

Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

December 1990

Final Report on
Harvest 90—page 8



Robert and Anita Folkenberg share their views.

Prayer life revolutionized

Thank you for Dr. Elvin Adams' very helpful article about the theology of behavior change ("The Pastor's Fight for Good Health," April 1990). The how-to's were so easily understood. One of the people with whom I shared the article is "Mac," who, as a result of recently and most unexpectedly finding himself in prison, has surrendered his life to Christ. I believe the article's content will be of immense help to Mac as he seeks to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour.

Thank you, too, for reviewing the book by Dr. Bloesch, *The Struggle of Prayer* (July 1990). My prayer life has been challenged and revolutionized and my walk with Christ made sweeter. —Shirley Dean, Sharon Hill, Pennsylvania.

Were they really signs?

"The signs that fired the pioneers seem like relics in a museum of antiquities." So wrote Marvin Moore, speaking of the signs in the heavens, in his article on the delay in Christ's second coming (August 1990). I believe there is another explanation that deserves consideration.

Please read carefully Revelation 6:12-17; Amos 5:18-20; 8:8, 9; Joel 2:2, 10, 30, 31; and Zephaniah 1:14, 15. To me these texts do not describe separate events occurring years apart. Rather, all are part of one great event called "the day of the Lord," "the great day of His wrath," etc. They describe events happening in rapid sequence, almost simultaneously.

Our pioneers took these texts to be describing separate events with their fulfillment from 1755 to 1833—specifically, the Lisbon earthquake in 1755, the dark day of 1780, and the falling of the stars in 1833. The pioneers attached great significance to each of these, but it can now be easily determined that none was in any way supernatural.

It is understandable that our pioneers arrived at erroneous interpretations,

since they did not have access to the abundant information and scientific instruments now available. I think it is time we took a fresh, honest look at this subject, and if we are wrong, let us not tenaciously cling to nonevents sinking further and further into the past. —Alice Davidson, Hendersonville, North Carolina.

We see no reason God could not use natural events as signs to herald Christ's return. What gave these events their cogency was not their supernaturalness, nor their uniqueness, nor their intensity — "greatest" earthquake, "darkest" day, "greatest" star shower. Rather, it was their proximity to the closing dates of the two great biblical time prophecies, 1798 and 1844, and thus to the biblically indicated time of the end. And it was their significance to those who were looking for and preaching the Lord's return. —Editors.

Reword the abortion statement

I am a 35-year-old family physician doing a mostly obstetric practice here at the Adventist Medical Center. I read with interest the "Provisional Statement on Abortion" in the July (1990) issue.

You solicited suggestions on rewording. If this statement would actually be understood and applied exactly as it is written, there would be relatively little controversy. But the hard fact is, it is inevitably at the mercies of the interpretation of the reader.

Statement 4 immediately stands out. The seemingly simple statement that "these circumstances may include significant threats to the pregnant woman's . . . mental health" is broad enough that a multitude of abortion clinics could be built within its boundaries. One does not have to practice medicine long to discover that every unwanted pregnancy is a significant threat to the mother's mental health, and therefore, by this statement, every abortion is totally appropriate.

Statement 4 might better read: "These circumstances may include severe congenital defects carefully diag-

nosed in the fetus, pregnancy resulting from rape or incest, and significant threats to the pregnant woman's life or physical or mental health. (A significant threat to mental health is defined as the presence of major psychiatric illness at the time of pregnancy, or a history of major psychiatric illness that the physician thinks, after careful evaluation, portends a high likelihood of relapse as a direct result of the stress of the pregnancy and delivery.)"

I would rather see us make no statement at all than to make a statement that says very little or nothing, a statement that is too timid to stand in the face of the ills of a sin-sick society, a statement that is so broad in scope as to limit nearly nothing. That kind of weak statement would indicate that we have such a broad range of opinions on the committee and in Adventism that we cannot contribute to the protection of unborn human life. —Kenneth L. Colburn, M.D., Nishihara, Okinawa, Japan.

Correction

My first glance [at the June 1990 issue of *Ministry*] happened to be at the section entitled "First Glance." Paragraph 2 suggests that "next to our health system, our Adventist educational system consumes more church money, time, and energy than any other departmental entity."

Certainly the health system represents tremendous financial enterprise; but I believe you'd want to check on how much money is consumed. Other than a budget now and then for a chaplain or a Bible teacher in an educational institution connected with a health system organization, not one dollar of church money is being consumed by the health system. Our health system, for all its faults, is totally self-supporting.

—Ron Wisbey, president, Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Columbia, Maryland.

Touché! —Editors.

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Many of the strains and stresses between various factions of our church originate in differing hermeneutics. And in turn, differing hermeneutics issue from differing concepts of inspiration. So what contributes to our understanding of inspiration contributes to our unity as a church.

In this vein, two articles in this issue of *Ministry* take on particular significance. The first is the concluding portion of Fred Veltman's report on his study of *The Desire of Ages*. In the two parts of this piece, "The *Desire of Ages* Project: The Conclusions," he gives the outcomes at which he arrived and his reactions to them.

The second article is our interview of Robert Olson, former secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate. We asked Olson about the study and what it means to our understanding and interpretation of Ellen White's writings. His candid comments on originality and inspiration, Ellen White's purpose in writing as more homiletical than exegetical, and other foundational issues are both interesting and helpful.

It's been more than a year since we published an interview in *Ministry*, but we're making up for that by including two in this issue! In addition to our querying of Olson we interviewed the recently elected General Conference president, Robert S. Folkenberg, and his wife, Anita. Among other things, Folkenberg spoke of his background, the challenges the church faces, and the role of the church's pastors.

Also in this issue: Mervyn Maxwell's "The Minister as Ecclesiastic" concludes the 10-article series on the minister by looking at his or her relationship to the church as an organization. Carlos Aeschlimann reports the gratifying results of the Harvest 90 program of the past quinquennium. And Floyd Bresee reports on the recent Annual Council, where we begin to see the direction the church will take during the next several years.

We've crammed a lot of what I think is important material into this issue. May you be blessed and grow as you read it!

David C. James

Robert and Anita Folkenberg share their views

The Folkenbergs speak out on their dreams for the church and share their priorities.



Robert S. Folkenberg and his wife, Anita. Folkenberg is the recently elected president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



J. David Newman, editor of Ministry, interviewed the Folkenbergs.

Pastor Folkenberg, tell us about your background, where you were raised, your schooling, and where you have worked.

I was born to missionary parents in Puerto Rico on January 1, 1941, the eldest of three children, beginning the fifth generation of Adventists in our family. After a few years we moved to Cuba, where we lived until my mother contracted a rare tropical disease and we had to return to the States for her recovery. I completed my primary and the first two years of my secondary education in Yuba City, in the Sacramento valley of northern California. After two years at Milo Academy, in southern Oregon, I graduated in 1958.

When my parents accepted a call to conduct evangelism in New York, I enrolled as a freshman in Atlantic Union College. I attended Newbold College in England my sophomore year, then continued my education at Andrews University, where in 1962 I graduated with a B.A. in theology. Later I completed an M.A. degree there.

Pastor N. C. Wilson (the father of our former General Conference president) called us to intern at the Battle Creek Tabernacle. Two years later his son, then president of the Columbia Union, called us to be the singing evangelist with the Roger Holley evangelistic team.

After my ordination, Christmas Eve 1966, Anita and I and our son Bob, Jr. (2 years old), began the long drive to Panama. Our first responsibility was pastoring a 10-church district. One of the

churches had 600 members. Some of the churches were English speaking and some required the use of my long-since-forgotten Spanish. Anita helped me greatly as I worked at relearning Spanish. She took copious notes as I spoke, making long lists of my errors. Our daughter Kathi Lynne was born there in December of 1967, completing our family.

We served 19 years in the Inter-American Division as conference evangelist and stewardship director, union secretary, union president, and then division field secretary and assistant to the division president.

In February of 1985, a few months before the New Orleans General Conference session, we accepted the call to the presidency of the Carolina Conference and served there until July 6, 1990.

Mrs. Folkenberg, tell us briefly about your background.

I was born in Havana, Cuba, where my parents, Kenneth and Dorothy Emerson, were missionaries. [Mrs. Folkenberg's father later served as General Conference treasurer.] I grew up in Mexico and attended academy in Uruguay and Argentina in South America. I spent my freshman year at La Sierra College in California and then completed a B.S. in nursing at Loma Linda University. Since I grew up in Spanish-speaking lands, I speak and think in Spanish just as well as in English.

Pastor Folkenberg, what does it feel like to be president of the General Conference?

This appointment brings a flood of mixed emotions. The challenges are so

massive, varied, and complex, the resources so limited, and the processes of governance so complicated, that finding solutions to each seems overwhelming. I feel totally inadequate for the task, but find peace in the fact that this is the Lord's church, and that we are all helping Him—not Him helping us!

Mrs. Folkenberg, how has your life changed with this appointment?

This change has been particularly stressful for me. I am a quiet person who enjoys privacy. I would have preferred not being thrust into the public eye. However, I am willing to make whatever sacrifice it takes. We are in this together.

Pastor Folkenberg, you wrote an article for *Ministry* on the mission and



structure of the church (June 1989). Have any of your views changed since you became General Conference president? And if so, in what way?

In that article I attempted to set forth my convictions regarding the dangers we face when organization or structure takes primacy over the mission of the church. These concerns are just as valid today as they were then. It seems, at times, that even our definition of the mission of the church has altered. Reviewing our priorities and implementing changes will be more difficult and complex than I anticipated. The NIMBY (not in my backyard) self-preservation mind-set does not operate only in institutions. It is evident at every level of the church from the local congregation to the General Conference.

For example, not long ago three churches, located close together, decided that they should combine their re-

sources and build one school rather than have one school at each church. This would save valuable resources. But the idea died when they could not agree on where to build the school. Each congregation insisted on a location favorable to themselves. Today one church has a school, which is in financial difficulty, and the other two are without Adventist education. Their individual special interests took precedence over the good of the whole—over their goal of providing an Adventist education for their children.

Almost all the conferences in the North American Division are facing serious financial difficulties. And most have large cities or towns in which they should plant new churches. How many members are willing to accept reduced levels of pastoral care in order to provide budgets for pastor-evangelists to open new work in these targeted areas? Yet this is the kind of thinking it will take, at every level of governance, to carry out these mission-driven objectives.

The General Conference is providing leadership by example. It has responded to the worldwide evaluation of its services revealed in the survey conducted by Dr. Duane McBride of Andrews University by cutting about \$2.5 million worth of personnel and services from its staff operations. Though these cuts constitute a significant portion of the cost of operating the General Conference office, they are small compared to the financial demands of the church. The General Conference employs most of the funds it receives to operate the world church, not the Washington office. Cutting only the General Conference budget will not ease the financial pressures the church faces in North America, in its institutions, and in carrying out its global mission. Every office and institution worldwide needs to consider similar efficiency actions.

Together we must face these difficult issues, and many more like them. Every level of the church must become more efficient in the use of the resources. We must also do everything possible to build

The NIMBY (not in my backyard) self-preservation mind-set does not operate only in institutions.

the trust of our laity so that they will have no reason to withhold their support from the Lord's church.

On a positive note, the recently concluded Annual Council voted that the General Conference and North American Division return to the local conferences of that division an extra 1 percent of local conference gross tithe. Beginning on January 1, 1992, this additional reversion will be phased in during four years at .25 percent per year.

Over the four-year period this additional reversion will return at least \$10 million more in tithe. Another \$5 million will be returned through the Church Growth Fund in addition to funds reverted by each union.

Mrs. Folkenberg, what do you see as your role?

I want to provide an atmosphere of emotional support, peace, and quiet for the rare moments when Bob and I can relax together. I will assist him in study and research projects. And I will give



I hope to be open and forthright. I plan to delegate responsibility and authority to others, trusting in their skills until I see evidence to the contrary.

counsel now and then—whether or not it's requested!

Pastor Folkenberg, what would you say are the five biggest challenges facing your administration?

1. To reaffirm our fundamental beliefs, including that of the nearness of the end of time. Reaffirming our beliefs with our members leads to a practical understanding of the plan of salvation. They need to enjoy the peace that comes from the assurance of salvation in the unconditional love of Jesus. This experience will result in a victorious Christian experience and is fundamental to revival.

2. To make the evangelistic mission of the church a passionate commitment rather than merely a matter of inspirational rhetoric.

3. To build unity and trust in the church and its leadership (indispensable for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit) by removing any legitimate basis for distrust and disunity. I pray that this will in turn isolate those who are undermining unity and trust by *taking upon themselves* the task of judging others and purifying the church, a task Jesus reserved to Himself.

4. To educate our members in the biblical principles of stewardship so each of us can become unrestricted channels through which God can pour His blessings on His church.

5. To portray a vision of Global Mission. This envisions the planting of an Adventist church in each of the world's 1,800 population areas of 1 million or more in which there is currently no Adventist presence. Most of these areas are found in China, India, and the Middle East.

Describe for us your leadership style.

I hope to be open and forthright. I plan to delegate responsibility and authority to others, trusting in their skills until I see evidence to the contrary. I also believe in the committee system of governance.

Tell us a little about your devotional life. How does a busy leader find time to be alone with the Lord?

I am very project-oriented, and this influences even my devotional life. I underline the Bible with color codes: blue for promises, green for truth or doctrines, red for warnings, yellow for exhortations, and brown for significant narrative events. I just completed reading and underlining the nine volumes of *Testimonies for the Church*. Now I am in the process of entering each of the underlined quotations in my computer with a system of topical cross-referencing. Anita helps me with this part of the project. She also helps me greatly in my devotional life. She reads voraciously, completing several books a week, and also screens and recommends books for me to read.

It seems that regardless of the time I spend in devotions I always crave more. Facing the new challenges of these past months has caused me to spend significantly more time in prayer than I ever have before.

