

# Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

April 1993

AND THE

# Glory

The silence breaks into morning.  
That One Star light the world.  
The lily springs to life and  
not even Solomon...

Let it begin with singing  
and never end!  
Oh, angels, quit your lamenting!  
Oh, pilgrims,  
upon your knees in tearful prayer,  
rise up  
and take your hearts  
and run!

We who were no people  
are named anew  
God's people,  
for he who was no more  
is forevermore.

*Ann Weems*

## The Way of Life engravings

The *Way of Life* engravings (October 1992) tell a remarkable but familiar story. It is a story of two covenants and two testaments. To me, more than anything else, they prove that, like Israel of old, Seventh-day Adventists are led by God.

As in Exodus, God also called the Advent movement with the hope of a speedy entrance into the Promised Land. As in Exodus, God then led them in the opposite direction—to Sinai—in order that they might first receive the laws of the kingdom.

It is no coincidence that for the first 40 years of Adventism our focus was on doctrine. During that time we too learned of the law, of the Sabbath, of judgment, of holiness, and of duty. God seemed to come down to Adventism to write the law all over again. And like Israel of old, we responded in exactly the same manner: "All that the Lord hath said will we do."

Yet the truth is we have done no better. The truth is we are no closer to Canaan than 150 years ago. Like Israel we have been traveling in circles.

Regardless of the grandeur and majesty of Sinai, God never intended it to be our final destination. The promise is Canaan, not the wilderness of sin. Yet when will we realize that we can't get to Canaan by circling Sinai? When will we realize that Moses is not the one who can take us there, that only Joshua can do that?

The *Way of Life* engravings are remarkable in what they reveal of the path of Adventist history and the only possible path of the future for Adventists. I know that some would call that "going off on a tangent." But compared with the circular path around Sinai, the road to Canaan can only be a tangent.—Z. B. Schubert, Cherry Valley, California.

■ Of the two pictures the second one is the more attractive one and does indeed present the gospel more accurately than the first one. The reason for this is that the first picture presents the law and Jesus as separate subjects when actually they are inseparable. One cannot truly uplift

Jesus without uplifting the law. And likewise, one cannot truly uplift the law without uplifting Jesus. They are one. Jesus magnified the law and made it honorable.

Jesus wove the law into all His teaching. He said that those who build their houses—their assurance of salvation—on the rock are those who *hear* and *do* what He says. Those who build on the sand are those who *hear* and *do not* what He says.

You can no more separate Jesus from the law and still have life than you can separate the sun from the atmosphere and have life. If we could only teach the keeping of the law from the standpoint of the cross, how much it would mean to our people! Good laws are not so much restriction as protection. The law is also our witnessing tool. Every standard of God's Word—be it for healthful living, recreation, music, dress, or the keeping of the Sabbath—is our witnessing tool to show the world the health, joy, and security that obedience to God's laws brings.—Beatrice Reinke, Myersville, Maryland.

## Jewelry defined

I am surprised by your statement that Adventists use a narrow definition of jewelry ("Raising or Lowering Standards?" December 1992). I consulted two dictionaries and found the following: A. Jewelry. "Gems and articles of precious metals" (*The Scribner-Bantam English Dictionary*). B. Jewel. "1. A costly ornament of precious metal or gems used as adornment. 2. A precious stone; a gem. 3. A small gem or gem substitute used as a bearing in a watch. 4. A person or thing that is treasured or esteemed" (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*).

I wonder what dictionary you used? As far as I am concerned, the 1972 Annual Council was correct in its definition of jewelry.—Victoria Joseph, Lancaster, Massachusetts.

## Challenging the continuity of history

In "Challenging the Continuity of History" (December 1992) George Knight points out a dangerous trend in

the Adventist Church: joining our predecessor denominations in the process of secularization.

The "problems of mixed motivation and vested interests of both individuals and national segments of the church" do not need to happen. We Adventists can be well organized and still be spiritually mature, with laity, clergy, and administrators all "subject one to another."

This would happen only if we make what Knight calls the "heroic and continuous efforts at reform and revitalization."

The same power of the Spirit available to help individuals overcome temptation is available to keep the church from secularizing.—Albert Dittes, Portland, Tennessee.

■ *Ministry* has said it all in Knight's latest teaser on Communism and Adventism. It's time for our leaders to listen, to admit that the church is in need of revival and reformation, and seek through prayer and study together to arrive at a spiritual renewal to accomplish our God-given assignment. Confession and repentance starting from the top will do wonders down the line. It's time to get back on track and follow the counsel of the red books.—Ernest H. J. Steed, executive director, Real Life, Inc., De Bary, Florida.

## "I, if I be lifted up from the earth"

Your October issue is a turning point in Adventist history. Hundreds of pastors have waited for a voice from leadership that affirms Christ as the center of our teaching. You have given the trumpet that certain sound, and we want to hold up your hands in this bold venture.

Strange gospels have rushed into the vacuum left by the rejection of Christ as our sole righteousness in the decade following the 1888 General Conference session. Only truth can brush these aside. It will not be easy; false gospels appeal to hearts of flesh.

For too long voices have lured the sheep to believe subtly attractive theories that thrust the cross into the shadows: that absolute victory over  
(Continued on page 30)

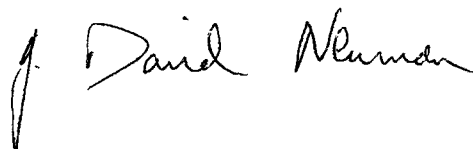
# First Glance

**Ministry does not usually publish** poetry, but this issue is an exception. When we received a review copy of Ann Weems's poems *Kneeling in Jerusalem*, we were so impressed by her ideas that we have selected three of her poems for this month's issue (cover, p. 7, p. 8).

**Seventh-day Adventists traditionally** emphasize Christmas and de-emphasize Easter, yet each contains equally pagan roots. Pastor Robert Zamora, pastor of the White Memorial church, reminds us that when the rest of Christendom is celebrating in a special way the death and resurrection of Christ, Adventists also should be foremost in lifting up Christ (p. 6).

**We continue our series** on evangelism with a stirring article by Walter Pearson (p. 9) and then add a novel approach that one country is using with great success to win souls for Christ (p. 12). Prayer is a vital component of evangelism and the Christian life, and Pastor Chad McComas shows us how prayer partners can enrich the life of the pastor (p. 14).

