appointed an ad hoc committee to study the proposal and bring back a recommendation. The ad hoc committee rec-

## Agenda for a Weekend Planning Retreat

### Friday

**7:30-9:30 p.m.** Small group activity. Purpose: To sing, reflect, and pray, and to get acquainted.

Divide into groups of eight; relatives are not to be in the same group. The groups stay together for the entire weekend. The member of each group who most recently joined the church is that group's facilitator for this session. Agenda:

1. Present to the group a brief personal history. Include your family history and describe when and how your family became Adventists.

2. List the important events and persons in your life, including someone from the congregation who has had a significant influence in your life.

3. Describe your hopes and goals as they relate to the congregation.

4. In a sentence, describe yourself.

5. At nine o'clock, stop and reflect and then share with others how the evening experience has affected you.

**9:30** Benediction

### Sabbath

**9:45 a.m.** Devotional

**10:00-12:15** Purpose: To explore ministry within the local congregation.

Introduce topic and divide into small groups. Agenda:

1. What is ministry?

2. Define the categories of ministry you believe are needed within this congregation during the next year.

3. What role does the church board have in developing the spirituality of the congregation? How might this be implemented?

4. Prepare for the group at large specific recommendations for developing the spiritual life of the congregation.

**12:30 p.m.** Lunch

**1:00-2:00** Free time

**2:00-2:45** Reports from the small groups. (We wrote each suggestion on newsprint and taped it to the wall for all to see.)

**2:45-3:15** Examination of recommendations and selection of specific proposals to be considered by the church board during the coming year. Prioritize the items into three categories: urgent, needed, and helpful.

**3:15-3:30** Break

**3:30-4:45** Small group discussion. Purpose: To discuss pastoral ministry in the local church.

The board chairperson should introduce the topic and initiate the discussion. Agenda:

1. What is an appropriate tenure for pastoral ministry?

2. What factors should be implemented to promote and evaluate ministry through this time period?

3. What role can the church board take to promote and evaluate this ministry?

4. Submit specific proposals for consideration by the group at large. (Again, we recorded these on newsprint and taped them to the wall.)

**4:45-5:45** Break

**5:45** Supper

**6:45-7:30** Report and discussion from previous session and the selection of specific items for later consideration by the church board.

**7:30-7:45** Break

**7:45-8:30** Small group discussion.

Develop a proposal for a program targeted to a specific group, such as the unchurched, non-Christians, health enthusiasts, students, etc. What is the purpose of the program you suggest?

**8:30** Benediction

### Sunday

**10:00-10:45 a.m.** After an opening prayer, report on and discuss the program ideas developed during the previous session, and select those to be considered by the board later.

**10:45** Consideration of needs that require further attention.

**11:30** Final summation

commended the retreat, and the board accepted the recommendation. It was further voted that the pastor, along with those whom he might select, should design the weekend program.

### **Preparation**

Preparing the program outline is the key to a successful weekend, and the pastor plays the major role in determining the direction the program will go.

It is important that we have in mind what we would like the participants to accomplish and that we seek ways to fulfill these intentions by creating a program schedule that is logical, interesting, and workable. The challenge is to design an agenda that provides the participants with a clear and reasonable outline that facilitates a natural flow from one process to another. It should provide opportunity for intense study as well as time for social involvement and personal reflection. Since time is a factor, the assignments should be brief enough to be completed, but detailed and broad enough to be interesting. How this is put together will depend on the pastor's resources and innate ability, but there are methods one can use to make the process easier.

First, locate congregational members who have group leadership experience and work with them. If you have no qualified members, consult other clergy or community people. The important thing is to find someone who understands group process. The pastor who depends on his or her own skills alone is asking for trouble.

Our session planning group tries to organize the planning session in such a way as to avoid problem-solving situations and to ignore those items that have so often occupied our board meeting agendas. It has been our purpose to consider proposals that explore fundamental issues affecting our church goals, purposes, philosophy, hopes, and dreams. We want to see the bigger picture, and from this perspective dream our dreams and look at opportunities awaiting our attention.

From the long lists of ideas produced at the annual planning session (see accompanying box for a description of how the lists are produced), some are realistic, others are less so. The best become the center for building the monthly board agenda. Each month presents another opportunity to consider, and to seek to implement, a proposal that came from the planning session.

### **After the session**

We take the newsprint papers on which we have recorded the suggestions from the groups back to the office. There the secretary copies each suggestion and mails a list to each board member.

Now the important question: What difference has the planning session made?

Our board meetings have become more issue-oriented and we get out earlier. We now have an accountability system. We can look back at what came out of the planning session and see what we have done to satisfy our hopes and dreams, and what we still need to accomplish. And each subsequent monthly agenda has involved at least one item that originated from the planning session. From this process the following programs were initiated by the board and became a part of the church program:

1. We initiated a secular campus ministry and worked with the conference to hire a campus chaplain.
2. We hired a community service and interest coordinator.
3. A pulpit/parish committee was established.
4. A sermon series on developing and maintaining spiritual life was presented.
5. We initiated a fellowship time at nine o'clock Sabbath morning during which people can share a hot drink and conversation.

Since that first planning session I have modified my views. Renting a full-service retreat center is expensive. As a compromise we tried renting a room in a nearby Christian retreat facility. This too proved to be expensive. As we discussed possible meeting sites, the church facility seemed the most reasonable. Therefore, for my last four years at Green Lake we met in our church. I also found that we could accomplish our goals by 5:30 Sabbath afternoon, and the agenda now reflects this.

In July of 1986 I moved to a new congregation. Four months later Ernie Furness, my fellow pastor in the congregation, and I led our church board through a weekend planning session. We met in the church and experienced a similar response to the one I had had with the Green Lake church.

### **District planning**

One problem many of my colleagues face is how to adapt the board planning

session to the multichurch district. I spent six years of my ministry in a district, so I am not unfamiliar with the special needs of the multichurch pastor. Congregations within a district have separate and distinct personalities, and the fact that they share a common pastor is no assurance that they share much else in common.

From my experience I believe that a joint planning session is less than ideal. It may in fact be more negative than positive. While I had not developed and used a program as detailed as the one above, the early roots for church planning rest in the experience I had in district churches. After the first year or so in a district, it began to dawn on me that I could not use the same programs and approaches in each of the three churches. Each church had its own needs, abilities, community, and possibilities. They even had their own separate, be it undefined, goals. It became my purpose to find a method for defining the undefinable and to explore with the board members what they would like to accomplish in their congregation and community, and how they would like to do it.

On two occasions I conducted joint planning sessions. I was not particularly pleased with how either one went. I found that there is a subtle dynamic present within a district that tends to separate rather than unite the churches. The members of one congregation did not participate, a few members from the second church came, but most of the participants were from the congregation nearest where we met.

Attempting to divide the participants by church left a couple of small groups, and putting them all together meant that groups were working on issues that were pertinent to only one portion of the group. My solution was to meet separately with each church. I would propose that it might be well to do the same with this program. Certainly the same weekend agenda could be used in all the churches within a district, but it is my belief that each congregation should meet on its own.

Whether one meets with congregations separately or together, whether one uses a "canned" agenda or develops a customized program, may not be important. What I believe to be important is that we pastors encourage and facilitate the yearly church board planning session. I found it one viable option in the war against the church board blahs. ■

# Christ and the imprisoned spirits

John C. Brunt

**How shall we understand the New Testament passages that weave in themes from Jewish legends? And what can understanding these passages teach us about how we should interpret other parts of the Bible?**



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**P**astors, teachers, and commentators have always had a hard time with three difficult and related passages: 1 Peter 3:18-22; Jude 5-7; and 2 Peter 2:4-9. Dealing with realms of darkness and Christ preaching to spirits in prison challenges the talents of any interpreter, but the difficulties are heightened for Seventh-day Adventists, who believe that the dead are unconscious and that hell is only future and temporary.

We shall begin with a brief overview of the Old Testament and intertestamental background to these passages. Then we will survey the basic elements in each of the New Testament passages and see how these passages utilize the intertestamental motif of the fallen angels, or "watchers," to convey a particular message. And finally, we will reflect on the significance of all this for pastors and teachers.

## **Sons of God and daughters of men**

The first part of Genesis 6, immediately before the Flood narrative, contains the bedrock motif underlying our passages. According to Genesis, sons of God, who are not identified, saw the beauty of the daughters of men and married them. Genesis does not explicitly state the results of these unions. But since, in what immediately follows, Yahweh says that His Spirit will not abide in humans forever and that humans would be limited to 120 years of life, the strong implication is that the results were evil.

Then Genesis mentions the Nephilim.\* Their precise connection with the union of the sons of God and

daughters of men is not clear from the text, although the two seem to be related. After this the text speaks of the wickedness of humans and moves to the Flood story.

It would hardly be apparent that the New Testament passages we are studying have anything to do with Genesis 6 were it not for the intertestamental literature, especially 1 Enoch.<sup>1</sup> There Genesis 6 is embellished and expanded with the following basic elements: The sons of God, who are now specifically identified as angels, are said to have lusted after the beautiful daughters of men. On Mt. Hermon, these angels conspire to marry the human women. These unions result in the birth of great giants, who consume man's possessions and sin against animals, filling the earth with blood.

The good angels take the case before God. They bind the evil angels, and Enoch, whom God has hidden, announces the evil angels' doom. They will have no peace and will be destroyed at the final judgment. In the interim they are imprisoned in the earth, where they are still able to do harm and influence the course of events.