Mrs. Folkenberg, how will you man-



age the time when your husband is traveling? There is some bitterness and cynicism here at headquarters among many of the families because one or the other of the spouses is gone so much. How do you balance the needs of your family with the needs of the church?

This issue causes me more difficulty than any other. My husband was absent for 70 percent of the time during some of the years we lived in Inter-America. I had hoped that somehow these extended periods of solitude were behind me. If I see growth in the church and increased credibility toward leadership, it will be easier to bear. I feel sure that when my husband is in Washington we will spend some quality time together. Sometimes I'd like to go with him on a trip if we can manage it. This will make it easier for me to understand the necessity of his time away from home.

Pastor Folkenberg, what are your dreams for Global Mission?

Global Mission is not something that happens only in the farthest extremes of the globe; it is equally applicable to my neighbor. We must raise the priority of the gospel commission in the mind of every member, pastor, and institutional leader. The Lord and His church should be our passion, not our secondary interest. We need to direct more human and financial resources from every level and institution of the church toward the preaching of the gospel.

There is much talk today about a loss of credibility in church leaders. Why do you think that is the case, and how can the leaders restore that credibility?

It certainly appears that there is a reduced level of credibility in the church and its leaders. Interestingly, however, some studies show that this loss of trust is greater among church employees than other members. Several reasons for this loss of credibility come to mind:

First, we (in the United States) are a nation of individualists who naturally tend to distrust or dislike organizations, especially those that represent authority.

Second, we in church leadership have made serious mistakes in the past. Nevertheless, I believe we have learned from our mistakes and we now have policies that reduce the likelihood of our repeating these mistakes. Sadly, it appears that our gifts of forgiving and forgetting are underdeveloped.

Third, some self-appointed critics have taken it upon themselves to proclaim constantly to the members that the church is unworthy of their trust.

Unfortunately, some members impute personal piety to these self-appointed critics. These members apply a dual standard of accountability. They distrust church leadership whom they elect, whose remuneration is carefully controlled, and whose records are independently audited and reported to the constituency. Yet they blindly support these critics of whom far less and sometimes no accountability is required.

Pastor Folkenberg, the church faces many social issues: abortion, the environment, nuclear war, racial and sexual discrimination, holding political office,



noncombatancy, AIDS, ordination of women, liberation theology, etc. How should it relate to these concerns? Should the church develop positions, or should it leave these matters to individual choice?

It is tempting for the church to take positions on social issues. Some of the issues you have mentioned certainly do carry a moral imperative that demand attention. Some, such as abortion, affect the operating policies of our institutions and as such must be resolved. Others are clearly humanitarian, and as Christians we need to be involved. Our commitment is evidenced in organizations such as ADRA.

On the other hand, it is possible to debate and promote these causes to such an extent that they become our "gospel." The experience of other Christian churches shows that to the degree that they became excessively involved in social issues they lost sight of their biblical imperative and began to decline. So it might be better to leave some of the debate over social issues to our individual

response as world citizens rather than to make responding an official function of the church.

Does the denominational pay scale need to be revised so that pastors and other church workers receive the same percentages? Why should an associate professor in one of our colleges receive 3 percent more in salary than the pastor of the Loma Linda University church? Why should the public relations director of a publishing house receive 3 percent more than the public relations director of a local conference?

We may need to rethink our salary structure. However, this side of the kingdom it may not be possible for us to establish a coordinated benefit program that is fully rational. Let's look at a few of the factors. We are trying to reconcile commitment and personal sacrifice on the one hand with the pressures of the marketplace (and in some instances even greed) on the other hand—and do it consistently. This is an extremely complex problem.

Here is an example of the pressures we face: Our colleges offer degrees for which the public and professional workplace demands accreditation. The accrediting associations severely criticize the wages of our college faculty—we pay our college staff wages that are significantly below those of the marketplace. What they consider to be low wages and high work loads jeopardize the accreditation in some of our institutions.

But to raise the wages of our college staff would cause two major problems. First, it would widen the chasm that you pointed out between the categories of workers. Second, it would increase the costs of operating our colleges. They then would seek increased appropriations, which in turn reduces our ability to provide balanced increases to the rest of the work force.

It is not difficult to find and point out the inequities. It is far more difficult to change them in a manner that is just, consistent, and not destructive of the mission of the church.

Mrs. Folkenberg, years ago Ellen White said that pastors' wives who engage in church work should be paid out of the tithe. Yet church leaders have been most reluctant to follow this counsel, pleading all sorts of poverty. How do you view this issue?

I fervently believe that pastors' wives

I dream of members who practice what they preach; who focus more on the life of Christ than on the lives of others.

who are interested in working beside their husbands in a team approach to ministry and who are not otherwise employed should be paid for this service. On the other hand, in some conferences poverty is not simply an excuse—it is very real! Office staffs have been cut back, and travel and services severely reduced. It is very difficult for a conference in such straits to fund these expenses. The answer will undoubtedly be found in gradually increasing the number of wives on the team ministry payroll each year. It is important to start.

Pastor Folkenberg, what do you see as the greatest need of the Adventist Church today?

Members who understand that the good news is really just that—assurance and peace in Christ as well as victory over sin. Members who are students of prophecy and understand that Jesus is coming soon, who consequently have a sense of urgency about the gospel commission. Members who are students of the Word.

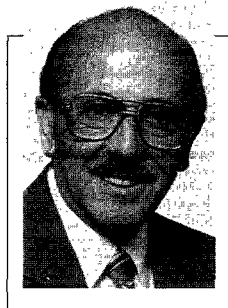
In one short paragraph, please give us your vision for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

I dream of members who practice what they preach; who focus more on the life of Christ than on the lives of others; who never utter a critical, judgmental word of another sinner; who demonstrate by their witness that they believe Jesus is coming soon; who manifest and share a spirit of confidence in their church and Christ its leader; and who radiate peace, assurance, and victory in their Lord—in summary, a church ready to go home! ■

Harvest 90— everyone's victory

**Carlos E.
Aeschlimann**

**The final, official
report on
the outcome of
Harvest 90.**



Carlos E. Aeschlimann is an associate secretary of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The Harvest 90 program launched at the 1985 General Conference session in New Orleans was the most widely accepted soul-winning program the Seventh-day Adventist Church has seen. Every division, union, local field, and (as far as we know) church participated in it. This program resulted in the greatest advance in soul winning the Adventist Church has seen in 50 years.

Specifically, Harvest 90 aimed to maximize church attendance, to double the number of members equipped for soul winning, and to double the number of accessions achieved during the One Thousand Days of Reaping. The latter goal involved four levels of achievement: 1. A basic goal of 2 million baptisms—double the 1 million baptisms goal of the One Thousand Days of Reaping. This was the goal set at the New Orleans General Conference session. 2. A second goal of 2,217,768—double the actual results of the One Thousand Days. 3. A faith goal of 2,303,000. This figure is the total of the individual goals the divisions set for themselves and is only the figure that was used in measuring their performance. 4. A supergoal of 2.5 million.

We don't have the figures to determine how successful we were at maximizing church attendance. But we think it likely that the Far Eastern, South Pacific, South American, and Inter-American divisions surpassed the goals they had set for themselves.

Regarding the doubling of the number

of church members equipped for soul-winning activities: at the beginning of Harvest 90 seven divisions and one attached field reported 362,726 people involved in soul-winning activities. By the end of Harvest 90 that figure had risen to 639,904 people, an increase of 76.4 percent.

As to the third objective, although in Indianapolis the divisions reported 2,503,192 baptisms for the quinquennium, the General Conference's Office of Archives and Statistics counted 2,490,105 baptisms. This latter figure is the official figure. Based on it, we reached 124.5 percent of the basic goal of 2,000,000; 112.2 percent of the Harvest 90 goal of 2,217,768; 108.1 percent of the faith goal of 2,303,000; and 99.6 percent of the supergoal of 2.5 million.

One last push

To culminate Harvest 90 with a global evangelistic explosion the Harvest 90 Advisory Committee challenged the field with a faith goal of 300,000 baptisms for the last two quarters of the campaign and a faith goal for the final quarter, the "Ninety Days of Reaping," of an average of 2,000 persons baptized per day. The committee also designated Sabbath, May 26, 1990, "Harvest 90 Victory Baptism Day." It encouraged every Adventist church around the world to conduct a baptismal ceremony on that Sabbath with the faith goal of baptizing 100,000 souls.

The challenge resulted in extraordinary evangelistic activity throughout all the world. And, thanks be to God, the three faith objectives were achieved. During the last two quarters we baptized 332,455

souls. Traditionally the quarter just before the General Conference session is very low in baptisms, but this time it proved to be the best of all: the baptisms totaled 197,179, or 2,167 per day. And on May 26 we baptized 117,206 souls—probably the most people baptized on one day in the history of our church!

We praise the Lord for these results. They exemplify what He can do when a church is fully dedicated to its mission—when it makes its priority the preaching of the gospel in every corner of the earth.

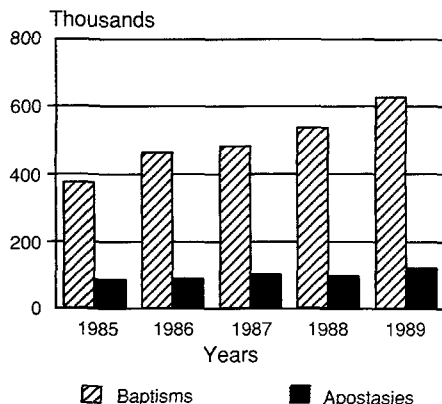
Not all of the news coming out of the Harvest 90 program is good news. There is a reason for sadness, but even the bad news has its positive side. During the first year of Harvest 90 we suffered a loss through apostasies and missing members of a number of members equal to 22.5 percent of our baptisms. By the last year of the campaign that figure had dropped to 19.1 percent. During the entire quinquennium we lost 493,050, or the equivalent of 19.8 percent of our baptisms.

While we praise God that our rate of loss dropped 3.4 points during the campaign, we regret the loss of almost a half million brothers and sisters. It is imperative that we continue to improve on preparing candidates for baptism and on attending to the new members.

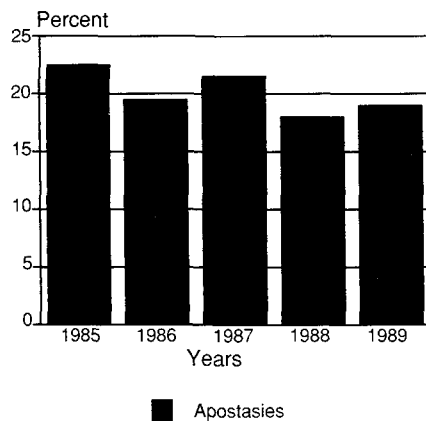
Evangelistic methods

The Harvest 90 campaign stimulated the development of new methods of evangelism, among them the gigantic national evangelistic campaigns such as those held in Brazil, the Philippines, Spain, Korea, Papua New Guinea, Peru, and Indonesia. Harvest 90 also saw multiple campaigns in metropolitan areas

Harvest 90 Baptisms and Apostasies



Harvest 90 Apostasies as a Percentage of Baptisms



—New York, Guayaquil, Mexico City, Seattle, Caracas, and Manila.

In order of importance the most productive methods of soul winning were: (1) public evangelism—used in all parts

What they said about Harvest 90

“I believe that Harvest 90 has been accepted more readily and with greater enthusiasm than the One Thousand Days of Reaping program.”—*Neal C. Wilson, former General Conference president.*

“We feel believers and workers have caught the vision of a finished work and will bend their energies to accomplish this goal.”—*J. J. Nortey, president, Africa-Indian Ocean Division.*

“Throughout Inter-America there is a high intensity of interest by workers and laity alike in the Harvest 90 evangelistic advance. Never has a church program been accepted with greater enthusiasm and interest.”—*George Brown, president, Inter-American Division.*

“The acceptance of Harvest 90 has been excellent throughout the Euro-Africa Division. Each union has set its own spiritual and baptismal goals. All kinds of evangelistic campaigns are taking place in all our fields.”—*Edwin Ludescher, president, Euro-Africa Division.*

“Harvest 90 has proven to be one of the most productive modalities in years in helping to bring about positive church growth.”—*A North American Division administrator.*

of the world, with exceptional results in Europe; (2) personal evangelism—in several divisions the majority of the baptismal candidates were prepared by laypersons giving Bible studies; (3) baptismal classes—this method brought great results in the South American and Inter-American divisions as well as in Africa and the South Pacific; (4) Revelation seminars—used throughout most of the world; (5) witnessing by laypersons in their own homes; and (6) evangelistic baptismal services—baptismal services held frequently and including a call for decisions as a part of the ceremony.

The various divisions showed some variety in their approaches as well. In Europe a mobile institute of evangelism was organized. The Far Eastern Division used language schools. In the South American Division, the organizing of new churches on a pioneer plan proved very successful. The Inter-American Division emphasized the combining of the efforts of pastors and lay members.

Factors contributing to the success of Harvest 90

What made Harvest 90 work?

For its part, the General Conference Ministerial Association coordinated Harvest 90 and offered suggestions and plans through the *Ministerial Association Bulletin* and the *Resource Materials Bulletin*. We also produced and sent out a quarterly statistical report, sharing news about the progress of Harvest 90. Each year we prepared for Annual Council a special program featuring reports from the division presidents and departmental directors. The Harvest 90 Advisory Committee, chaired by Kenneth Mittelider, prepared the strategies and statements approved at Annual Council.

But most important, the world field enthusiastically accepted the Harvest 90 program, voluntarily setting big baptismal goals and making excellent plans. It was obvious that the divisions had made evangelism the priority item on their agendas.

I believe the Harvest 90 program succeeded because:

1. It received unanimous approval at the General Conference session, and administrative leaders in the General Conference, divisions, unions, and local fields enthusiastically gave their total support to this program.