**"Project SDA Clergy: Part 1"** begins a two-part series on the type of pastor coming into the ministry in North America. Administrators, in particular, need to study this information carefully. Then Pastor Wintley Phipps draws us back to the central issue in worship, giving glory to God.



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# The pastor is a trainer

Miguel Angel Cerna

**B**y and large the church is woefully ignorant of it. The average member does not know it. The pastor doesn't have a clue. This widespread ignorance about the nature of the work of the pastor is costing the church a great deal in soul winning, in burned-out pastors, in church growth and ministry.

In all my years of training, no one taught me what I as a pastor should do. I came out of school without a clear understanding of a pastor's priorities. When I arrived at my church on my first pastoral assignment, the members had all kinds of expectations of what I ought to be and do. It turned out that they were leading me instead of the other way around. I asked my church board about the objectives and purpose of the church and ended up with 15 different statements. I knew I was neither big enough, smart enough, nor strong enough to take that church in 15 different directions. I knew something was wrong.

At the end of every month I had to turn in a report to my conference. The report specified how many visits I had made, how many Bible studies I had given, and how many sermons I had preached. To me this was proof enough that the more studies and sermons and visits I had to my credit, the better worker I was. I indeed deserved my check. The monthly report not only made me worthy of my salary but also defined my work. My ministry was evaluated by the mathematics of sermons, Bible studies, and visits.

And what are the results? I can do all

the hard work that the church members and the conference want me to do and exhaust myself in the process, but accomplish little or nothing of lasting value. The spirituality of members also is affected; in fact, it may well be ruined through inactivity, even while sermons present a level beyond their measure of obedience. The church, meanwhile, remains dysfunctional.

This status will continue to be so as long as everyone remains ignorant as to the true nature of the work of the pastor. And we pastors are sandwiched, pressed from both sides. The members criticize us because the church is going downhill. The conference criticizes us for not being more productive. But how can we produce more when everyone concerned chooses to remain far from the only method that can bring productivity in church ministry?

My concern comes from the fact that whenever we see a problem in the church, we seem to be more concerned about dealing with the symptoms than the cause. God never meant for the church to be dysfunctional. God never meant for one ethnic group of our church to grow more or faster than another. God never implied that under certain conditions, outside of sin within the church body, the church would not grow. This is the problem with the church growth movement that actually teaches there are reasons for not growing under certain situations. Not so. Whatever has life will always grow anywhere and everywhere. Right principles will give life to the church—always. And the church's beginning point is to understand what makes up the work of the pastor.

## Pastor's real work

So what is it? What is the work of the pastor?

The primary work of the Seventh-day Adventist pastor is not preaching, teaching, giving Bible studies, chairing committees, visiting, counseling, managing, building, dedicating babies, and burying the dead. All these are important, and most can and should be done by regular elders or deacons. The pastor's specific work is to teach and train members to evangelize and minister.

Ephesians 4:11, 12 declares: "It was [Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (NIV). Along with this biblical perspective, consider the following counsel:

"Christ intends that His ministers shall be educators of the church in gospel work. They are to teach the people how to seek and save the lost."<sup>1</sup>

"Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. . . . There should not only be teaching, but actual work under experienced instructors."<sup>2</sup>

"The best help that ministers can give the members of our churches is not sermonizing, but planning work for them. . . . And let all be taught how to work."<sup>3</sup>

"Just as soon as a church is organized, let the minister set the members at work. They will need to be taught how to labor successfully. Let the minister devote more of his time to educating than to preaching."<sup>4</sup>

I submit that the sermons, Bible studies, and visits we should report to the

conference should be the ones our members give and make. Is a teacher evaluated by what he or she learns, or by what the students learn? Is a mother's success dependent on how long she can feed her babies herself, or on how quickly she can teach them to feed themselves and take care of themselves?

So with church growth. Wouldn't it be better to count the active evangelists and ministers among the laity rather than count the members? What virtue is there in having many members if they all remain in eternal babyhood? What good is there in having members who continue to remain eternal infants? Even cemeteries register numerical growth. Our business is not to build great crowds but great congregations who will worship God and serve Him.

Church growth is never a matter of

location, education, population, ethnicity, tenure, lack of a model, or lack of a program. Churches stop growing when the members don't get involved in the cost of church growth. There are no bargain prices. Ask any successful pastor of any denomination. The answer would be the same. Leaders and members alike must pay a price. When pastors return to the work to which they are really called, there will be reaction and criticism. But God will be pleased. And future members will love them for it.

Can you imagine a football game in which the coach is the only one playing against the opposite team? The coach wants the team to win, works hard, plays hard, but lets the team players sit in the bleachers and give excuses such as "We're not as good as you are"; "You have training in the game"; "You play

better than we do."

No such team can ever hope to play, much less win. But in the church it happens every day. The coach, the pastor, is the only one playing the game. No wonder we seem to be losing. Let's turn it around and win it for Jesus. He paid His price and did His work. Let's pay our price and do the work. Leave the results to Him. He will take care of them. ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 825.

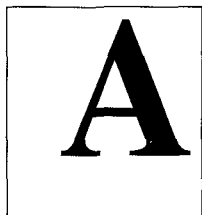
<sup>2</sup> ———, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> ———, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 6, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 20.

# Paul's big mistake

Martin Weber



As we rejoice this month with fellow Christians in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, let us beware of repeating Paul's mistake at Athens.

With unmatched eloquence he proclaimed there the glory of the risen Christ, but something was missing in his message. Let's visit Mars Hill and listen carefully.

Never before (and seldom since) has such an exclusive intelligentsia gathered to hear the gospel. Paul, squinting in the warm Mediterranean sun, surveys the furrowed faces of those pagan dignitaries. His heart thrills with eagerness to win their worship for the true God, and his lofty rhetoric rises to meet the challenge:

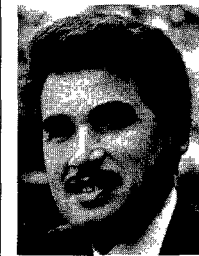
"Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an

altar with this inscription: *to the unknown God*. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you" (Acts 17:22, 23).\*

After that introduction of tact and wisdom, Paul smoothly shifts into his homily. He first identifies the God of heaven. Then, artfully weaving in quotations from local poets, he explains how Yahweh created all humanity of one blood for the sake of fellowship with Him. Finally, Paul moves beyond merely communicating information and makes an urgent appeal for repentance: "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all, by raising Him from the dead" (verses 30, 31).

