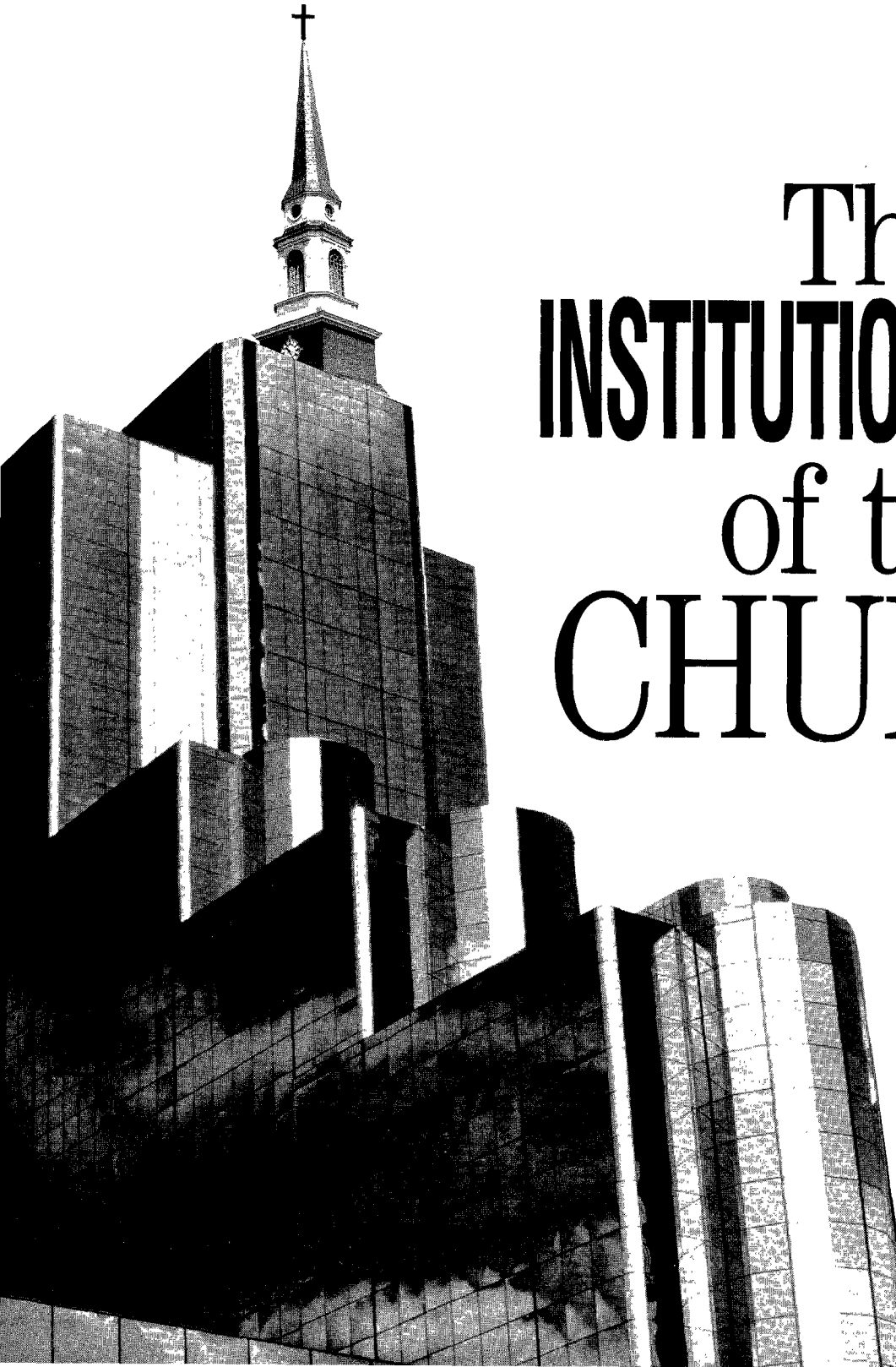


# Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

June 1991

NAD  
Evangelism Council  
page 23



## The INSTITUTIONALIZING of the CHURCH

**Tends to destroy faith**

I received a copy of the book *Set Free* from Don Hawley [advertised in *Ministry*, April 1991]. I have not read the book in its entirety, but I have read a number of chapters. From these chapters alone it is quite clear that this book is not helpful to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It has a tendency to destroy faith in the church and in the principles and standards that characterize it.—John R. Loor, president, Indiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Carmel, Indiana.

*It is our intention that not only the articles but also the advertising that we publish in Ministry be helpful to the pastors we serve. We have received several negative comments regarding our accepting the advertisement for Hawley's book. While we think the book has some commendable features, such as its uplifting of the gospel and its stand against legalism, we wish that it were more balanced. It does not call for the radical discipleship to which Jesus called people. It also regards rather lightly some of our important doctrines.*

*We accepted the ad without examining the book carefully. We have refunded the payment for the ad and have begun a review of the procedure by which we accept advertisements.—Editors.*

**Never advocated canonizing**

A careful reading of *1888 Re-examined* will confirm that we have never advocated “canonizing” Jones and Waggoner or “fixating” on their words, nor have we regarded them as “inspired” prophets (see “Crisis in Authority,” *Ministry*, February 1991, p. 11). In close context with the phrase quoted from us (p. 75) appear statements about their “imperfections” and “immaturity” (p. 73). Ellen White said she counted it a privilege to join them in public ministry from 1888 to 1891. Calling the message they conveyed “a message of light,” she said, “The power of God attended the message wherever it was spoken. . . . God has set His hand to do this work.” “Wherever they [Jones and Waggoner] go among the churches, light, and relief, and the blessing of God is sure to come

in.” They had the “heavenly credentials.” This only is the sense in which the “trio” was “inspired.” They were “special” (p. 76).

Their message was declared to be “the beginning” of the loud cry and of the latter rain. Does it therefore not deserve our close attention?—Robert J. Wieland and Donald K. Short, Meadow Vista, California.

**Adventist inquisition?**

George Knight’s article entitled “Crisis in Authority” is a breath of fresh air and pregnant with meaning for the Adventist Church today. I am so glad that this article follows the January (1991) *Ministry* article by Frank Holbrook, “Issues in the Book of Revelation.” In that article the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) of the General Conference would give us a “consensus statement,” from “biblical scholars from throughout the world divisions of the Adventist Church, on some aspects of the seals and trumpets” without giving us detailed reasons for their beliefs. And then follows what BRI considers correct thinking on various parts of the Revelation.

I fear that BRI will be used like the Department of the Inquisition was used in the early history of the Catholic Church. Even today I receive letters, passed down from BRI through administrative channels, informing me who is in and who is out in the current theological jungle. I suppose some of this is helpful, but I am glad that Ellen White said that “investigation of every point that has been received as truth will richly repay the searcher; he will find precious gems. And in closely investigating every jot and tittle which we think is established truth, in comparing scripture with scripture, we may discover errors in our interpretation of Scripture” (*Review and Herald*, July 12, 1898).

How much better off we would be as a people if we took these words to heart. And what a glorious treasure chest is God’s book if we would but study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that don’t need to be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15).—Chico Rivera, Jr., pas-

tor, Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, St. Louis, Missouri.

*In defense of BRI, we requested permission to reprint the article referred to—because we thought it would be of interest to our readers. As we understand it, the article was not meant as a defense of the positions laid out, but as a report of the work of the Daniel and Revelation Committee on these specific parts of Revelation.—Editors.*

**Resonating the trend to autonomy**

“Crisis: Threat or Opportunity?” (February 1991) resonated the current trend to autonomy—self law—just as we are torn with disunity. What we need is some onward Christian soldiers, “marching as to war . . . . We are not divided, all one body we.”

The real issue is this: Are we certain of having a unique mission? Uncertainty about this is fatal. Haggling over minutiae is hardly our orders for the day.

As I read of “different ways of walking in the same direction” my eyes fell on the ad right next to these words, admonishing pastors to “be sure those you baptize know the beliefs of the church.” Let’s decide which way we want it.

May Adventism have the courage to “press together” by *making the time* to study away our differences in a Bible-in-hand, eye-to-eye, on-our-knees dialogue. Crisis calls for courage to be one in Christ, not courage to amiably go our separate ways.—Norman L. Meager, Sonora, California.

■ “Crisis in Authority” is excellent, and “Crisis: Threat or Opportunity?” is right to the point and as timely as any articles you have ever published. It is high time that we learn to live with the imperfections of our fellow church members, clergy and laity, and *try to learn* to avoid the judgmentalism that is so rampant in our church. If we would all read the book of Romans every few months, our church would grow in many ways! It’s my own opinion that pluralism, rightly considered,

(Continued on page 28)

Two years ago, June 1989, we published a ground breaking article called "Church Structure—Servant or Master?" Since that time the author of that article has become the General Conference president and has convened a commission on governance to examine how the church operates.

We continue looking at that topic with articles in this issue by George Knight and L. A. King. The problem with Laodicea is that it does not know its condition. Despite what many say, all is not well with the church. These articles might lead to deep pessimism if we focused only on the difficulties. The authors point out that we will not reverse the trend by "business as usual." Some tough decisions need to be made.

God has not called the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to make the decisions for us, but to lead us into a climate where radical commitments may be made. And leadership can do this by articulating clearly the mission of the church—a mission that institutionalism has only too certainly blurred.



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VOLUME 64 NUMBER 6



# Symbol illiteracy

David C. Jarnes

**I**n chapter 17 of his book *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers* Alden Thompson points out the difficulty of determining

where the literal leaves off and the symbolic begins in some passages of Scripture. He notes that Adventists, particularly American Adventists, have a hard time with the symbolic. \* We tend to be more comfortable thinking of truth in terms of the literal rather than the symbolic, of the concrete rather than the abstract.

The editors of *Ministry* have learned this truth through hard experience! In August 1990, almost a year ago now, we published an issue focusing on Christ's second advent and the mission of the church. On the cover we featured a painting that we had commissioned depicting the Advent. That cover proved to be controversial. One of the rags that make their living slinging mud at the church had a field day, somehow seeing it to be simultaneously New Age and "medieval Catholic," "riddled with . . . most terrible errors"!

Many of those who wrote us criticizing the cover were concerned that we hadn't accurately pictured Christ's return. Some noted that the painting apparently portrayed the fires of hell as simultaneous with the Second Advent, while others objected that it depicted Christ much too near the earth.

The painting pictures the Advent in a symbolic way rather than attempting to reproduce it literally. In contemporary visual terms, it powerfully confronts the viewer with the biblical truth of Christ's return, and makes it clear that one must

decide whether he or she will be among those who have accepted Jesus as Lord or among those who have turned from Him. To convey this message, it condenses reality, bringing together in one picture people and events that might in actuality be separated by time and space.

Other Adventist portrayals of end-time events have also used the mode of symbolism. One type of illustration I remember seeing as a child depicted the judgment. In these paintings, typically a man stands on trial in a heavenly courtroom (apparently plucked from earth in his Sabbath best!). An angel holds the open record book from which the defendant will be judged, while the gallery is filled with the rest of the heavenly host. Sometimes the painting pictured Christ standing beside the man, ready to plead his case; sometimes Christ was on the bench. Often with the painting there appeared a quotation from Romans 14:10: "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

Now, we believe in a literal judgment that will examine everyone who has professed Christ. But no one will actually, literally stand in a heavenly courtroom while his case is being considered. We believe that the investigative judgment takes place before Christ returns, and Scripture nowhere indicates that the saints will be raptured to heaven, individually or as a group, to stand judgment and then be returned to earth for the close of probation and the events that lead up to the Second Advent.

Obviously, then, this genre of illustrations is symbolic. It represents something that will actually happen but not in the manner portrayed. The portrayal focuses on *what* will happen and not on *how* it will happen. It intends to cause viewers

to reflect on their spiritual state.

Scripture is full of symbolism. Its use in apocalyptic passages is well known. The sanctuary and its services, so central to our beliefs, were also symbolic illustrations of the truths of God's plan for our salvation. Most of us realize that these illustrations are significant for the truths that they convey, and that they shouldn't be pushed too far literally. (For example, to receive forgiveness in the sanctuary system, the sinner must literally slit the throat of the sacrifice with his own hands. We recognize this as meaning that our sins are responsible for Jesus' death; we don't go so far as to say that to be forgiven we must literally slit Jesus' throat.)

Symbolism is a form of illustration. As one of my college teachers used to warn us, you oughtn't try to make illustrations walk on all fours—that is, try to push them too far, to make every detail significant.

That we have been able to accept the use of symbolism regarding the judgment and the sanctuary is good. We need to recognize that its use is just as legitimate in other portrayals. ■

\*It seems to me that Alden may have misconstrued the situation a bit. From his narration I gathered that it was actually the German Adventists who were uncomfortable with the use of symbolism. They would have preferred that abstract concepts be talked about in abstract terms. As for American Adventists, it wasn't so much that they were uncomfortable with symbolism; they just didn't recognize it for what it is—they tended to consider the descriptions literal rather than symbolic.



# Journey to the cross

John M. Fowler

**W**hen I became a Seventh-day Adventist years ago, the strongest motivation to cross over from a traditional church to what was then considered a cult was the imminence of the second coming of Christ. The evangelist did a persuasive job. Supported by colorful prophetic charts, his exposition of the Parousia left no doubt in my mind that my young life could have meaning only if I faced the reality of the soon-to-unfold drama of the Second Coming. The Voice of Prophecy broadcasts and the correspondence school continued their reinforcement of the point week after week. Even the Sabbath school theme song reminded me, "Jesus is coming again."

The second coming of Christ thus became the motivating force for most of my life activities. My faith, worship, values, study, vocation, and association were all somehow related to an eschatological hope, either as a definer or as a conditioner. This eschatological orientation was particularly prominent in my newfound Adventist ethic and lifestyle. One argument would suggest that since the investigative judgment has been in process for a while now, at any time it could be the turn of the living, and therefore it was necessary to lead a sanctified life. Another would appeal to the quote: "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."<sup>1</sup>

The quote, which I memorized as a teenager, was a momentous one. Are divine plans so dependent on simple mortals? Is there really a cosmic, universal, and eschatological significance in what I did or what I did not do? The thought was awe-

some and lasted a long time, until one day as a beginning pastor I realized that I knew more about the Lord who is coming again than about the Lord who did come. I knew more about the mysterious beasts of Daniel and Revelation than the mystery of the cross. I found it easier to explain to my friends Daniel 2 and 7 than Romans 5 and 7. My preaching was at home with the magic of history marching toward its teleological climax, but in the process the Lord of history remained the sovereign of the universe to many of my hearers without becoming their saving Lord.