2. While the General Conference offered suggestions and plans, each division set its own strategies and goals.

Notes from the divisions

Africa-Indian Ocean Division: Set the highest baptismal goal—and almost reached it. In January 1987 the work reopened in Burundi, and more than 18,000 people have been baptized since then. In Rwanda 4,500 were baptized in one day. Ghana celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of Adventism in that country with a united national evangelistic campaign.

Eastern Africa Division: Baptized more than any other division—more than a half million. In 1989 the division's baptisms totaled 131,823, a record. Several evangelistic campaigns produced more than 1,000 baptisms each (the campaign in Niamira, Kisii, Kenya, produced 4,227).

Euro-Africa Division: Established a mobile institute of evangelism that provided evangelistic training for pastors and laypeople. Lisbon's evangelistic campaign attracted 4,000 people. The first national evangelistic campaign in Europe convened in Spain. In Angola and Mozambique thousands of new converts united with the church each year. The 1986 campaign in Munich, Germany, produced 68 baptisms. After the revolution in Romania, more than 200 churches were organized.

Far Eastern Division: National evangelistic campaigns were held in the Philippines, with the 10,000 simultaneous cottage meetings resulting in 44,250 baptisms. Indonesia's 2,000 cottage meetings brought 5,431 baptisms.

Inter-American Division: Became the first division to reach a membership of more than 1 million. It attained the highest num-

ber of baptisms three of the five years of Harvest 90, and stood second in total baptisms with almost a half million. Mega-Mexico 89, the biggest evangelistic campaign, involved 120 pastors and 650 lay evangelists. It resulted in 3,265 baptisms and the organization of 15 new churches.

North American Division: Revelation seminars and public evangelistic campaigns were its two most successful methods of soul winning. The Atlantic Union reached its Harvest 90 goal. The Columbia Union baptized more than 2,000 souls during the last weeks of the Harvest 90 program. Evangelists, pastors, and lay preachers conducted hundreds of evangelistic campaigns and Revelation seminars. The division's biggest campaign was the 1986 New York Metropolitan Campaign in which 50 churches participated. This year-long effort produced 1,465 baptisms.

South American Division: Prepared a half million Revelation seminar sets. This division organized metropolitan campaigns in the principal cities of its territory. National evangelistic campaigns were held in each country. The national campaign in Brazil included 10,000 centers for preaching and resulted in 47,551 baptisms. In one year Pastor Felix Aduviri and lay members prepared 1,027 souls for baptism.

South Pacific Division: Pastors and laypersons conducted Revelation seminars through all of Australia. In Papua New Guinea, several campaigns produced between 200 and 1,000 baptisms each. The largest single baptism in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church took place in

Papua New Guinea when 127 officiating pastors baptized more than 4,400 people.

Southern Asia Division: Worked hard to reach its thousands of villages. On November 22, 1987, 20 pastors from the North and South Andhra sections baptized 725 people in the Godavari River. The Central India Union organized 25 small-town efforts, 45 cottage meetings, and 38 lay efforts—eight conducted by women and nine by youth. In a six-month period, baptisms totaled 1,520.

Trans-European Division: Conducted schools of evangelism and campaigns in Gdansk, Belgrade, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Budapest, Tampere, and Karachi, with remarkable results. One of the most exciting breakthroughs was the introduction of the Revelation seminars translated into several languages. The biggest evangelistic campaign was held in London with seven simultaneous efforts resulting in 475 baptisms. The Karachi campaign brought 246 baptisms.

U.S.S.R. Division: Though their goal was 4,000 baptisms, they attained 8,344, or 208.6 percent of the goal. A public baptism held in the Dnieper River in the city of Kiev attracted more than 5,000 spectators. The first public evangelistic campaign held in the Soviet Union in years convened in Novosibirsk, Siberia, with Harold F. Otis as speaker.

Middle East Union: Became the first union in the world to reach its total Harvest 90 goal. Eventually this union almost doubled its original goal of 1,200 baptisms.

3. The ongoing exchange of methods, news, and statistics kept the world informed on the progress of this program.

4. The goals were specific and clear.

5. The departments collaborated by sharing ideas, methods, and materials.

6. Working together in aggressive evangelism, pastors and laypersons were productive in soul winning.

7. Finally, and most important, God manifested His power and the Holy Spirit worked through the church. In turn, the church made evangelism a real priority.

Harvest 90 has been a memorable experience. By leading the church to place its priority where it should always be—on completing the great commission to evangelize the world—it united the church. Administrators and local field departmental leaders gave evangelism a high priority on their agendas. The churches served as centers of evangelism,

and thousands of pastors became able evangelists. And above all, multiplied thousands of laypeople took an active role in preparing hundreds of thousands of baptismal candidates. The church was fortified, enriched, and strengthened.

Now Harvest 90 is history. But the church has reaffirmed its call to evangelism by launching a more complete and challenging plan: Global Strategy for Global Mission. Its goal is "to take the everlasting gospel to every people group and each individual on Planet Earth, placing a personal Adventist presence among all people groups throughout the world."

The same powerful God who gave the victory to Harvest 90 is going to give a greater victory to Global Mission. We hope that this will be the final victory. ■

Statistical odds and ends

● During Harvest 90 we baptized enough people to organize a division of 124,505 members each quarter, a union of 41,501 members each month, a conference of 9,577 members each week, and a mission of 1,364 members each day.

● At the beginning of Harvest 90 we had 4,598,032 church members and at its close, 6,442,545. This is an increase of 1,844,513, or 40.1 percent net growth (8.02 percent annually).

● At the beginning of Harvest 90 we had 25,176 churches and at its close, 31,592. So we organized 6,416 new churches, which represents an increase of 25.5 percent (5.1 percent annually).

● On the average we baptized people at the rate of nearly one per minute. In other words, every hour we could have organized a new church of 57 members.

The Desire of Ages project: the conclusions

Part 2 of two

Fred Veltman

The uniqueness of *The Desire of Ages* is to be found in its practical use of Scripture and its stress on spiritual realities and personal devotion rather than the originality of its content.



When he was commissioned to do this research project, Fred Veltman, Ph.D., was the chairman of the Religion Department of Pacific Union College, Angwin, California. He continues to teach half-time in that department while chairing a different, newly formed department.

To what degree was Ellen White dependent upon literary sources in writing *The Desire of Ages*? Did she do the copying herself or was it done by her literary assistants? Could she have unconsciously used the literary expressions of other authors—did she have a photographic memory? Our lengthy and detailed investigation led to five general conclusions that cast light upon these broad questions posed in the introduction to the study. The conclusions are based primarily but not exclusively on the answers generated by the 14 questions we addressed to each chapter of *The Desire of Ages* (DA) text.¹ They also include interpretations of the data, and to that degree involve personal judgment. I have tried, however, to separate my opinion from what I would argue the evidence indicates to be a fact.

I have attempted to set forth the five concluding statements in as concise a manner as accuracy would allow. To understand properly the meaning intended, the reader should give careful consideration to the accompanying explanations and supporting arguments, brief as they are.

As is true of most research activities, the process of drawing conclusions raised additional issues that in my view call for further study. I hope that the underscoring of these issues will challenge some readers to add their efforts to those of myself and others who have tried to shed more light on Ellen White's work and writings. It should be clearly understood that these questions are not offered to

dilute the reasonableness of the arguments or to suggest that this investigation is incomplete, and that therefore its conclusions are invalid.

1. Ellen White used literary sources when writing *The Desire of Ages*.

The purpose of this fundamental claim, and for many an obvious truth, is to set forth clearly the following facts. It is of first importance to note that Ellen White herself, not her literary assistants, composed the basic content of the DA text. In doing so she was the one who took literary expressions from the works of other authors without giving them credit as her sources.² Second, it should be recognized that Ellen White used the writings of others consciously and intentionally. The literary parallels are not the result of accident or photographic memory.

In view of the fact that she employed editorial assistants, our clearest evidence of Ellen White's literary borrowing comes from her personal diaries and manuscripts. If we want to establish more precisely the degree of literary dependence, it would be well to study the manuscripts as they come from her hand, comparing both the dependent and independent sentences. Each manuscript should be treated as a whole. When we take the chapter as the basic unit of composition, we remove ourselves several steps from Ellen White's basic work.

This first and fundamental conclusion never fails to elicit a further inquiry as to its implications. Implicitly or explicitly, Ellen White and others speaking on her behalf did not admit to and even denied literary dependency on her part.³ In the

The issue that concerned her was the authority and truth of her messages—not their originality.

light of this study and other similar studies, what are we to make of such denials? I think that any attempt to address this problem should include a serious consideration of Ellen White's understanding of inspiration and of her role as a prophet. Such a study should be contextualized in terms of nineteenth-century views on inspiration, especially within Adventism.

2. The content of Ellen White's commentary on the life and ministry of Christ, *The Desire of Ages*, is for the most part derived rather than original.

In light of the data our source studies on the DA text provided, this conclusion might appear to some readers as being unjustified.⁴ To those who have been told that literary sources played a minimal role in Ellen White's compositions such a statement may be incredible. Obviously this second general conclusion calls for some clarification.

As I explained in the first article, source dependency involves more than verbal parallels. We must consider not only the DA text as it reads today, but also Ellen White's earlier writings, the thematic structure of her writings, and the content of her material even where no direct literary similarity exists. When we do so, we find that she depended on her sources to a much greater degree than the verbal similarities of the DA text to those sources indicate.

We must not place too much weight upon arguments from silence. But it is worthy of note that the DA material that we classified as independent was often

material dealing with topics not usually covered in a work on the life of Christ. Since our study was largely limited to this type of literature, the reader must consider our estimate of the level of source dependency in *The Desire of Ages* as conservative.⁵

In practical terms, this conclusion declares that one is not able to recognize in Ellen White's writings on the life of Christ any general category of content or catalog of ideas that is unique to her. We found source parallels for theological, devotional, narrative, descriptive, and spiritual materials, whether in reference to biblical or extrabiblical content.

Ever since the recent surfacing of the issue of Ellen White's literary borrowing, the question How much? has had center stage. Adventists have tended to emphasize the uniqueness, the originality, of the content of Ellen White's writings. But in an ultimate spiritual sense Ellen White always insisted that her works were derivative. She received the information from which she wrote out her views through visions, through some sort of impression upon the mind, and from Scripture. She saw herself as a messenger of the Lord. I believe the issue that concerned her was the authority and truth of her messages—not their originality. For Ellen White, all truth ultimately originates with God.

This second conclusion suggests some areas for fruitful study. Even though we found parallels to sources in all of the types of the DA materials, perhaps we need to make a serious comparison of the content of the parallels and that of the independent sections.⁶ And it may be that we will find other distinctions when we study the other books published from her writings on the life of Christ—*Christ's Object Lessons* and *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*.

We also need to look at the content of her visions. Did she leave any record—what she saw and when—that would enable us to identify the vision content independent of her commentary on the life of Christ that exhibits the use of sources? And what about those times when she was impressed to write? Did she have revelatory experiences other than what is generally understood as a vision? Would the use of sources play any role in such experiences?

There is also the matter of plagiarism. We have now identified several of the sources she used. We know the types of literature these sources represent. And

we have an idea of the nature and extent of Ellen White's literary dependency at the level of her original writings. With all this data at hand, we should be able to examine the issue of plagiarism in terms of the literary conventions that governed the use of such religious works among her contemporaries.

3. The special character of Ellen White's commentary is to be found in its practical use of Scripture and in its stress on spiritual realities and personal devotion.

Though Ellen White's writings appear to have been largely derivative, they do not lack originality. A fair assessment of the evidence should not deny or underplay the degree of her dependence, but neither should it overlook or depreciate her independence. Despite her lack of formal education and her dependence upon literary sources and literary assistants, Ellen White could write. She obviously had the ability to express her thoughts clearly. She was not slavishly dependent upon her sources, and the way she incorporated their content clearly shows that she recognized the better literary constructions. She knew how to separate the wheat from the chaff.

It may not be possible to identify Ellen White's "fingerprint" in the material that Marian Davis edited, but certain features of her work are readily apparent. She did not approach the biblical text as a scholarly exegete. Rather, she approached it from a practical point of view, taking the obvious, almost literal, meaning. She gave Marian Davis the responsibility of deciding where the earlier publication needed improving. In some instances the revision included a change in the order of events to bring her writings into harmony with the text of Scripture.

Another distinct characteristic of her work is stress on what I have called "spiritual realities." She differed from her sources in the emphasis she gave to descriptions of the activities or viewpoints of God and His angels and of Satan and his angels. She appears to be much more informed and at home than her sources when discussing the "other world," the real though invisible world of the spiritual beings of the universe. Her concern for reality is also evident in her replacing the expressions of probability, supposition, and imagination found in the sources with factual accounts given in

the style of a reporter or eyewitness.

Ellen White's "signature" is also to be found in the proportion of commentary given to devotional, moral, or Christian appeals or lessons that usually appear at the end of a chapter. This feature would naturally fit the evangelistic purpose that motivated her writing on the life of Christ. It is among her devotional comments and throughout her presentation of what I have called "spiritual realities" that we are more likely to find her independent hand at work.

Ellen White's independence is also to be seen in her selectivity. The sources were her slaves, never her master. Future studies would do well to compare her text with that of the sources and to note how she selected, condensed, paraphrased, and in general rearranged much of the material she used.

Our study raised another question that merits further attention: Was Ellen White indebted to sources for her devotional or spiritual comments? We did find several parallels in one or two works of this type, but our research did not survey enough of these works to establish whether her apparent independence is owing to her originality or to the limits of our investigation. When we extend the survey of possible sources to sermons and devotional literature, we will be able to tell how accurate are our data on her independence and bring into sharper focus just how much of her sections of comment corresponds to or differs from the sources she used.

No doubt a thorough look at Ellen White's use of Scripture would also prove helpful. Is biblical interpretation today limited to her practical approach? Is there a place for careful exegesis? If there is more than one legitimate approach to the study of Scripture, should Ellen White's views control Adventist interpretation of Scripture?