Paul's message was a model of magnificence. With style and substance he had spoken of God, creation, resurrec-

tion, repentance, and judgment. Everything was contextualized in the culture of his hearers, climaxed by a call to commitment. Only one element was missing, and it was a big one: Paul omitted the crucified Christ. He mentioned His resurrection from the dead, but didn't say how or why He died. He consciously avoided Calvary's cross. Why? The apostle didn't want to offend his sophisticated audience. His strategy backfired, however. Few were converted.



Paul left Athens disappointed. Heading for Corinth, he pondered what happened and reached a firm conviction. Let's hear it in his own words to the Corinthian church: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom de-

(Continued on page 29)

# The absence of Easter

Robert M. Zamora

Proclaiming the resurrected Christ.



*Robert M. Zamora, Ph.D., is senior pastor of the White Memorial Church of Seventh-day Adventists in Los Angeles, California.*

**A** minister friend told me that his daughter, who attended a well-known university, invited a non-Adventist friend to visit one of our churches the Sabbath of Easter weekend. After church they reviewed the worship service. Her friend expressed surprise that no attention was given to the resurrection as he was accustomed to seeing it at Easter. There wasn't much she could say in explanation.

Unfortunately that student visitor experienced what is common in Adventist churches. Furthermore, members commend themselves for what they consider loyalty to biblical principle by shunning traces of "pagan worship" that still cling to "other churches."<sup>1</sup> Other Adventists feel that although nothing is wrong with commemorating the Resurrection on Easter, it is not vital or important practice. Both these attitudes conflict with the witness of the New Testament, and regrettably, feed the suspicion among many Christians that Adventists have not fully thrown off the trappings of a cult. Let me illustrate.

Last Easter, after our Resurrection Sabbath service, as I stood at the church door, a woman visitor remarked, "This is the first Adventist church I have been in where the Resurrection was commemorated at Easter time. All my relatives are Baptists. They appreciate many things about Adventists but do not think we are fully Christian because we don't celebrate the Resurrection. Thank you for this service. Now I can tell my relatives there are Adventists who do celebrate the Resurrection at Easter time."

Making us seem cultish because we do not commemorate the Resurrection will seem trivial to some. It is only so, however, to those who do not fully understand the significance of the Resurrection to the Christianity of the New Testament. The Resurrection is at the heart of a fundamental concept that fuels the theology, ethics, and beliefs of Christianity.

## A historical religion

Christianity draws its life and meaning out of specific historical events, maintaining continuity with the religion of the Old Testament. When Paul defines the gospel, the message of the New Testament, he says it is "concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated Son of God . . . by his resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:3, 4, RSV). Within these events Paul finds the Gospel that reveals the power of God's salvation (verses 16, 17). Preaching the gospel is the proclamation and exposition of the meaning of these events to the human condition.

The New Testament writers employed the historic events to define Christianity and address the human dilemma and its solution. Everything they wrote, whether moral or theological, was an implication or explication of those events. The moral or theological is never primary; it is but the outgrowth of their accounting for the presence of Jesus in human history and the significance of His death and resurrection. They testify that in these events God's action in human history is revealed.

Of these events, the Resurrection is the most significant. It is not one event

among other important events—it is the principal event. It is the event that makes Christianity what it is—a religion of resurrection.<sup>2</sup> A. M. Ramsey, former archbishop of Canterbury, observed: “For the [first disciples] the gospel without the Resurrection was not merely a gospel without its final chapter: it was not a Gospel at all. . . . Christian theism is resurrection theism.”<sup>3</sup>

Even a surface reading of Resurrection passages, which are considerable, demonstrates the importance it holds in the New Testament. It is the center around which everything else revolves.<sup>4</sup> Without the Resurrection there actually would have been no New Testament, for there would have been no church to write about it.<sup>5</sup> The cross has no benefit without the Resurrection, and without it the Second Advent is an impossibility.

By saying that, the cross is not minimized. The death of Jesus is always fundamental, but it is never isolated from the Resurrection that crowned and completed it. In fact, when Paul speaks of either the cross or the Resurrection, the other is always implied. They were two historic events, but as God’s action in history, the two are one.<sup>6</sup> In the preaching of the early church the two were always preached together. As Acts testifies, the early Christians preached “Jesus and the resurrection” (Acts 17:18, RSV; see also Acts 2:22-24, 32; 3:13-15; 4:2, 10-12).

The preaching of the early church was never a system of salvation, a new ethical code of human ideals. It was not a theoretical argument with paganism or the aspirations of a new religious ideal. It was not a word about how men ought to act in an ideal society. It was a declaration, not a debate, a proclamation of the mighty acts of God in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was an account of the way in which God acted in history decisively and forever in Jesus.

The Old Testament prophets had long expected the coming of God’s kingly power to deliver and vindicate His oppressed people. The New Testament declares that in the Resurrection, the long-expected kingdom of God broke into history with power. In the Resurrection, that invisible realm of God suddenly projected itself into history. It was no longer a dream, an expectation—the people were living in it. It had arrived!

### History split asunder

So, the Resurrection was nothing less than the mighty act of God. This was the message to the crowds on the streets of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. It was the news that the Sovereign Power of the universe had split history asunder by planting a cross and an empty tomb midpoint to signal the before and after of salvation history. And the crowds shouted back, “We hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:11, NKJV).

This is the gospel! This is the theme of the New Testament. The early Christians gathered to commemorate the salvation so freely given through the death and resurrection of Christ. They were now conquerors because of it. No wonder other Christians hesitate about the Christian authenticity of Adventism if we give but meager regard to the Resurrection.

How can we lead our people to understand salvation when we neglect to teach the meaning of the very act that made it possible? Ask your members what the resurrection of Christ means to them. I am sure the majority believe it to be just a miraculous verification of the personal survival of Jesus after His death and an assurance of the Christian’s life after death.

Resurrection, to many of our members, is a future experience at the Second Advent. It touches the past and gives hope for the future but seems to have little relevance in the present. However, when Jesus rose from the dead, Paul tells us, resurrection began to take place and we Christians have been caught up in it (Col. 3:1; 2:12; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:3-10). We are living on this side of the Resurrection, and by faith in Christ we partake of its power.