Suddenly it dawned on me that I was missing the essential issue of coming to grips with what is central to Christianity. "Give me a place to stand," said the old philosopher Archimedes, "and I will move the earth." The question for me as a pastor was: Where is my place to stand, that I may move my parish for my Master's mission?

The answer came through the study of the momentous discovery of the apostle Paul: "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2, RSV). Paul's decision (*krino*) was a resolute act of the will, a determination born out of deliberate consideration. Paul had employed a different approach at Athens, that great bastion of intellectual skill, philosophical tools, and historical pride. He met philosophy with philosophy, logic with logic, poetry with poetry, and at the end of the Mars' Hill production, the apostle did leave a magnetic spell on his audience—but very few in that city understood the mystery or the meaning of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. Out of that experience, when eloquence seemed to bury the essential and when shadows seemed to submerge the sub-

stance, the apostle came to the conclusion that the Christ of the cross and Him alone constituted the essence of Christian living and preaching.

Christ and the cross! All other claims are secondary. "It is high time," wrote Visser't Hooft, "that Christians should rediscover that the very heart of their faith is that Jesus Christ did not come to make a contribution to the religious storehouse of mankind, but that in Him God reconciled the world unto Himself."<sup>2</sup> As I considered this central theme of the New Testament, I made my discovery. The starting point for Christian ministry is the cross. "He who beholds the Saviour's matchless love will be elevated in thought, purified in heart, transformed in character. He will go forth to be a light to the world, to reflect in some degree this mysterious love. The more we contemplate the cross of Christ, the more fully shall we adopt the language of the apostle when he said, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Gal. 6:14)."<sup>3</sup>

## The ground of certitude

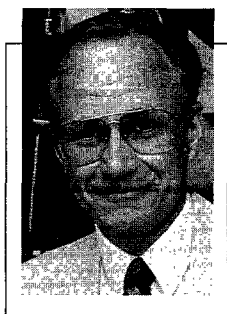
To say this is to affirm two vital dynamics of Christian ministry. First, the cross is the Christian's ground of certitude. Any emphasis other than the cross would nullify the Christocentric nature of the gospel, and lead to the denial of the very essence of Christianity. Any experience, hope, lifestyle, or mission that derives its primary motive from any factor other than God's redemptive activity on the cross is essentially work-related, accomplishment-oriented, and self-centered. The preoccupation with all such cross-less endeavors, like that of the rich young ruler, is *what must I do* to enter into the kingdom.

(Continued on page 30)

# Adventism, institutionalism, and the challenge of secularization

George R. Knight

**Adventism has reached that critical point where it must deliberately choose and courageously act to reverse the patterns of institutionalization and secularization that threaten its heritage and mission.**



George R. Knight is professor of church history, Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

**C**hurches in their second century face problems their founders never had to deal with. Two of those problems are institutionalism and secularization. Churches, like people and other organizations, pass from infancy through adolescence into adulthood and eventually have to face the problems of dysfunction that aging brings.

The early church fell into this pattern, as did the Reformation churches and the Methodist movement. The present article will examine the problems and challenges of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as it faces the same issues in its second century. In the process we will survey the life cycle of a church, some of the dilemmas that hinder reform, the "problem" of success, and the possibility of avoiding what appears to be the course of history as churches move from being movements to machines to monuments.

Before beginning our journey, it should be noted that this article is based upon sociological analysis. It is important to realize that sociological analysis is only one way of viewing the church. As such, it supplements other viewpoints, including the most important perspective—the biblical/theological. While sociological patterns do not predetermine religious history, it is significant that church after church has followed the same pathway to institutionalism and secularization. The challenge set forth in this article is to recognize those patterns as they apply to Adventism so that such knowledge, through God's grace, might be utilized

deliberately to "correct" the course of Adventism. Whether Adventism will be successful in this respect remains to be seen. But one of the great lessons of church history is that such a course correction will not be the product of either accident or ignorance.

## The life cycle of a church

David O. Moberg describes five stages in the life cycle of a church.<sup>1</sup> His analysis sheds a great deal of light on the development and current status of Adventism, even though his model does not provide a perfect correlation.

Before examining Moberg's stages of development, I would like to suggest some qualifications. First, a church may exhibit the characteristics of several stages at the same time, even though it is predominantly in one or two stages at any given time. Second, different individual members, congregations, or ethnic or national subdivisions of a church may be at different stages at the same time. Third, my comments on Adventism will focus on generalizations regarding the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church, with an emphasis on the North American Division.

*Stage 1: incipient organization.* Moberg's first stage is that of "incipient organization." Sects, he claims, usually develop out of unrest and dissatisfaction with existing churches, often being stimulated by the lower classes who complain about the clergy, the "corruption" of privileged groups, or denominational complacency. The unrest may arise out of a crisis that the parent church has failed to meet satisfactorily.

With the rise of leadership, a new cult or sect emerges, often as a reform move-

ment within the parental body. Emerging sects are characterized by “a high degree of collective excitement,” “unplanned and uncontrolled emotions” in public situations that “may lead to a sense of bodily possession by the Holy Spirit,” and physical reactions. “Charismatic, authoritarian, prophetic” leadership is characteristic of this state.

The stage of incipient organization is a fairly accurate description of Sabbatarian Adventism between 1844 and 1863. Arising out of the failure of the existing denominations to accept William Miller’s premillennial views and the unwillingness of the majority of the post-disappointment Millerite Adventists to embrace the biblical truths of the seventh-day Sabbath and the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, the Sabbatarian Advent band emerged as a separate “sect” between 1844 and 1850.

By that time, three strong leaders—Joseph Bates, James White, and Ellen G. White—had risen to bind the emerging group together through a series of conferences and a periodical. Their combined leadership may easily be characterized as having charismatic, authoritarian, and prophetic aspects. Formal organization was a taboo for most adherents during this period, with some claiming that the first step toward organizing a church was the first step toward forming another Babylon. Their leadership style would not fit well into the Adventism of the 1990s.

Beyond leadership styles, one doesn’t have to read very far in the first volume of *Testimonies for the Church* or other early Sabbatarian Adventist literature to pick up the charismatic flavor of their worship. The work of the Holy Spirit was much in evidence through such manifestations as visions, healings, being slain by the Spirit, and even a few instances of speaking in tongues.<sup>2</sup> In many ways, if not most, the early Sabbatarian Adventists would find themselves distinctly uncomfortable in Adventism as we know it today.

*Stage 2: formal organization.* Moberg describes the second stage as being characterized by formal organizational identity. The group formulates and publicizes its goals to attract new members, who in turn are asked to commit themselves by formally joining the group. The organization develops a creed “to preserve and propagate orthodoxy,” and emphasizes the differences between the new sect and non-members. Symbols are developed that reflect the group’s theological orientation.

Stage 2 often sees the development of

an emphasis on behaviors that deviate from those of the surrounding society. Thus, writes Moberg, “the use of automobiles, neckties, tobacco, instrumental music, cosmetics, or wedding rings may be considered sinful; card playing, movie attendance, dancing, or military service may be tabooed. Thus codes of behavior are developed and enforced; these distinguish members from others and often draw persecution or ridicule that increases in-group feelings and strength.” In addition, “agitational” leadership forms gradually abate as stage 3 is approached.

The stage of formal organization represents Seventh-day Adventist developments between approximately 1863 and 1900. The year 1863 saw the formation of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists—an organizational step that had been preceded by the formation of the first local conferences in 1861 and the choice of a name in 1860. Such a move was a giant step away from the free-flowing, “anti-Babylon” stance of many adherents in the previous decade.

Following rapidly on the heels of formal organization came Ellen White’s June 6 health reform vision (just 15 days after the formation of the General Conference), which proved to be a mighty step forward in the development of a distinctive Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle package. In addition, the mid-1860s saw the denomination take its position on noncombatancy, take special interest in the issue of personal adornment, and establish its first health-care institution. The early 1870s saw the publication of Adventism’s first formal statement of beliefs, the development of its first permanent educational institution, and the sending of its first foreign missionary. Persecution over the breaking of Sunday laws in the 1880s and 1890s and continuing adverse discrimination on the basis of its Millerite heritage helped strengthen the young denomination’s in-group feelings.

By 1900 Adventism’s lifestyle and doctrinal position were well established, and the church supported a rapidly expanding system of missions, conferences, schools, hospitals, and publishing houses around the world. Beyond that, leadership was becoming progressively more formal and “administrative,” as opposed to being informal and charismatic. By the turn of the century, however, the denomination had outgrown its 1863 organizational structure. Reorganization was crucial if the church was to continue

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## The work of the Holy Spirit was much in evidence through such manifestations as visions, healings, being slain in the Spirit, and even a few instances of speaking in tongues.

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to operate effectively. This brings us to Moberg’s stage 3.

*Stage 3: maximum efficiency.* If stage 1 is viewed as toddlerhood and stage 2 as childhood, then stage 3 in the life cycle of a church should be seen in terms of youthful vigor and young adulthood. Moberg labels the third stage as that of maximum efficiency.

During stage 3, statesmen dominate leadership and organization becomes increasingly rational. Formal structure rapidly develops as executives, boards, and committees are added to meet the needs of the growing organization. Official leaders perform their duties “enthusiastically and efficiently”; and rituals and administrative procedures, although regularized, are still viewed as means to the end rather than as ends in themselves. Programs of action tend to be formulated in light of rational consideration of relevant facts. Growth during the period of maximum efficiency is often very rapid.

Stage 3 also sees the rise of historians and apologists for the faith. This period witnesses the group move psychologically from the position of despised sect to one of near-equality with recognized denominations. Hostility toward other groups diminishes and “the fanatical resolution to maintain sharply different ways relaxes.” As an illustration Moberg goes out of his way in the first edition of his book (1962) to point out the “the gradual acceptance of Seventh-day Adventists into fundamentalist circles (through the aid of Walter Martin and Donald Grey Barnhouse in the late 1950s).”<sup>3</sup>

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## Doctrinal platforms become “venerated relics from the past” and for most “worshippers” organized worship gradually degenerates into a repetitive ritual.

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While Adventism may have been achieving public acceptance by the 1950s, the denomination undoubtedly had entered into Moberg's state of maximum efficiency in 1901. That year saw the administrative reorganization of the General Conference along a more rational line. It also witnessed the election of Arthur G. Daniells to denominational leadership. Daniells was the first president who could be viewed as a “statesman.”

The 1901 General Conference session also witnessed the development of union conferences and the present departmental structure at all levels of the church. The departments replaced semi-autonomous organizations, whose varying programs had been impossible to coordinate. The appointment of the first vice-president of the General Conference took place the next year. Subsequent years and decades saw the development of numerous committees, boards, and other entities to forward the work of the church. The organizational changes begun in 1901 set the stage for unprecedented denominational growth around the world. The early decades of the twentieth century also saw the development of the denomination's historical/apologetic literature under such writers as J. N. Loughborough, M. E. Olsen, A. W. Spalding, and F. D. Nichol.

If a specific date can be given for Adventism's arrival at “adulthood,” it may best be seen as 1956, when the denomination had the “right hand of fellowship” extended to it by Donald Grey Barnhouse, editor of *Eternity* and a highly influential fundamentalist leader.<sup>4</sup> The acceptance of that fellowship unfortunately (but predictably) split the

Adventist ranks between those who viewed it as a step forward and those who saw it as a “sell-out” to the enemy.

Like it or not, the denomination did reach its adulthood. Evidence of that transition can be found in the fact that the late 1950s and early 1960s witnessed the capstone being placed on the church's educational establishment, with the creation of two universities, and the hope of developing Ph.D. programs. The important question now became whether the denomination would use its adulthood responsibly.

Even though it seems rather clear that Adventism arrived at the stage of maximum efficiency around 1901, it is much less clear where the denomination is in 1991. That may be partly because we lack enough distance from current events to evaluate the flow of recent history properly. It seems that at the present time the denomination may be largely in stage 3, but teetering on the brink of Moberg's stage 4. Another way of saying what needs to be said is that part of the church may be in stage 3, while other sectors are already in stage 4. This picture should become more evident as we discuss stage 4. What is important at this juncture, however, is not that we determine its position, but that we foresee the general pattern of the future if the denominational aging process is not successfully challenged.

*Stage 4: institutionalism.* Moberg presents stage 4 as one of great danger. During this stage formalism drains the group's vitality. Its leadership comes to be “dominated by an established bureaucracy more concerned with perpetuating its own interests than with maintaining the distinctives that helped bring the group into existence.” Administration tends to center in committees and boards that often become self-perpetuating. The church becomes a “bureaucracy,” with mechanisms of the group's structure largely having become ends in themselves.

For individuals at this stage, doctrinal platforms become “venerated relics from the past” and for most “worshippers” organized worship gradually degenerates into a repetitive ritual. At this stage the institution “has become the master of its members instead of their servant, making many demands upon them, suppressing personalities, and directing energies into serving the ‘organization church.’”

Stage 4, claims Moberg, sees conflict with the outside world replaced by complete toleration. Conformity to social

norms and mores is typical, “respectability” becomes a central quest, and membership standards are relaxed as the church seeks to bring more socially respectable people into its fold. Feelings of group intimacy decline as the growth in membership brings increased heterogeneity and varying dedication, sentiments, and interests. Membership becomes remote from leadership and increasingly passive. Interests and activities once considered “worldly” become major attractions as the church seeks to become a center of community activity. Sermons, meanwhile, become “topical lectures dealing with social issues, rather than fervent discourses” on sin, salvation, and church doctrine.

As noted above, current Adventism has a love/hate relationship with Moberg's institutional stage. Many Adventist leaders and members could find Moberg's thesis a source of temptation or fear or both. These ambivalent feelings are sometimes present in the same person or group of people simultaneously.