Finally, regarding content, how do Ellen White's writings on the life of Christ compare among themselves? We can no longer ask either Ellen White or those who knew her to explain what she meant by what she wrote. To be fair to her and to avoid the misuse of her authority, we must be careful how we represent what she wrote and how we establish what her position on a given subject was. My study of her writings on the life of Christ has given me the impression that some of her views changed through time. The very fact that the DA text represents a revision of her ear-

lier work suggests that her writings form a textual tradition.

If continued investigation indicates that there is some development in her ideas, would it not suggest that her comments need to be considered in terms of "time and place" not only within her own life experience and textual tradition but with respect to the larger background of her times, both within and without the Adventist Church? Perhaps we need Adventist historians and/or the Ellen G. White Estate to provide introductions to her writings in similar fashion to what we find useful in studying the Old and New Testament writings. At any rate, we may not necessarily find her view by simply striking a harmony among all her writings on a given subject. Her latest view might well be a correction or at least a modification of an earlier position.

4. Ellen White used a minimum of 23 sources of various types of literature, including fiction, in her writings on the life of Christ.⁷

Actually, we have no way of knowing how many sources are represented in Ellen White's work on the life of Christ. In addition to the remaining 72 chapters of the DA text, there are two other books to review: *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* and *Christ's Object Lessons*. These 23 writers are sufficient, however, to answer the questions so many have asked: From what writers did Ellen White borrow? What kinds of books were they writing?

Space does not permit us to survey all 23 here. But there is no need to cover the entire lot, since many fall under the literary category of "Victorian lives of Christ." The books in this category were never intended to be biographies. Today they would probably be classified as historical fiction.

One obviously fictional account is Ingraham's *The Prince of the House of David*, a work that Albert Schweitzer referred to as one of the "edifying" romances on the life of Jesus intended for family reading.⁸ Ingraham cast his work as a collection of letters written by an eyewitness in Palestine to her father in Egypt.

William Hanna's popular work was designed to be "practical and devotional."⁹ No wonder that parallels from Hanna are to be found in 13 of the 15 DA chapters we investigated.

The books in Ellen White's library at

We found that Ellen White's sources had used each other in the same way that she later used them.

the time of her death appear to corroborate what her writings reveal. She read widely in works of differing literary type, theological perspective, and scholarly depth.

5. Ellen White's literary assistants, particularly Marian Davis, are responsible for the published form of *The Desire of Ages*.

The role of Ellen White's literary assistants was not a major concern of the study. But this subject cannot be entirely excluded from any serious attempt to treat her use of sources. Her method of writing inextricably involved the work of her secretaries, especially that of her "bookmaker." A significant part of the introduction to the research report covers this rather interesting side to Ellen White's literary work.

In her day she was no doubt known more for her public speaking than for her writing. She loved to speak, took every opportunity to speak, and was confident of her speaking ability. It was not that way with her writing. Though she felt the burden to write, her confidence in her ability as a writer was not strong. She knew that her education did not qualify her to write for publication.

The evidence suggests that she wrote day by day in her journals, moving from topic to topic as time and opportunity made it possible. No doubt she worked with one source for a while and then moved on to another source and another subject. These jottings would be copied and corrected for grammar, syntax, and spelling when she passed that journal

over to one of her secretaries. Several journals would be active at the same time.

From these collections her assistants would compose articles for Adventist journals. It appears that larger publications were produced from collections of materials gathered into a scrapbook. At least that seems to be the way the chapters for *The Desire of Ages* were compiled. Apparently her assistants at times developed manuscripts from journal entries. Several of the manuscripts consist mainly of excerpts from earlier writings and do not carry Ellen White's signature.

Our comparison of manuscripts with the finished text and our study of the

letters Ellen White and Marian Davis wrote that reveal the steps required for preparing the text for publication clearly show that Marian Davis had the liberty to modify sentence structure, to rearrange paragraphs, and to establish chapter length. Ellen White was more concerned about the general content of the book, the cost, and getting the material to the public as soon as possible. She also took a keen interest in the artwork used to illustrate her writings.

I found no evidence to indicate that Marian Davis was involved in the original composition of any Ellen White text. But without the original manuscripts it is difficult to prove that such did not happen with any portion of the

text of *The Desire of Ages*. It might prove helpful to make a stylistic study of the letters of Marian Davis and the handwritten materials of Ellen White. If their "fingerprints" emerge, we would have some basis for determining more precisely the level of involvement Marian Davis exercised in her role as "book-maker." It may well be that she deserves some public recognition for her services in this regard.

As a final statement on the research project, I think it is fair to say that in respect to the text of *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White was both derivative and original. Future studies will no doubt bring to our attention not only more sources but also a greater understanding

Personal postscript

Some of the questions I have been asked about this investigation relate to matters of faith and to my perspectives as an Adventist. Because I view myself as both a pastor and a scholar, I would like to answer briefly four of these questions. The following remarks constitute my personal response to what I have discovered and are not conclusions formed from the research data.

1. "If you believe that Ellen White was inspired of God, why are you spending so much time searching out possible sources for her writings?"

There are several reasons. The study is justified on the basis of Adventist interest—many in the church are asking about her literary dependency. No faith in Ellen White and her writings can be persuasive if it cannot stand the light of truth. Several friends of mine, and I am told many others unknown to me, have given up faith in Ellen White's inspiration, if not in Adventism, over this issue. If there are those who find it no longer possible to believe in Ellen White or Adventism, I would prefer that their decision be based upon a proper understanding rather than a misconception.

There is also a professional basis for my interest in this subject. As a biblical scholar I am aware that our knowl-

edge of Scripture is largely owing to similar studies on the biblical text, its composition, its history, and its background. In my view, it is imperative that we develop the knowledge and tools for properly interpreting the writings of Ellen White. These principles must emerge from a knowledge of the text and not be superimposed on the text.

2. "Do you think that Ellen White was guilty of plagiarism, as some have charged?"

As I pointed out in my report, the investigation did not treat the issue of plagiarism. While we cannot settle that issue here, nor do I wish to minimize its importance, my *personal opinion* is that she was not guilty of this practice. We did find verbatim quotes from authors who were not given credit. But the question of plagiarism is much more complicated than simply establishing that one writer used the work of another without giving credit. A writer can only be legitimately charged with plagiarism when that writer's literary methods contravene the established practices of the general community of writers producing works of the same literary genre within a comparable cultural context.

In the process of doing our research we found that Ellen White's sources had previously used each other in the same way that she later used them. At times the parallels between the sources were so

strong that we had difficulty deciding which one Ellen White was using.

3. "How do you harmonize Ellen White's use of sources with her statements to the contrary? Do you think the introductory statement to *The Great Controversy* constitutes an adequate admission of literary dependence?"

I must admit at the start that in my judgment this is the most serious problem to be faced in connection with Ellen White's literary dependency. It strikes at the heart of her honesty, her integrity, and therefore her trustworthiness.

As of now I do not have—nor, to my knowledge, does anyone else have—a satisfactory answer to this important question. The statement from *The Great Controversy* comes rather late in her writing career and is too limited in its reference to historians and reformers. Similar admissions do not appear as prefaces to all her writings in which sources are involved, and there is no indication that this particular statement applies to her writings in general.

But it seems to me that the statement from *The Great Controversy* does provide a hint as to where the answer will be found. Apparently Ellen White believed that documentation was necessary only when a writer was quoted as an authority. When the source was quoted to provide "a ready and forcible presentation of the

of Ellen White's creative role. With the aid of her literary assistants, she built out of the common quarry of stone not a replica of another's work but rather a customized literary composition that reflects the particular faith and Christian hope that she was called to share with her fellow Adventists and the Christian community at large.

It is perhaps more accurate and useful to speak of her creative and independent use of her writings and those of others than to minimize her dependence upon the writings of others. Whether sentence, paragraph, chapter, or book, it is the finished product that should be considered in the final analysis. A reading of the full report will readily reveal that the

multiple aspects of literary dependence or independence, particularly of large portions of text, are often too subtle, too intertwined, and otherwise too complex to be precisely and consistently evaluated. ■

¹ See the first article in this series: *Ministry*, October 1990.

² I do not claim that her secretaries did not borrow from the sources. My point is that I found no evidence that they composed the text using literary sources, and there is plenty of evidence in Ellen White's manuscripts to show that she did so.

³ See "Personal Postscript" for the reference of the statement from *The Great Controversy* on this question.

⁴ See questions 5, 6, and 7 in the first article in this series, "The Desire of Ages Project: the Data," *Ministry*, October 1990.

⁵ For example, chapter 56, "Blessing the Children," includes much comment on motherhood, fatherhood, and the family. Until we survey the literature that we know Ellen White read on such topics, we cannot be sure that the sentences of this chapter actually deserve the independent rating we have given them.

⁶ For a good example of a content analysis, see Tim Poirier's "Sources Clarify Ellen White's Christology," *Ministry*, December 1989, pp. 7-9.

⁷ The summary statement in the first article listed 28 writers and 32 sources for both the DA and pre-DA texts. I came up with the number 23 by omitting the duplications between the two textual surveys and, in an effort to be sure that we had bona fide sources, by eliminating from the count all sources providing less than five parallels for any given chapter.

⁸ Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: A. and C. Black, Ltd., 1910), p. 328, note 1.

⁹ Daniel L. Pals, *The Victorian "Lives" of Christ* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1982), p. 69.

subject," no credit need be given.*

The idea that Ellen White worked with these distinctions in mind does not settle the question of plagiarism. Nor does it fully answer the questions raised in connection with the DA text, in which paraphrases rather than quotations dominate. It does suggest, however, that Ellen White may have viewed literary dependency as primarily indicating authority and applying to wholesale quotations rather than to paraphrasing.

If my guess is correct, answering the question would demand that we carefully study her responses on the topic of literary dependency in their historical context. This approach would include a scrutiny of her comments and those of her contemporaries on the subject of inspiration. If so many believers today find her use of sources disturbing to their faith in her inspiration, is it reasonable to expect less of nineteenth-century Adventists? Ellen White's denials and/or nonadmissions may have meant something other to her than what they mean to us today.

4. "Do you personally believe that Ellen White was an inspired messenger of the Lord? And if so, what do you mean by 'inspiration'?"

This fourth and final question is the "bottom line" when it comes to questions on Ellen White. Even though there

is no single orthodox Adventist view of inspiration, whether of the authors of Scripture or of Ellen White, there are boundaries to acceptable positions. My personal position relative to Ellen White is informed primarily by my knowledge of the biblical text and secondarily by what I know about Ellen White and her writings.

While I do not have all the answers to the questions being addressed to the writings of Ellen White, my belief in her inspiration is not seriously compromised. After all, we don't have all the answers to questions on the text of Scripture.

I have no problem with inspired writers using sources. To my way of thinking, inspiration is not dependent upon originality. Much of Scripture makes no claim to being new and different from what anyone else was saying or from what had been said in the past. Why should we expect from Ellen White something more than we find in Scripture?

Actually, as a result of my reading many of her writings in their handwritten and typescript form, I find that my respect for and appreciation of Ellen White and her ministry have grown. I covet for her supporters and critics alike the opportunity to read her writings in their original context. To be able to experience firsthand her breadth of interest and involvement, her judgment and devotion, her humor and humaneness, and

her piety and spirituality, was both informative and faith-building.

Obviously she was human, had personal and character weaknesses, and was far from perfect and infallible. She never claimed otherwise. In my judgment, her writings contain both time-conditioned and timeless statements. These have to be sorted out through principles of interpretation, as is done with Scripture.

I am under the strong conviction, now more than before I began this research, that the issue is not one of deciding if Ellen White was a prophet or merely a religious leader. It is not a case of all or nothing, of either/or. Nor is it the problem of deciding which of her messages are inspired or when she exchanged her prophetic hat for an editorial cap.

I find compelling reasons for viewing her as a nineteenth-century prophetic voice in her ministry to the Adventist Church and to the larger society as well. Her voice out of that Christian community of the past still deserves to be heard today in those timeless messages that speak to the realities of our world at the end of the twentieth century. —Fred Veltman.

*Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. xii.

Olson discusses the Veltman study

Robert W. Olson reflects on the Veltman study of *The Desire of Ages* and, more broadly, on our understanding and use of Ellen White's writings in general.



Robert W. Olson, Th.D., who retired this past summer, was the secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate during the time the Veltman study was carried out.



David C. James, an associate editor of *Ministry*, interviewed Olson about the Veltman Study.

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re you satisfied with the validity of the Veltman study? Do you have any questions about the methodology Veltman used?

I am totally satisfied with this study. No one could have done a better job—no one. He did it as a neutral person would have and not as one who is an apologist.

Veltman says that a minimum of 30 percent of *The Desire of Ages* is to some degree dependent. Do you agree with that figure?

I don't think your wording expresses it accurately. In 31 percent of the sentences *one word* or more shows some degree of dependency. But of course if what she did was wrong, it wouldn't matter whether it involved 90 percent or 10 percent of what she wrote.

What does this study mean to our understanding of inspiration in general and Ellen White's inspiration in particular?

Because of the studies of the past 10 or 12 years we have a much better understanding of how Ellen White did her writing than we did earlier. W. C. White and Dores Robinson tried to explain this to our people in 1933. In our White Estate files we have a document, "Brief Statements Regarding the Writings of Ellen G. White," that they wrote and offered for sale at that time. In that document they state that Ellen White had been told by the Lord that she would find precious gems of truth in the writings of others, and that the Holy Spirit would

help her to recognize these and to draw them into her writings so they would be preserved.

How should we interpret Ellen White's writings now that we are aware of her use of sources?

Well, it is simply the method that the Holy Spirit used. Inspiration doesn't require originality. Read Luke 1:1-4. Luke didn't say that anything in his Gospel was original. He said that he wrote in order that Theophilus might know what the truth was, what to believe. It wasn't new, but it was true. Now we know that the same thing can be said of Ellen White's writings.

Your question was how this would affect our interpretation of her writings. Well, no differently than it affects our interpretation of the Gospel of Luke. That she used sources doesn't mean that she was any less inspired than if she hadn't; we simply know that she had help—and she was always looking for help in phrasing things.