Judaism and early Christianity adopted this basic scenario, with many variations in detail, as the standard interpretation of Genesis 6.<sup>2</sup> And in ethical material a kind of standard reference was formed by linking the negative example of these evil angels, or "watchers," with other examples. The most common combination was the watchers, the people who lived at the time of the Flood, and Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>3</sup>

There are obvious similarities between the basic elements in this intertesta-

## We should never feel that if we cannot answer every question we have failed.

mental legend and elements in the New Testament passages we are studying:<sup>4</sup>

1 Peter 3. This passage portrays Christ as preaching, in the spirit,<sup>5</sup> to the spirits in prison who refused to obey in the days of Noah. This passage also says that Christ, through His resurrection, has gone into heaven to the right hand of God, where angels, authorities, and powers are subject to Him.<sup>6</sup>

Jude 5-7. Here we find that certain angels did not keep their own position, but left their appointed place, and as a result have been kept by God in eternal bonds in deep darkness until the final judgment. These evil angels, together with the Hebrews who were unfaithful during the wilderness wanderings and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, serve as negative examples and warnings of judgment.

2 Peter 2. This passage cites three examples to show that God can hold the wicked for punishment until the day of judgment: the evil angels, the people at the time of the Flood, and those of Sodom and Gomorrah. It says the angels sinned against God, who is now holding them in hell (Tartarus), in a place of great darkness, until the day of judgment. Verse 4 is very similar to Jude 6 and is probably dependent on it, although 2 Peter 2 contains unique elements.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the intertestamental embellishment of Genesis 6 stands behind these passages. Several elements—the imprisonment of evil angels in deep darkness, keeping them until the day of judgment, and the recognition of their ultimate doom—that are found in the intertestamental literature but not in Genesis 6 are assumed in these New Testament passages. In fact, Jude and 2 Peter even use the watchers motif in the context of the negative examples cited above as becoming standard.

But more important than the fact that these passages assume the intertestamental watchers embellishments is the matter of *how* the New Testament uses this material. It is to this question that we now turn.

### The watchers in the New Testament

1 Peter 3. Adventist interpretation of this passage has varied,<sup>7</sup> but generally we have ignored the intertestamental background in favor of a position that sees Christ warning the antediluvians through Noah. It is much more natural, however, to see the preaching to spirits in prison as a reference to the intertestamental motif. But it is also important to recognize that this reference is incidental. The author does not argue for the story, but assumes that his readers are familiar with it.

Peter mentions the motif for several reasons. Our passage begins by pointing to Christ's death for our sins. His example shows that it is good for us to suffer for doing right (verse 17). Peter's reference to Christ "preaching" to the spirits in prison follows and shows that we can do right with courage because the evil powers that might harass us have already been condemned by Christ and are subject to Him (verses 19, 22).

At this point, an understanding of the background actually helps in interpreting the text. In the intertestamental material, the "announcement" to the imprisoned angels (made by Enoch) is an announcement of doom and defeat. Christ's "preaching" to the spirits should be understood against this background. Peter is saying that Christ has fulfilled that which people of his day commonly thought Enoch had done. Christ, by His death and resurrection, effects the doom of the evil powers.

That the "preaching" to the spirits involves an announcement of judgment is also clear from the conclusion the passage draws (verse 22). The evil angels have been defeated and are now subject to Christ. The point is that Christ has accomplished all that the legends of the day attributed to Enoch. Christ "preached" (announced) the doom of all evil angels; in Christ we need have no fear of them.

Jude 6. In this passage also, the reference to the punishment of the watchers is incidental. It is part of a list of examples (already traditional in Judaism) showing that God is willing to punish. Jude's reference to judgment falls within the context of his stern warning against the false teachers who threaten his readers.

2 Peter 2. The same is true in 2 Peter. The evil angels, punished, imprisoned, and awaiting the final judgment, are but one element in a series of negative exam-

ples. They are evidence that God can rescue the godly and punish the wicked. Again the context is a warning against false prophets and teachers whose heresies threaten the readers. The passage does not affirm the intertestamental legend; rather, it refers to it as an incidental example.

The extent to which the authors of these General Epistles believed the various details of the watchers motif is impossible for us to determine, and speculation is futile. But inspiration is not omniscience. Obviously these New Testament writers felt free to allude to this motif that was a commonplace of their day. In each case they took up the motif in the course of conveying a message that is quite different from that of any of the intertestamental sources. Recognizing this background solves some of the difficult problems of the passages.

### Significance for the pastor

In the light of the background and meaning of these difficult passages, how should we, as pastors and teachers, handle them?

First, we must be honest and not gloss over the problems. Obviously, the communication context will determine the degree of detail that we can share. One would not include in a sermon all the technical details that he might present in a class. But nevertheless, we must always deal with the problems honestly.

Second, we should make use of the intertestamental background material to aid in the interpretation of these passages. Too often we are afraid to refer to this material because its use seems problematic. The fact is that this background material aids our interpretation; we cannot really understand the passages apart from it. So we must familiarize ourselves with this background material and know how to bring it to bear in an appropriate way in our interpretation.

Third, we must focus on the *messages* the authors of these passages intended them to bear. Each passage holds a positive message. The elements that we consider problematic are incidental to the messages, not central to them.

There is a great temptation to feel that when we have solved the problems the texts present we have interpreted the texts. But this is not the case at all. To solve the problems that the texts raise for Adventist belief is only to remove certain barriers to understanding them. The task of interpretation is always to under-

stand a text's positive message.

And the fact is that people need to hear the positive messages these passages convey. We need to hear, as 1 Peter 3 teaches, that Christ has put all hostile powers under His feet, and that we can therefore find hope and confidence in Him. We also need to hear the message of Jude and 2 Peter, that what we believe and teach and who we follow are important to our spiritual life and growth.

We can never feel that we have succeeded in interpreting these passages until we have made their messages clear. This is the task of exegesis and of preaching.

Finally, we must be willing to admit that these passages contain problematic elements. We should never feel that if we cannot answer every question we have failed. Both pastors and teachers must be willing to admit fallibility and the lack of omniscience. Those to whom we minister will be patient with our human limitations if they also sense our willingness to struggle with a text, our honesty, and our commitment to the message the text conveys. ■

\*Unless otherwise noted, the Revised Standard Version is used in this article.

<sup>1</sup> See especially 1 Enoch 6-19.

<sup>2</sup> For details regarding the persistence of this motif in Judaism and early Christianity and of its demise in each, see Richard J. Bauckham, in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), vol. 50, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> See Bauckham, p. 46, for a chart outlining the use of this schema of negative examples in works such as Sirach 16:7-10; the Cairo genizah text of the Damascus document 2:17-3:12; 3 Maccabees 2:4-7; Testimony of Naphtali 3:4, 5; and Mishnah tractate Sanhedrin 10:3.

<sup>4</sup> Other New Testament passages may draw on this motif in a less explicit way. For example, some have seen an allusion to Genesis 6 in 1 Corinthians 11:10. There Paul lists "because of the angels" as one of the reasons why women should be veiled in church. But Paul's reference is much too ambiguous to permit a definite interpretation.

<sup>5</sup> Although Adventists have avoided interpreting the "in which" at the beginning of verse 19 as a reference to "in the spirit" of verse 18, it is the most natural reading of the text. It need not mean, however, that Christ preached as a disembodied spirit. Rather, the resurrected Christ, including His resurrection body, is seen as existing in the spirit. This is theologically consistent with Paul's use of the term "spiritual body" in 1 Corinthians 15. For more detail on this question, see note 7 below.

<sup>6</sup> For a monograph-length treatment of this passage that includes the history of its interpretation, see William Joseph Dalton, S.J., *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6*, *Analecra Biblica* 23 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965). Dalton holds that "made alive in the spirit" refers to Christ's bodily resurrection, "in which [spirit] he went" refers to His ascension, and the proclamation to the spirits in prison refers to Christ's proclamation of victory over the hostile powers.

<sup>7</sup> *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (vol. 7, p. 575) gives three possible interpretations

of 1 Peter 3:19: 1. "By which" (KJV) refers back to "the Spirit" (verse 18, KJV) and means that by the Holy Spirit Christ preached to the antediluvian humans through Noah. 2. Christ in His preexistent state preached to the antediluvians. 3. "By which" (KJV) refers to verse 18 as a whole and means that by virtue of Christ's future vicarious death and resurrection He preached to the antediluvians through Noah.

But all of this ignores the watcher's motif and the obvious analogy to the announcement of doom to evil angels that it provides. It also ignores verse 22, where Christ's "preaching" results in the end of the rule of the powers. These considerations point to Christ's "preaching" as an announcement of judgment on the powers hostile to God.

## From bitterness to reconciliation

From page 12

gether it seemed that our minds were simultaneously impressed. A greater understanding of unconditional love so flooded our minds that our eyes flowed with unchecked tears.

Something happened that night that I will never forget. The Lord opened a corner of my heart, and a spirit of forgiveness and peace came in. Bitterness vanished as a miracle of love took place.

Since that time I have met others who have demonstrated that same unconditional love—that love that will one day unite all of God's people.

I did not intentionally try to divide my church and create additional problems for its leaders, yet that's what my actions resulted in. Even though I felt that I was only seeking answers to unresolved questions, I was wrong. I had forgotten that Scripture says men's hearts are "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9).

My learning experience has not ended. Just over a year ago God led me back into the pastoral ministry and to a bitterly divided church. Having walked in bitterness, I knew how those people felt. I prayed for the same unconditional love that was shown to me. Through God's transforming grace I have seen mighty miracles take place in this church community. Unity in love prevails and reconciliation is taking place, resulting in church growth and increased attendance.