There are many indicators that the denomination at times enters stage 4. These include: church-owned radio stations with almost exclusively classical/cultural programming (except, of course, for the Sabbath hours); the deliberations at the 1989 General Conference Spring Council that set forth arguments for “community wages” for Adventist hospital administrators based on market premises rather than on dedication or denominational mission; and the fact that the church seems to be maintaining an increasing number of personnel and institutions that no longer appear to contribute to the fulfillment of its *primary* goals in the *most effective* manner. Vested interests and tradition loom larger and larger as the church wiggles its toes increasingly in the sands of stage 4.

One of the great challenges facing contemporary Adventism, as it teeters between stages 3 and 4, is to make a healthy adjustment. The church cannot go back to the “old ways” that were effective in the 1930s and 1950s; but to drift into stage 4 means eventual disaster, as we shall see in our discussion of stage 5. The only viable choice is to critique *radically* (yet rationally) the denomination's structures, procedures, policies, etc., and then to retool for reinvigoration at Moberg's stage of maximum efficiency. Such a procedure will take both guts and creativity. We will return to this challenge at the end of this article.



*Stage 5: disintegration.* Stage 5 in Moberg's taxonomy is disintegration. Its chief characteristics are overinstitutionalism, formalism, indifferentism, obsolescence, absolutism, red tape, patronage, and corruption. In addition, the institutional machine's lack of responsiveness to the personal and social needs of members causes loss of their confidence.

During this stage many withdraw into new sects or drift without any formal church membership. Many of those who remain in fellowship with the parent body often ignore it in practice or conform to its teachings only halfheartedly. Meanwhile the denomination continues—supported by a leadership with vested interests and by a membership with emotional attachments.

While contemporary Adventism at certain times and places may penetrate the life cycle senility of stage 5, and while some of the denomination's more radical offshoot movements may perceive the church to exist at that level already, it seems that Adventism has a fair piece to go before it is firmly at stage 5. Of course, the better part of wisdom is renewal and reformation at the borders of stages 3 and 4, before further degeneration takes place.

### **Dilemmas and roadblocks on the road to reformation**

Neither renewal nor reformation come easily, however, since religious organizations exist in part to provide stability. Compounding the difficulty is the fact that evolving tradition and structure are often confused with the pristine values of a movement's founders. Religious organizations typically desire to pass on the experience of the founders, their original doctrine, and the lifestyle they set forth as the ideal; but the outcome is often the passing on of the mere forms of the founders without the vitalizing spirit that gave those forms meaning.

Sociologist Thomas F. O'Dea presents five dilemmas that tend to frustrate the renewal and reformation of religious structures.<sup>5</sup> These dilemmas are active to some degree in every stage of the life cycle of a church—from its vibrant infancy through decrepit senility; their dynamics help push the church down the path to Moberg's disintegration stage. Two of these dilemmas are especially pertinent to this essay, since they interact with the life cycle of the church.

O'Dea's first dilemma is that of mixed motivation—the Achilles' heel of social institutions. A movement typically be-

gins with a circle of disciples gathered around a charismatic leader. In the beginning, both leader and followers are single-minded. They know their goal and do not deviate from it. They are not motivated by any external or internal reward structures, such as prestige or benefits, for the simple reason that these do not exist for the new sect.

Subsequent leaders, however, begin to work for the movement for reasons other than merely fulfilling its primary goal. A professional clergy arises that gives stability to the movement, but with stability come many "perks": security, prestige, respectability, power, influence, and the satisfaction derived from the use of personal talents in teaching and leadership. Moreover, keeping these rewards coming tends to become a part of the motivation of the group.

That dynamic opens the door to men and women seeking leadership positions for reasons of self-interest. O'Dea has identified at least three aspects of the more advanced stages of the problem of mixed motivation that further the secularization of the movement as it experiences institutionalization: (1) the emergence of a careerism that is only formally concerned with the movement's goals; (2) bureaucratic growth that may be more concerned with maintaining and protecting vested interests than with accomplishing the movement's original goals; and (3) official timidity and lethargy in the face of problems and challenges, rather than a vital and progressive spirit that is willing to risk all for the accomplishment of the mission.

So while mixed motivation contributes to the survival of the church organization, it also tends to transform the church's goals and values. And that transformation nearly always moves the church toward secularization.

Mixed motivation is not merely a clergy problem. The dedication and motivation of members born into the movement are nearly always of a different type than those of members who have been converted into it as adults. As H. Richard Niebuhr puts it, children brought up in the church "could not be expected to receive the faith with the ardor their parents had manifested nor to experience in a second birth what had in their case been given them in large part with the first."<sup>6</sup>

There may be a vast difference between membership based upon heritage as opposed to membership stemming from conviction. For the first generation of a move-

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**One of the most serious of those consequences is that structures that are erected to respond to a particular set of problems or opportunities are not dismantled when the reason for their creation passes.**

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ment, membership tends to be based on a conversion experience, but for succeeding generations socialization of the young through the process of education and training often substitutes for the more dramatic conversion experience. For many, church membership may mean comfortable social relationships rather than a radical religious experience.

Every church, as it grows older, faces the dilemma of mixed motivation in both its laity and clergy. Adventism has not escaped that secularizing dynamic.

Let us now turn to the other dilemma O'Dea describes as impacting the secularization process—administrative order: elaboration versus effectiveness. As charismatic leadership is routinized in an aging organization, bureaucratic structure increases, and that brings a number of consequences. One of the most serious of those consequences is that structures that are erected to respond to a particular set of problems or opportunities are not dismantled when the reason for their creation passes. As these structures multiply, the movement's complexity increases. While originally the structures solved real problems, their continued maintenance may greatly hinder the solving of later problems.

Obsolete structures may even cause later problems as needed funds are drained off and spheres of competence and authority begin to overlap between departments or institutions. The problems created are considerably complicated by the parallel existence of mixed

motivation. Thus "genuine organizational reform becomes threatening to the status, security, and self-validation of the incumbents of office."<sup>7</sup>

Seventh-day Adventism is currently feeling the combined effects of the administrative elaboration and mixed motivation dilemmas. Nearly everyone seems to agree that radical administrative and institutional reorganization, consolidation, and reform are imperative, but few appear to be willing to put their best judgments into action. The result is that a great deal of money and effort is expended in defending the existence of the status quo when these resources might better be used to develop new structures and methodologies to reach the movement's original goals.

Moberg's institutional life cycle pattern and O'Dea's insights on the roadblocks to reform seem to describe inexorable processes. But as we shall see in our concluding section, they can be reversed if a movement senses its danger and is willing to act rationally and courageously.

Before examining possible cures to the "institutional disease," however, we should look at one more factor in the secularization of Adventism.

### The "problem" of success

"Wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride . . . and love of the world in all its branches. . . . So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away."<sup>8</sup>

These words of John Wesley (the founder of Methodism) state the paradox faced by all religious groups that inspire their adherents to rigorous ethical standards. In their dedication to God, such people work hard and save. But their very dedication tends to lead them (or more often their children) to worldly success. That success, in turn, leads to more thought about this world than about the next.

These dynamics operate both in the lives of individual Christians and in corporate denominations. Thus Peter Berger can write that one way to prevent a society from becoming secularized is to keep it "in a condition of economic backwardness." Wesley's solution was that Christians should not only gain all they

can and save all they can, but also give all they can, so that the kingdom of heaven would retain the allegiance of their hearts. Neither of these solutions, of course, is apt to be as popular as their alternatives.<sup>9</sup>

Seventh-day Adventism currently faces the secularization problems inherent in its success at both the individual and the corporate levels. Its success threatens its goal orientations. This syndrome is evidenced in Adventism when its "conference office types" proudly view their children's (or grandchildren's) graduation from Loma Linda Medical School (as opposed to ministerial training) as the ultimate mark of family accomplishment. On the corporate level the process is evident when maintaining or adding institutions and structures (including conferences) is confused with progress toward accomplishing the denomination's mission. Thus a recent book on Adventism can claim that "to visit the hospitals of the system today is to see an Adventism that is 'of an undenominational, unsectarian, humanitarian and philanthropic nature.'"<sup>10</sup>

### Is there hope?

Can we stop the drift toward secularization? Is there hope? The answer lies in the honesty with which the church faces the problem. Denial will lead to disaster. Defensiveness is even worse. H. Richard Niebuhr sees the "evil of denominationalism" to be "the temptation of making . . . self-preservation and extension the primary object" of its endeavor. Such an orientation merely makes the rise of sects that aim at getting back to the movement's original goals seem "desirable and necessary."<sup>11</sup>

One hundred years ago the Methodist Church in the United States faced the same drift toward success and secularization that Adventism faces today. To many sincere believers it seemed that that church was losing its goal orientation. As a result, the holiness groups arose to aid the denomination in refocusing on what they saw as Methodism's primary goals. The last thing that the first generation of holiness reformers wanted was separation from Methodism. In order to achieve their purposes, however, they began their own printing presses, educational institutions, and camp meetings, and they eventually acquired their own property. The second generation of holiness leaders, having been reared on semi-sectarian thought, took their movements out of Methodism to establish the various Nazarene and Wesleyan denominations.<sup>12</sup> The success of the de-

## Adventism will be swept down the river by the same sociological forces unless it courageously acts to reverse the patterns of institutionalization and secularization.

nomination had called forth the sects.

Today Adventism, at 150 years of age, stands in an analogous position to Methodism at the same age. The next 10 years could quite easily see sectarian schism if the maturing denomination does not take corrective action to stem the problems of institutionalization with their secularizing effects.

Fortunately, something can be done if Adventism has the courage to do it. The church is not caught in the clutches of inexorable history.

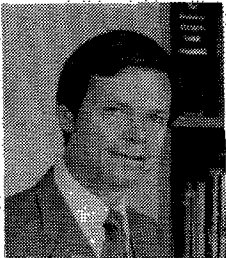
In his valuable study of the early Christian church, Derek Tidball hints at the dynamics of reversing the institutionalization/secularization process.<sup>13</sup> Tidball turns to Paul's advice to Timothy and suggests that it arose partly from the apostle's desire to stem the problems inherent in an aging church. Tidball emphasizes three of Paul's admonitions.

First, Timothy was to guard the original aim, teaching, and life of the church (see 1 Tim 1:19; 4:16; 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:14). Too often people hold firm to the wrong things. "We must hold firm to principles and revealed truths, not to forms, traditions, and structures which are vehicles that conveniently or aptly express those principles in any one age."<sup>14</sup> The church needs to evaluate constantly and critically its true goals and aims and to bring its structures and programs into line with those goals.

Second, Paul urged his younger colleague never to forget his "battle-torn" circumstances (see 1 Tim 1:18; 4:16; 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:4). The moment Timothy relaxed vigilance, all sorts of secondary issues would sidetrack him. Churches and their

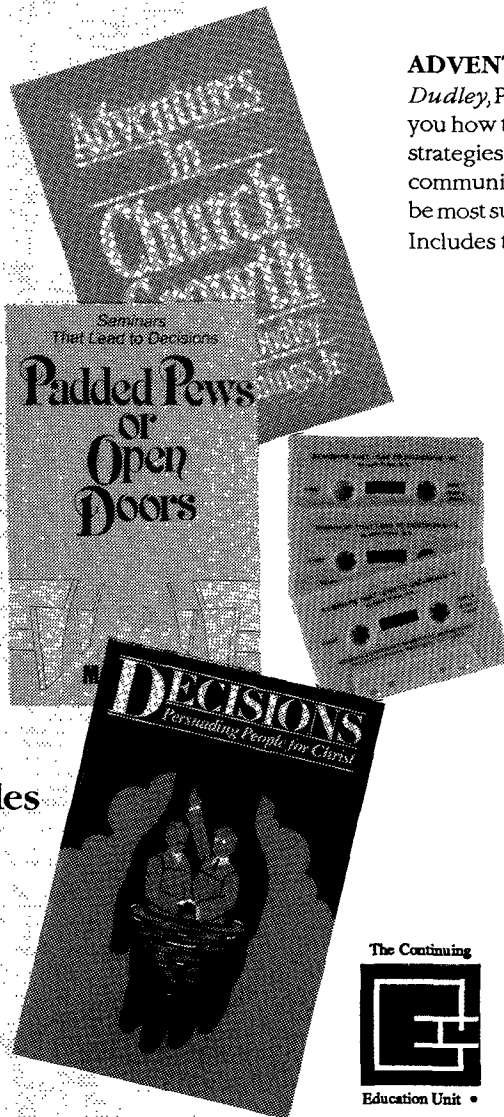
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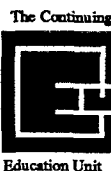
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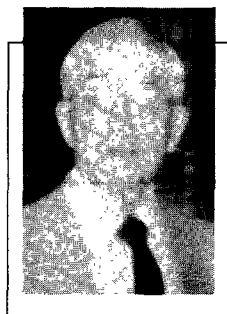
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# Legalism or permissiveness: an inescapable dilemma?

L. A. King

**Do new movements of the Spirit, whose fiery beginnings offer such promise, inevitably face a decline into one extreme or another?**



*Dr. King is emeritus professor of English at Malone College, Canton, Ohio. This article is reprinted from April 16, 1980, The Christian Century.*

**I** have been reading history—specifically, Quaker history. And what I have read has not made me happy; questions keep nagging at me. Troubling questions about the why of things, about weakness and error, about inevitability; questions of concern to every child of God.

## **They offended many**

Go back briefly with me into Quaker history. In their early years (about 1650 to 1690) Quakers were marked by a fiery evangelism and an obviously and radically different style of life from that of their neighbors. They were like John the Baptist, calling upon all people—especially the religious establishment—to repent and bring forth lives suited to that repentance. They had, they declared, not merely heard the gospel proclaimed; they vividly experienced it, here and now in their own lives.

Setting out by twos, they ranged over the British Isles proclaiming that everyone might—no, must—have the same experience they had had. Fiercely devoted to their discovery of life in Christ, they faced mobs, imprisonment, even martyrdom. They offended many by their tactics, sometimes interrupting the minister in his sermon, sometimes taking over his congregation after his sermon and preaching their own message. Driven out of town, they often returned the next day. Denied buildings to meet in, they preached in marketplaces and commons, and on bare hillsides.