In this study Veltman speaks of Ellen White's "factualizing" the original writers' speculations. I understand this to mean that as those authors wrote of an incident, they said, "Perhaps it happened this way." Then when Ellen White wrote of it, she said it indeed happened that way. Was she just confirming what she had seen of others' speculations?

Yes, I think so. But let's remember that Veltman doesn't say that she confirmed all of their speculations. She was selective. That's the important thing.

I studied a chapter that Veltman did

not cover—the chapter “Lazarus, Come Forth,” on the resurrection of Lazarus. In that chapter I found at least 24 extrabiblical points that were mentioned by the 10 authors I examined. Ellen White discussed 15 of these points. In five cases she stood completely alone, opposing what these other authors had said. For example, she wrote that Lazarus died after the messenger returned to Bethany, not before the messenger returned. Here she differed with Edersheim, Abbot, Farrar, Hannah, March, and McMillan. She was the only one to make that statement.

So where she took their speculations and wrote them as firm, as true, she did so selectively. She wasn't copying wholesale and endorsing everything.

Wouldn't it be reasonable to say that perhaps God used this method in part because of Ellen White's limited education? Maybe she used these other authors to compensate for her lack of education, and maybe God worked with her by showing her which parts to use and which to ignore.

Yes, I think so. But I would not state that Ellen White was infallible in the decisions she made along this line. There are instances in her writings in which she differed with herself. I have to say I just don't have an explanation for that kind of thing. I simply will not claim too much.

Consequently I don't want to prove all of history, for example, by what Ellen White has written. Her main purpose in writing was not to present historical facts, either biblical or otherwise. Her main purpose was always evangelistic. She was always a soul winner. She was always a homiletician. She was always a pastor. She was always trying to bring people to the foot of the cross.

So, for instance, in one place she says that the Tower of Babel was built before the Flood.¹ Well, in *Patriarchs and Prophets* that's corrected. You will find that kind of thing—occasionally she differs with herself. We have to acknowledge fallibility. It's there.

[At this point Olson looked at the list of questions we had given him before the interview and brought up one we had skipped.]

You asked about changes in chronology—differences in the chronology of the life of Christ as presented in the *Desire of Ages* and *Desire of Ages* texts owing to influence of sources. We know exactly why she used the chronology that

she did, because Marian Davis tells us. Marian says, “In the order of chapters we followed Samuel Andrews' harmony as given in his *Life of Christ*.” That's why any changes were made that were made. No inspiration connected with such changes. I should say, no divine directive from the Lord telling her “This is the chronology.”

When I taught Life and Teachings at Pacific Union College I used *The Desire of Ages* to establish the sequence, the way it all happened. I wouldn't do that today. Now I know that they were following Samuel Andrews. *The Desire of Ages* may not contain a perfect chronology. I don't think the Lord is that concerned about giving one to us. If He had been, Luke 4 and Matthew 4 would not differ on the three temptations in the wilderness.

Do you think there are times when she wrote with the purpose of interpreting a particular text or establishing either biblical history or church history?

I think that there were times when she was an exegete, but those instances are extremely rare. I think usually she was a homiletician. She used Scripture as an evangelist would.

For example, take John 5:39. She used that text in two ways, following different translations. She used the King James Version's imperative: “Search the scriptures [and you will have eternal life].” And she also quoted the Revised Version's indicative: “Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life [but you'd learn of Me if you read them right].”

She used two different translations of the same verse, and they really have opposite ideas in them. Now, if she was willing to do that with John 5:39, then I know that she was not necessarily trying to give me an exegesis of a verse when she quoted it. Rather, she was drawing a spiritual lesson from it.

So you would see the suggestion that Ellen White's writings comprise an “inspired commentary on Scripture” as true only in a limited way rather than as a general rule?

We cannot use Ellen White as the determinative final arbiter of what Scripture means. If we do that, then she is the final authority and Scripture is not. Scripture must be permitted to interpret itself.

In the article that contains his conclusions, Veltman suggests that Ellen White's writings may form a type of textual tradition—that her later writings may differ somewhat from her earlier writings. Do you think that is true? If so, should we give more weight to her later writings?

I consider the later writings to be more precise—more accurate—than some of her earlier ones. I don't like to talk about mistakes in inspired writings. There are mistakes in the Bible, but whenever I mention it in a public forum of any kind I feel uncomfortable about doing it. I don't like to talk about mistakes in Ellen White, either; I'd rather concentrate on that which builds faith. But to answer your question, there are some discrepancies there. I mentioned a while ago the one about the Tower of Babel.

Maybe a key for handling the mistakes is looking at the purpose for which the material was written. Does it occur in material that is merely supportive or illustrative? It is the point that she was attempting to make that is of concern, and whether the supporting material, the illustration, the means of conveying that point, is actually completely accurate is not the real issue.

I agree with you 100 percent on that, and I think most of the White Estate staff would do the same. We believe that her counsel is always good to follow. I have never yet found one example of where you would suffer in any way by following her counsel. I've always found that you would benefit. Now, the rationale that she gives for the counsel may not always be absolutely and precisely correct. But we can't find fault with the counsel itself.

Let's move on to the question of Ellen White's literary assistants. Veltman says that “Ellen White's literary assistants, particularly Marian Davis, are responsible for the published form of *The Desire of Ages*.” Do you agree with that statement?

Yes, this is true. However, it should be made clear that Ellen White supervised Marian Davis; she examined and approved her work. Not one line was published without Ellen White's approval.

Marian Davis would sometimes change words. She would divide sentences because she realized that shorter sentences made a greater impact. She would eliminate repetition. She constructed the book in its present form.

Ellen White called Marian Davis her "bookmaker." Without her (or someone like her) we would never have had *The Desire of Ages* or *Steps to Christ* or *Christ's Object Lessons* or *The Ministry of Healing* or *Education* or *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*. In the case of all of these works, she selected key passages from Ellen White's writings and put them together in book form.

But Marian was very careful to state that she was only the editor, that's all. She took what Ellen White had written and created the book out of it.

In 1900 Ellen White wrote a letter to the president of the General Conference, Elder Irwin, that describes how her books were produced: "My copyists you have seen. They do not change my language. It stands as I write it.

"Marian's work is of a different order altogether. She is my bookmaker. . . . She takes my articles which are published in the papers, and pastes them in blank books. She also has a copy of all of the letters I write. In preparing a chapter for a book, Marian remembers that I have written something on that special point, which may make the matter more forcible. She begins to search for this, and if when she finds it, she sees that it will make the chapter more clear, she adds it.

"The books are not Marian's productions, but my own, gathered from all my writings. Marian has a large field from which to draw, and her ability to arrange the matter is of great value to me. It saves my poring over a mass of matter, which I have no time to do."²

Did Ellen White write any of her books following the process that you would normally think writing a book involves, in which you lay out the outline and then you write chapter 1, chapter 2, and so forth—each in sequence?

She never just sat down and wrote a book. I don't think she ever did that. I don't know of one example. The only possible candidates for that would be *Experience and Views* (1851)—her husband, I think, helped her put that together—and the four volumes of *Spiritual Gifts*. After that, beginning as early as 1870 with *Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 1, she had the help of literary assistants.

But note this. In a letter to W. C. White, Marian Davis wrote: "Sister White is constantly harassed with the thought that the manuscript should be

sent to the printers at once. I wish it were possible to relieve her mind, for the anxiety makes it hard for her to write and for me to work. . . . Sister White seems inclined to write, and I have no doubt she will bring out many precious things. I hope it will be possible to get them into the book. There is one thing, however, that not even the most competent editor could do—and that is prepare the manuscript before it is written."³

So it is clear, Marian Davis was only the editor. Ellen White had to write first, and then Marian picked that up—"Can I put it in here?" "Can I add something here?" etc.

Veltman wrote of time-conditioned elements in Ellen White's writings. How do you view that?

We recognize such elements in the Bible—for example, Paul's sending the slave Onesimus back to his owner. Why not in her writings? I don't believe it's the role of the White Estate to determine what is time-conditioned and what is not. That's up to individuals as they apply Ellen White's counsels to their lives.

I suppose this last question is the

toughest: What about Ellen White's denials of literary borrowing?

That's the only thing that I don't like about Fred's report. He mentions these denials but gives no examples. I feel like writing an article in which I mention every single denial and then from an apologist's standpoint give my view of them.⁴

There are some problems in Ellen White's writings—that's a fact. And I do not have a totally satisfying answer to all of them, but I'm willing to give her the benefit of the doubt when necessary. I recognize in her ministry God at work. A lifetime of intimate connection with the work of Ellen White has convinced me that she was a true prophet in the highest sense—as real a prophet as Elijah or Nathan or Agabus. So if there are some things I can't explain—well, I'll have to wait until the Lord comes and get the explanation then. ■

¹ *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 301.

² From the White Estate booklet "How *The Desire of Ages* Was Written," pp. 40, 41.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴ The editors of *Ministry* have invited Dr. Olson to write this article, and plan to publish it in our February 1991 issue.

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*Ella M. Rydzewski is
editorial assistant of
Ministry.*

As I cleaned out the last items from my old family home this spring, I found a rumpled brown sack lying on a bookshelf. When I picked up the sack, the aged paper tore, and three tattered books fell to the floor. I had not seen them for years, but these old friends were so familiar I felt I had read them yesterday. They brought back memories of a lonely childhood spent in rural Maryland.

While I grew up, books, not television, functioned as my gateway to the world. Early black-and-white television sets didn't provide good reception, and so my family didn't have one. I'm glad. Over the years I have become convinced that children growing up with a steady diet of television are restricted in their creative ability. The wayward Israelites who worshiped Asherah poles and Baal would feel comfortable with this modern equivalent of child sacrifice before an idol.

I find the effects of television detrimental to my spiritual life. Television, a psychological fast food, adds fat to the intellect and cholesterol to the soul, leaving them too sluggish for spiritual exercise. Good books, however, have the potential for changing lives, because they take thought and time to digest.

Reading is as important to me as breathing, for I am a true bibliophile. I am on the mailing list of numerous publishers and find it difficult to pass a bookstore. Clothes and furnishings hold no fascination for me; I am tempted to spend the family budget on books. They act as

my spiritual directors, teachers, psychologists, and friends. The Bible, being the ultimate book, meets my needs more than any other. But there have been times when God has led me to other books that have answered my needs.

What makes a book life-changing? Not so much the book itself, I believe, as timing. What at one time may seem an ordinary book may at another period in one's life become special. Books can provide relief from psychological pain or a flash of insight that answers an important question. My spiritual journey winds over hills and through valleys, and there are books for both parts of my pilgrimage.

A book for the right time

Several years ago I lived in that paradisiacal city considered to be one of America's most desired metropolitan areas—San Diego. Part of San Diego's harbor area includes a cluster of shops known as Vacation Village. Tucked away in one corner is a bookstore that offers hot drinks and pastries with its books. I went there regularly.

On one of those golden mornings so common in southern California, I drove to the shop. The sun found no reflection in my heart that day, for I was still pained by recent news that a longtime friend had died in an auto accident. I could not imagine the world without Anya, for she had been so interested in it. Her interest unfortunately attracted her to what we now call the New Age movement. When she and her companion Warren occasionally visited me from San Francisco, her explanations of her new worldview seemed bright compared with the dusti-

ness of Christianity. There was an excitement and yet mystery about her beliefs. Not particularly interested in them for myself, I could see they had made a change in Anya, and it seemed a change for the better. Then in the prime of life she was gone.

While browsing through the books, I wondered what had happened to my own experience as a Christian. I pondered Warren's belief that Anya would contact him.

Curious, I inspected the science fiction section. I was looking for something as exciting as Anya's tales of reincarnation. It must have been an angel who brought my hands to rest, not on some mystical New Age volume, but on an unusual little book—*Perelandra*, by C. S. Lewis. The author's name seemed familiar, and so I bought the book.

Lewis's descriptions of *Perelandra* fascinated me. I could imagine its golden sky, floating islands, and many-colored forests. He opened my mind to the idea that God has created many worlds, and that we can expect them to vary as people vary.

But it was the plot of this book that really captivated me. Through his imaginative storytelling Lewis effectively presents the conflict between good and evil. The book's narrator begins the story by taking the reader down a misty road in England. The narrator is en route to visit an unusual friend. Before the book ends, the reader travels to a planet where another Adam and Eve play out the same drama that happened on earth 6,000 years ago.

The "Un-man," representing Satan, seeks to bring about the fall of "the Lady" of *Perelandra*. Lewis writes: "Though the Lady had no word for Duty, he had made it appear to her in the light of a Duty that she should continue to fondle the idea of

disobedience, and convinced her that it would be a cowardice if she repulsed him. The ideas of the Great Deed, of the Great Risk as a kind of martyrdom, were presented to her every day, varied in a thousand forms."¹

Lewis deals with the subtlety of the temptations of this Eve in ways we may not have previously related to the Eden context. But they were no doubt there, too. They are temptations similar to those the enemy uses against God's people every day.

This book with its types of Christ and Satan led me to contemplate spiritual matters. It also led me to read others of Lewis's numerous books, including the well-known *Mere Christianity*. I definitely believe that God used the works of this Christian writer to bring me to a more intimate relationship with Him.

One good book leads to another

Lewis's use of visionaries in his stories led me to read in more depth the writings of Ellen White. I appreciate the old favorites—*Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages*—but the book that attracts me most is the not so widely read *Early Writings*. Perhaps this book's lack of popularity stems from its troubling sense of urgency. Or maybe it's because the modern intellect finds it difficult to accept the idea that God sometimes communicates in symbols through visions and dreams. Whatever the reason, I think those who avoid *Early Writings* are the poorer for it.

In this book Ellen White's writing is as unpretentious, simple, and straightforward as was the young woman herself. *Early Writings* was penned before the need for secretaries and the resulting revisions and compilations that became the norm in this writer's busy life. Its style is fresh.