And what a joy it is to watch! Surely God has given to each one of us the ministry of reconciliation. ■

<sup>1</sup> *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> E. G. White, in *Review and Herald*, May 29, 1888.

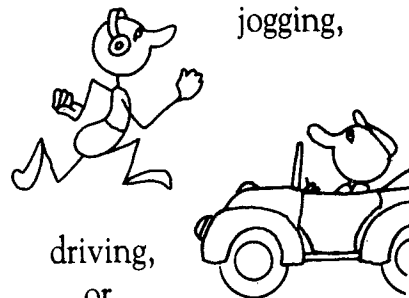
<sup>3</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 266.

<sup>4</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 505.

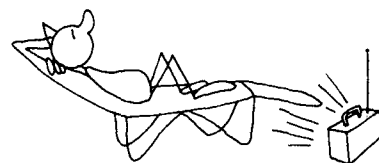
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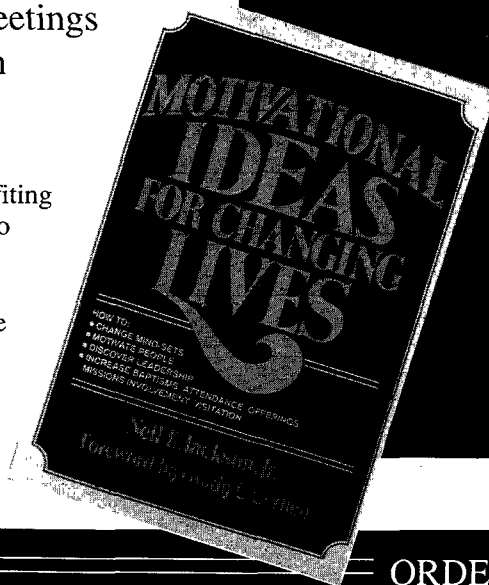
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# The mission of the minister's wife

Ruth M. Murdoch

**Ten secrets of Christ's success in working with others.**



Ruth M. Murdoch, professor emeritus of educational psychology and counseling at Andrews University, stood by her minister-husband throughout their 46 years together before his death.

**I** believe one of the major considerations facing us today is the role of women in leadership. As I pondered the kind of leadership it might be our privilege as ministers' wives to give, my mind turned to this statement: "The greatest work that can be done in our world is to glorify God by living the character of Christ."<sup>1</sup> To me, this is our mission as women of the church.

And how do we live the character of Christ? Ellen G. White's book *Education* identifies 10 characteristics of the way the Master approached His task of leadership.<sup>2</sup> We can best live His character by adopting His methods, by associating with others as He associated with those whom He was seeking to save.

1. *Christ came with the accumulated love of eternity.* One day I asked my granddaughter how much she loved me. She thought a few minutes, then holding out her little arms, she said, "Grandma, my arms aren't big enough to show you." I thought this was such a beautiful illustration—there is no way that we can really comprehend the meaning of Christ's coming to this world with the accumulated love of eternity. If Christ's love permeates our efforts to bring our fellowmen to Him, then our mission as ministers' wives will be successful, because love is the foundation of all growth—physical, mental, and spiritual.

2. *Christ had an understanding heart.* Someone has said that he who seeks to transform humanity must himself understand humanity. Christ alone had perfect understanding. Such understanding of

others may include sympathy, feeling sorry for them, but more important it includes empathy, feeling sorry *with* them.

When one of our boys was just a little fellow, his little terrier, which he loved dearly, was run over. As he thought of Spotty, he sat on the back step silently weeping, tears running down his cheeks. A little neighbor girl came over and seeing his tears asked, "What's the matter?" My son answered, "Spotty got run over." She looked at him a minute and then asked, "Dead?" He said, "Dead." Then she sat down beside him, put her arm around him, and began to cry copiously. She had an understanding heart. She not only felt sorry for him, but she was sorry with him.

Not only did Christ come with the accumulated love of eternity, but since He created men and women, He has perfect understanding of them. If we are to meet the world's needs, we must, like Solomon, pray, "Give . . . thy servant an understanding heart."

3. *Christ reasoned from cause to effect.* We see people doing things that seem very strange to us, and we ask, "How can they behave like that?" Our question comes because we do not understand the circumstances of their lives. But Christ reasoned from cause to effect. In order to understand what this means, come with me to the Temple court, where Christ and some of His disciples have gathered. A group congregates around Him as He teaches. Suddenly a shuffling sound captures their attention, and turning they see a group of men half dragging, half pushing a woman toward Christ. When these men reach Him, they say, "This woman was caught in the act of adultery.

Shall we stone her? The law of Moses says she should be stoned."

These men have no concern for the woman and little for her sin. Their intent is to trap Christ. If He says, "Yes, stone her," then they can go to the Roman rulers and say, "Jesus has assumed authority that is reserved for you." If He says, "Don't stone her," they can claim before the rest of the Jewish people that He rejects the law of Moses.

Jesus takes in the entire situation. He reads the story of the woman's life—reasoning from cause to effect. He knows that the very individuals who dragged her into His presence led her into this sin.

Acting as though He has not heard their question, Jesus leans down and writes in the dust, where the next breeze will erase what He has written. I've often wondered just what He wrote. But you know the story—as He writes, one by one the accusers shamefacedly leave. Then, looking up, Jesus says to the woman, "Hath no man condemned thee?" And for the first time the poor, frightened woman dares to lift her eyes and look into His face. The understanding she reads there is confirmed by His words,

"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

Because He looked behind the effects to the causes, Christ understood people. While He did not condone sin, He was willing to forgive the sinner. If we could understand the lives of those whom we might condemn, we too would say, "I do not condemn thee."

4. *Christ associated closely with those whom He hoped to save.* Scripture says He "dwelt among us" (John 1:14), the original Greek word for *dwelt* raising the imagery of Christ pitching His tent among the tents of the sons of men. He did not teach from some exalted position above the common people—He approached them in all their activities. Those whom He chose to be His close followers ate and lived and traveled with Him.

We cannot uplift or help those whom we despise or consider as less privileged. If we are to have an influence as leaders, then we too must walk the path of those whom we want to help.

5. *Christ was a faithful reprover of sin.* Never was there another who so hated evil. His denunciation of sin was sometimes strong. You will remember He said to Peter once, "Get thee behind me, Satan." And He called the scribes and

Pharisees hypocrites. But His love drew those whom He reproved. He ever spoke the truth with love. He never needlessly wounded a sensitive soul. Could that be said of us? "Of the rebuke that is love, of the blow that wounds to heal, of the warning that speaks hope, they [those who are dealing with the tempted and erring] have need to learn."<sup>3</sup>

6. *Christ taught people individually.* He did not speak just to the masses—and even when He did, He watched the individual faces. When a face revealed doubt or lack of comprehension, He added further illustrations of the principle He was teaching.

7. *As He taught, Christ used illustrations with which the people were familiar.* He did not speak in abstract terms. "Consider the lily," He said as He walked by the way. Seeing a wedding procession going by, He spoke of 10 wedding guests. Teaching in the country, he told of a man sowing his field.

If we are to be leaders and teachers, we must use illustrations common to the lives of our hearers. Not only will such illustrations communicate better, but as the incidents we spoke of recur in the lives of our hearers, they will be reminded of the lesson we taught.

8. *Christ saw infinite possibilities in every individual whom He sought to save.* I think often of those who come to us, people we meet by the way. Sometimes we're tempted to say, "There is no hope for that individual. Look at his background. Look where she comes from." But Christ saw in every individual the infinite possibilities that were hers or his if that person were transformed by divine love. If we are to be Christ's representatives and reflect His character, we must regard no person as hopeless or of little value. We do not know what Christ intends to do with the apparently useless material.

I can never forget a young man who came to school when I was in the sixth grade. An orphan, Charles had had to work for a living, and had been passed from one family to another. But then a representative from the academy visited the community where Charles lived and invited him to come back to school. Inspired, at 16 years of age he came back into class with 11- and 12-year-old children.

Returning to school wasn't easy. He went canvassing summers and often came back to school in rags. And always, his studies were difficult for him. But he

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never gave up. Eventually he dedicated his life to medical missionary work and to the uplifting of humanity, and today there is a hospital named for him.

I'm sure that most folks would have said, "It's a waste of effort to put him back into school at his age." But Christ saw infinite possibilities where to others there appeared to be only useless material.

9. *Because He looked upon people with trust, Christ inspired hope.* When Christ and His disciples were passing through Gadara, two demoniacs ran out calling, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of David? Leave us—get away." But even in their curses Christ heard the cry for help, and looking upon them with trust, He inspired hope. They saw in His glance the assurance that there was a future for them.

When we look upon people with hope we inspire trust, and when there is trust there is growth. This characteristic of the Master, to reveal trust to the individual, enables that individual to be of great use in the Lord's work.

The principle of showing trust and

confidence is especially important when one is working with young people. I learned a valuable lesson about trusting young people when one of our two sons, who was working at the General Conference printing press, first learned to drive. I had been hesitant to give him a set of keys to the family car. Then one day he came into the house swinging a set of keys on his finger. When I asked him what keys they were he answered, "They are the keys to the boss's new car. He trusts me! He has asked me to deliver some printing jobs in downtown D.C."

Not until several years later did I discover how important being trusted by the boss was to this 16-year-old. One of his friends told me the story. The day that he and another of our son's friends learned that the boss had given our son the keys to the new car, they got a bright idea. They took the bus to a shop where they knew he was delivering a package of printing. When he came out of the shop, one of them said, "The boss won't know how long it takes you to make your deliveries. We'll just get into the car with you

and you can drive us out to the wrecking yard to get the part we need for our hot rod club."