We must not give anyone reason to accuse us of disregarding or minimizing the importance of the Resurrection.<sup>7</sup> Let Adventists everywhere give testimony to the risen Lord. When all the churches in the land praise the Christ who rose, let not that season pass without a word or song from us. Let our voices rise above them all, rejoicing that He who rose to give us new life will come again to give us a new world. ■

<sup>1</sup> I am neither defending nor advocating the celebration of Easter. Our anti-Catholic polemics

have biased us against Christian festivals and robbed us of genuine Christian traditions helpful to the spiritual growth of our members. My concern is that Adventists take seriously the commemoration of the Resurrection whenever we choose to do it.

<sup>2</sup> C. F. Evens, *Resurrection and the New Testament* (London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1970), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> A. M. Ramsey, *The Resurrection of Christ* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1945), p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> John Knox, *Chapters in the Life of Paul* (New York: Abingdon Press), p. 131.

<sup>5</sup> K. H. Rengstorff, *Die Auferstehung Jesu* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1960), pp. 37ff.

<sup>6</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1951), vol. 1, pp. 292ff. See also Eduard Schweizer, *Jesus* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1971), pp. 53ff.; Hermand Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1975).

<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1950), p. 547.

## Holy communion

Eat, Drink, Remember  
who I am.

Eat, Drink, Remember  
who I am  
so you can remember  
who you are.

Eat, Drink, Remember  
who I am  
so you can remember  
who you are  
and tell the others.

Eat, Drink, Remember  
who I am  
so you can remember  
who you are  
and tell the others  
so that all  
God’s people  
can live  
in communion . . .  
in holy communion.

—Ann Weems

*From Kneeling in Jerusalem, Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1992. Used by permission.*

# In search of new resurrections

Ann Weems

We in the church are in danger  
of becoming a tearless people,  
unable to rage even in a starless abyss.  
We have imitated a smiling society,  
glossing over the hurt, the oppression,  
the peacelessness on earth,  
or we have become caustic  
and cynical and despairing,  
insisting on looking the other way  
as our church members crawl to the altar,  
the scraps of their lives in their arms.

We were created for covenant keeping  
and yet, we are in danger  
of becoming a blindhearted people,  
buying into the system,  
placing our hope with kings and corporations.  
Have we not seen?  
Have we not heard?

We persist in clinging  
to the way things are,  
or eagerly placing our faith  
in the newest religious fad,  
the latest book on how-to Christianity  
(in ten easy steps),  
or the current slogans  
presented as though they were  
the Word of God.

We are programming and papering ourselves  
into perpetuity,  
and rationalizing and excusing  
our immorality.

We spend our energy in complaining,  
gloomily forecasting our future together.  
We panic for positions  
in employment and committee,  
with each special interest group  
vying for first place in the kingdom.  
Perhaps it's time for remembering  
that Jesus stood in the Jordan  
to be baptized with the others,  
long ago casting His lot,  
not with the good church people,  
but with the poor  
wherever that poverty might emerge.  
His name is Emmanuel,  
and yet, individually and corporately,  
we have named Him "GOD-WITH-ME."  
Have we not seen?  
Have we not heard?  
In the light of the cross,  
the alternative is anything but hopelessness.  
On the contrary!  
There is every scriptural indication  
that we are called to change  
who we are into the kingdom of God.  
Where change is possible,  
new resurrections loom!

*From Kneeling in Jerusalem, Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1992. Used by permission.*



# Intimidated by evangelism?

Walter Pearson

You don't need  
charisma or  
oratorical skill.



Walter Pearson is senior pastor of the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Atlanta, Georgia.

**H**is eyes flash with lightning and blaze with the intensity of reflected glory. His words come first at a breathtaking pace then in an impressive deliberate cadence. His vocal tone is musical and stirring. His manner exudes confidence. His gestures are dramatic. His convictions seem too authoritative to be merely human. This being seems bathed in the mysterious aura of the Spirit.

Is the above description an accurate picture of an evangelist? In some cases, yes. Picture John the Baptist in his wilderness retreat turned auditorium. Hear his impassioned words. See the faces in the throng that would have welcomed him as their king.<sup>1</sup> Then place yourself in the charged atmosphere where Peter's preaching caused 3,000 to decide to be baptized. After that, listen to the voice of the aged disciple John as he speaks to the persecuted church of his beloved Saviour. Feel the power of his testimony as he urges the beleaguered believers to hold fast.<sup>2</sup>

Preaching indeed has power if controlled by the Holy Spirit. Arguably, it is the sheer force of the preached Word that has invested these images with such potency and longevity. Unfortunately, the tendency to compare one's own abilities with these romanticized recollections has a very debilitating influence. One can never measure up!

When you think of evangelistic preaching, someone with a flamboyant personality probably springs to mind. God has endowed certain ones with gifts that seem supernatural. It almost appears that they were born with silver tongues, ordained to be public speakers. But some successful evangelists defy this stereotype. They have no obviously superlative oratorical skills, no charismatic endowments. Yet these "mere mortals" communicate the gospel convincingly enough to lead people to Christ. Conversely, some gifted individuals have mastered many facets of ministry without ever doing well at soul winning. The secret of evangelistic success apparently does not lie in the possession of extraordinary talents.

## Unflattering images

Other images about preaching, equally powerful as the above but less flattering, are etched in the memories of many ministers and laypeople. Recently televangelists have provided the stuff of which these legendary images are made. Their painful public confessions make it somewhat disadvantageous to be associated with evangelism. In some circles, a politician would better be branded as a liberal than for a minister to wear the title "evangelist."

Some negative images arise from bygone days when nattily dressed expositors of fire and brimstone erected tents and urged sinners to repent, while garnering their freewill offerings. The fame of these evangelists showcased

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## A real desire to share the gospel cannot be divorced from the call to the gospel ministry.

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their frailties, which were captured in the headlines and portrayed on the silver screen. The result? An ambivalence toward evangelism, that has been nearly as damaging as the tendency to deify evangelists.