The visions, rich in symbolism, are not readily understood in today's world. However, one is particularly meaningful to me. Ellen writes that she saw those looking for Christ's advent traveling an upward path. A light shone on the path so that they could not stumble. "But soon some grew weary, and said the city was a great way off, and they expected to have entered it before."²

As the path became more difficult, some of the pilgrims continued to complain. The light behind them went out, and these travelers lost sight of Jesus and fell.

But the kernel of this vision offers encouragement. Ellen White conveys that kernel in these words: "If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe."³

On days when my spiritual journey seems dark, life distracting, and my search for truth confusing, I remember those words.

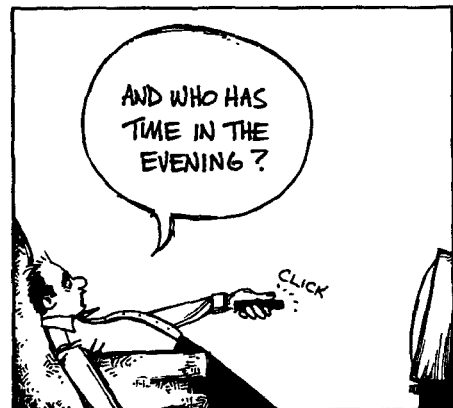
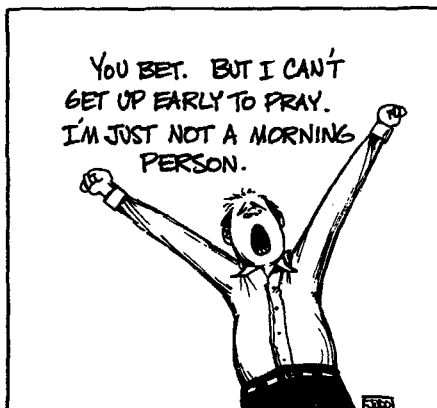
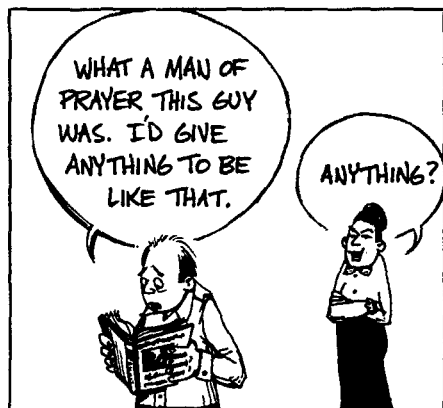
The book nobody wanted

Every day books arrive at the Ministry office. Some I send out for review; others go to the General Conference library. Those we don't consider appropriate for either review or the library we allow Ministerial Association staff members to pick through and take home.

After one such giveaway there remained a book everyone had passed over. It had no bright picture cover to attract attention; it was just a small red volume with gold-leaf letters that read *A 365-Day Guide for Praising God*.⁴ I took the book home just in time to start the new year with it. Since then I have read from the book daily.

Each entry in this book begins with a verse from Psalms praising God. Then

BEYOND BELIEF



follow three short paragraphs from the author and a conclusion expressing his admiration for the Lord. As a sample, here's a paragraph from July 1: "The night is filled with Your majesty, power, and glory. The days burst with Your wonders. You are the center of the universe, Great King."⁵

I do not know the author, Paul Fellows, but he gives evidence of an intimate relationship with our heavenly Father. Every sentence in the book forms part of a verbal mosaic that beautifully expresses his love for God.

To some the words may seem repetitive and the concepts unoriginal as they imitate the psalms. But the thoughts come from the heart. Actually, the book brings to mind some thoughts from *Early Writings*: "The angel showed me those who ceased not day nor night to cry, 'Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.' 'Continued repetition,' said the angel, 'yet God is glorified by it.'"⁶ And "We should not come together to remain silent; those only are remembered of the Lord who assemble to speak of His honor and glory and tell of His power; upon such the blessing of God will rest, and they will be refreshed."⁷

From the time I became a Christian as a young adult, I have attended church services that discourage the expression of feeling. I have learned from this little volume what it can mean to celebrate God's greatness.

An old theology worth studying

The last book I want to mention disputes church tradition dating back to the third century A.D. Neal Punt's *What's Good About the Good News?* which has been advertised and reviewed in *Ministry*, proposes to show the error of the teachings that persons are lost either because they are not elected for salvation (Calvinism) or because they haven't properly accepted the gospel (Arminianism). Neither of these concepts of salvation sounds like good news. Either could easily be the basis for pride, insecurity, or elitism.

Countering these ideas, Punt presents biblical evidence for believing that Christ's sacrifice covers the sin, original and otherwise, of all people—whether they have heard of Christ or not. Yet Punt does not teach universalism. He acknowledges that the Bible specifically says some will be finally lost. His point is that only those will be lost who specifically reject salvation.⁸

As Punt says: "This insight has vast im-

plications for the way we read Scripture, are assured of our own salvation, build one another up in the faith, see the coming of Christ's kingdom, view the masses of mankind, and for the approach we use in evangelism."⁹ It suggests that we should consider all persons children of God unless we have ample evidence to the contrary. The good news that we are all equally part of the family of God leaves no excuse for either arrogance or low self-esteem. In addition, this view illuminates the fate of the innocent heathen and of those dying in infancy. Nor does it leave any reason to question our own salvation. Imagine the joy that can bring!

Would such a belief cause more sin? Maybe. But isn't it how people behave when they have complete freedom that reveals what side they have finally chosen in the great controversy? Many sensitive people turn from Christianity because of its exclusiveness. Upon hearing the *real* good news they would be more likely to respond positively for the right reason—God's love.

Punt's thesis as expressed in this volume does not answer all theological questions.¹⁰ But it opens the door for us to see more of God's tremendous love for all of humanity.

I had always dared to hope we had such a gracious God. To me, being saved by knowledge has never seemed any more fair or loving than being saved by works.

We must admit that we know of people who could not tolerate the glory, unselfishness, and love that permeate heaven and that will eventually also fill the new earth. These people have learned alien ways and remain unwilling to unlearn them. But for those who have chosen to accept and give love, God is truly both fair and loving. This book's message will warm your heart as you view yourself and others with new dignity. ■

¹ C. S. Lewis, *Perelandra* (New York: Collier Books, 1944), p. 131.

² Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1945), p. 14.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Paul Fellows, *A 365-Day Guide for Praising God* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1989).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁶ White, p. 116.

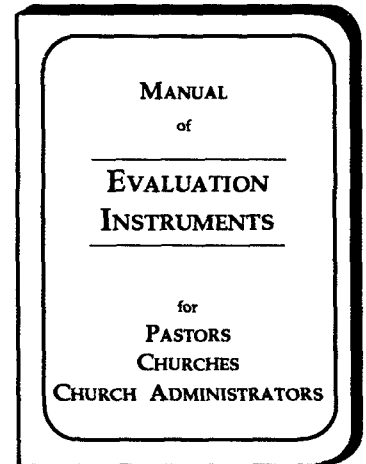
⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁸ Some Seventh-day Adventists have taught that persons are saved until they choose not to be, but the concept has often been obscured by other emphases.

⁹ Neal Punt, *What's Good About the Good News?* (Chicago: Northland Books, 1988), p. 5.

¹⁰ For more detail, see his earlier work, *Unconditional Good News* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1980).

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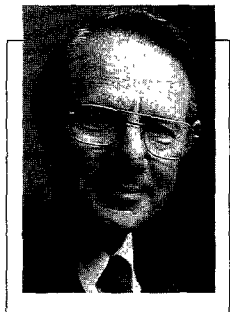
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The minister as ecclesiastic

C. Mervyn Maxwell

The Bible description of the destruction of Korah, Dathan, Abiram and their families puzzled the author for many years until he learned that “the sons of Korah died not.”



C. Mervyn Maxwell, Ph.D., recently retired as professor of church history, Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

One of the clearest Bible memories of my childhood is the story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

My family owned a volume of *Scripture Prints*, by the famous French engraver Doré, that further encouraged my youthful imagination. More than once I contemplated Doré's version of the fate of the three ambitious men. There, robed and equipped with full hieratic regalia, they plunge between open ragged rocks. Their household goods tumble on top of them, while smoking flames await them deep in the earth.

But more gripping even than Doré's drawing was my awareness that their children went down with them. I read the dramatic portrayal in the King James Version:

“And he [Moses] spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of their's, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. . . . And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods” (Num. 16:26-32).

A child myself, I wondered what went through the children's minds as they felt the earth open up. I thought again of Moses' appeal, “Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, . . . lest ye

be consumed in all their sins.” I hoped, had I belonged to one of the families, that I would have obeyed Moses and run away.

All the rebels' children didn't die

Years later I noticed references to the sons of Korah, implying that centuries after the Exodus, Korah still had living descendants. Samuel the prophet and Heman the singer were among this group (1 Chron. 6:22-28, 33-38). Eleven of the psalms (e.g., Ps. 84 and 85) are introduced as psalms of the sons of Korah.

Examination of 1 Chronicles 6:22-28, 33-38 shows that the sons of Korah of the psalms and elsewhere were indeed descendants of the same great-grandson of Levi who descended so unceremoniously into Sheol. But how could this have been?

To my personal relief and satisfaction, I discovered the answer in Numbers 26:11, a verse that states simply, “But the sons of Korah died not.” A careful re-reading of Numbers 16 shows that the original account omits Korah's family, stating that “Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and *their* wives, and *their* sons, and *their* little children.”

So all the rebels' children didn't die! They didn't all ignore Moses' final appeal. The sons of Korah paid heed. Instead of dying with the rebels, they lived to produce descendants of many generations who sang God's praises in the Temple courts.

“The sons of Korah died not.”

I'm glad they didn't die; aren't you?

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram perceived themselves as noble champions of

the people. They spoke up for the rights of laity. "All the congregation are holy," they asserted (Num. 16:3*), and not just the leaders. They boldly confronted a leadership that they alleged was arbitrary and faulty. Dathan and Abiram said Moses had led the people out of, rather than into, a land of milk and honey (verses 12-14). Albert George Butzer in *The Interpreter's Bible* urges that we not be too hard in judging these three men, because "today we glory in their two main contentions."¹

And in truth many people do so glory. They want a courageous ministry that doesn't flinch in calling sin by its right name, even when sin is committed by top administrators. The prophet Isaiah spoke of lifting up one's voice like a trumpet to expose sin, and he personally bore a straight testimony to Kings Ahaz and Hezekiah. We admire the Reformers for demanding change in belief and practice. Our own Advent movement was born amid a cry that dubbed other churches "Babylon"; and we respect our modern messenger's written reproofs.

Didn't Paul rebuke Peter? Didn't Jesus call His contemporary clergy "hypocrites," "serpents," and a "brood of vipers"? (Matt. 23:29, 33).

But there is a balancing side in Scripture. The Spirit expressly calls for unity, commanding us to bend our backs to achieve it. Inspiration requires us to shrink our sense of personal infallibility and replace it with open respect for the opinions of others, including leadership. Alongside mindless apathy and culpable complaisance, the Bible also denotes disunity and disrespect for authority as sin.

New covenant promises

There are several versions of the new covenant in the Bible, and several different promises vouchsafed among these different versions. For example, there are four promises in the new covenant as formulated in Jeremiah 31:33, 34, and at least seven promises in the version found in Ezekiel 36:22-32.

In both Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 God makes the same promise: in Jeremiah, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people"; and in Ezekiel, "You shall be my people, and I will be your God." In both versions we also find that God has promised to engrave His law upon our hearts. Jeremiah quotes God as saying "I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts." Ezekiel has "I will put my spirit within you, and cause

you to walk in my statutes." And in Ezekiel God offers the additional promise "Through you I [will] vindicate my holiness" among the nations.

As we think about the minister's responsibility to reform and reprove the church, we must keep these new covenant promises in mind. Let us look at them now more closely.

1. "You shall be my people." The promise that we are to be God's "people" does not focus on our individual relationship with God. We find that implied in the words of another new covenant promise, "They shall all know me." The promise about a people invokes a corporate concept. God will have a whole people, a very special group.

The formation of a special people was God's goal when He led Israel out of Egypt: "The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth. . . . It is because the Lord loves you. . . . [He is] the faithful God who keeps [His] covenant and steadfast love" (Deut. 7:6-9).

To identify a people was the purpose of the plagues and the pillar of fire, of the windswept sea, the carnage of the crack troops, and the storm, flame, and trumpet blasts at Mount Sinai. To have a people of His own was the purpose of shedding the Passover blood, which underlay and overarched everything God did. God provided all in order to give birth to a nation, to a kingdom of priests, to His own special people.

This was also the purpose of the blood and pain and shame of the cross—to bring out a special people united in love as well as in His name. In the New Testament the Passover Lamb spoke of the Good Shepherd who "lays down his life for the sheep," and added, "I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:11, 16).

On the way to the cross to give His life for the sheep, Jesus prayed, "I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me" (John 17:23). By using words like these the Lord our sacrifice enriched our understanding of atonement, making it imply at-one-ment between persons as well as between individuals and God.

In these end-time days God has worked anew as a "wonder-working

Our zealous urgency in reforming the church needs tempering with a keen appreciation of God's covenant promise of a united church.

God."² And He will continue to work wonders on behalf of His special people—the remnant who keep His commandments and have Christ's testimony. They are the saints who keep the commandments and have the faith of Jesus, the "144,000" who receive God's seal and stand on Mount Zion singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. They sing the song of Moses, rejoicing in deliverance from modern Egypt. They sing the song of the Passover Lamb, who wrought out the deliverance and who sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. This special group have "no guile" in their mouths (Rev. 14:5, KJV).

"God is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals here and there, one believing this thing, another that. . . . The third angel is leading out and purifying a people, and they should move with him unitedly. Some run ahead of the angels that are leading this people; but they have to retrace every step, and meekly follow no faster than the angels lead."³

"Like a mighty army
Moves the church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
Where the saints have trod!"