The friend said, "Your son looked at the keys for a moment and then replied, 'I know he won't check on my time, but he trusted me and I can't betray his trust.'"

10. *Finally, Christ lived what He taught.* If this can be said of us, then we will be effective leaders. But we can live the faith that we profess only if Christ dwells in our hearts. We cannot, by our own talents or gifts, draw sinners to our Saviour.

Christ lived to bless others because that was His nature. The love that filled His heart caused Him to reach out to all around Him. If we, who are ministers' wives, are to be His representatives, if we are to fulfill our mission by reflecting His character, then we must live and work in the spirit of Christ. ■

<sup>1</sup> Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 439.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 73-96.

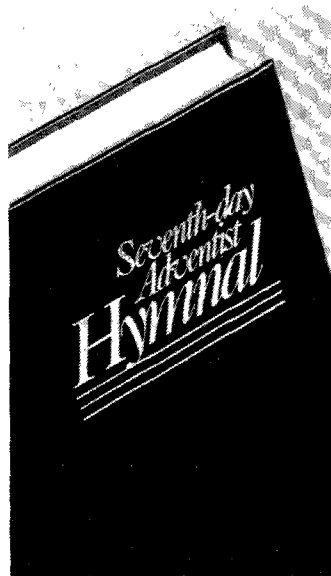
<sup>3</sup> The Acts of the Apostles, p. 516.

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# The scholar-evangelist

Floyd Bresee

**W**hatever was a huge circus-type tent doing pitched there on the lawn right in the heart of the Columbia Union College complex? And why the big banner there on the corner confronting the Takoma Park traffic? Had the college invited a circus on campus? Was it some big education convention? Or homecoming? No, none of the above. Sligo church and the college were holding a series of evangelistic meetings.

The evangelist was John Brunt, who holds a Ph.D. in New Testament studies and is dean of the School of Theology at Walla Walla College. This was the third series Brunt and his associate, Donald Bigger, have held in the past three years. Bigger is pastor of the Walla Walla college church.

College registration would begin the day after Brunt returned home. Why was this scholar holding evangelistic meetings clear across the country when it was time to be getting ready for school?

## Why evangelism?

Dr. Brunt's first answer, as we sat chatting in the trailer set up as an office behind the tent, was that New Testament scholarship demands evangelism. He insists, "Actually, I am surprised that so many are surprised that teachers are doing evangelism, because it seems to me that that's just part of what all Christians should be doing in one way or another. And my field, of course, is New Testament, and you just can't study the New Testament without coming to a strong sense of the need for evangelism."

Brunt feels that intellectual Adventism needs evangelism. "We are con-

cerned about the fact that there are a lot of Seventh-day Adventists for whom evangelism has become virtually a bad word. And I don't believe the church can be healthy if that's what a fairly important segment of the church thinks. In past meetings we've seen some who were really quite negative at first about getting involved."

John Brunt lives in an area that has one of the highest concentrations of Adventists in North America. He shared his burden, "You know, it is easy when you are in an Adventist ghetto to not realize how many people are hurting and in need and how many would benefit from things you take for granted. And some wide exhibits of that, I think, can turn people on to evangelism."

## What kind of evangelism?

What kind of evangelism was being practiced by this scholar-evangelist? Quite straightforward actually. Not quite all of the basic Adventist doctrines can be presented in a three-week series, but those not given in meetings were covered in the Bible class. Brunt emphasizes three dimensions of evangelism:

1. Christ-centered evangelism. He says, "I firmly believe that we need to preach the distinctive proofs of Adventism, but for me, the real excitement is showing how those relate to Jesus Christ."

2. Bible-based evangelism. Brunt asserts, "I feel strongly that people need to have the Bible in their hands and read the Bible themselves and see it there in Scripture. And for that reason we use a gift Bible. That way, since every one has the same Bible, I can give page numbers."

This intellectual is a stickler for sim-

plicity. "I think that we overkill a lot of times. I average about four to seven texts a night. I preach without any kind of notes, and I want it to be simple enough that I can remember it. I figure that then maybe my listeners will be able to remember it as well."

3. Practical, life-related evangelism. Brunt explains, "We have focused on practical needs as the hook, or the drawing card, to try to bridge the gap between the gospel and everyday concerns—loneliness, stress, parenting, marriage. For example, our initial presentation on the Sabbath is about stress—God's answer to the problems of stress. Darold Bigger talks about stress management, and then I talk about how God knew that we needed rest and refreshment, and gave us the gift of the Sabbath to supply them."

## Who should do evangelism?

If John Brunt can, I can. And so can you. His example speaks to pastors: Evangelism is not passé, shallow, or beneath our dignity.

His example speaks to teachers: Evangelism helps keep the scholar's theology practical. Our trainers of preachers ought to be doing evangelism. Only soul winners will produce soul winners. The North American Division could learn a great deal from other divisions where religion teachers are kept closer to the ministry by regularly working with pastors in evangelism.

His example speaks to administrators: How do you find time? Brunt says, "You don't find time; you make time. You decide that you're going to do it regardless of whether you 'find' time or not."

If John Brunt can make the time, so can you. And so can I. ■



# Adventist Renewal Initiative

Neal C. Wilson

**A**s I visit and fellowship with our people and church leaders throughout the world, I discover there is a longing on the part of many for revival and reformation. There seems to be a growing recognition of our spiritual needs. This emphasis has often been the subject of discussion and prayer, and was the great burden of Robert H. Pierson, my predecessor as General Conference president. I along with other leaders share this burden.

Several Annual Councils of the General Conference Committee have appealed to the churches and the ministry to give priority to revival. And in 1979 the General Conference sponsored the righteousness by faith consultation that led to the publication of the document "The Dynamics of Salvation" in the *Adventist Review* in 1980 (republished in *MINISTRY*, February 1988).

But revival is not something that can be voted. It is not something that can be produced by a study commission. So in spite of the efforts of leadership, the church still seems to be drifting toward a Laodicean condition of lukewarmness and apostasy.

Symptoms include an escalating divorce rate, questionable practices and standards, disunity, pockets of rebellion, and a general attitude of worldliness. Too many of our people are doctrinally illiterate, and as a result, they have no firm convictions or commitment to this prophetic movement.

Redemptive discipline, or for that matter any type of church discipline, seems to be passé. Tolstoy's comment

that Christianity has made no demands on its followers has come to be generally true of the Christian church.

A careful comparison of membership lists with church attendance would likely reveal an appalling discrepancy. We can count more than 5 million members on our books, but the question is Where are they on Sabbath mornings? More important, how are they faring spiritually?

Although we have placed strong emphasis on evangelism, it is all too true that "not one in a hundred among us is doing anything beyond engaging in common, worldly enterprises. We are not half awake to the worth of the souls for whom Christ died" (*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 148). This statement may be viewed as a homiletical device, but one wonders if the ratio isn't realistic.

In 1893 Ellen White wrote: "It is a solemn statement that I make to the church, that not one in twenty whose names are registered upon the church books are prepared to close their earthly history, and would be as verily without God and without hope in the world as the common sinner. . . . I lay down my pen and lift up my soul in prayer, that the Lord would breathe upon His backslidden people, who are as dry bones, that they may live" (*Christian Service*, p. 41). What is the ratio today? Some might be tempted to say that the readiness ratio is now worse than 1 in 20.

What has brought us to this unenviable state? And what can we do about it other than to criticize and utter lamentations? If we were to ask our leaders to prioritize the church's needs, their list might read as follows: We need to

- enter new territories
- enroll all Adventist youth in our schools

- employ more ministers
- enlarge our medical work
- circulate more literature
- increase lay involvement
- increase our financial base

These are excellent and worthy objectives. But fulfilling them without meeting the deeper spiritual needs of each member's heart will not fulfill our real objectives.

At this point you may feel that this appeal is largely negative or even a bit depressing. You will discover, however, that I affirm that the grace of Christ can transform a negative outlook into a positive one, and that God's promises are bright with hope.

In my own personal study of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, I have become convinced that there are three major elements that keep the spiritual flame burning in the Christian's heart. They are *Bible study*, *prayer*, and *witnessing*. We have strongly emphasized the witnessing aspect. Presently we are engaged in Harvest 90, and are moving toward a global strategy. In no way should we diminish this emphasis. But what have we done in a tangible way to move our church in the direction of Bible study and prayer?

The church, and each of us individually, need a renewal of Bible study, a renewal of earnest prayer, and a renewal of the fervor of witness for our Lord. It is for this reason that I would urge that we now press for this renewal. That we all participate in what we might call an Adventist Renewal Initiative.

Jesus asked, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Dedication and commitment to our Lord and to His church are built on faith, and "faith cometh by hear-

## There are three major elements that keep the spiritual flame burning in the Christian's heart: Bible study, prayer, and witnessing.

ing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The reason for the paucity of end-time faith is lack of knowledge and understanding of God's Word. The Holy Spirit operates within the realm of God's revealed will—His Word. It is as a person studies the Bible or hears the spoken word that the Holy Spirit has opportunity to enter the soul to bring conviction and conversion.

One hundred years ago Ellen White pointed out the importance of Bible study as a shield against Satan's assaults: "Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth, there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His Word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 464).

Notice carefully the following points in this statement:

1. This revival of primitive godliness occurs just before the end of time.
2. This revival exceeds all revivals since apostolic times.
3. This revival leads many to separate from other churches and accept the truths we proclaim.
4. This revival experience prepares a people for the Lord's second coming.
5. It is implied that love for God and His Word has not been supplanted by love for the world among those who receive the outpouring of God's Spirit and power and are part of the revival.