### The biblical image

We must separate the truth from the lore about evangelistic preaching. Stripped of myths, evangelistic preaching remains a relevant and potent soul-winning tool. Evangelism must not be conceded to those who appear specially endowed, nor should it be spurned because of any negative images. Accompanied with a call for commitment, most well-planned Christ-centered sermons can bring people to decision. The elements that spark success have little to do with charisma, oratorical expertise, or complicated theory. The Holy Spirit holds the key to the human heart, prompting a decision. The Ethiopian treasurer's response to the relatively brief words of Phillip (see Acts 8:26-39) demonstrates that an invisible and supernatural Agency energizes the soul-winning process.

Jesus is our model for evangelistic preaching and teaching. His miracles of healing the sick and raising the dead are matched by miracles of communicating the truth. Church history is replete with examples of astonishing responses to inspired evangelistic preaching. Alan Walker prefaces his book *Evangelistic Preaching* with a succinct and commanding rehearsal of the efficacy of this specific species of communication.<sup>3</sup> Few ministers would dare question the effectiveness or relevance of evangelistic preaching. Many, however, see it as a specialty that should be left to the professionals, whom they invite to the church from time to time. Requests are placed on a long list to await patiently the evangelists' arrival.

Undeniably, some are indeed more gifted than others in the field of public evangelism. The skills required to organize and direct a major evangelistic crusade are fairly unique. But how are we to determine who possesses these talents if we regard only a select few as qualified to share the gospel through preaching?

### The fear of failure

A real desire to share the gospel cannot be divorced from the call to the gospel ministry. Recognizing this will keep our preaching evangelistic. Austin Phelps defines a sermon as "an oral address to the popular mind upon religious truth contained in the Scriptures, and elaborately treated with a view to persuasion."<sup>4</sup> Few ministers would challenge that statement, yet general perceptions of evangelistic preaching carry enough extraneous baggage to become a potential deterrent.

Evangelistic preaching is unique only because it calls for an immediate commitment that can be qualified. Walker suggests that other types of preaching can inform, build faith, motivate, or inspire without seeking or gaining a commitment.<sup>5</sup> But evangelistic preaching seeks a response. The absence of the call for response in other types of preaching represents perhaps a level of comfort for the public speaker. Nobody can accurately gauge a sermon's impact unless it has included a gospel invitation. The response or lack thereof to a call for commitment could be either validating or embarrassing.

No rational human being enjoys the risk of public embarrassment. But the evangelist's call is on God's behalf. Those who decline to respond are not usually rejecting the person or the personality of the communicator. In fact, the individual who communicates for God must learn to deflect apparent failure—and also resist accepting credit for unmistakable success. One should not be crushed by what seems to be personal rejection, nor exalted by what appears to be personal success. Either error can be fatal.

Walker also suggests that the miracle of Acts 2:6, when "each one heard them [the apostles] speaking in his own language,"\* could have been a miracle of hearing instead of one that involved communicating in other tongues.<sup>6</sup> If the Holy Spirit did interpret "in midair" the messages that were responsible for so

dramatic an influx of new believers, the same Spirit must be responsible for the content and the dynamics of the evangelistic communication. The burden of success in terms of delivery or response should never be construed as resting solely on the communicator.

A God who spoke through Balaam's beast, and whose Only Begotten might have received praise from rocks at the triumphal entry to Jerusalem, cannot be doubted in His ability to communicate. Nor should His servants feel that they are without resources when they speak for Him.

### The emotion dilemma

Another element that restrains some from evangelistic preaching is the fear of emotion. Some ministers and members are uncomfortable when feelings are tapped in a call for commitment, regarding it as emotionalism. True, evangelistic preaching can wittingly or unwittingly misuse emotion. Ellen White, while declaring that the gospel must be delivered with intensity and solemnity, warns evangelists about the effects of emotional appeals on unbalanced or inexperienced minds.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, emotion remains important to evangelism. In view of the immense value of the gifts that the gospel offers, Walker concludes that "genuine emotion is inevitable in evangelistic preaching." In his judgment, "people cannot be moved without having their emotions touched."<sup>8</sup> An overemphasis on the intellectual versus the emotional effects of preaching, says Phelps, can result in "the most lifeless and dead levels as respects original thinking."<sup>9</sup>

The matter probably finds its best solution in an ethical balance that considers the whole being. Ronald Sleeth identifies two extreme positions. One is strictly emotional to the exclusion of the intellectual, and the other solely intellectual. Sleeth recommends a combination. He asserts that emotions are at the center of volition and that they must be reached to stimulate response. His analysis includes the informing of the intellect and an ethical appeal to the emotions, carefully noting the difference between emotion and emotionalism, sentiment and sentimentality.<sup>10</sup> While the communicator of the gospel definitely seeks to persuade, the listener should make an informed decision. Contrived emotionalism usurps the listener's con-

trol of that decision, resulting in resentment that undermines genuine commitment.

The power of a message energized by the Holy Spirit is so formidable that unethical methods are unnecessary. Success comes neither by human might nor by human power.

### How about you?

We have sifted through some of the potential pitfalls of evangelistic preaching, and now the time has come to call you who are reading this to a commitment. Please consider the following suggestions as an appeal.

1. *Communicate the gospel for your own survival.* Phelps suggests that "the inmost destructive disease of the ministry is satisfaction with other successes than those of saving souls and building up a sanctified church."<sup>11</sup> Ironically, few aspects of the ministry can be as enjoyable as preaching the gospel. The excitement attending evangelistic preaching has no parallel. Nobody can rob you of the joy, the matchless exhilaration, that comes when the Holy Spirit gives the exact words that turn on the lights in the eyes of a soul. One who communicates the gospel is in a position similar to Christ's when He multiplied the loaves and the fishes to feed the 5,000. The speaker's relatively insignificant talents are multiplied by a supernatural Power to meet the needs of the audience. There is a feeling of partnership with Divinity, of being controlled by the Spirit, that cannot be compared with anything else in the universe. The joy of being God's instrument in explaining the beauty of salvation, whether in a crowded auditorium or in an office with a single human being, makes the mundane elements of our job worth putting up with.

2. *Communicate the gospel because it excites you.* We religious professionals can become so enmeshed in inconsequential doctrinal disputes, ecclesiastical struggles, and the endless quest to attain goals that we lose our enthusiasm for the very things that once formed the source of our excitement. We must re-discover our calling and rekindle our own first love; then we can share our amazing discoveries with others. Glen Asquith suggests that we must wrestle with ourselves until we embrace basic beliefs to cherish forever before we can preach with strong conviction.<sup>12</sup> So let

us get excited again about the story of salvation!