So we sing, and we are entitled to sing. But what if we needlessly disturb the unity of the faithful through ungracious criticism and self-glorifying innovations?

Like a mighty army
Moves this bunch of men?
Gripping and conniving
Every day till ten!

Even the ancient saints wait to receive their reward, so insistent is God on saving a single, united, happy, loyal people. Hebrews 11:39, 40 reminds us that "these all, having obtained a good report

through faith, received not the promise: . . . that they without us should not be made perfect." (KJV).

Our zealous urgency in reforming the church needs tempering with a keen appreciation of God's covenant promise of a united church.

"The sons of Korah died not." Rather than lend support to a popular schism, they loyally stood with the body of God's chosen people.

2. "I will put my spirit within you." "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). When God covenanted to have His Spirit engrave His law upon our hearts, it was His law of love. And love, as we know, "seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (1 Cor. 13:5, 6, KJV).

One of the many forms in which new covenant promises occur in the Bible is in Galatians 5:22: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness," and so on (KJV). Love is a way we feel about another person. When God's Spirit writes His law in the hearts of His followers, they feel an affection and appreciation that makes possible a uniquely united people.

Christ calls His people to be reformers, but we should have a periodic spiritual cardiogram to learn whether we're letting the Spirit write His law of affection in our hearts. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9, KJV). "The sons of Korah died not." More than they loved their father, they loved God's chosen people.

3. "Through you I [will] vindicate my holiness." When Jesus took the cup representing the blood of the Passover Lamb and said "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Cor. 11:25), He had more in mind than the forgiveness of sin. The new covenant promises peoplehood to the erstwhile oppressed and disinherited. It promises to apply the principle of love to the innermost seat of our emotions and attitudes. And it also promises us the exalted privilege of being part of a group of people through which God can vindicate His honor before the nations.

In line with this third promise, when Jesus in the upper room commanded His disciples to love one another, He added the words "By this all men will know that you are my disciples" (John 13:35). Later that evening He pleaded with the Father that "they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast

sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me."

Jesus knew that the loving loyalty and obedience displayed by His once unruly and quarrelsome disciples would give evidence to the world around that God had sent Him. It would show that He had loved them into loving one another. Their mutual confidence and perfect at-onement would communicate something vital about God and about the meaning of Christ's mission that no one could contradict.

We rightly sing, in terms of our personal experiences,

"Redeemed! and so happy in Jesus! . . . His child, and forever, I am."

But when we realize our role in God's chosen community and that our love must help vindicate God's character in a hostile and suspicious world, we can also sing,

"Redeemed to bring honor to Jesus, A part of His people I am."

When Augustine turned his back on family affection and declared that man is made for God, he painted a one-sided picture. Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher emperor, painted another one-sided picture when he said that men, like the upper and lower teeth, are made for one another. Neither writer was wholly right. God made us for Himself and for one another. We show the world our love for Him and His love for us by loving one another.

"The sons of Korah died not." They wanted nothing of their father's disaffection. They refused to have any part in the ugly message that the rebels were communicating about God and about His selection of church leadership.

Other counsels

4. "Strive for peace with all men." Even loving believers doesn't always come naturally for most of us. Which is why we need the Spirit to write God's law in our hearts. Paul knew that we would also need to cooperate with the Spirit. So he wrote, "Strive for peace with all men" (Heb. 12:14). "Try to be at peace" (TEV). "Let it be your ambition" (Phillips). "Make every effort" (NIV).

If we need to strive to be at peace with everyone, how much more should we make an attempt with those in the household of faith. "I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same

judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

"By the grace given to me," pleaded Paul, "I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (Rom. 12:3). "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (verse 10, KJV). "Be devoted to one another" (NIV). "Love one another warmly as Christian brothers, and be eager to show respect for one another" (TEV). "Let the other man have the credit" (Phillips).

Wrote the end-time messenger to the remnant people: "Cultivate love, uproot suspicion, envy, jealousy, and the thinking and the speaking of evil. Press together, work as one man. Be at peace among yourselves." ⁴

"Again and again the angel has said to me, 'Press together, press together, be of one mind, of one judgment.'" ⁵

"Oh, how many times, when I have seemed to be in the presence of God and holy angels, I have heard the angel voice saying, 'Press together, press together, press together.'" ⁶

"If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all" (Rom. 12:18). "Strive for peace with all men."

5. "Obey . . . for conscience' sake." Earnest Christians often quote Acts 5:29: "We must obey God rather than men." Sometimes it is essential for us to disobey lawful authority. But it is important to remember that part of our obedience to God is obedience to administration. If a person's conscience leads him to think he should disobey human government because of Acts 5:29, he should remember that the Bible also contains Romans 13:5: "You must obey . . . for conscience' sake" (Jerusalem).

"You must all obey the governing authorities. Since all government comes from God, the civil authorities were appointed by God, and so anyone who resists authority is rebelling against God's decision, and such an act is bound to be punished. . . . You must obey, therefore, not only because you are afraid of being punished, but also for conscience' sake" (verses 1-5, Jerusalem).

In 1 Timothy 2:1, 2, Paul gives the highest priority to loyalty to human leadership: "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions."

Members of a group who love one another will not despise their leaders. In

trial, they will pray for their leaders' success; in failure, for their forgiveness; in crisis, for their guidance; in error, for their enlightenment. But belittle them in public? Never! Not for a moment would they assault them with invectives. With the law of love Spirit-written at the seat of their attitudes and emotions, how could they?

Disrespect is one thing; disagreement is another. Jesus did not agree with some practices of the church administration in His day. But when He disagreed, He showed respect. He wrote their sins in the sand. He did not willingly alienate anyone—for He had come "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

But isn't it true that on another occasion Jesus publicly catalogued the leaders' sins and called them "hypocrites," "serpents," and a "brood of vipers"? (see Matt. 23). This brings us to yet another vital point.

6. *Could you give your life to save him?* Ellen White once asked professed members of God's people, "Do you feel, when a brother errs, that you could give your life to save him? If you feel thus, you can approach him and affect his heart; you are just the one to visit that brother."⁷

There are certainly times that oblige us to disagree and even disassociate ourselves. Romans 16:17 specifically charges us to "take note of those who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught; avoid them." Paul proceeds to unmask their hypocrisy as Jesus unmasked that of the Pharisees. Paul says that the dissension makers "do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by fair and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded" (verse 18).

On one occasion Paul publicly rebuked Peter for a momentary lapse from a well-publicized church regulation. But we find on Paul's part no chronic toxic draining away of his respect for Peter. In the same context where we read of Paul's rebuke, Paul tells us that God had appointed Peter and himself to a major role in missionary evangelism (Gal. 2:7). Paul must have known Peter would take the rebuke manfully in the same way he had accepted Christ's rebukes years before.

If anyone attempted to drain away someone else's authority in those days, it was some of the leading Jerusalem Christians. As the years passed, these leaders became thoughtlessly jealous of Paul's

great success. "Throughout his ministry, Paul had looked to God for direct guidance. At the same time, he had been very careful to labor in harmony with the decisions of the general council at Jerusalem, and as a result the churches were 'established in the faith, and increased in number daily' (Acts 16:5, KJV)."⁸

On his last known journey to Jerusalem, "notwithstanding the lack of sympathy shown him by some," Paul "found comfort in the consciousness that he had done his duty in encouraging in his converts a spirit of loyalty, generosity, and brotherly love, as revealed on this occasion in the liberal contributions which he was enabled to place before the Jewish elders."⁹

We know that Paul demonstrated his loyalty to the central leadership of his day by cooperating with their Temple vow suggestion, and thereby spent the next several years in jail. Yet there is no record that he complained even once about the leading brethren taking advantage of him.

And what about Jesus? "Jesus did not suppress one word of truth, but He uttered it always in love. He exercised the greatest tact and thoughtful, kind attention in His intercourse with the people. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul. . . . He denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity; but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes."¹⁰

Christ listed the sins of His contemporary clergy with the voice of a broken-hearted lover. He addressed them like a man who in three days would *die for them* on a cross. "Do you feel, when a brother errs, that you could give your life to save him? If you feel thus, you can approach him and affect his heart; you are just the one to visit that brother."

7. *"Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men."* We noted in beginning that Korah, Dathan, and Abiram perceived themselves as noble champions of the people.

But Moses called them "wicked men"; and wicked, in truth, they were, for all the people were by no means "holy." Rather they were called to be holy (Ex. 22:31, KJV). Citing Egypt as a land of milk and honey artfully overlooked that nation's brickyards. And implying that Moses alone maneuvered the Exodus was sheer blasphemy.

Moses later reminded the Israelites that it was God who brought them out of

Members of a group who love one another will not despise their leaders.

Egypt, with a great hand and mighty wonders (Deut. 4:34). Moses' word was supernaturalist and triumphalist, but it was nonetheless the truth.

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram denied God's authority through His designated human leadership and claimed that any layman could lead as well as Moses did. In doing so they offered the people one more humanist administration of the type that has always failed. These men wanted to retreat to Egypt, not advance with God to the Promised Land.

God's new covenant envisions a people whom He has led out and transformed, one through whom He has brought honor to His name, one in whom the members lay aside their personal pride in the esteem with which they highly regard one another.

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, sad to say, still swing their censers in the congregation of the Lord. And the words of Moses still plead "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of their's, lest ye be consumed in all their sins."

It is encouraging to read that on one occasion Moses' appeal had some effect. "The sons of Korah died not." ■

*Unless otherwise noted, the Bible texts that follow are from the Revised Standard Version.

¹ *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 2, pp. 221, 222.

² *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 365.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 207.

⁴ *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 295.

⁵ *Evangelism*, p. 102.

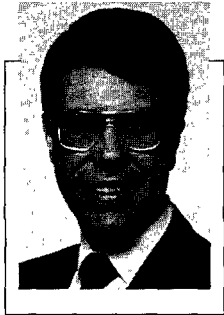
⁶ *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 374.

⁷ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 166. (Italics supplied.)

⁸ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 402.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Steps to Christ*, p. 12.



“Celebration” is a naughty word

The word “celebration” has become a naughty (wicked! bad! evil!) word in Adventist circles. It constitutes, for many, the new buzzword for expressing displeasure with almost any change in church worship practice. If you want to discredit a pastor, just whisper in sepulchral tones that he has begun a celebration church. Images of boisterous, Pentecostal, tongues-speaking men and women leap into the minds of many people. Some churches have gone so far as to refuse to subscribe to *Celebration!* magazine, the official publication of the North American Division Church Ministries Department, merely because of its name.

“But didn’t Ellen White caution against shouting, drums, dancing, and a bedlam of noise in worship services?” some inquire. Yes, she did, but she certainly didn’t mean that in and of themselves drums, music, dancing, and sound are wrong.

Meaning of “celebration”

Webster’s New World Dictionary defines “to celebrate” as “to honor or praise publicly” or “to mark (a happy occasion) by engaging in some pleasurable activity.”

Many who criticize the so-called celebration churches forget, or never knew, that this celebrative, happy, joyful type of service is common in Black and Hispanic churches. People often do not distinguish between what is cultural and what is absolute. Many things, in themselves, have no moral significance. It is their association with other elements that brings them into disrepute.

For example, in a church I once pas-

tored I planned to light candles as part of an evening Communion service. When I turned out the lights I almost started a riot. I had to blow out the candles and switch back on the electric lights. Members felt that candlelight alone was too Catholic and too dark. “The devil dwells in darkness, God in light,” some intoned.

Dancing in worship

Nowhere does the Bible map out a specific order of service; nowhere does it list in one passage all the elements of worship. But the style of worship it does depict differs considerably from that of the average Caucasian congregation.

In fact, those who criticize the celebration churches would be scandalized by the worship of Bible times. Not only did God call for singing, praying, and reading of the Word as part of worship, but He also called for dancing: “Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp” (Ps. 149:3). * “Praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute” (Ps. 150:4). Both Miriam and David danced before the Lord as an expression of their joy and trust in Him (Ex. 15:20; 2 Sam. 6:14).

I find it fascinating to observe that we condemn what the Bible expressly commands as part of worship. We associate dancing with immorality and worldliness, forgetting that it has had good and even spiritual connotations. While there are evil types of dancing, there are also types that express the emotions and creativity of the mind and body.

Ellen White and instruments

The writers of the Psalms usually associated dancing with dramatic music.

While they did mention stringed instruments, it is the percussion instruments—tambourine and cymbals—that receive the emphasis. Imagine a church service today patterned after Psalm 150, “praising God with voice, trumpet, harp, lyre, tambourine, dancing, strings, flute, and resounding cymbals.”

The opponents of the celebration churches rely heavily on Ellen White’s denunciation of the use of musical instruments in the Indiana holy flesh experience. Yet it was not the fact that they used musical instruments that she condemned, but the way in which they used them. Her particular concern was the “bedlam of noise” that “shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing.”¹

What did Ellen White mean by this “bedlam of noise”? The compilers of *Selected Messages* inserted an editorial note at the beginning of the section that contains Ellen White’s comments on the Indiana scene. In that note they say that musical instruments played an important part in working the people up to a high pitch: “They sought a physical demonstration and shouted and prayed and sang until someone in the congregation would fall, prostrate and unconscious, from his seat. One or two men, walking up and down the aisle for the purpose, would drag the fallen person up on the rostrum. Then about a dozen individuals would gather around the prostrate body, some singing, some shouting, and some praying, all at the same time.”²

On September 25, 1900, S. N. Haskell wrote the following to Ellen White: “There is a great power that goes with the movement. It would almost bring anybody within its scope . . . because of the music that is brought to play

in the ceremony. They have an organ, one bass viol, three fiddles, two flutes, three tambourines, three horns, and a big bass drum, and perhaps other instruments which I have not mentioned. They are as much trained in their musical line as any Salvation Army choir that you ever heard. In fact, their revival effort is simply a complete copy of the Salvation Army method, and when they get on a high key, you cannot hear a word from the congregation in their singing, nor hear anything, unless it be shrieks of those who are half insane. I do not think I overdraw it at all.”³

So the “bedlam of noise” consisted of disorder (various people singing, talking, praying, all at the same time), singing from the choir so loud no one in the congregation could be heard, and the instruments dominating rather than accompanying.