The same chapter, which carries the

title "Modern Revivals," makes it clear that extensive movements of the future will include revivals based on emotional excitement and a mingling of the true with the false that will mislead people. "Yet none need be deceived." "The light of God's Word" can protect us from being misled. But "wherever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God's blessing is not bestowed." And "in the truths of His Word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. It is a neglect of these truths that has opened the door to the evils which are now becoming so widespread in the religious world" (*ibid.*, pp. 464, 465).

Although this chapter deals with obedience to the law of God as part of the revival formula, Ellen White uses the term *law* in a broader sense than just the Ten Commandments. On page 478 she points out that "it is by beholding that we become changed. And as those sacred precepts in which God has opened to men the perfection and holiness of His character are neglected, and the minds of the people are attracted to human teachings and theories, what marvel that there has followed a decline of living piety in the church. . . . It is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position that there can be a revival of primitive faith and godliness among His professed people. 'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls' (Jer. 6:16)."

This declaration contains several important concepts:

1. God's character, His will, and His holiness are unknown to many simply because they are not beholding Him through His Word.
2. Human teachings and theories are being received by the people resulting in a decline of living piety in the church.
3. Our only hope of a "revival of primitive faith and godliness" is in a return to the Word, the law of God that reveals the old paths, the good way.

Another statement relative to our need to study the Scriptures is found in *Testimonies*, volume 5, page 273: "The Christian is required to be diligent in searching the Scriptures, to read over and over again the truths of God's Word.

Willful ignorance on this subject endangers the Christian life and character. It blinds the understanding and corrupts the noblest powers. It is this that brings confusion into our lives. Our people need to understand the oracles of God; they need to have a systematic knowledge of the principles of revealed truth, which will fit them for what is coming upon the earth and prevent them from being carried about by every wind of doctrine." The above concepts mandate that a thorough study of the Scriptures is the major key for revival and reformation and is a safeguard against apostasy.

Can there be a better time to lead our people into this experience than in 1988? The framework is already in place for intense study of the fundamental doctrines that make us a church. The Sabbath school lessons for the last two quarters of this year focus on our 27 fundamental beliefs. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, the 325-page doctrinal book on which we have been working for two years, will be on the press by May 1. The manuscript for this book has been read and critiqued by more than 200 Adventist scholars and church leaders around the world. Each of the 27 chapters takes an in-depth look at one of our beliefs. And yet the book is written in such a way that every member of the church can understand and grasp the importance of these great truths that bind us together.

In addition, there is a renewed emphasis on righteousness by faith this year as we think back to 1888 and the message that came from the General Conference session in Minneapolis. Tens of thousands of extra copies of MINISTRY's special righteousness by faith issue have been ordered for study in Adventist churches around the world.

Could it be that Providence has ordained 1988 as a year of unprecedented opportunity for revival and reformation in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? That the Sabbath school lessons, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, and the emphasis on righteousness by faith together will lead us to the kind of faith in God that will open the way for Him to empower us to finish His work on this earth?

We want to see a great movement of renewal, revival, and reformation in the Seventh-day Adventist Church—a rising tide of spirituality that will carry us all to a closer walk with God. We want to

see a new commitment to the great truths for these times.

Will you join me, pastor? Will you pray with me, administrator? Educator, physician, shepherdess, local elder—whatever position of leadership the Lord has placed you in, God looks to you to lead His people to a deeper experience with Him.

Let us all join together to lead God's people to the experience of renewal we need. —Neal C. Wilson.

## A dollar each

**N**ever before has there been such an emphasis upon an incarnational approach to the world—to those suffering from poverty, injustice, distress, and discrimination. Christ, “the man for others,” is proclaimed as the pattern for such involvement and identification. While it is almost impossible to formulate what is meant by “God became man,” one’s duty to love one’s neighbor is clear. One cannot, then, argue that we ought to abandon the so-called social gospel and return to the straightforward task of converting sinners. But the magnitude of the world’s social problems poses a real danger to believers.

A Christian living in Africa or India faces this reality in the most direct way. If he gave \$1 to every beggar he met, he would soon have given away everything he had without making any appreciable difference to the poverty about him. This realization may not confront a Christian living in one of the richer countries of Europe, North America, or the South Pacific so directly. But when he has given

a fairly large sum of money to the United Way, another to help starving Ethiopians, and a day’s pay for world development, he also will find that there are yet apparently limitless appeals for his help, and that the world is hardly any better off for what he has contributed.

The relief agencies’ publicity campaigns are directed, and rightly, at the Christian conscience. So the Christian is continually being told that he is his brother’s keeper and, by implication, that he is not doing the job very well. Inevitably, there results a huge gap between responsibility and achievement. *And the gap becomes filled with a growing sense of guilt.*

This situation runs a very close parallel to the worst kind of cheap and nasty evangelism. It is possible to “convert” a man by harping on his sins and their consequences, creating an intensifying sense of guilt and so persuading him to resolve to turn away from all that. Unfortunately, a man’s resolve to be good yields few results. Conscious of the gap that remains, the convert may become a hypocrite, overscrupulous, careless, or despairing. In any event, the conversion is not likely to last, and will have done irreparable damage to the man’s integrity.

Where the evangelist has failed is that he has not preached the forgiveness that is integral to Christianity. If there is a gospel, it is a gospel of sins forgiven—the closing of the gap between conscience and achievement. It is this essential element of forgiveness that is lacking in our contemporary social gospel, and it is the lack of it that is the real danger. The resulting guilt threatens not the integrity of individuals but the integrity of a whole society. It may end by destroying the most hopeful feature of contemporary Christianity—the vigorous desire to care.

The answer to this problem is not to be found in abandoning moral demands. Doing so would be irrelevant to the real issue and would not assuage the sense of guilt that already exists. What will suffice is to offer a gospel of forgiveness as vigorous, credible, and effective as the social morality that it undergirds. The church must emphasize that though the Christian will never be able to satisfy the needs of humanity, it is his duty to do everything in his power to meet those needs. But the church must add that the Christian’s failure is not an occasion for a

despairing sense of guilt, but for the joy of being forgiven.

One must be careful to maintain a gospel of forgiveness that is not cheap and easy—neither an evasion of responsibility nor a license to sin. But at the same time, the proclamation of Christ as the “man for others” must be done in a wider sense than the mere making of moral demands. —Rex D. Edwards.

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## Biblio File

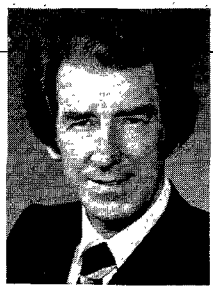
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He feels that both Jesus and Paul maintain the high ideal of marriage but leave open the possibility that there may be certain situations that are unsuitable for the well-being of the couple, and that in those circumstances the relationship should be dissolved. “The question for the church today,” says the author, “is whether there is a real marriage if this growing together does not take place.” For me this teaching raises more questions than it answers, because “real marriage” can be defined so subjectively.

Summarizing the biblical teaching on remarriage, the author suggests it is scanty if we accept the biblical idea that persons are more fulfilled in a family situation. He states that “it seems legitimate to conjecture that the remarriage of divorced persons is not only permissible but perhaps desirable.”

The cumulative effect of the book is a softening (if not removing altogether) of what the author considers the too-rigid teaching of many churches on divorce and remarriage. He argues that the importance and significance of marriage needs to be emphasized. Couples should be assisted in making wise marriage choices and keeping their marriages strong. When they fail, they should be forgiven by the grace of God and allowed another chance to make things right.

While some couples may need to separate because of exceedingly great difficulties in their union, Efird’s re-exegesis of Scripture seems to dilute the marriage bond and thereby pave the way for greater levels of acceptable divorce and remarriage among church members. Our efforts must ever be to give greater emphasis to the gospel in marriage. That emphasis will not result in weakening the covenant, but in providing the means to fulfill it.



Rex D. Edwards



# Chemical dependency among Adventists

Kathy Lewis

**S**

eventh-day Adventists who are involved in addiction or in a process of recovery share certain problems. *Recovery* refers

either to recovery from the actual addiction to a chemical or to recovery from the negative aspects of coping with a chemically dependent person.

One common denominator the addicted person and the family member share is their sense of guilt, shame, and despair. The addicted person feels shame that he has the addiction, guilt that he cannot control his addiction, and despair over his addiction. Family members feel shame for the addicted person, guilt because they cannot "fix" the addiction (they often feel responsible for it), and despair because they believe they cannot tell anyone about it.

The addict and the family members share similar coping mechanisms to avoid reality. The addict uses chemicals to avoid reality. Family members use food, work, intellectual pursuits, and often prescription medications to avoid reality.

Each tries desperately to avoid facing up to his true thoughts and feelings about the addiction. Within this desperate attempt to avoid reality the addict and the family set up rules of avoidance. They are: Don't talk, think, or feel about the addiction. No one knows what to do about it, and no one wants to call it what

it is. These symptoms are true of all addictions and are the same whether the person is an Adventist or not.

A great deal of controversy exists about where addiction comes from. Is it a disease? Is it a moral issue? Is it a matter of willpower or self-control? We seem to think that if we can figure out what addiction is, then we can find someone to blame. And if we can put the blame on someone, then no one else has to take any responsibility for it.

## Denial

An unspoken ideal within the Adventist community says that Adventists do not become addicted. This is a primary obstacle in treating the addicted Adventist. In the chemical dependency field this is called *denial*.