Super salespersons who travel from market to market, hawking automobiles and earning megabucks, ought to tell us something. Enthusiasm sells! How much enthusiasm have you projected about your product lately? The same amount that you *feel* about your product. To Fred Craddock, the first and foremost conviction undergirding those who preach is the knowledge that what they say will make a difference.<sup>13</sup> And it does! Proclaiming the gospel, faithfully communicating the Word of God, will always accomplish what He sends it to do and prosper wherever He sends it (see Isa. 55:11).

3. *Communicate the gospel in view of our emergency situation.* Our bureaucratic burdens can become so great that we sometimes employ methods that better befit an enormous corporation than a church urgently needing divine direction. While every organization, the church included, must operate in a businesslike manner, everyday corporate concepts must never govern our approach to preaching God's Holy Word. Yes, contemporary ministers must skillfully negotiate compromises between opposing factions while conducting the business of the church. But the real problems that threaten the future of humanity on this planet and those that menace our peace day by day demand another approach in the pulpit. The times dictate that we declare a state of emergency. Consider the urgency ever present in the messages of ancient prophets and ask yourself: Is our world so loving and moral that we need no longer warn our hearers?<sup>14</sup> Our situation is no less urgent than in the aftermath of a tornado or a hurricane when human needs must be met.

Clear instructions and definite directions are needed and welcomed in an emergency. Even the most refined, tactful leader must speak decisively. Evangelistic preaching makes the hearers aware of their spiritual emergency so they can react appropriately.

4. *Expand your concepts about communicating the gospel.* Parameters for our methods of evangelistic preaching ought not to be frozen in the past. Christ "sought access to the people by the pathway of their most familiar associations."<sup>15</sup> Consider seminars, teaching ministries, or expanded use of the elec-

tronic media. Explore other creative modes, evaluate the various forums that are successful today. Quite possibly you will find an alternative method that will allow you to feel comfortable communicating the gospel. Goliath is there to be conquered, but Saul's is not the only armor. Prayerfully employ the methods that best suit your own style and temperament, then plan to implement them.

Evangelism is to occupy more, not less, of our time.<sup>16</sup> The weekly worship service can become an hour of power when evangelistic preaching is the centerpiece. The worship service is not a time for entertainment. We have the most important message in the universe, and we must present it with the clarity and fervency that indicates its worth. The Holy Spirit, on His part, will demonstrate His ability to reach and draw souls. Membership growth will be accompanied by a new awareness and appreciation of God's saving grace. Members will want to get involved. The number of visitors will increase. The zeal that accompanies the evangelistic crusade will continually enrich the worship experience.

5. *Pray for skill in communicating the gospel.* Earnestly pray, not so much to be a great preacher, but for the ability to share the gospel in a manner that draws people to Christ. What request could be more consonant with the will of God? And "if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us" (1 John 5:14). ■

<sup>1</sup> See Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), pp. 178, 179.

<sup>2</sup> See ———, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), pp. 568, 569.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Walker, *Evangelistic Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1988), pp. 7, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Austin Phelps, *The Theory of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Walker, pp. 72, 73.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 13.

<sup>7</sup> See Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 611.

<sup>8</sup> Walker, p. 73.

<sup>9</sup> Phelps, p. 104.

<sup>10</sup> See Ronald E. Sleeth, *Persuasive Preaching* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), pp. 57-61.

<sup>11</sup> Phelps.

<sup>12</sup> Glenn H. Asquith, *Renewed Power for Preaching* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1983), p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), p. 216.

<sup>14</sup> Asquith, pp. 79, 80.

<sup>15</sup> White, *Evangelism*, p. 55.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

# Evangelistic camps in Finland

**Auvo Helminen**

**Your local conference campground could become an evangelistic reaping center.**



*Auvo Helminen is director of the Bible Correspondence School in Finland.*

**S**oul-winning camps in Finland operate as an outgrowth of the Bible correspondence school. In a peaceful setting by a lake, students enjoy personal Bible studies and evangelistic preaching. Many are even baptized during the five days of spiritual teaching and fellowship.

For the last three decades, the Adventist youth camp at Kallioniemi has hosted these evangelistic retreats. They have become so popular that three are held each summer. Attendance has swelled since church members began bringing non-Adventist friends.

## **“Five-day Plan” for baptisms**

The camp begins on Tuesday night and continues through Sunday noon. During those five days our ministers conduct 28 studies, covering the same range of subjects as a normal evangelistic campaign.

Bible classes last 45 minutes, leaving intervals for personal visitation. Every worker on our team is entrusted with names of students to look after with personal encouragement and biblical instruction. Informal evangelism takes place between meetings, even in the sauna. Amid the billowing steam, some make their decision to be baptized.

Each evening we have a revival meeting, complete with special music and some kind of invitation for commitment, such as an altar call. On Wednesday we

give a specific appeal to accept Jesus as Saviour. On Thursday there is a call for baptism, and on Friday we invite them to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The main baptism follows church services on Sabbath.

During camp we schedule private workers’ meetings to train younger pastors and discuss the needs of various guests. We take time to pray for them and for each other.

Before lunch on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday we have an hour set apart for questions and answers. Students too restless and hungry to sit through a lecture will respond to the question box approach. This hour also provides opportunity to present supplemental information on the Sabbath, baptism, death, and Christian standards.

Saturday night is a time of fellowship when workers share how God has been leading in their lives. These personal testimonies, combined with the enthusiasm of newly baptized believers, inspire decisions for an additional baptismal service the next morning. After camp closes we offer follow-up meetings to nurture new converts and encourage those still holding back on commitment.

## **Inexpensive evangelism**

The Bible correspondence school sends all students of its full message courses an invitation to camp. They often agree to attend after a personal follow-up call. Other visitors come from Revelation Seminars or as friends of members. Though we charge nothing for

accommodations and tuition, the camps remain an inexpensive method of reaping decisions. Board and lodging for five days at Kallioniemi cost the conferences less than US\$100 per attendee, and we have 25-50 non-members at nearly every camp. Expenses are offset by selling literature, taking one collection, and receiving unexpected gifts of gratitude. Some students send donations later.