Quakers offended not merely by their preaching but by their style of life as well. Flouting long-established custom, they refused to remove their hats in the presence of social and political superiors. They addressed everybody, even the Protector Cromwell or King Charles, exactly the same way they addressed the humblest peasant. They refused to pay tithes for the support of the state church, and to use what they regarded as pagan names for the days and the months. They dressed and lived quite simply. In worship services they sat in silence, without program or liturgy, without official minister. Quakers could by their appearance and way of life be instantly and infallibly identified—even from afar.

With no organization to shape or to enforce their practices, the Quakers nevertheless spontaneously achieved a remarkable unity in style of life, worship, and ministry. Warm love and care for one another grew rapidly. Early in their history they began the custom of making offerings to help those impoverished by persecution and other misfortunes. And despite much opposition, they still expected to win enough adherents to transform the whole world and bring in the kingdom of God.

But if the Quakers offended many, they also won many. Thousands in the British Isles and in America became adherents. Even magistrates who tried them, and whom they defied and preached to in court, were on occasion softened, and sometimes themselves became Quakers. Theirs was the most lively Christian movement in England during those years. One is reminded of the early chapters of Acts.

Presently, however, and little by little, Quakers began to change. Even in the period of persecution they were gaining a reputation for good workmanship and honest dealing, and many of them began to prosper. After the persecution lessened, it became in some ways helpful to be a Quaker—helpful to business success. Then some with less fiery devotion began to join the Society of Friends, while some earlier members relaxed into easier ways. The danger loomed of a slow slippage down into permissive worldliness and mediocrity after the glorious high beginnings.

That relaxing of devotion alarmed the still-devoted members. How were they to preserve the old fire and life? Agonizing over the danger, they grasped onto what they hoped would be the remedy. From the beginning Quakers had stated in general terms their principles of worship and Christian living in what they called “testimonies.” These testimonies, neither highly detailed nor specific, had almost spontaneously been agreed on by early Quakers. Now, it seemed to the worried devout, was the time to make more use of the testimonies.

### **Walling out worldliness**

By spelling out the heretofore general statements of principle in specific detail, they decided, worldliness would be walled out of the Society of Friends. The slightest deviation from proper Quakerly conduct could thus be pinned down, chapter and verse. For example, the women’s meeting of York in 1712 declared: “We desire an alteration in these things . . . as follows, *viz.*: Friends’ gowns made indecently, one part over long and the other too short, with lead in the sleeves; and that Friends should come to a stability, and be satisfied in the shape and compass that Truth leads into, without changing as the world changes; also black or coloured silk and muslin aprons, as likewise hoods or scarves not too long or broad . . .”

Other matters also had to be specified. One involved headstones in cemeteries: Should Friends even have them? Should they lie flat or stand upright? What, if anything, should be engraved on them: name only, or life dates as well?

A crucial concern was marriage. Taking a spouse who was not a member of the Society and being married by other than the Friends ceremony were forbidden. Disownments (expulsion from membership) for this cause cost the Society, it is

estimated, some 5,000 young members over the middle period of Friends history.

This legalistic policy was not without opposition. Margaret Fell Fox (the widow of George Fox) called it a “silly, poor gospel.” She wrote: “We must not look at colours, nor make anything that is changeable colours, as the hills are, nor sell them, nor wear them. But we must all be in one dress and one colour.”

What was happening during this period in Friends’ history was a change from bold expectation of conquering the world for Christ to fear of being infiltrated by the world and its spirit—a mood shift from the offensive to the defensive. The specifically worded testimonies—involving countless hours of discussion in meetings to work them out and then countless more hours to enforce them—were a means of separating themselves from the world which they feared. They were determined to remain pure, not only from the influence of unbelievers but also from that of other professing Christians.

They succeeded. Those who remained as faithful members kept their distinctive style of life; but this life, once a means of winning people, was now regarded by non-Friends as quaint but hardly winsome. The flames of evangelism died away. Friends sat silent in their little enclaves and slowly lost members.

As the eighteenth century ended, many Friends were realizing that this closed policy was not truly a success, and in various ways they began to come out of their isolation. Some, deeply under the influence of the Wesleyan revival, adopted items from that movement: the *programmed meeting*, a *paid ministry*, hymn-singing, evangelism. The result in the United States is the so-called evangelical wing of Friends.

But that wing is not without its faults. While thoroughly evangelical, it is not flamingly evangelistic: it has many small congregations that barely maintain their numbers and add few or no members from any source other than their own children—and not all even of them. Evangelical Friends show almost no distinctiveness in style of life; they are not noticeably different from the members of other denominations or, in many areas of lifestyle, from the worldlings about them. Neither offensive nor defensive toward the world, they are largely similar to it and comfortable with it.

These Friends are highly individualistic, as are many evangelicals of all de-

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## **The danger loomed of a slow slippage down into permissive worldliness and mediocrity after the glorious high beginnings.**

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nominations, living by the principle that every Christian has the right to form his or her own beliefs and style of life. Indeed, I once heard an evangelical Friends pastor say: “If I undertook to hold my congregation seriously to the testimonies, I would lose three-fourths of the membership,” and his statement was received by Friends without surprise or disagreement. It is unlikely that George Fox would easily recognize this comfortable people as Friends, any more than he would have recognized those of the defensive period.

### **Pattern of church history**

But a history of this sort is not confined to Friends. The Anabaptists began in the 16th century with the same pattern of distinctive style of life, evangelistic fervor, warmth and unity of devotion—and persecution and success. Early in their history, however, there arose the fear of contamination by the world, to this day embodied in the Amish and Hutterian Mennonites. These groups have specific and strict rules, including prescriptions for apparel, and spend hours in working out and enforcing them—and in expelling those who fail to conform. Further, in the writing and speaking of more liberal Mennonites, there appear from time to time agonizings about their own loss of the distinctive Anabaptist life.

So also with the Wesleyan revival movement, which produced the Methodist Church. John Wesley, with the same intensity, preached the same experience of the gospel as did both George Fox and the Anabaptists—with the same success and some of the same persecution. But before he died, Wesley was to

complain that the Methodists' distinctive style of life brought them prosperity—and worldliness. Among them there developed the same alarm over worldliness creeping in, with resulting split-offs like the Wesleyan and Free Methodist churches. And among main-line Methodists today there is the lament for the loss of the old fire and life and message.

The history of the wider church follows a similar pattern. First there was the church of Acts. Then hermits and monastic orders isolated themselves so as to guard their purity of faith and life. Presently, however, there developed—and persists to this day—the comfortable, permissive life of the majority membership.

Legalism or permissiveness—that is the dilemma of the church. It is not difficult to point out the flaws of both. The fault of the legalistic development is not in its motivation: the desire to preserve the values of an original movement. Striving to continue the good of a movement of the Spirit is right.

What is wrong is that the legalistic stance does not accomplish its aim. Rather than preserving the original character of the movement, legalism entombs and stifles it in prescriptions about the external marks of the changed life, neglecting the very life that produces those marks. The fruit of the Spirit is not acts themselves but qualities of the heart that produce acts. Various motives may account for the same acts, but a changed heart will, as the Epistle of James reminds us, invariably produce a changed life.

To quote John Audland, a Friend of long ago: "Force and compulsion may make some men conform to that outwardly, which otherwise they would not do, but that is nothing of weight, their hearts are never the better, but are rather worse, and more hypocrites than ever . . . for it is God alone by His powerful word of life operating in the hearts of people that changeth them."

Perhaps the most serious flaw in the legalistic stance is that it becomes almost inescapably a matter not of spontaneous unity but of we/they. We hold the high standards already; we know what is right. But they—the ignorant; the lax, the worldly—must be forced to live as we do. We will police them and preserve the faith. We will defend the old standards against them. Such an attitude cannot produce a loving fellowship, nor can it change hearts.

And so it fails, this well-motivated but wrong-headed effort to preserve a movement. The drift is from the propagation of the new life in the gospel to the preservation of a peculiar sect. The clever cage of rules by which alarmed members think to keep their treasure safe entraps them instead—and the treasure somehow slips out and away.

### Reducing devotions and standards

But if legalism is isolating and ultimately futile, the permissive stance, although different, is, alas, no better. True, it rightly recognizes that outward compulsion does not bring about the gospel. It avoids isolation from the world, and the "I thank God I am not like others" attitude.

The escape is costly, however, gained not by an inner fire and devotion leading to a radical and distinctive style of life, but by a reduction of both devotion and standards. The process is circular: lowered devotion brings lowered standards of life; lowered standards bring lowered devotion. The result is a more or less open and sincere lukewarmness—Laodicea, a gradual erosion of Christian distinctives.

Those adopting the permissive stance do not say: "My meditation on the Word and communion with the Spirit have given me new light on how I may serve my Lord more devotedly." Rather, they say: "I have been too demanding of myself. I am permitted more ease in this matter." But that ease is almost inevitably defined by desire, by the "latest insights" from psychology, sociology, new styles of biblical interpretation or whatever, but not by a consuming devotion.

This gradual easing drift produces its own hypocrisy: a denomination's official statements, publicly professed, of an expected level of Christian behavior, but constant violation of that behavior in the members' style of life. And that style inevitably will be individualistic, with a consequent low doctrine of the church. Each person will follow his or her own conscience: there is no mutual disciplining of fellow Christians in keeping with Matthew 18 and Galatians 6:1, 2. The church becomes not the body of Christ, within which there is mutual love and care, but a collection of atomistic individuals, each of whom goes his or her own way without taking any responsibility for one's fellows or accepting any concern from them.

Moreover, retaining contact with the world wins nothing. The permissive stance may, indeed, attempt evangelism, but only mildly, for it invites the worldling to a bland, culturally conformed Christianity. It does not proclaim: "If anyone will come after Christ, let him renounce himself and . . ." It says instead: "Accept Christ, and you will be happy and comfortable. No sweat, no worry." And the worldling looks at the exemplars of this gospel, sees no great difference between them and himself or herself, and is not presently interested in fire insurance. The worldlings do not repel the evangelism; they simply disregard it.

Pointing to the faults of the legalistic and the permissive stances is small comfort. Questions still nag. Is one or the other of these developments of a movement of the Spirit inevitable? Must it be so? Is there no escape from this dilemma? And once either has taken place, can there be recovery? Or must there be a new movement? If a new movement appeared, what would it be like?

Inevitable? To date, no denomination (we are assuming that all of them represented new movings of the Spirit) has maintained its original distinctiveness and power. For the most part the development has been to the relaxed, comfortable stance. And this seems likely a priori. It is difficult in succeeding generations to reproduce the vividness of the original experiences, and so at least some later converts will have less than the original devotion. Further, there is the constant eroding pressure to conform to the culture in which a group lives. Hence I must sadly admit that it seems that the outcome I have described for the Quaker, Anabaptist, and Wesleyan movements is inevitable for any movement. Defensive isolation keeps the form but loses the fiery life; relaxed permissiveness—the commonest development—keeps an institution from having great distinctiveness or impact.

Can such development ever be reversed, so that an institutionalized movement regains its original character? Of course, the power of God must not be discounted, but I fear that restoration is most unlikely. It has not occurred in the three movements cited; I know of none where it has. And any such reversal would seem unlikely. An institution has structures, offices, boards, committees, vested interests, a "we have always done it like this" rigidity. These are all incom-

bustible and can hardly be brought again to incandescence. Or, to change the metaphor, arthritis is not curable.

But out of one or more of these arthritic institutions the Spirit may bring forth a new moving, the old gospel again breaking forth in fiery life. If this should happen, what might the new movement be like? I offer some tentative suggestions, based on the Friends' beginnings.

The genesis will center on a person or a small group dissatisfied with what they presently see and experience in their religious life. With Friends it was George Fox and the "Valiant Sixty." From such a person or group, the conflagration will spread like fire in dry grass to others similarly dissatisfied, and the movement will be born.

These people—and their followers for some time thereafter—will have a stirring new insight into and experience of the old gospel—not a new gospel or anything additional, but a recovery of what has been lost or not fully understood. What is happening will be sensed as a

new attempt to get back to primitive Christianity. But this attempt must be seen as new or different (or what is all the excitement about?), not only within the movement, but to outsiders as well.

Of course, a new insight or experience requires a new style of life to embody it. This new movement will have one that is radically different and countercultural, so perceived by its members and by outsiders (who may deem it so peculiar as to be offensive). But to some it will seem right and challenging.

The members of this new movement of the Spirit will not be silent about their new life, but will proclaim it warmly and eagerly, persistently and boldly. They will use the word of their new experience and different style of life as an instrument of attack on the prevailing culture and as evangelism. What they will proclaim and propose will be not Band-Aids and Mercurchrome for the civilian walking wounded, but drill for combat troops. Members will meet not for a weekly self-confidence session and an all-week sucker, but for training with sword and

shield. The movement's proclamation will be a truly prophetic witness, a ringing "Thus saith the Lord."

And all of this—the insight, the experience, the style of life, the witness—will come out of a strikingly spontaneous agreement. No long debate, no rules imposed, little institutionalization, but a striking unity of the Spirit. There will also be a remarkable mutual concern and love for one another.

Such were the churches of Acts, the Friends, the Anabaptists, the Wesleyans. Such, I believe, will be the look of any new movement of the Spirit. And it will prosper and grow—but for how long? No one can say. In the past, however, as one movement of the Spirit has passed into mediocrity, God has moved once more to break forth in a continuing display of His power. So, I believe, it will be again. ■

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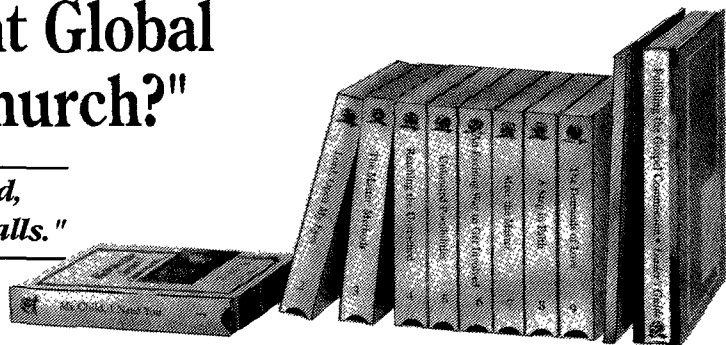
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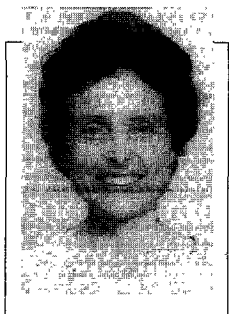
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# I married a shepherd, but no, I'm not a shepherdess

**Carolyn M. Livingston**

**Is a pastor's wife a shepherdess? Not necessarily so, says the author, as she argues for responding to God's call in life's varied situations.**



*Carolyn Livingston, a teacher and a nurse, has an M.A. in religion. She writes from Queensland, Australia.*

**I**t was one week before commencement. I already had my teaching appointment to a two-teacher country school 500 miles away. And in two years I would marry a ministerial graduate.