It is time to recognize that addiction does exist. Perhaps it is time for all of us to recognize that we share a responsibility to educate ourselves as to the physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of addiction. If we are truly sincere in our desire to come to a greater understanding of addiction, we are going to have to risk stating how we feel about it. And most of us feel angry about it.

A major belief system among Adventists seems to be that anger is sinful. The core of the belief says, "If I feel angry, I am sinful; I am not Christian; I am wrong and bad."

To take it a step further, the majority of Adventist addicts have established a belief system that says, "I am sin." These people truly believe that because they are addicted or involved with an addict, and because they feel angry, they are sin it-self.

So what can be done to help the Adventist addicted person and his family

members? The usual manner of counseling is to listen, develop trust, offer feedback, confront, and educate. This type of therapy works for Adventists just as it does for anyone else. But when the recovering addict leaves therapy and returns to Adventist society, problems often begin to recur. For many, remaining abstinent becomes impossible because finding adequate support among Adventists is difficult. Returning to a culture whose members believe willpower can overcome anything—including addiction, or sin, if you will—exposes the addict to an environment in which the reaction to addiction is the exact opposite of that experienced in treatment.

The message offered in treatment is that you must admit the addiction with a conversion to the idea that says, "I am powerless over this condition. I need a power greater than myself to restore me."

Because as human beings we all need acceptance, approval, and love from those around us, we are likely to fail when our culture, our religion, or our loved ones shun us. The chemically dependent person's plea to Adventist society is: You have not been able to accept me in my struggle, and I need you. I need you to accept me as I am and leave the business of judging me to God.

## The Adventist ideal

In my endeavor to gain a clearer understanding of Adventism for my own enlightenment and to provide better care to those I serve, I have read several books about Adventism. In *The Ministry of Healing* the message repeated over and over again is "Judge not, lest ye be judged." Over and over Ellen White urges us to accept and love the tempted. "With a sense of our own infirmities, we

*Kathy Lewis, who is not a Seventh-day Adventist, is the clinical supervisor at Clearview Alcohol and Drug Recovery Program, Center of Health Promotion, Loma Linda University.*

shall have compassion for the infirmities of others.”<sup>1</sup>

It is apparent that Ellen White recognized that the victims of intemperance have a physical disease. Speaking of the intemperate, she wrote, “With these self-indulgence is not only a moral sin, but a physical disease.”<sup>2</sup> In the same passage she further stated, “Men speak of these erring ones as hopeless; but not so does God regard them. He understands all the circumstances that have made them what they are, and He looks upon them with pity. This is a class that demand help. Never give them occasion to say, ‘No man cares for my soul.’”<sup>3</sup>

It appears that many consider these statements to apply only to non-Adventists. We must realize, however, that these statements need to include Adventists as well.

The most recent edition of the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* states that “the Christian’s life is not a slight modification or improvement, but a complete transformation of his nature. This means a death to self and sin and a resurrection to a new life as a new man in Christ Jesus.”<sup>4</sup>

This sounds very similar to step 1 in the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) program. Both agree to a need for complete transformation of nature as a process of recovery. A death to self is necessary before a resurrection to a new life can begin.

Step 2 of AA states, “We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” Step 3 states, “We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”

The *Church Manual* concurs with these steps also: “The heart of the Christian becomes the dwelling place of Christ by faith. This is brought about by ‘the contemplation of Christ, beholding Christ, ever cherishing the dear Saviour as our very best and honored friend, so that we would not in any action grieve and offend Him.’ Thus it is that Christians ‘have the companionship of the divine presence,’ and it is only as we realize that presence that ‘our thoughts are brought into captivity to Jesus Christ’ and our habits of life made to conform to the divine standard (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 387, 388).”<sup>5</sup>

When Adventists are willing to accept the fact that addiction exists in the church, and are willing to acknowledge

openly how they feel about it, then and only then will they be able to embrace fully the standards of Christian living set forth in the *Church Manual* and be of help to the addict and his family.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that the church is the body of Christ. If this is true, then each individual within the church represents a segment of the body, and each segment of the body represents Christ. Since Christ represents love, mercy, and forgiveness, so should the church and its individual members.

The love, mercy, and forgiveness that the church’s individual members feel is based on their external judgment of one another. Apparently, though, many church members have moved from the position of exemplifying Christ’s position of “Love thy neighbor as thyself” to judging their neighbors.

The *Church Manual* does not support them in this. “‘Christ came to this earth with a message of mercy and forgiveness. He laid the foundation for a religion by which Jew and Gentile, Black and White, free and bond, are linked together in one common brotherhood, recognized as equal in the sight of God. The Saviour has a boundless love for every human being’ (*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 225).

“‘No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. . . . In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. All are brought nigh by His precious blood’ (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 386).”<sup>6</sup>

Everyone—including a chemically dependent person—has free access to God. Since the church represents God and is made up of each individual within the church, it appears that each individual within the church who is not chemically dependent needs to broaden his view of what the church stands for.

If the body of the church is the individual members of the congregation and the greater percentage of the congregation believes chemical dependency is sin, has judgment not been rendered? Which is the greater sin, chemical dependency among Adventists or judgmentalism among Adventists? Are not chemical de-

pendency and judgmentalism equally giving energy to Satan’s cause?

If we are to move beyond the nature of Satan, we will need to move beyond our small selves. We will need to move into an area of acceptance of our brothers and sisters regardless of their infirmities. Is that not what Jesus taught us when He said, “Love thy neighbor as thyself,” and “Judge not, lest ye be judged”?

Perhaps most Adventists believe that if the chemically dependent person would move beyond the chemical to God, in one fell swoop all would be cured. To expect that the majority of chemically dependent people could move from a tangible source of comfort to what they perceive as an intangible source of comfort is unrealistic.

Alcoholics Anonymous works as a spiritual path toward recovery primarily because of its nonjudgmental posture. AA is willing to accept the whole person as he is. If the body of people who are the members of AA were to move into a judgmental posture, few, if any, chemically dependent people would be able to remain abstinent with any sense of intrinsic peace. The nature of the illness moves from intrinsic to extrinsic, and recovery involves a movement from the extrinsic to the intrinsic.

### Belief and practice

The basic teachings of Adventism profess the same thing AA does—acceptance of the lost as they are. It is time now to renew faith in the basic foundation of Christ’s message and practice the principles of Adventism in all our affairs, as does AA.

If we agree that this is true, we will be compelled to move beyond judgment to acceptance of the whole person. When the majority of the members of the body of Christ move beyond a judgmental attitude toward chemical dependency, Satan’s force in this regard will no longer be an energy among us. Perhaps then the light of Jesus Christ will shine in our hearts as we learn to love our brothers and sisters as we are loved by our Saviour.

To live within a community that fosters the belief that chemical dependency is a sin or a moral weakness and to set aside the judgments of others and humble oneself to reach out for help requires a tremendous amount of courage. Pain brings Adventist chemically dependent people to treatment; courage keeps them in treatment.

Courage comes from within. It is the

seed of the still small voice that whispers, "I am with you, even till the end of the world." It is upon this foundation that many therapists build a relationship with the person they are counseling.

"The Saviour's example is to be the standard of our service for the tempted and erring. The same interest and tenderness and long-suffering that He manifested toward us, we are to manifest toward others. 'As I have loved you,' He says, 'that ye also love one another' (John 13:34). If Christ dwells in us, we shall reveal His unselfish love toward all with whom we have to do. As we see men and women in need of sympathy and help, we shall not ask, 'Are they worthy?' but 'How can I benefit them?'"

"Rich and poor, high and low, free and bond, are God's heritage. He who gave His life to redeem man sees in every human being a value that exceeds finite computation. By the mystery and glory of the cross we are to discern His estimate of the value of the soul. When we do this, we shall feel that human beings, however degraded, have cost too much to be treated with coldness or contempt. We shall realize the importance of working for our fellow men, that they may be exalted to the throne of God."<sup>7</sup>

If the body of the church intends to practice all of the principles that it has set forth, a clear message needs to be given to all segments of the body that the church recognizes the need for treatment and refuses to enhance further the disease through denial of its existence and judgment of the individuals suffering from it. ■

<sup>1</sup> *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 172.

<sup>4</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, p. 141.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup> *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 162, 163.

## Letters

From page 2

lem, namely, that administrative and departmental personnel need to be rotated to pastoral positions periodically in order to maintain perspective. —Donald Hopkins, Simi Valley, California.

### The fall and rise of the beast

"The Reprieve of Martin Luther" and "Why I don't Believe in *Sola Scriptura*" are two articles in your October 1987

issue that I find very interesting. In the former, Arnold Wallenkampf shows how the deadly wound of the beast is being healed. In the latter, Tim Crosby explains how the Adventist Church can become an image to the beast.

One is informative; the other, provocative.

To the beast, *sola scriptura* is not the only guide for faith and practice. To Luther, it was the only authority. On *sola scriptura* he took his daring and fearless stand.

Ellen White, whose authority Crosby champions, took the same stand. "The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." She was opposed to "the authority of tradition." "Clearly," says Crosby, "it was considering human tradition authoritative that she opposed, not the authority of extracanonical inspired writings."

But isn't it from human tradition, the tradition of North American elders, that we are being asked to accept the authority of an extracanonical writer? The tradition and the writer are only human.

For daily guidance, a believer in God's Son and in the power of His Holy Spirit needs neither priest nor prophet. Direct divine-human encounter is possible without a knowledge of or dependence on the writings of Ellen White. To say this is not to reject her writings altogether. It is to plead for action that we don't by specious argument claim too much for them. —V. H. Percy, Scott's Runn, Jamaica, West Indies.