Maybe we would not be so divided today if, rather than overreacting to the employment of musical instruments, we had followed Ellen White’s counsel as to their use. She strongly advocated the benefits of all kinds of instruments in worship.

“In our camp meeting services there should be singing and instrumental music. Musical instruments were used in religious services in ancient times. The worshipers praise God upon the harp and cymbal, and music should have its place in our services. It will add to the interest.”⁴

Don’t oppose use of instruments

Not only did Ellen White advocate the use of instruments; she explicitly stated that we are not to oppose their use: “In the meetings held, let a number be chosen to take part in the song service. And let the singing be accompanied with musical instruments skillfully handled. We are not to oppose the use of instrumental music in our work. This part of the service is to be carefully conducted; for it is the praise of God in song.”⁵

In supporting the use of instruments, Ellen White often referred to the practice in Bible times: “Let the talent of singing be brought into the work. The use of musical instruments is not at all objectionable. These were used in religious services in ancient times. The worshipers praised God upon the harp and cymbal, and music should have its place in our services. It will add to the interest.”⁶

When Ellen White traveled in Europe, she requested that a young lady sing, with

guitar accompaniment, at one of the worship services.⁷ In one of her talks at the 1905 General Conference session she said, “I am glad to hear the musical instruments that you have here. God wants us to have them. He wants us to praise Him with heart and soul and voice, magnifying His name before the world.”⁸

Adventists are not the only ones who fear the use of instruments. Other Protestant groups—heirs of the Radical Reformation—banned all use of instruments in worship. I well remember worshiping in the Knox Free Presbyterian Church in Perth, Scotland. There the congregation sang without any musical accompaniment.

Zwingli also opposed the playing of the organ; in the cantons of Switzerland zealous people destroyed many fine organs. It is only within the past 100 years that organs have even begun to reappear in some of those churches.

The pendulum swings

I wonder what an Adventist worship service incorporating all the elements we have discussed would look and sound like. Too many Adventists worship God only with their intellect and wall off their emotions. We are so afraid of the charismatic renewal that we swing to the opposite extreme and deny our emotions altogether. While we should avoid emotionalism, we need to express emotion—passion, feeling, fervor—in our worship of God.

Yet, at least in White churches, we prohibit almost all expression of feelings. Though the Bible says to lift up one’s hands in prayer and in worship (see 1 Tim. 2:8; Neh. 8:6), we permit this only for the minister’s pronouncement of a benediction and not for the congregation’s expression of their feelings. Many churches are discovering that our Puritan heritage has saddled us with negative as well as positive elements in our worship of God.

In their desire to incorporate more emotional elements in the service some may swing too far in the other direction. Mistakes may be made. We must have patience and ask ourselves whether our protests come from a biblical or a cultural base.

Some have requested that Ministry speak against the celebration churches. We cannot for at least two reasons. First, for many people the typical Adventist worship service in the White culture is no longer relevant. Change is necessary. Second, so far as we are aware, no con-

The use of musical instruments is not at all objectionable.

ference administrator has prohibited these forms of worship. We have confidence in our leaders.

Perhaps the bigger issue really concerns our theology of worship—or our lack of one. That Adventists have neglected developing a theology of worship is strange. I say it is strange, because restoring true worship is an integral part of the first angel’s message (Rev. 14:7). Yet the term *worship* does not even appear as a heading in either the encyclopedia or the sourcebook that are part of our Bible commentary series. No wonder we seem to lack direction in this area! We need to recognize that our focus on the restoration of the seventh day as the Sabbath is only part of what it means to restore true worship.

The counsel Ellen White gave to the delegates at the 1909 General Conference session bears repeating today: “The leaders among God’s people are to guard against the danger of condemning the methods of individual workers who are led by the Lord to do a special work that but few are fitted to do. Let brethren in responsibility be slow to criticize movements that are not in perfect harmony with their methods of labor. Let them never suppose that every plan should reflect their own personality.”⁹

Let’s praise the Lord with our *whole* being!—J. David Newman.

* Bible texts in this editorial are from the New International Version.

¹ *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 36.

² *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³ Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1981), p. 102.

⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 62.

⁵ *Evangelism*, p. 507.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁷ Ellen G. White et al., *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Basle, Switzerland: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886), p. 195.

⁸ *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, June 15, 1905.

⁹ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 259.

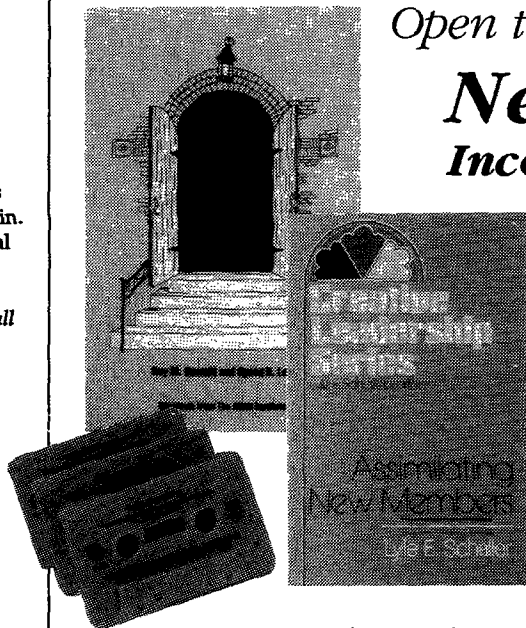


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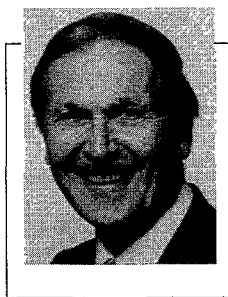


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Annual Council and the Adventist pastor

Floyd Bresee

I was walking nonchalantly through a gift shop at the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Looking up, I saw, filling the wall just in front of me, one of the ugliest paintings imaginable. It looked as though the artist had haphazardly thrown huge gobs of odd-colored pigment at the wall.

Shrugging my shoulders, I continued through the shop, looking at the geegaws designed to attract a tourist's attention. Some minutes later I looked up again and saw, across the room, the most colorful and inspiring depiction of the Grand Canyon I've ever beheld. It was the same painting, but that which appeared ugly close up became beautiful when viewed from a distance.

We've all had times when things in the church didn't appear as beautiful from where we were standing as we'd like them to be. It's important to look at things from a greater distance once in a while, to get a broader view, to see the church as a whole. Annual Council offers such an opportunity.

As I sat in meeting hour after hour at this year's convocation (October 2-9), I tried to slip my feet into the shoes of the typical Adventist pastor. What might inspire you? Here are four things about the 1990 Annual Council that may help you see the beauty of your church:

1. Soul-winning success. Final, official figures are now in for the five years of Harvest 90. Our goal was to baptize 2 million souls. We actually baptized 2,490,105, averaging about one per minute by the end of the quinquennium. As of June 30, 1990, world membership stood at 6,442,595.

2. Soul-winning plans. Global Mission, our special emphasis for the next decade, stresses three objectives—all of which apply to every church. These were explained in a document shared with the Annual Council:

"Seek. We will seek to enter new [areas] in a strategic manner that will make our mission truly global. The General Conference will be especially involved in reaching the 1,800 unentered [areas] with a population of 1 million or more. . . . Every department and layer of church organization, down to the individual member, will be invited to participate as [the areas] are broken down to ethnolinguistic groups, cities, communities—and the neighbors next door.

"Reap. We will encourage each local church to set its own baptismal goal. The total of these goals will form the basis for the world church's goal.

"Keep. We will emphasize nurturing of members, reclaiming the inactive, and increasing church attendance."

3. Unity. Some came to the 1990 Annual Council with a sense of foreboding. The conferences of the North

American Division had requested that the amount of tithe they are required to send to the unions, division, and General Conference be reduced. But much of this tithe goes to support the work overseas. Would North America turn its back on world missions? North America's conference presidents answered with a united emphatic *no*.

To support the larger organization, conferences have been passing along 20 percent of the tithe they receive from their membership. Up to now, 4.1 percent of their total tithe intake has been returned to the conferences, the unions and so forth retaining 15.9 percent. The action voted at this Annual Council will gradually increase the "rebate" until by 1995 it amounts to 5.1 percent. However, as the official action reads, "it is hoped that this can be accomplished through savings from streamlining and cutbacks rather than the reduction of assistance to the overseas divisions." The General Conference and North American Division together expect to reduce their operating expenses for 1991 by approximately 10 percent (\$2.5 million).

Through the increasing of the percentage of tithe returned and the reducing of operating expenses, the church hopes to give strong support to both the hurting North American conferences and the worldwide work.

4. Spiritual renewal. Never have I been so moved by the devotional speakers and overall spiritual emphasis of Annual Council as I was this year. The last morning of the session we gathered in small groups and shared our need and yearning for a greater infilling of the Holy Spirit. Pastor, please accept this invitation to join us in that experience. ■

The church hopes to give strong support to both the hurting North American conferences and the worldwide work.

Millennial Dreams and Moral Dilemmas: Seventh-day Adventism and Contemporary Ethics

Michael Pearson, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1990, 328 pages, \$49.50, hardcover. Reviewed by Jack Blanco, chairman, Department of Religion, Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists.

Michael Pearson, a teacher at Newbold College in England, has done a remarkable job in capturing the Adventist ethos and placing it in a contemporary setting. Written originally as a doctoral thesis, this work provides an incisive look at ethical dilemmas facing the Adventist Church today.

The author states his purpose as being to "break new ground in the chronicling and analysis of significant developments in Adventist moral thought." He does it successfully. After a brief description of the doctrinal and cultural legacy of Adventist moral thought, Pearson devotes two chapters each to five areas of moral ethics: sex, abortion, women, divorce, and homosexuality.

Pearson's outstanding research results in an accurate overview of these critical issues. He documents his work with a thorough bibliography. I found every page worth reading and valuable for future reference.

A few places in the text need further documentation or clarification. In the chapter "Advent and Remnant" he says: "The new church now stood in official relationship to the state, which 20 years earlier Adventists had regarded as a demonic agency." He provides no footnote to support that statement. In the same chapter he notes paradoxes in Adventist behavior. For example, the church constructs institutions costing millions, while expecting the soon coming of Christ. But Pearson makes no reference to the cost needed to make an institution functionally viable.

Pearson suggests that self-interest motivates Adventism's ethics concerning civil liberties. He implies that silence on certain issues proves self-interest. This may or may not be the case.

In the chapter "Adventist Women in the Modern Church," Pearson says that in the 1960s Helen B. Andelin's *Fasci-*

nating Womanhood was projected by the church as a model for Adventist women. The source for this statement is the journal *Spectrum*, which rightly opposed that book's philosophy. However, to my knowledge, the Adventist Church never recommended *Fascinating Womanhood* as a model for Adventist women.

In the chapter "Homosexuality in Adventism," Pearson says: "There remains within Adventism a strain of American Puritanism that regards the sexual nature as dangerous and not a source of pleasure." Such a statement needs documentation. Furthermore, current research shows that American Puritanism did endorse sex as pleasure, contrary to popular opinion.

In a concluding statement, the author says that the church's behavioral norms are codified in considerable detail, yet he fails to make a distinction between the church's official belief structure and its educative process.

In spite of these minor criticisms, I highly recommend Pearson's work as an important volume for anyone interested in the ethical struggles within Adventism.

The Power of the Lamb

Ward Ewing, Cowley Publications, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1990, 238 pages, \$11.95, paper. Reviewed by Lawrence G. Downing, pastor, Anaheim Community Adventist Church, Anaheim, California.

Ewing has not tamed the beast. It is wilder than ever. But the enduring power of the Lamb triumphs at last!

Ewing admits he wrote this book to present his understanding of how the thoughts, dreams, hopes, and pain of first-century Christians have a part in John's Revelation. But he does not limit his discussion to ancient times. Taking a greater risk, he brings Revelation face-to-face with contemporary issues.

Power and the lack of it compose the fulcrum upon which his ideas balance. The beast, as portrayed in Revelation, appears at first to have the advantage. The beast has the power; the Lamb is helpless. The book explodes first appearances, and the reader witnesses a remarkable reversal.

We learn, however, that the central issue is not identifying evil powers. Ewing

proposes that Revelation demands we make a personal behavioral response to specific situations. Our response is the clue that identifies whether we operate by beast power or Lamb power. Our choice has eternal consequences.

Ewing's work enriches Adventist apocalyptic understandings by bringing the ethical implications into focus. He spares neither individual nor institution. He invites us to reflect on how persons and organizations may evidence beast power or the power of the Lamb.

I found this book bristling with sermon ideas. The author has credibility with pastors. He speaks our language; he is one of us.

Some will take issue with Ewing's infrequent forays into textual interpretation. (For instance, he understands the Lord's day as Sunday.) But his insights on how Revelation impacts contemporary life more than compensate for the few statements we may not accept.

This is a delightful book, especially compared with the speculative and bizarre interpretations evidenced by so many who venture into turbulent apocalyptic waters.

Pastoral Transitions: From Endings to New Beginnings

William Bud Phillips, Alban Institute, Washington, D.C., 1988, 67 pages, \$8.75, paper. Reviewed by Leslie Smart, pastor, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Morganton, North Carolina.

The author writes from the perspective of Methodist pastoral transitions. Phillips is director of the Centre for the Study of Church and Ministry, and is also associate professor in the Vancouver School of Theology. In this volume he analyzes a process that every year 20 percent of North American churches experience.

Phillips focuses on feelings and helps clarify problems that make transitions difficult. He suggests ways to enhance communication between pastor and congregation during the transitional period. His insights can facilitate the disengagement, interval time, and new relationship initiation involved in changing pastoral positions.

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