The division president was addressing the future teachers. "Teaching is not just a job," he said. "It's not just a way to fill in the time before you get married, either, girls. It is a special ministry to which you are called to dedicate yourself."

The speech left me uneasy. Wasn't I planning to do just what he said that I shouldn't do—teach for two years and then quit to get married? I was sure I was going to be a dedicated teacher. But was I doing the right thing—taking it on for just two years, then intending to quit?

After two dedicated and hardworking years of teaching, I felt exhausted. Personally, I was emerging from a broken engagement that shattered my little world. Professionally, I needed additional training to cope with the extended responsibilities of my job.

I resigned my job to take the further training. The second year of that study period was almost "wasted" in mere recuperative sleep and dropped subjects. Then a cousin challenged me to take up nursing. But was I not called to teaching?

I was not sure, but one thing I was sure of was that I needed a break. So I took up nursing as a much-needed and useful holiday from teaching.

## **Called for what?**

Nursing gave me a new lease of life and

time to gain an insightful perspective on what I am called to do. A realization that persists even to this day suddenly dawned on me. No, I am not called to dedicate my life to teaching—or nursing, for that matter. I am called to dedicate my life to God and to whatever He calls me to do. I am called to do the work that lies nearest unless given special indication otherwise. His word to me is "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccl. 9:10).

Now I am a minister's wife of 15 years' experience and mother of two boys aged 10 and 13. My husband's pastoral work has included being the shepherd of one or two churches and/or working on an evangelistic team. But no, I have not thereby automatically become the local shepherdess.

Yes, I preach a sermon occasionally; often teach the Sabbath school lesson; fill in for absent children's Sabbath school teachers; accompany my husband on Bible studies and pastoral visits; at times lecture and demonstrate in nutrition/cooking schools and Five-Day Plans; try to make sure no one at church leaves for home not spoken to or without provision for Sabbath lunch; take my turn on the church cleaning roster and the organ; pray for the individual church members and community members in our sphere of influence and/or knowledge; try to answer the telephone and the front door in a caring Christian manner; endeavor to provide a home atmosphere conducive to supporting my husband and nurturing my children spiritually, mentally, socially, and physically; and try to cater to the special needs of callers and guests.

But doing all these doesn't make me a shepherdess. After all, shouldn't every Christian woman do what she can to help



nurture those in her sphere of influence in a spiritual way, and use her other talents in areas of specific ability?

I have to admit that as a minister's wife I have a special talent that wives of men of other callings do not have: the talent of influence as a minister's wife. I have not asked for it, but it's mine because of the man I married. Because of this, people's expectations of me are usually higher than of others, whether justified or not. Because of this I am asked to help in ways that other women equally qualified may not be. And I am grateful that I can ask God to use this special aspect of my influence to help someone.

However, by virtue of marriage I am no more the shepherdess than a doctor's wife is a doctress, or a plumber's wife a plumberess. I believe that church-elected elders, deacons, and deaconesses are the official shepherding colleagues of my shepherd-husband in the shepherding ministry. And I am not always elected as deaconess.

#### **Called to be responsible**

I believe all members have the responsibility of contributing toward this nurturing/shepherding ministry, whether or not they are specialist shepherds or shepherdesses. No doubt the effectiveness of their roles will be influenced by their social situation.

When I became a nurse, I discovered that people had vastly different expectations of me in spiritual and church responsibilities than when I was a teacher. When I married a seminary student, people's expectations of me again changed. Yet I have been the same person.

Such expectations, though often unjustified, have provided me with unique opportunities for sharing. Should I resent these expectations, my opportunities might be lost. So I try to prioritize such opportunities and turn them into privileges of witness and ministry. I do this not because of some unique talent or office placed upon me by marriage to a minister, but because as a Christian I sense an urge of my own responsibility to those around.

I believe I am called to serve God in my present sphere of influence; and today it is as a shepherd's wife, as the mother of our children, and as a member of our local church and community. It is my privilege and opportunity to support my husband as he shepherds his various flocks. But no, I am not a shepherdess. ■

# The beast from the earth

**Robert Surridge**

**Symbolism surrounding the mythical Behemoth may give us a more solid basis for our identification of Revelation 13's beast from the earth.**



Robert Surridge is a pastor with the South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

**S**eventh-day Adventists believe that the second beast of Revelation 13, the lamb-like beast that arises from the earth, represents apostate Protestantism, the amalgamation of church and state, and, more specifically, the United States of America. In support of this interpretation, Adventist commentators from Uriah Smith onward have argued that the sea in Revelation 13:1 represents the dwelling place of men, Europe in particular, and the earth in verse 11 represents the opposite, an uninhabited or sparsely populated wilderness.

The interpretation that the symbol "sea" means peoples and nations is soundly based on Revelation 17:15. But our interpretation of the symbol "earth" is not so soundly based—we have no comparable biblical evidence for this symbol. Rather, our interpretation has been based on what seems to me to be conjecture and assumption. Those propounding this latter position say things like: "Since 'sea' represents peoples and nations . . . , 'earth' may reasonably be assumed to represent a sparsely settled region."<sup>1</sup> "The sea represents 'peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues' (Rev. 17:15), a true picture of Europe, where the papal beast arose. The earth must represent, not a crowded country of diverse nations, but a sparsely populated and isolated area."<sup>2</sup> "When in closely related prophecies 'earth' is contrasted with 'sea' and 'sea' represents vast populations, we perceive that 'earth' represents an area with a very limited population."<sup>3</sup>

Having concluded that in John's vision the sea represents multitudes of people, heavily populated areas, can one then assume that the second beast's rising place is just the opposite—a peaceful, sparsely populated wilderness? Perhaps some are satisfied that it is so. But the scholar familiar with the terms involved will likely still entertain serious doubts.

It is not my purpose in this article to prove or disprove that the lamblike beast is the United States of America. Rather I hope to go some way toward developing an interpretation of Revelation 13:11 that does not violate the principles of biblical symbolism, the literary structure of Revelation, or the original intentions of its author. Significantly, I believe this sounder interpretive approach leads to the same conclusion, thus giving us greater confidence in that conclusion and making it more convincing to others.

To interpret Revelation aright, we must begin with the book itself. Next we need to consult the Old Testament, especially the apocalyptic passages—for Revelation is particularly dependent on Old Testament symbolism.<sup>4</sup> The noncanonical apocalyptic works that influenced John's literary style also help us interpret the symbols he used.<sup>5</sup>

### Sea and earth in Revelation

The first question we must consider is whether one can base the interpretation of Revelation 13:11's "earth" on the meaning of "sea" in verse 1. Did John intend to convey the idea of opposites, as Adventists assume, or could earth and sea together symbolize the whole of civilization?

In Revelation 17:15 an angel explains that the symbol "waters" used in verse 1 means "peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues." If the symbol "waters" (*hudōr*) can be used for "sea" (*thalassa*), we have grounds for our interpretation of Revelation 13:1. Elsewhere in Revelation the sea is an inhabited place (for example, Revelation 8:9; 10:6; 16:3). But in all of these texts the sea's inhabitants are mentioned in close connection with those of the earth (often suffering the same or a similar fate, as in Revelation 16:2, 3.)

Inspecting the Old Testament texts that are used to support our interpretation, we find that only Daniel 7:2, 3 and Isaiah 17:12 refer to the sea. Isaiah 17:12, 13 parallels this term with "mighty waters" and "many waters," ter-

minology also appearing in Isaiah 8:7, 8 and Jeremiah 46:7, 8. It refers to the rising waters of a flooding river, which symbolize an invading army. Isaiah 17:12 speaks of the multitude making a noise like the sea, and this is probably how the symbol originated.

So our position that the rising of the Revelation 13:11 beast from the "sea" represents its rising from among multitudes of people or from a heavily populated area is both reasonable and defensible. It has good exegetical support. But, as we have noted above, we can find no such biblical support for our interpretation of "earth."

How was "earth" used in John's day? To better understand the terminology and symbolism here, we need to expand our study to include another significant Greek word: *gē*, which is translated "earth" both in Revelation and in other apocalyptic and prophetic writings. *Gē* occurs more than 70 times in Revelation, including five times in chapter 13. At least half the occurrences refer to the earth's human inhabitants. Of these, 10 have *gē* and *katoikeō* ("dwell") in the same phrase; for example, *tous katoikountas epi tēs gēs*, "those who dwell on the earth" (Rev. 11:10, RSV). There are also many references to kings and rulers of the earth, implying a strong social structure rather than virgin territory. None of the references describe *gē* as an uninhabited wilderness.

In Revelation 13:3 the meaning of *gē* is the exact opposite of sparsely populated wilderness, for "the whole earth followed the beast" (RSV). Verse 8 claims that "all who dwell on earth will worship it" (RSV), and verse 12 says "*tēn gēn kai tous en autēi katoikountas*," literally, "the earth and the ones who dwell in it."

Daniel uses the Hebrew and Aramaic stem 'rs for "earth" nearly 20 times, and half of these uses refer to people dwelling on the earth. None refer to a wilderness. The rest of the Old Testament's apocalyptic and prophetic literature also considered the earth the dwelling place of man. It is often used simply to mean Israel, or Palestine. The same is true in intertestamental apocalyptic literature. So as an isolated word, "earth" carries no symbolic meaning for John or his sources.

If, then, *gē* so often refers to earth's inhabitants, where do we find the support I suggested exists for the traditional Adventist view? There is a hidden indicator, understandable to John's original

readership, that shows that in verse 13 "earth" has the opposite meaning of what it has in the rest of the chapter—or throughout Revelation, for that matter.

### John's literary background

When we deal with symbolic passages of Scripture, we realize that the writer is trying to illustrate a spiritual truth. While the spiritual truth may have a universal application, the symbol he uses does not. It must by necessity come from his own cultural background. So to appreciate the spiritual truth fully, we need to understand what the symbol meant to the author and his first audience.

It is in the intertestamental apocalyptic literature, the source of some of John's rich symbolism, that we find a clue to the meaning of his cryptic message in Revelation 13:11. J. M. Ford points out that "chapter 13 introduces another Jewish belief associated with the coming of the Messianic era, namely, the activities of Leviathan and Behemoth. . . . [These] are the names of gigantic beasts or monsters described in Job 40 [and] 41."<sup>6</sup>

There are a number of references to these two monsters in various Jewish and Christian apocalyptic works and, most significantly, in the Old Testament. Since this is the case, we need to examine this myth as it occurs in biblical and intertestamental literature.

### John's use of the Leviathan- Behemoth myth in Revelation 13

Job 40:15-24 is the only biblical reference to Behemoth, an oxlike animal of the land. Leviathan, however, appears in Job 41; Isaiah 27:1; Psalm 74:12-14; and Psalm 104:26. It is a large, fierce, fire-breathing water beast that is proud and haughty like the beast of Revelation 13. It is also a many-headed dragon that God will slay in the days of Israel's deliverance (Ps. 74:14; Isa. 27:1).

In his commentary on Job, Pope traces the origin of Behemoth back through Ugaritic myth to the Epic of Gilgamesh.<sup>7</sup> Throughout these myths Behemoth, the devouring one, is always a land animal with prominent horns, as in Revelation 13:11.

Jewish writers made free use of the imagery of these mythical beasts. In the Apocrypha they appear together somewhat as they do in Revelation. The text of 4 Ezra 6:49-52 describes Leviathan and Behemoth as pre-Creation water monsters that God named on the fifth day of Creation week (see verse 47). On the third day, ac-

according to this passage, Behemoth was cast onto the dry land and lived among a thousand hills because the water that was left could not hold both beasts.

In 1 Enoch 60 we find a similar story, and an extra detail that is relevant to our understanding of Revelation 13. Here Behemoth "occupied with his breast a waste wilderness named Duidain [or Deddain] on the east of the garden where the elect and righteous dwell" (verse 8). Significantly, 2 Baruch 29:4 states, "Behemoth shall be revealed from his place and Leviathan shall ascend from the sea"—locating the places where they dwell just as does Revelation 13.

This myth was well known to first-century Jews through apocalyptic literature,<sup>8</sup> and they would have known that one beast arose out of a populous sea and the other from a distant, sparsely populated wilderness.

Milik also traces this mythical material back to the Epic of Gilgamesh. After discussing the twin mountains, and the gloomy desert of Deddain described in 1 Enoch 10:4, he states, "In Christian times the author of the Book of Parables was to place in the same region (Deddain) the male monster with the name Behemoth."<sup>9</sup> So John was not alone

among early Christian writers in making reference to this material.

Indeed the use of myth material was quite acceptable in primitive Christianity. A Leviathan-like creature appears in the Shepherd of Hermas.<sup>10</sup> And Jesus Himself used mythical material—the story of the rich man and Lazarus—to good effect. Just as an understanding of the origins of that story helps us fit it credibly into our system of belief, so an understanding of the story underlying the lamblike beast of Revelation 13 gives us the basis for interpreting the passage properly.

### Conclusion

The word "earth" does not have a consistent symbolic application in Revelation, as "horns," "stars," the "Lamb," and other words do. So in interpreting Revelation 13:11, we ought to abandon our old argument that merely contrasts "earth" with "sea." But we need not abandon our traditional position. The imagery of John clearly draws upon a well-known myth, long established as a metaphor in Jewish religious thinking, to express his prophetic message. In this legend the second beast was lord of the wilderness of Duidain. In Revelation 13:11, then, the place the beast arises

from is an uninhabited, rugged wilderness. Only by invoking the Behemoth-Leviathan image can we hope to show that John meant something different by "earth" in Revelation 13:11 than he meant by it in the rest of the book. ■

<sup>1</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1980), vol. 7, pp. 819, 820. (Italics supplied.)