■ Was it planning, providence, or coincidence that Tim Crosby's article "Why I don't Believe in *Sola Scriptura*" immediately followed "The Reprieve of Martin Luther"? While the Roman Catholic Church is trying to get closer to Martin Luther, Tim Crosby is trying to get further away. After reading the article, I had the feeling that those who agree with such a view of inspiration and authority would not be too uncomfortable with opening up the back flyleaf of their Bibles and adding the writings of E. G. White. —Bob Hunter, Stone Mountain, Georgia.

### Nixes making money an incentive

In response to a letter published in the December 1987 issue on moonlighting, I would like to comment on the writer's three suggestions: 1. I would

hate to think it would take salary levels to stimulate church growth and evangelism. If it does, then we who are in the ministry better reevaluate our calling.

2. We have pastored districts with three to five churches and have pastored a large college church. From our experience, I do not feel that those who pastor large churches incur more expenses than do those who pastor small churches. Often in smaller churches there are more long-distance calls to the other churches in the district, and the distance between the churches puts more miles on the pastor's car. We entertained just as much in our smaller churches as we did in our large church; people are the same everywhere, and Christian hospitality is 365 days of the year. And every pastor needs equipment.

3. Our people who are faithful in paying tithe should not also be asked to supplement their pastor's monthly income. God's ordained way of paying for the physical and material needs of ministers is heaven-sent. Calls and moves are complicated enough; please, let's never muddy the waters by making money an incentive. —June Loor, Carmel, Indiana.

### More from Hispanics

I was glad to see the article entitled, "How I Use Small Groups in Evangelism," by Miguel A. Cerna (October 1987). In the past, Hispanic Adventists have been given little recognition for their contributions to this great work, yet they are some of the most enthused and energetic workers for God, both as leaders and laypeople. This is being reflected in the rapid growth rate of Hispanic Adventism here in America. I would like to see more articles of this nature authored by Hispanic writers expressing their views and methodologies. —Ramon Perez Greek, Montgomery, Alabama.

We are anxious to publish more from Hispanic and other ethnic authors and from authors from outside North America—but to do so, we need to receive manuscripts from such authors. Please feel free to submit manuscripts for our consideration; we would also be interested in receiving names of potential authors and the areas of their interest or expertise. —Editors.

### **The Reign of God**

Richard Rice, Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1985, 400 pages, \$23.95. Reviewed by Norman R. Gulley, professor of systematic theology, Religion Department, Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee.

*The Reign of God*, by Richard Rice of Loma Linda University, is an introduction to Christian theology from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective. It consists of 16 chapters, each with study helps and suggestions for further reading.

The prolegomena concerns the task of Christian theology. The second chapter begins the system with the doctrine of revelation, and succeeding chapters cover the doctrines of God, man, Christ, the church, last-day events, and in conclusion, the Sabbath.

Rice places soteriology within ecclesiology to guard against individualism, so personal salvation is considered within the corporate context. His eschatology also focuses on social rather than individual rewards. He ends with the Sabbath because he believes it to be the "capstone" of SDA theology and Adventism's most valuable contribution to the larger Christian world. A link is revealed between the Sabbath and each major doctrine.

Rice chooses "the reign of God," however, as his central theme that holds together and shows the interrelatedness of each of the doctrines. He traces this theme in a way that enables one to see the wholeness in Adventist fundamental beliefs, rather than seeing them as 27 unrelated entities. This is Rice's greatest contribution.

It is my opinion that eschatology could serve as a logical capstone to this theme. Adventist eschatology provides insight into God's foreknowledge of events, and His continuing reign leading up to triumph. It is also an area where Adventists can make a contribution that is in contrast to Dodd's realized eschatology, Bultman's timeless (or existential) eschatology, and Moltmann's proleptic eschatology on one hand, and the dispensational-secret-rapture-Israel-centered final events focus on the other. But Rice limits his

inquiry to basics, focusing on the "meaning" rather than sequence of end-time events. He hints that he will examine these unique sequence features later. So one looks to the heading "An Adventist Outline of Final Events" to find such an examination. All that is found is that the differences between those who accept and those who reject God's reign become sharper until probation closes (a mere half page compared to two pages on William Miller). There is no hint of a preprobation sequence of events.

The investigative judgment has no apparent reference to the antichrist little horn in Rice's presentation. The pre-Advent, millennial, and postmillennial judgments do not appear to be brought together in their great controversy context.

The rich Adventist contribution to Daniel and Revelation studies is missing in Rice's eschatology, as is the unfolding of Armageddon, the final outworking of the reign of God in human history. He admits a "brief review of Adventist eschatology," which is much too sketchy. I see it as the weakest part of his system when it could be the resounding climax of his theme.

Rice's presupposition for his eschatology is apparently found in his doctrine of God. He calls that chapter "a constructive proposal," in which he takes the view that God does not know all the details of the future because He is in a dynamic relationship with man. Hence many predictions are not ironclad forecasts. Instead, they describe what God will do in the event that certain things happen. So God "does not foresee their occurrence as inevitable; He intends to cause them to happen, but He may change His plans according to human actions." This seems to be a qualified "process theological" perspective.

Moltmann's proleptic eschatology, expressed in *Theology of Hope*, pictures God as one not bound by biblical predictions because He is sovereign. Rice, on the other hand, seems to question God's absolute foreknowledge on the basis of man's freedom. I believe a better understanding can be achieved by accepting

the fact that our all-knowing God knows how man will choose and has revealed the future in biblical eschatology.

### **The Advent Hope for Human Hopelessness**

Samuele Bacchiocchi, Biblical Perspectives, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1986, 430 pages, \$14.95. Reviewed by John W. Fowler, recently returned from serving as ministerial secretary in West Africa.

The heart warms to the message conveyed in the title of Dr. Bacchiocchi's book *The Advent Hope*. The colorful, striking cover portraying the visible coming of our Lord and the joy of the redeemed will find a ready response in minds and hearts. The author is to be commended for his efforts to write a book that presents the great truths of the Advent in new and fresh ways.

While the book focuses on the second coming of Christ and the wonder of this truth, its unique contribution is found in what it says about the signs of the coming, their meaning, and the method by which they are interpreted.

Bacchiocchi's view of the nature of prophetic signs becomes clear in chapter 7. He writes, "The signs of the end given by Christ in His Olivet discourse (which includes false christs, wars, earthquakes, famines, worldwide gospel proclamation, and tribulation), are all signs which cannot be precisely dated or fixed. Christ did not say, for example, when an earthquake completely destroys San Francisco, or when famine causes the death of hundreds of thousands in Ethiopia or Cambodia, 'then you know that My return is near.' . . . On the contrary, Christ chose to give signs of a generic nature which could find a degree of fulfillment in every age." This concept is repeated several times throughout the book. He rejects the idea that there are unique signs that have a specific fulfillment and that can be seen in the context of a chronology of events giving certainty of the nearness of the Advent.

The author uses what he calls the "prophetic perspective" as a context in which we can understand the purpose of Advent signs. He places the focus on the "what" rather than the "when" of

Christ's return. The "what" are generic signs that will bring assurance of the certainty and imminence of Christ's coming. They enable every generation to experience imminence as a necessity for faith. His premise is that faith can be sustained only if a person believes that Christ is coming in his day. Therefore the signs must be fulfilled for each generation.

If the Advent signs are of a generic nature with no unique characteristics in any generation, then it follows that they must be fulfilled in each generation. This the author calls "contemporizing the Advent signs." Acknowledging that in every age there have been Christians who believed they were witnessing a unique fulfillment of the Advent signs, he does not feel this is an acceptable use of signs. Making unique applications of generic signs in any age results in ridicule by thinking people, sensationalism, a hopeless attitude toward the present social order, a false sense of security, and finally disappointment. Contemporizing generic signs then is to make general applications of them to the present age, showing that God is at work in the world and that the conflict between good and evil is moving toward a climax.

While Bacchiocchi appears to believe in the historical perspectives of Daniel, his hermeneutic for interpreting prophecy is in conflict with it. He writes that some weaken the Advent hope by concentrating on peripheral factors such as dates, events, and hypothetical future political developments. In chapter 10 the author presents what he sees as "true" and "authentic" signs and in outline form explains them in detail, using many of the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments to identify them.

His basic argument that the signs "point to the certainty of the approaching end" is predicated on the concept of signs intensification. This concept is the *modus operandi* by which signs bring hope and assurance to the believer.

There is no chronology of events as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the past to give assurance of the nearness of the end. Bacchiocchi appears to say that the Scriptures do not identify, even generally, a period of world history when the end will come. A concept of end-times with specific signs, events, and dates identified by prophecy is missing.

Further study is needed to fully understand Dr. Bacchiocchi's eschatological

views and the hermeneutical principles undergirding them. This study is a matter of urgency in view of the seeming differences found in this book from traditional Adventist eschatology and in view of the probable wide circulation of this work.

### **Marriage, Divorce, and . . .**

Robert C. Kistler, *Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C., 1987, 156 pages, \$10.95. Reviewed by Jerry Connell, pastor of the University Seventh-day Adventist Church, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.*

Opening the book to page 57 and reading "if the ring is perceived as a symbol that enhances the loving care and stability that should exist in a marriage, it would be uncaring and less than Christian to condemn those who find strength for fidelity in its symbolic meaning" is enough to arrest the attention of any Seventh-day Adventist reader. Going from there to the table of contents and finding titles such as "The Meaning and Demeaning of Marriage," "With or Without a Ring," "Mixed Marriages," "Plural Marriages," and "Second Marriages," the reader realizes that the author has put his pen on some theological and social sore spots within global Adventism.