Many return the following summer as self-paying listeners. Some who have backslidden want a new start with the Lord. Second-time attendees often bring friends preparing to be baptized. Free room and board is offered to all Adventists who accompany interested friends. The cost is repaid when they encourage these friends in making their decision. Beyond such benefits, I have seen members become inspired at camp to begin their own personal soul-winning.

New members are also welcome. The experience serves to ground them in their understanding of the message and also to bond them in new relationships with other Adventists.

#### **Advantages and disadvantages**

Students at camp have continuous contact with pastors, Bible workers, and Christian friends, away from the doubts and bad advice of unbelievers. They are not looking at television but listening to the Word of God. They are not influenced by the noisy world but by the Holy Spirit.

People at Bible camp begin learning Adventist habits. They eat vegetarian food without coffee and tea. Many get a good start in temperate living without alcoholic beverages and tobacco. During the week they learn to pray, study the Bible, and sing Christian songs; on Sabbath they experience its sacredness in a practical way.

Bible camp is not without its risks. Five days removed from the world is a short time to begin a spiritual lifestyle. Many lacking an Adventist background find themselves confused at camp. They are unsure of their former thinking but cannot in such a short time grasp what our church offers them. Although some who have no prior knowledge of the truth are able to come to terms with it during the five days, I prefer inviting students with some previous understanding.

Some members invite to camp friends

who are heavy smokers and drinkers. We clarify the importance of overcoming their addictions before baptism, and some do gain complete victory during the week. Unfortunately, the time to test them is short even in the best cases. There have been situations where local congregations could not accept into membership converts from our camps because of continuing use of tobacco and alcoholic beverages. These cases are exceptions.

Upon arriving home from camp, sometimes newly baptized persons are discouraged by relatives, friends, and others who do not endorse their new faith. The home environment is certainly different from the spiritual setting at camp, and some cannot survive the transition. This is sad, but we must remember that other methods of soul-winning also leave us with casualties.

One drawback to baptizing students at camp is that local churches want to host the ceremony. There are many advantages in that, but we have found it better to lead souls through the doorway of baptism while they are yet at camp. We baptize in Kallioniemi many who would not make their decision at home. Usually they are joyfully voted into membership at their local churches during the weeks that follow camp.

Occasionally, some who come to Kallioniemi just want a summer vacation and do not enjoy the meetings. We have even had two or three cases where guests accepted a free bed and meals in order to have a place to stay while conducting business outside the campground. These occurrences are so rare that they do not disturb the atmosphere of the camp. Expenses being low, not much is lost.

Some students find romance during the camp, only to meet with disappointment. Others make new friends without harm to anyone. The important thing is that so many of them are falling in love with Jesus.

#### **Significance in soul-winning**

In Finland, attracting a regular audience for evangelism is a daunting challenge. Still more difficult is carrying them over into baptism. At the Bible camp, however, usually one third who attend are baptized that week, and many others take their stand later. This is impressive, especially since the Finland Union gets less than 200 new members

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**Usually one third who attend are baptized that week, and many others take their stand later.**

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per year. As many as 40 of these souls are baptized each summer at the Bible camp.

No wonder that the presidents of local conferences give all possible support for the Bible camps. They enjoy serving as speakers. They also assign their best ministers, along with new workers needing training.

Five days at Kallioniemi is not a small commitment for pastors, but it provides them wonderful fellowship in a productive evangelistic setting. As for lay members, hundreds of faithful Adventists in our churches thank God for the blessings they have received at Bible camp.

#### **The future of Bible camps**

Our task is to get the gospel into every town, village, and home around the world. Drawing evangelistic audiences everywhere may be impossible, but many are already acquainted with the Adventist message through broadcasts, literature, and Bible correspondence schools. Bible camps seem one good way of reaping this interest and establishing personal contact in a setting conducive to decision-making.

Jesus Himself held Bible camps. He led people outside the urban centers and taught them in a natural setting. John the Baptist did too—people came and were baptized. Bible camp meetings were an effective evangelistic method in Ellen White's ministry. Adapted for time and place, soul-winning camps today could be a continuing blessing. Perhaps your local conference campground could become an evangelistic center. ■

# Prayer partners for the pastor

**Chad McComas**

**A powerful new  
concept that can  
revolutionize your  
ministry**



*Chad McComas is  
pastor of the Seventh-  
day Adventist church  
in Medford, Oregon.*

**I** can hardly believe the dramatic change that has come to my ministry! It all began a year ago when I learned the concept of personal prayer partnership.

For years I had longed to have men of the church pray with me. I could count on two fingers the men who had taken time to support me as their pastor in prayer. One elder stopped by my office now and then to pray with me. Another shared prayer with me after a difficult business meeting. These were meaningful experiences, but not much to show for more than 10 years of ministry.

I took an informal survey of my peers and discovered that I wasn't the only pastor around who lacked prayer fellowship with local church leaders. Although all of them expressed their need for it, few had experienced more than sporadic instances of prayer support. One pastor told me that he longed for elders to pray with him just before he preached. He had hinted to them of his desire that they pray for the Holy Spirit's power to anoint his speaking, but they didn't seem to understand his need.

## **Biblical base of prayer support**

The concept of prayer support for spiritual leadership is rooted in Scripture. In the book of Exodus we find Moses going from a desperate situation (needing water for his people) to a miracle solution (water from the rock). Then suddenly he found himself faced with another crisis—Amalekites were attacking the camp. He commissioned Joshua

to lead the men of Israel into battle while he went to the top of a hill and held up his hands to the Lord. The results were remarkable:

“As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning” (Ex. 17:11).<sup>1</sup>

Aaron and Hur caught on to what was happening. They surrounded Moses and held his hands high so Joshua would prevail against the enemy.

“When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword” (verses 12, 13).

By now you have realized that Aaron and Hur were the first official prayer partners of a spiritual leader. Their assistance enabled Moses to continue in prayer so Joshua could win the battle.

## **Compelling symbolism**

Let me suggest some applications for us today. I see Moses representing our leadership, whether we serve as a pastor, teacher, administrator, evangelist, or local church leader. Like Moses, we must be in prayer to the Father. Too often in a crisis we race to solve the situation ourselves. But Moses didn't rush off to fight the enemy. He hastened into prayer.