<sup>2</sup> R. A. Anderson, *Unfolding the Revelation* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1974), p. 138. (Italics supplied.)

<sup>3</sup> C. M. Maxwell, *God Cares: The Message of Revelation for You and Your Family* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1985), vol. 2, p. 341. (Italics supplied.)

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of Saint John*, Vol. I of *The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1971), p. lxxv.

<sup>5</sup> Most modern writers on Revelation stress its indebtedness to apocalyptic literature. See, for instance, J. M. Ford, *Revelation (Anchor Bible)* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1975), p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

<sup>7</sup> M. H. Pope, *Job (Anchor Bible)* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1975), pp. 321, 322.

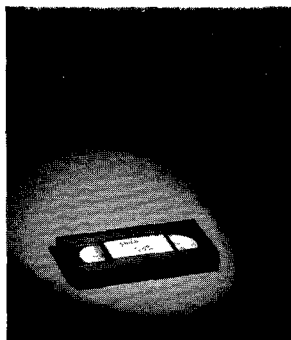
<sup>8</sup> See A. Y. Collins, *Crisis and Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), pp. 148f. Collins says that sea and land monster symbols were common first-century political symbols.

<sup>9</sup> J. T. Milik, *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* (London: SCM Press, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 631-638.

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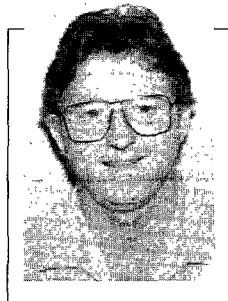
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# Ministering to the youth on their own turf

R. B. Ferrett

**A living faith demands communication in living terms. Youth ministry is no exception.**



*Rick Ferrett is a Seventh-day Adventist minister on Pitcairn Island. He devotes most of his ministry to young people.*

**C**all it the generation gap or call it the generation leap. Look to the developing countries or survey the prosperous West. Go to a distant island or a bursting metropolis. You cannot miss it. You cannot evade it. You have to confront it.

The youth culture. The youth value system. The way youth look at life, its mysteries, and its challenges.

It is a universal phenomenon that confronts nations, communities, and homes. The Christian church is no exception: it too is facing from within and outside a distinctive youth culture.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, it becomes increasingly necessary that in ministering to young people today, we understand their turf—what they think, how they feel, how they relate to each other—and shape our ministry accordingly. Instead of letting our preconceived ideas confront them, we should let their ideas of life, truth, and values define our approach to youth ministry.

One of the most crucial areas of concern in youth ministry is that of value formation. How are values formed? What role do cultural and societal forces play in creating value systems? When a young person says “I just did what seemed right at the time,” is that an indication that values do lie beneath decisions? On the other hand, when a person’s actions contravene professed values, what shall we say? Is behavior a true indicator of values? How correct is the statement that “once a value becomes internalized it becomes con-

sciously or unconsciously a standard of criterion for guiding action?”<sup>2</sup>

For many young people today values are formed and governed by the concept of “now time.” They tend to view the past and the future as inconsequential. Society in general and the media in particular have not been slow in detecting this attitude and have capitalized on the “now” theme in their effort to capture the mind of the youth.

Another factor that has momentous impact on young people’s development of values is the peer group. Researcher John Horrocks has noted: “The family—important as it is as a limiting and defining agency and as much as it is the central focus of any child’s existence—nevertheless cannot usually transcend, or indeed in many cases even meet, the achievement of the ‘peer group’ in shaping values and in providing perceived personal security as an individual.

“Research has suggested that within the group situation the adolescent can feel a sense of power, belonging, and security; he can make decisions in collaborating with his peers that he would never be capable of making alone. . . . Thus we may see the peer world for most adolescents as a tremendously important source of attitudes, the inhibitor as well as the initiator of action, the arbiter of right and wrong.”<sup>3</sup>

Hence the difficulty of an older generation to understand fully the youth—their vocabulary, thought process, feelings, perceptions, and values—unless it takes the time needed to identify itself with the world of the youth.

The problem is further complicated by a twofold weakness in how today’s soci-

ety transmits values. First, there is a lack of commitment to any absolute norm, leaving values in a state of constant flux. Second, there is an inconsistency between proclaimed attitudes and observable behavior within society, particularly in authority figures such as parents, teachers, political leaders, clergy, etc. A young person is often faced with the dilemma of relativism on the one hand and the hypocrisy of inconsistency on the other.

As traditional patterns of approval/disapproval regarding values diminish, adolescents are generally left to establish their own values within the "peer" group. But peer pressures tend to support a relativistic bias in valuing. For example, a teenager may disapprove of premarital sex personally, but may not wish to take any stand on a peer's conduct. Objective or reflective thinking as a basis for value is often missing; instead impulse becomes the norm. Since youth focus on the present, they tend to judge values in terms of immediate experience rather than of long-term consequence.

The fundamental problem with focusing on the "now" is that it can degenerate into a mere search for satisfying sensations. The craving for entertainment shapes one's values. Consequently, hedonism—seeking pleasure for itself, without accountability—determines what values an entire generation accepts.

Yet the gospel of Jesus Christ locates meaning in life outside the experience of personal pleasure or the gaining of personal ends. Not that the gospel calls for a total renunciation of the ordinary pleasures of living, but it does demand of a Christian that these do not become the focal point of values in life. The gospel requires that we seek first the kingdom of God. Once that priority is conceded, the Christian claim opens the way for living here, living now, and living fully. So the critical problem for the church is to teach its youth to differentiate between the way those in the secular world live in the "now" and the way Christians ought to live.

### Scripture as the value norm

But we must go a step further. What shall we teach our youth about how to use Scripture as a norm for developing values? Is the best approach merely authority-based, or is it an internalized process of valuing? For any and all problems our young people face, a common

approach has been to give them a good dose of proof texts, quotations, and Bible doctrines. A set of well-defined beliefs and doctrines, presented as a "truth system," is expected to perform the magic of keeping youth in line with moral and ethical demands. A logical extension of such an attitude has been to see the Bible teacher as a facilitator of knowledge and information, to project the Bible class as an intellectual pursuit just like any other class, and to expect from the student a factual mastery of the subject. Consequently, both the student and the teacher miss the essential purpose of Bible teaching: the making of a new person by the grace and power of God.

However, Scripture introduces not so much a "truth" system based on knowledge and information, but rather a "reality" system, based on the possibility of a new relational dynamic. God's Word reveals to us the real world we live in, the true nature of humanity and God, the pattern of relationships between God and us, and the possibility of entering a new reality governed by God's love and power.

L. O. Richards illustrates the point graphically (see figure).<sup>4</sup> He argues that as long as we remain on a truth system in our study and appreciation of the Bible, we remain content-oriented. We may discover and accept truth, but this acceptance is on an intellectual level and does not necessarily govern experience and values.

Theological emphasis	Communication pattern	Appropriate response
1. Truth system	Communicate content (truth)	Accept it as true
2. Reality structure	Guide to experience truth	Discover it to be real

On the other hand, the second system, which makes the biblical approach to reality its theological basis, helps students find a different way of sorting out life's issues. The students still learn scriptural teachings and doctrines—truths. But rather than remaining merely the object of an intellectual pursuit, these truths become a reference point for experience. And rather than discovering merely someone else's ideas, the students find a genuine standard for evaluating life experiences and conduct.

So system 1 is an intellectual approach

## The craving for entertainment shapes one's values.

to Scripture and system 2 is an internalized approach. The first leads to discovery of truth and calls for acceptance of value norms on the basis of authority. The second leads to internalizing truth and letting that truth govern experience in interpersonal relations and practical Christian living.

Which of these two systems would young people be interested in? A survey of 502 Seventh-day Adventist students in Australia between the ages of 12 and 18 revealed some interesting patterns. The study aimed to ascertain whether young people were more concerned with areas of personal relationships and practical Christian living or with theological and doctrinal areas. A think sheet (see box) consisting of 19 items was distributed. The participants were asked to indicate how important they considered each of these items, rating them in a scale of 1 to 5—1 being least important and 5 being very important.

The survey found that young people consider personal relationships and practical living as the most important areas of concern. They regarded doctrinal and theological issues as less important, although they do not despise doctrine as such.

They also consider issues of intense personal nature as very important (see graph), and would like to know what the Bible has to say about them. A simple question like making and keeping friends received the highest interest rating, suggesting that young people would be interested in hearing what the church has to say about it. Similarly almost 75 percent of the young people surveyed were interested in the issues of temptation and effective prayer. The only practical questions that received low interest scores (3, 6) were those that the students most likely found irrelevant to their situation.

What does all this mean? Without doubt, young people are more interested in a "reality" structure than a mere truth system—which suggests that our tradi-

tional methods of teaching and relating truths are inadequate. Bible teaching and value communication, to become effective and meaningful, must move away from emphasizing content only to applying content to experience, from cold facts to warm human living. Only then will teaching have relevance to the valuing task.

In a way the survey dares the older generation to provide opportunities for young people to question, analyze, argue, choose, and possibly arrive at their own conclusions. For too long we have been fearful of facing questions for which we have no answer; we have sought comfort in evasion. "The tragedy is that so many young adults never allow themselves to question beliefs or to be confronted with the searching demands of life in order that their religious 'clichés' and moralisms can be fully examined. For all too many young adults it is not the loss of faith that besets them, but a superficial faith."<sup>5</sup>

### Teaching to think

A teenage student once told me why a Bible class she attended turned her off completely. The teacher was well educated, spoke clearly, showed concern, and was generally nice. He said nothing that really disturbed the student, and yet she had little interest in his class. What was the reason for her frustration? The teacher's inability to welcome and handle questions.

Young people's questioning our closely held beliefs does not mean that they are on the road to perdition. It generally means that they are trying to understand and experience all the alternatives. Real truth is never afraid of openness to question, to debate, to clarification. In fact, it is truth that leads to change in values and belief structures.

Learning situations that are characterized by an issue-answer atmosphere rather than issue-discussion one usually offer a specific solution or point of view as the ultimate solution. Those who teach Bible from this orientation seek to move in a straight line to a previously worked-out solution, arguing logically, but usually indifferent to alternative views. Such an authoritarian approach carries a ring of finality about it; once an answer is found, there is no need ever again to reexamine the questions.

Our youth today would reject such an approach. Rather than dismissing alternatives, they want to generate several and then explore them all. Therefore a

person teaching Bible or communicating values should try to move outward, seeking new insights and ideas and holding off decision until alternative views are explored. The process emphasizes "opening" outward to the right answer. Once an answer is decided upon it needs to be tested in experience, while the seeker remains open to better solutions.

Both approaches may lead to valid answers. However, the latter is more likely to win and keep the youth because it

## THINK SHEET

*The survey referred to in the article reads as follows:*

As you read through the list of statements below, indicate how important each item is to you by giving it a score of 1 to 5 (1 = not very important, 5 = very important).

1. Salvation: being good versus believing?
2. The judgment: is it going to be that bad?
3. What do you do when you don't enjoy church?
4. How to beat temptation.
5. The Bible: why we can trust it and how we can enjoy it.
6. How to grow up in a home with no mom or dad.
7. What entertainment can a Christian enjoy?
8. The trinity: what is it all about?
9. How to get better grades at school.
10. How can I have more/better faith?
11. The millennium and other last day events.
12. How to get the right boyfriend/girlfriend (dating and all that).
13. How to pray effectively.
14. Daniel: the four superpowers and the mark of the beast.
15. How can I be better prepared for a career/employment?
16. What about sex, drugs, rock, and all that?
17. Making good friends and keeping them.
18. The Holy Spirit, angels, and spooks.
19. Easy ways to share your faith.

exposes them to the realities of existence and provides them the opportunity to explore the meanings of life experience in the light of Christian faith.

Have we failed to provide that ideal learning situation? Could it be that we have called our young people to come inside our church walls to talk about *our* faith without offering the counterbalance of taking them into the "world" to test the reality of faith and belief against the facts of human life and existence?

Whatever the answer, we cannot escape from the conclusion that our ministry to young people should be on their turf, in their world, meeting their demands. To do this successfully, youth ministry:

1. Must flow from an understanding that the youth's expressions of life may differ from ours, but that they are just as valid.

2. Should relate Scripture and doctrine—not merely to achieve intellectual assent and doctrinal discovery, but to create an understanding of a reality structure in which the relational and personal dynamic operates on biblical principles.

3. Cannot ignore or evade problems society poses, but must face them squarely and let Christian principles work on them.

4. Must provide young people direct experience and involvement in the great issues of life where their beliefs and faith can be tested.

5. Must present doctrine as a basis to challenge lifestyle and bring about change in behavior.

6. Must work and play with, teach, counsel, and guide young people on a footing of equality; it must enter their world and be part of their lives.

7. Must be ready to admit that adults don't always have the answers, and that together we can make an honest search for answers.

A living faith demands communication in living terms. Youth ministry has no other option. ■

<sup>1</sup> "Youth Today," *InterVarsity Newsletter*, November 1970.

<sup>2</sup> M. Rokeach, *Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1968), p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> J. E. Horrocks, "Adolescent Attitudes and Goals," in Muzafer and G. W. Sherif, *Problems of Youth* (Chicago: Aldine Co., 1965), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> L. O. Richards, *Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> A. Moore, *Young Adult Generation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), p. 77.



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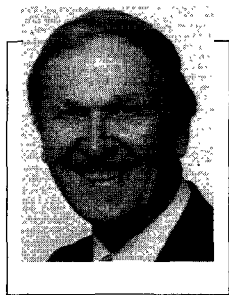
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# Adventist worship

Floyd Bresee

**A**dventist ministers in several parts of the world are frustrated about the form of their weekly worship hour. We have used pretty much the same order of service, made the same announcements, sung the same songs, prayed the same prayers, and preached almost the same sermons decade after decade, generation after generation—until recently.

Young people say we're out of tune with the times. Significant numbers of members seem bored with worship. They are voting for change—with their feet. Thousands of Adventist congregations have twice as many names on the books as they have worshipers in the pews. Perhaps yours is one of them.