Kistler, a former pastor, is a sociologist at Andrews University. He wrestles with some perennial questions in our worldwide church. They are issues that inevitably arise as the church impacts other cultures.

*Marriage, Divorce, and . . .* is well documented as a resource base for both pastor and laity. It is written without technical jargon and easily understood. Although Kistler would not suggest that his work is definitive, it is an acutely needed resource that combines biblical theology, the counsels of Ellen White, modern social science, a broad cultural understanding, and compassion.

The volume is a significant contribution because it deals with multicultural issues. It will also help the casual reader to be sensitive to the church's attempts in the past to deal with such complex issues as mixed marriages and plural marriages, and to see how our present positions have evolved.

At a time when individuals apply their own understanding to the church's teachings on divorce, remarriage, and rings, this volume can contribute toward reaching a theological and sociological consensus.

### **Freedom of Simplicity**

Richard J. Foster, *Harper and Row, San Francisco, California, 1981, 200 pages, \$13.95. Reviewed by Sandra Smith-Reynolds.*

This book is a delightful and thought-provoking exploration of the Christian grace and discipline of simplicity. Foster leads us first through a careful study of scriptural examples of simplicity and then explores its practice throughout Christian history.

The second half of the book provides an in-depth study of the practice of simplicity in the daily life of the Christian, beginning with placing God as our divine center and working outward through our priorities within the family, work, community, and the world. This book is a resource to be used again and again. It also makes an excellent study guide for group discussion.

### **Marriage and Divorce**

James M. Efrid, *Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1985, 96 pages, paper, \$4.95. Reviewed by Ron Flowers, associate director, Department of Church Ministries, General Conference of Seventhday Adventists.*

This book grew out of the author's feeling that an inordinate amount of guilt is levied upon divorcing Christians because of rigid, legalistic understandings of "once married, always married" held by the church. He sets out to reexamine what the Bible says about the permanence of marriage and the possibility of divorce to determine whether or not the interpretations of Scripture that give rise to such positions reflect biblical teaching.

In a comprehensive study of marriage in the Old and New Testaments, Efrid sees a shift between the Testaments with a greater emphasis on monogamy and more attention given to the relationship *per se* in the New Testament.

An underlying thesis of the author (which is often alluded to but never really developed) is that a real marriage takes place when two people become one personality joined by God. Such unity is indivisible, and divorce is not possible. Efrid implies that where such unity does not exist divorce is possible. He believes that those instances in which the Scripture permits the possibility of divorce are an acknowledgment that not every marriage will result in the couple becoming "one."

(Continued on page 25)

## Hospitalized missionary members

When you visit hospitalized church members, bring them several pieces of literature to distribute while they are in the hospital. Almost any type of denominational pamphlet, book, or magazine will do—I've used *Steps to Christ*, *What I Like About . . .*, and doctrinal pamphlets, all with success.

Distributing literature is good missionary work for the hospitalized for two reasons: First, people are more receptive to the sick because they desire to make them feel better. And second, sick people feel better themselves knowing that they are still able to do something significant despite the many things they aren't able to do while in the hospital. —Byron K. Hill, Campostella Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

## Easy English quarterly

Do some members of your church find the standard Sabbath school lesson quarterly difficult to understand? Perhaps the Easy English quarterly is just what is needed to draw them into regular Bible study and participation in Sabbath school classes.

The Easy English quarterly is prepared with the needs of the hearing-impaired in mind. The Christian Record Braille Foundation's Department of Services for the Deaf "translates" the standard quarterly into the easily signed English used in American Sign Language. The editors of the General Conference Department of Church Ministries check this translation to ensure that the

original intent of the standard quarterly has been maintained. Likewise, the White Estate assists by making sure that Spirit of Prophecy quotations have been accurately adapted.

The Easy English quarterly uses a large typeface to accommodate those who are sight-impaired, and modern Bible translations that are suited to the language needs of the deaf.

The simplified vocabulary of the Easy English quarterly extends its usefulness beyond the hearing-impaired. Many of those for whom English is a second language find this quarterly more understandable than the standard quarterly. And the less-educated among those whose primary language is English may well find this quarterly helpful also.

You may obtain this quarterly through Adventist Book Centers or by ordering it through your local personal ministries director. —Lyndelle Chiomenti, assistant director, General Conference Department of Church Ministries.

## Nurturing the culture

After His resurrection our Lord was concerned to restore Peter, who had denied Him and then bitterly repented of his denial, to his leadership role (John 21:15-19). An important, we might even say critical, directive in assuring Peter of his restoration was Jesus' invitation to "feed my lambs." By entrusting to Peter those He was most concerned for—the young and tender of the faith—Jesus showed His faith in Peter.

The care of the young is the first responsibility of

today's pastor also. To assist the pastor in this task, the church has established church schools, extensions of the Sabbath school. These schools have the mandate to nurture the culture; to, as Paul put it, teach the traditions that assure the life and vitality of our faith (2 Thess. 2:15).

In a study of the members of the Lake Union Conference, Elder Warren Minder found that the longer a person had attended an Adventist school, the longer that person was likely to remain with the church. To support Christian education is to support the church. On Christian Education Day, April 23, 1988, will you dedicate yourself and the family you serve to strengthening and nurturing the culture?—Victor S. Griffiths, associate director, General Conference Department of Education.

## Adventist services via satellite

Persons unable to attend Seventh-day Adventist worship services in person now can "attend" via television—if they have a satellite dish.

Every Sabbath, members of the Loma Linda University Church Media Ministry videotape their church's study and worship services. For the past four years these programs have been aired on cable television in the Loma Linda area, primarily for shut-ins.

Recently the Three Angels Broadcasting Network began broadcasting these services on Satcom IR [F1], transponder 17. The satellite has an 8-watt transmitted output and gives a good-quality signal that satellite dishes can pick up well.

*The Church at Study* begins Sabbath mornings at 11:30 a.m., *Central Standard Time*, and *The Church at Worship* follows at 12:30. The programs, edited to 58 minutes and 30 seconds, contain no commercials, local news, or offering appeals. —Jocelyn Fay, communication director, South-eastern California Conference.

## Are your youth joining the military?

Are your church youth thinking about joining the armed forces? Because of the educational benefits, many Adventist youth are. Three leaflets have been prepared to help you help them find answers to their questions: "What An Adventist Should Know About the Military"; "What if Uncle Sam Orders Me to Work on the Sabbath?"; and "What to Expect if I Join." These leaflets will help you minister to the youth and their families. You may obtain them free through your local conference Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries/National Service Organization (ACM/NSO) director.

Those Adventist youth who do enlist in the military services need recognition and a warm send-off by their local church families. Why not present them with servicemen's kits, available from your local ACM/NSO director for \$3.50? Each kit includes a high-quality Bible, several devotional booklets, and leaflets written to help servicemen deal with special problems of conscience they may encounter in the military. —C. E. Bracebridge, director, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries.

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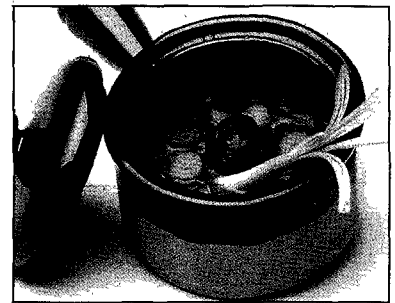
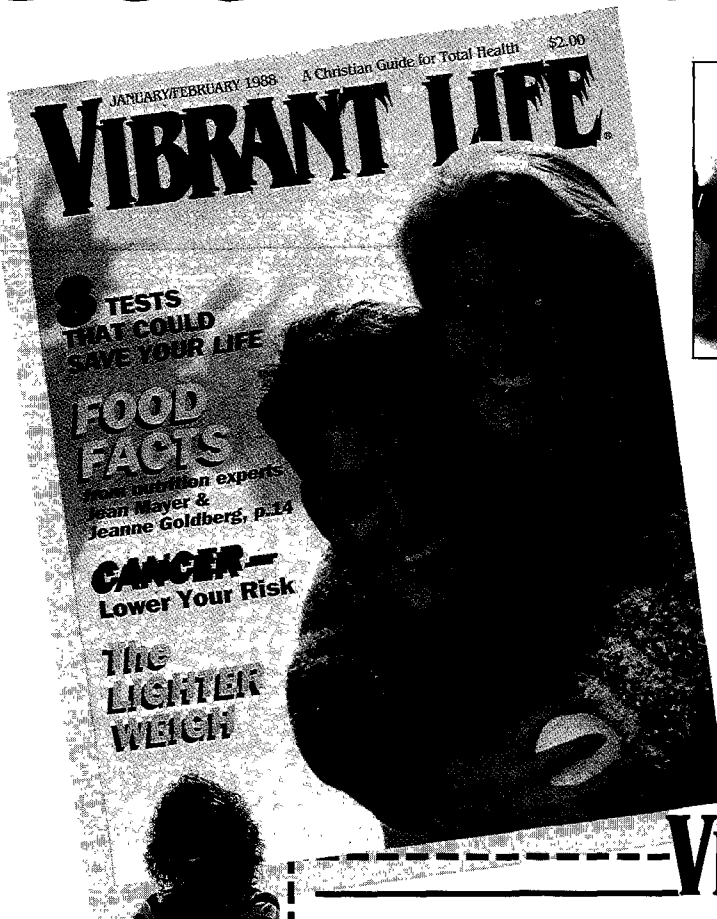
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