Pastors are experimenting with new ways to worship. But these innovations can have their problems too. We must not replace traditional worship, from which time may have drained the meaning, with gimmickry and entertainment that have no biblical basis.

Adventist ministers should not be afraid to experiment with new forms of worship, but we need some guidelines. There's no better place to find them in Scripture than in that uniquely Adventist chapter, Revelation 14. Verse 7 insists we must be a worshipping people. It is our *worship* of our Creator that makes us unique.

## Ingredients of Adventist worship

1. *Adventist worship should be awe-inspiring.* Revelation 14:7 says the first angel declares, "Fear God, and give glory to him." As Adventist ministers know, this word "fear" suggests reverence, awe. Worship does involve having a good re-

lationship with your fellow-worshippers—a gospel of love cannot be realized in isolation. And it involves having warm feelings toward God. But these are no more than parts of worship. In corporate worship, God's people enter God's throneroom together. Worship is not primarily for feeling good, but for seeing God.

2. *Adventist worship should be joyful.* Revelation 14:2, 3 describes God's redeemed in worship: "The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang as it were a new song" (NIV). This heavenly harp-playing and singing reveal that joy and feeling belong in worship. When we who are preparing for heaven worship as we will in heaven, our worship will be joyful. It will include both our thoughts and our feelings, demanding both clear heads and warm hearts.

Too many of us Adventist ministers have had the emotion educated out of us. Too many of us so fear emotionalism, excess emotion, that we're afraid of any emotion at all. But we are wrong in presuming we defend our pioneers when we defend only the formal and the rational. Early Adventist worship included great gobs of relating and participating. And sometimes it was highly emotional.

3. *Adventist worship should be experiential.* Of the song God's people sing Revelation 14:3 declares, "No one could learn the song" (NIV). Why? Because it is a song of personal experience. Nobody else can do it for us. Worship is experiential.

Worship is not a routine, a tradition. It is an event, a happening. It is not a passive, spectator sport, but personal interaction between Creator and created. Worship is encounter.

## Adventist worship controversial

Adventist worship has become controversial. Myriads of pastors worldwide have been communicating with the General Conference Ministerial Association, asking for guidance as they seek a way through the minefield surrounding change in worship practice. Some don't know where to turn. What should we change? What should never change?

The subject demands far more than the cursory treatment this brief article affords. We have begun research for a book on Adventist worship, and plan to survey a sample of Adventist congregations. Preliminary plans include addressing such questions as:

1. How did early Adventists worship?
2. What are our current worship customs or traditions, and where did we get them?
3. What do our pastors and congregations think about worship?
4. What do our young people think of our worship services?
5. What are the Bible principles that will keep us balanced between divine adoration and human fellowship and between reason and emotion?
6. What about "celebration" worship?

Pastor, how does your worship service measure up? Sometimes you ought to sit alone in the sanctuary, when the people are gone and the pews are empty, and ask the one question that counts: "Did they or did they not meet God today?"

Keep preaching the old message. But keep experimenting with more meaningful ways to worship, until you feel certain that every week every sincere worshiper is encouraged to encounter God. Worship is encounter. ■

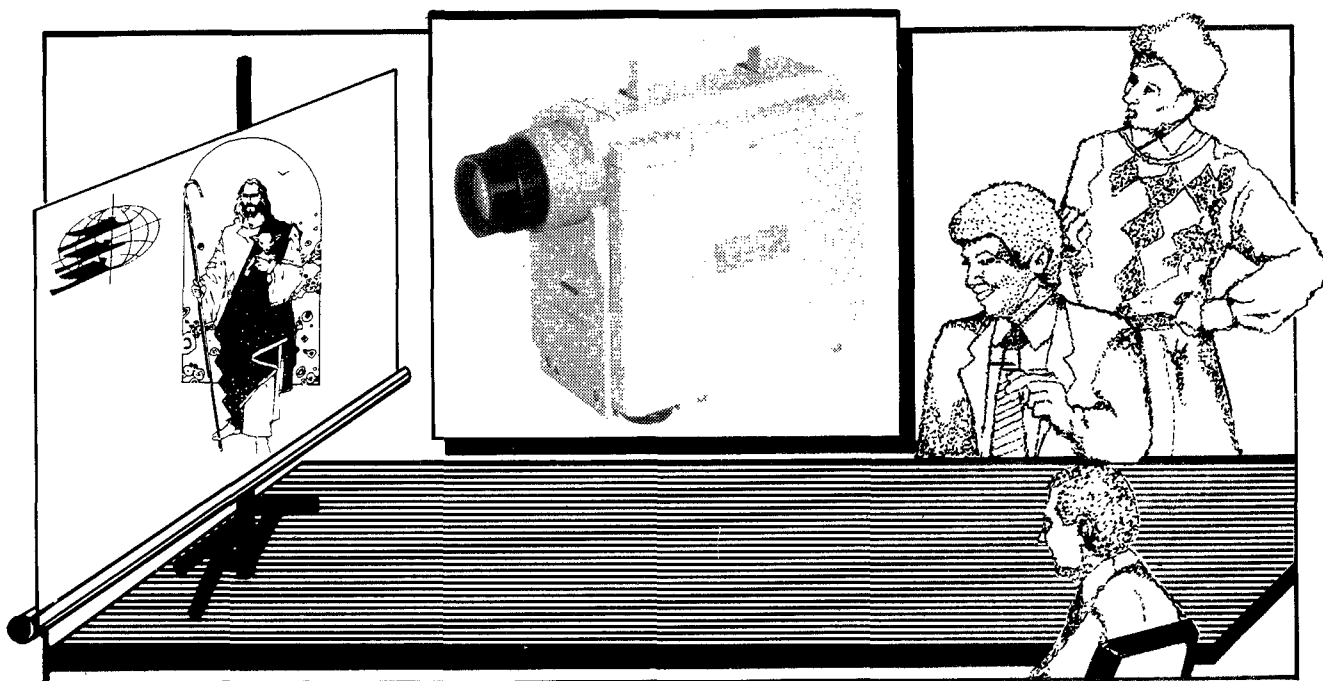


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**Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters**

Stephen Westerholm, *Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1988, 238 pages, \$14.95, paper. Reviewed by Sakae Kubo, retired vice president for academic affairs, Atlantic Union College, now living in Chico, California.*

This book deals with the place of law in Paul's thought. Paul regards the law in a pejorative way in most cases, and yet he talks about fulfilling the law and living out its ethical content. The question is, How does Paul view law?

Westerholm first presents an overview of recent interpreters of Paul who deal with questions relevant to Paul's view of the law. Scholars generally no longer regard Judaism as a religion of works-righteousness. They believe that the law was given to the Israelites as a gift of love subsequent to their covenantal relationship—which was based on grace.

Recent interpreters also point out Paul's apparent inconsistencies concerning the law. At times Paul speaks against it, at other times upholds it, and at yet other times uses a more balanced approach, keeping in tension the relationship between justification and the fulfilling of the law.

The second part of the book gives Westerholm's own views on Paul's understanding of law. He first states that the word *nomos* refers to the Old Testament Scriptures (generally, the Pentateuch); when Paul uses it, however, he means specifically the Sinaiatic legislation. *Nomos* never refers to the perversion of law.

On justification by faith the author sees Paul agreeing with Judaism that the law promises life. However, Paul says that human failure keeps us from ever achieving this promise. Judaism does not regard sin as radically as Paul does. So Judaism does not emphasize divine grace to the same extent—Paul totally excludes human works.

Westerholm sees a kind of dichotomy in Paul's theology. There is a dispensation of law from Sinai to Golgotha, followed by a dispensation of grace. God in His foreknowledge had given the law to

bring out sin, which was already latent in humans, in order to set the stage for granting mercy through Christ.

With Christ's coming, the Spirit replaces the law. The Christian is not under compulsion to do the law, but nevertheless in the Spirit "completely satisfies" what the law requires.

This book requires a lengthier review than can be presented here. It is important enough for careful study by every Adventist minister. It presents clearly and concisely the views of recent scholars on Paul's understanding of law and the author's own careful explanation of the problems raised by these scholars.

**The Keys of This Blood**

Malachi Martin, *Simon and Schuster, New York, 1990, 734 pages, \$24.95, hardcover. Reviewed by Marvin Moore, associate book editor, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Boise, Idaho.*

*The Keys of This Blood* has been making minor waves in Adventist circles the past few months. The subtitle tells why: *The Struggle for World Dominion Between Pope John Paul II, Mikhail Gorbachev, and the Capitalist West*. Notice the following from the first part of the book (pages 15 and 17): "Willing or not, ready or not, we are all involved in an all-out, no-holds-barred, three-way global competition. . . . The competition is about who will establish the first one-world system of government that has ever existed in the society of nations. . . ."

"It is not too much to say, in fact, that the chosen purpose of John Paul's pontificate . . . is to be the victor in that competition, now well under way."

Martin, a former Jesuit and professor at the Vatican's Pontifical Biblical Institute, claims that John Paul has had one overarching purpose in his travels during the 13 years since he took office: To gain recognition for himself as a geo-religious and geo-political force to be reckoned with.

Martin sees both Communism and capitalism as godless institutions that cannot solve the world's ills, and he claims that this is John Paul's view as well. Martin is unabashedly laudatory of the Roman Catholic Church, which he

claims was established by Jesus Christ Himself and is therefore the only true church on earth and God's ultimate solution to the world's problems.

According to Martin, the American principle of separation of church and state has devastated the West's corporate morality and must be dismantled if a lasting spiritual and moral order is to be established in the world. As Christ's vicar, the pope is God's highest authority on earth and the only human being ordained by God to bring order out of the moral chaos.

However, Martin does not envision the pope taking up arms to gain control of the world. He says John Paul believes that the alleged vision of Fatima (a series of monthly "appearances" of the virgin Mary to several children in the Portuguese hamlet of Fatima in 1917) revealed God's plan for the world's future during his (the pope's) lifetime. Martin also claims that this was corroborated during a personal "communication" John Paul had with heaven during his six-month recovery from an assassination attempt in 1981.

According to Martin, Fatima predicted that a catastrophic event will soon occur in the heavens over Eastern Europe, destroying the hopes of both Communists and capitalists for world dominion. Out of this worldwide catastrophe John Paul will emerge as "the servant of God's grand design."

These are astounding claims, to say the least!

In preparing this review I asked two Adventist specialists in Roman Catholic history and theology how reliable they consider Martin to be. According to these scholars, Martin is not always accurate. He is an excellent fiction writer, and his book is written more in fictional than in documentary style. This is not to say that his assertions are wrong, but they cannot be proved correct. The book does not provide a single footnote, making it difficult to separate fact from opinion. Yet as a former Jesuit priest and professor at the Gregorian University of Rome, Martin certainly must have some inside information.

John Paul was the leading force in the

dramatic events in Poland during the last half of 1989, and strongly influenced events in other parts of Eastern Europe. There can be no doubt that John Paul would like to achieve spiritual-moral-social dominance over Eastern Europe and Russia. If, in the process, he can gain political control in the rest of the world, that would be in harmony with historic Catholic self-understanding.

Martin is a firm believer in papal authority, and he is very fond of John Paul II. His book is a challenge to powerful forces in Roman Catholicism, especially in America, that want to see the church go beyond the liberal reforms of Vatican II. In contrast, Martin wants the church to go back to its pre-Vatican II mind-set.

The Keys of This Blood has been making waves in Adventism because it seems to substantiate what was predicted about Roman Catholicism 100 years ago. Martin's scenario could usher in the long-anticipated end-times. But let us be enthusiastic wisely.

### **Women in Their Place, Does God Call Women?**

U. J. Underwood, M.D., *Biblical Publications, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1990, 461 pages, \$14.95, paper. Reviewed by Lawrence G. Downing, pastor, Anaheim Seventh-day Adventist Church, Anaheim, California.*

A noticeable need for editing obscures insightful and helpful understanding hidden within this book written by a woman physician. Now and again flashes radiate from the pages and illuminate our understanding of woman's role in biblical literature and affirm the author's grasp of the barriers the Adventist Church has erected against women. We male clergy plead guilty to thwarting the expression of the talents given women. Unfortunately the author obscures her point with a meandering potpourri of extraneous observations and esoteric opinions.

Particularly troubling are statements presented as fact with no evidence to support her claims. Here are a few examples:

- If males prayed and studied the Bible more, they would accept women.
- "True" records show that more women than men were burned at the stake.
- Sprinkling baptismal candidates was introduced by apostate male ministers because "no husband wants another man holding his wife in his arms."

A precarious argument from silence underlies Underwood's belief that in Old

Testament times women served as priests. "If women were meant by God not to serve in the ministry, then the Scriptures would plainly state this." She feels female priests were necessary to diagnose and treat women's physical problems. Men could not perform this task; therefore, there must have been women priests.

Underwood's list of women and their accomplishments, drawn from both Testaments, affirms God's confidence in women. Their lives are a witness against any church and its leaders who consciously exclude this significant group. In the Adventist Church their dedication has benefited the denomination.

Underwood's charge of an abuse of power by Adventist clergy and administration stands as an indictment we cannot lightly cast aside. Her voice adds to those who call for repentance, reformation, and refutation of those practices that have brought hurt and limitation to those God has called.

Underwood's contention that God does call women will be ignored to our harm. How unfortunate that her persuasive arguments are hidden in pages of extraneous material.

### **The True Image: Christ as the Origin and Destiny of Man**

Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1989, 430 pages, \$19.95, paper. Reviewed by Wayne Willey, pastor, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Hughes begins with the premise that "the doctrine of man (anthropology) can be truly apprehended only in the light of the doctrine of Christ (christology)." He presents Christ as the "true image in which man was formed at creation and into which by the reconciling grace of re-creation fallen man is being transformed."

Comprehensive and challenging enough to be a seminary textbook, this volume has been written clearly enough for the layperson to understand its concepts.

The author addresses problem areas in anthropology—original sin, foreknowledge and foreordination, immortality of the soul, and perfection. While upholding the importance of orthodoxy, Hughes challenges traditional interpretations that contradict Scripture. His persuasive writing makes one wonder how some issues could have been misunderstood for so long. I found his discus-

sion of the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and the eternal torment of the wicked most impressive.

Hughes' survey of the history and development of the doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of man makes this book worth buying. It is of special interest to Seventh-day Adventists. While reading this book, I began to understand why we continue to have problems with such concepts as perfection. I could see the linkage between our doctrine of Christ and our doctrine of man. I discovered that a deficient doctrine of Christ will result in a stunted doctrine of man.

In studying the development of doctrine in Adventism, we find that our spiritual ancestors developed their doctrine of man well before they dealt with the doctrine of Christ. Many of them held unorthodox, even heretical, views of the nature and divinity of Christ while developing their doctrine of man. It is, therefore, not surprising that we still have a few details to clarify in our doctrine of man. Hughes provides useful principles to understand God's Word, ourselves, and the relationship between ourselves and God better.

### **Recently Noted**

Getting the Best of Yourself, David W. Aycock, Victor Books, Wheaton, Il, 1989, 166 pages, \$6.95, paper.

Not just another self-help book, this volume gives practical how-tos in overcoming destructive thinking and behavior. "To do the job right, you must have the right tools," and Aycock seeks to direct us to some of those tools in a Christian context. He does not deal in generalities but provides specific help. For example, the author explains how and when to use such techniques as "thought stopping" when stressed by worry or other troubling thoughts.

This is an excellent book for both the pastor and his or her counselees, and to have available in the church library. ■

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## Letters

From page 2

will eventually lead to a patience, tolerance, and sympathy for the rest of God's children that we've never seen before! —Robert N. L. Forman, Monmouth, Illinois.

■ George R. Knight and Christine Feldmann-Neubert are to be commended for their outstanding articles on authority and crisis opportunity. I have already determined that Dr. Feldmann-Neubert's article will form a platform for a sermon series on the opportunities facing Adventism as a result of the current spat of crises that confront the church.

Dr. Knight's outstanding review of the efforts of church leadership to manipulate both Ellen White and her writings into the support of traditionalist doctrinal positions gives me hope for the outcome of our current debates. —Michael Hanson, Riverside, California.

### Emotion versus emotionalism

David Newman's editorial "Celebration' Is a Naughty Word" (December 1990) failed to address the real central issue involved. The question that we should be addressing most prayerfully, soberly, and analytically at present is this: Is it possible that our church is standing at a crossroads where a way stretches before us that appears safe, attractive, and even right, but that would lead us in the wrong direction?

We all need, want, and yearn for renewal. We desperately need a mighty, new infilling of the Holy Spirit. But we don't want a counterfeit. We don't want a substitute. We need more emotion, not only in our worship but in our individual lives. Love is the most powerful of all emotions; we need more, *much more*, of it! Hatred is a mighty emotion; we need more of it—hatred of sin, hatred of everything false and phoney. But what we *don't need* is emotionalism. There is a world of difference between emotion and emotionalism. May God give us the heavenly discernment to distinguish between them! And not only between them, but, even more im-

portant, between their *fruitage!* —Geoff Garne, pastor, Maryborough Seventh-day Adventist Church, Maryborough, Queensland, Australia.

### Human life principles perplex

I am perplexed about two points in the February 1991 editorial "How sacred is human life?" Point nine seems to indicate that since God has left it with individuals to make choices for God or evil, we, then, have no business enacting laws to protect life. And point 11 leaves life decisions in the context of the family. Though quality life happens in a family, I hope that the committee forming this resolution is not suggesting that families have the right to decide who may live and who may die—or rather who can be put to death. —David Glenn, pastor, Warren Seventh-day Adventist Church, Warren, Michigan.

■ I applaud the attempt to develop a set of biblical principles. Still, it was a sad admission of the direction of the leadership of our church when the members on the committee were on their fourth meeting before they decided to go at it from a biblical perspective. Thank you, David Newman, for your clear stance: "This church must be guided first by what the Scriptures say and only secondarily by human ethical theories." Personally, I would not have included the human theory part, for two reasons: because they're *human*, and because they're *theories*.

Except for principle number 11, I agree with the committee. I even agree with that one as far as *individuals* are concerned. But the church—as an institution, and not as a political entity—must take a stand against death. We do so in regard to the armed services, and nobody is paying the church for it. It's called conscientious objection.

The flaw with principle 11 is that the "healthy" in "healthy family relationships" remains undefined. Would a family with a relationship that's "healthy" consider abortion a "healthy" decision for the unborn child?

The church as a faith community should always be supportive of people who need us most: people in a crisis. Adultery is a crisis. Theft is a crisis. And so is murder. So how do we as a faith community show our support in these crises? We show it by loving care,

*notwithstanding* our disapproval of the sins committed. We show our disapproval through disfellowship. By taking that stand, we don't take away people's "right" to take someone's life, or the "right" to sexual permissiveness. But we hold them responsible.

Decisions about human life—God has left these up to individuals. Positions about human life have not been and cannot be. —Luis F. Acosta, associate pastor, Santa Barbara Seventh-day Adventist Church, Coleta, California.

■ I understand the guidelines to say that human life is sacred to God, but principle number nine says "God gives humanity the freedom of choice—even if it leads to abuse and tragic consequences." This leaves unanswered the vital question Does an unborn human being come under the protection of the Sixth Commandment? Does a mother or prospective mother have the right to terminate the life of her unborn child if that is her desire?

I do not know whether your guidelines will satisfy those Adventists who endorse abortion. But I do not believe they will satisfy those Adventists who are opposed to abortion and want a yes or no statement from our church leaders.

I believe the members of the committee should view ultrasonic pictures of a developing human being in the womb. It is this scientific development that led Dr. Bernard Nathanson, an atheist, head of one of the largest abortion clinics, to make the following statement: "I am deeply troubled by my own increasing certainty that I had in fact presided over 60,000 deaths. There is no longer serious doubt in my mind that human life exists within the womb from the very onset of pregnancy." ("Deeper Into Abortion," *New England Journal of Medicine*, Nov. 28, 1974; quoted by Debra Evans in the book *Without Moral Limits* [Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1989], p. 58). —Clifford Laurell, Apple Valley, California.

### Thanks for the portrait

Thank you for giving us a fresh, personal glimpse of our new General Conference president and his wife (December 1990). Portraits like that are invigorating and educational, and this one helps me to appreciate the Advent movement I belong to. —Johann Thorvaldsson, Holbaek, Denmark.

# Adventism

From page 10

leaders need to maintain conscious alertness to what is happening to them. Only by recognizing the problems and challenges and taking efficient action can any church hope to succeed in its mission.

Third, Paul reminded Timothy that he must constantly renew the spiritual resources available to him and his fellow believers in order to maintain the stamina needed for battle (see 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6, 7).

Tidball concludes by asserting that to succeed the church needs "to be alert constantly to the peril of mixed motives, the threat of unwieldy bureaucracy, the lessening of standards, and the fossilisation of principles."<sup>15</sup> Beyond that, he suggests that the church needs to be open to new leaders that God may wish to use for its reform and renewal.

The early church, of course, failed to learn the lessons that Paul sought to teach Timothy. In its second century it began to suffer the ravages of both institutionalization and secularization. Methodism also

failed at that point in its second century. The fate of Adventism in its second century awaits the ongoing process of history. The only thing that can be said with certainty is now that Adventism will be swept down the river by the same sociological forces unless it *deliberately chooses and courageously acts* to reverse the patterns of institutionalization and secularization that are part of the dynamics of an imperfect world.<sup>16</sup> ■

## References

- <sup>1</sup> David O. Moberg, *The Church as a Social Institution: The Sociology of American Religion*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), pp. 118-125. All unattributed citations dealing with Moberg's stage theory in this article are taken from this source.
- <sup>2</sup> For the gift of tongues in early Adventism, see the letters by Ellen G. White and Hiram Edson in *Present Truth*, December 1849, in *Early SDA Periodicals*, pp. 34-36. Ellen White's autobiographical writings provide ample evidence of other charismatic experiences in early Adventism.
- <sup>3</sup> David O. Moberg, *The Church as a Social Institution* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 120, 121.
- <sup>4</sup> See Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?" *Eternity*, September 1956, pp. 6, 7, 43-45; T. E. Unruh, "The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956," *Adventist Heritage* 4 (Winter 1977): 35-46.
- <sup>5</sup> Thomas F. O'Dea, *Sociology and the Study of Religion: Theory, Research, Interpretation* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), pp. 240-255; Thomas F. O'Dea and Janet O'Dea Aviad, *The Sociology of*

*Religion*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1983), pp. 56-64.

<sup>6</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), p. 170.

<sup>7</sup> O'Dea, p. 248.

<sup>8</sup> John Wesley, quoted in Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 175.

<sup>9</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1969), p. 132; on Wesley, see Weber, p. 176.

<sup>10</sup> Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), p. 226.

<sup>11</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: New American Library, 1957), p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> See Charles Edwin Jones, *Perfectionist Persuasion: The Holiness Movement and American Methodism, 1867-1936* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1974); Timothy L. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness: The Story of the Nazarene, the Formative Years* (Kansas City, Mo.: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962); Melvin Easterday Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1980).

<sup>13</sup> Derek Tidball, *The Social Context of the New Testament: A Sociological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), pp. 134-136.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>16</sup> For more on the problem of institutionalism in Adventism, see George Knight, "The Fat Lady and the Kingdom," *Adventist Review*, Feb. 14, 1991.



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## Journey to the cross

From page 5

*What must I do?* The cross strips the human of any pretension for such self-salvation. Non-Christian religions, as Emil Brunner rightly pointed out, may speak of the "self-confident optimism" of the human in the struggle with sin,<sup>4</sup> but the Bible does not accede to self any such innate potential for redemption. As Ellen G. White wrote: "The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion."<sup>5</sup> A self that could save itself is a contradiction to the gospel and its cross.

So the cross is the one and only means of identifying God's way. In the words of John Stott: "In different ways and with different emphases all the religions of the world proclaim the possibility of self-salvation by self-reliance or the accumulation of merit; only the gospel proclaims the salvation through the merit of Another, who paid the price of sin in a unique, historical act of self-sacrifice."<sup>6</sup>

Even our understanding of the nature of God—His love, His fatherhood, His grace, His justice—flows out of the perspective of the cross. Other religions do

talk about a loving, holy, just, omnipotent, omniscient, caring god—but never of a cross. Only Christianity talks of a God who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, RSV). In choosing the death of the cross to deal with sin and to vanquish the originator of sin, the Man of the cross became both the defier of death and the definer of life. Through Him death is a defeated foe; through Him life becomes possible. Therefore, He is the ground of our today and our tomorrow, our faith and our love, our hope and our certitude.

### A cross expects death

The second dynamic of the cross-centered ministry is that it expects a perpetual surrender to the demands of discipleship. "Every Christian," Martin Luther once said, "is a crucian—a man of the cross." When Jesus enunciated that taking up the cross to follow Him is not an option but a necessity of discipleship (Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23), He was saying that the cross and its claims—both immediate and ultimate—must confront Christian ministry and demand absolute response. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's comment is appropriate: "If our Christianity has ceased to be serious about discipleship, if we have watered down the gospel into emotional uplift

which makes no costly demands and which fails to distinguish between natural and Christian existence, then we cannot help regarding the cross as an ordinary everyday calamity, as one of the trials and tribulations of life. . . . When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die. . . . It is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at His call."<sup>7</sup>

So the call to Christian ministry is a call to the cross—to continually deny self its persistent desire to be its own savior, and to adhere fully to the Man of the cross in order that our "faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:5, RSV). ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1901), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> W. A. Visser 't Hooft, *No Other Name* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915), p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Emil Brunner, *The Mediator* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947), pp. 291-299.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Authentic Jesus* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1985), p. 79.

<sup>7</sup> Dietrick Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), pp. 78, 79.

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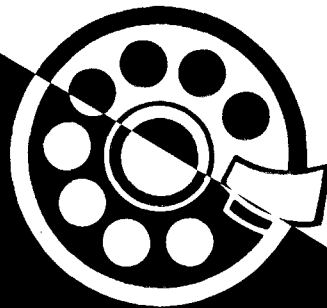
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The group study is christened *Testimony Countdown III*, to distinguish it from other studies of the *Testimonies* in the 1960s and 1970s. The current approach involves 10 sessions. The Bible is the primary textbook. Ellen G. White's *Counsels for the Church*, along with a study guide, make up the resource package for participants.

*Counsels for the Church*, a 400-page book, is a comprehensive selection of materials from *Testimonies for the Church* and other E. G. White books. Originally produced for translation and use in countries where it was not possible to publish the entire corpus of Spirit of Prophecy publications, the book is a survey of Christian doctrine, belief, and lifestyle.

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The entire Takoma Park church seminar is available on 10 cassettes from American Cassette Ministries, P.O. Box 922, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17108-0922. The Ellen G. White Estate also has ready a complete resource package for churches wanting to conduct *Testimony Countdown III*. The materials include *Counsels for the Church*, the accompanying study guide, *The Great Visions of Ellen G. White*, certificates, and a booklet on how to conduct the seminars. For more information, write to The Secretary, Ellen G. White Estate, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20904.

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**Doctors do it, why not pastors?**

“Doctors don't come to your home anymore,” I told my congregation during the announcement period. The physicians present looked startled. Others looked curious. “Is it because they care any less about the sick? Is it because they are less concerned about your health?”

I paused and continued. “No. They still care. They are still concerned. But they have discovered one thing: they reach more patients if the patients come to them. It's a better use of time and energy.”

I was now ready for the next logical step. I shared with my parishioners that I also care. I also am concerned, but I am experiencing frustration in attempt-

ing to visit so many of them with so little time. In view of this, I suggested that our church implement “The Pastor Is In” Day twice a month. People wanting to see me may sign up on a call sheet taped to the church office door or call the secretary to set up an appointment. Visitors, of course, may choose their own agenda—from serious discussions to griping about my previous Sabbath's sermon to anything they wish to unburden.

So far my congregation has accepted the idea, and it is working well. The plan does not do away with regular home visitation, but provides an opportunity for those who want to have a little time with their pastor. The plan has also provided significant input on various aspects of my ministry. — Denver W. Cavins, pastor, Mount Pisgah Seventh-day Adventist Church, Candler, North Carolina.

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