Now, who does the warrior Joshua symbolize? In Hebrew the name means “Yahweh is salvation,” and in Greek Joshua is translated “Jesus.” In reality, then, the one who fights our battles is

Jesus! He alone can conquer the enemy. As long as we keep praying, Jesus will fight our battles. If we cease praying, the battle isn't won.

Now for the third symbol, the support of Aaron and Hur. Despite their shortcomings, Moses needed their prayer partnership. Without it the Israelites would have suffered loss. Spiritual leaders today likewise need prayer support people. Ellen White observed: "Happy the minister who has a faithful Aaron and Hur to strengthen his hands when they become weary and to hold them up by faith and prayer. Such a support is a powerful aid to the servant of Christ in his work and will often make the cause of truth to triumph gloriously."<sup>2</sup>

"As Aaron and Hur supported the hands of Moses, they showed the people their duty to sustain him in his arduous work while he should receive the word from God to speak to them. And the act of Moses also was significant, showing that God held their destiny in His hands; while they made Him their trust, He would fight for them and subdue their enemies; but when they should let go their hold upon Him, and trust in their own power, they would be even weaker than those who had not the knowledge of God, and their foes would prevail against them.

"As the Hebrews triumphed when Moses was reaching his hands toward heaven and interceding in their behalf, so the Israel of God prevail when they by faith take hold upon the strength of their mighty Helper."<sup>3</sup>

### Getting started

Upon understanding this concept of personal prayer partnership, I decided to implement it. My wife and I each sought partners from the congregation who were willing to make a one-year commitment to pray for us, the church, and its projects. Realizing that prayer brings people close together, we kept men and women separate—I chose six men, she found seven women.

We launched the program by having a retreat for the men and another for the women. In our separate groups, my wife and I shared the importance of prayer partnership and confided some of our needs and weaknesses. We were vulnerable with our partners, and they in turn were vulnerable with us and one another.

The prayer partner retreat was a high

point in my ministry. Never before had men prayed over me and my needs like that. A strong bond formed at the retreat that continued throughout the year.

Each of the partners was assigned one day of the week to uphold my wife and me in prayer. For Sabbath the men took turns meeting with me at 7:00 a.m. in the church to pray over the children's departments, the adult Sabbath school classes, and the worship service. The men also prayed for me and my message. Their powerful intercession enabled me to start each Sabbath with the right "Spirit."

Through the year the prayer partners met once a quarter for breakfast. We talked about how the program was going and discussed specific prayer requests from church members and from one another. Along with their responsibility to pray for me, each selected a personal partner from among the group. Each pair got together during the week to pray.

With all this praying going on, I felt I could handle any challenge during the upcoming year! And I did.

### Satanic attacks

Let me share a warning. Whenever we unite in God's strength, Satan tries to destroy us. During the time I was developing prayer partners, I had to weather strong criticism from offshoot factions within the church. It was a rough time—but I had my partners praying for me. Challenges that might have destroyed me earlier now seemed easy to deal with. This past year turned out to be the most successful year for evangelism we have ever had. Our church prospered financially as well. Great things are happening with the continual prayer support of our partners.

## Prayer Partner Materials

The prayer partner manual is US\$5, and a video is available for \$10. Add \$1 shipping for each item. Order from:

Prayer Partner Materials  
c/o Medford SDA Church  
1900 Greenwood Street  
Medford, OR 97504

## With all this praying going on, I felt I could handle any challenge during the upcoming year! And I did.

Power through prayer doesn't come without a price. Satan worked hard to discourage our prayer partners this past year. One had marriage problems. Another's mother had major cancer surgery and his father became paralyzed. Another partner had a bicycle accident that required surgery; as a result he had to quit college, and lost his financial support. Then his wife lost her job; after that they lost their car. Another partner suffered a divorce and the hurt of having his children removed from him to another state.

The list goes on. But as long as the prayer partners continued to meet regularly, through prayer they found strength to cope with every situation.

### Power and peace for you too

After a year of having prayer partners, I almost forgot what it was like before I had them; how I used to hunger for men to pray with me. Now my partners stop by the church office whenever they can to pray with me. I can testify to the power and peace this brings to a pastor.

If you are tired of standing alone, you too can have a prayer partner ministry in your church. Our congregation has prepared materials to help you get started (see the box elsewhere on this page).

I am determined that my ministry will always have the support of a prayer partner program. Now I never have to face anything alone again. ■

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, scriptural passages in this article are from the New International Version.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 4, p. 531.

<sup>3</sup> ———, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1958), p. 299.

# Project SDA clergy: part I

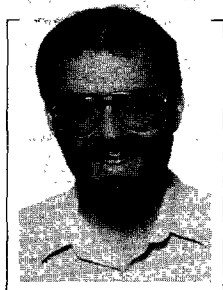
**Jack Bynum,  
Douglas Clark, and  
George Hilton**



*Jack Bynum, Ph.D., is a professor of sociology at Oklahoma State University.*



*Douglas Clark, Ph.D., is dean of the School of Theology at Walla Walla College.*



*George Hilton, Ph.D., is a professor of mathematics and director of institutional research at Pacific Union College.*

**M**any are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14). As of June 30, 1991, there were 11,626 active ordained ministers serving the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>1</sup> Numerous others have also felt "called to the ministry" but were unable to respond because of familial, economic, educational, or other social constraints.

To learn about the ministerial students who actually become pastors and those who do not, in 1987 the authors solicited input and support from the heads of the religion departments at the 11 Adventist colleges and universities in North America, and also the presidents of the Southwestern Union and Oklahoma Conference. The enthusiasm and research orientation of these individuals and their assistance, plus the considerable contribution of Oklahoma State University, combined to make this research a reality. We three authors are also grateful to the ministerial student subjects who graciously participated in the project. This is the first in a two-part report on a scientific study of Adventist ministerial students and their success in finding employment as pastors.

Beyond the formal criteria for admission to the official ministerial ranks (for example, prescribed character and commitment, theological orthodoxy, and educational prerequisites), an informal filtering process also functions to select, rank, and assign those ministerial aspirants who manage to graduate from an Adventist college or university (see Table

1). Thus the life chances for an individual to attain a denominationally sponsored ministerial appointment are influenced by many less visible social and demographic variables.

## **The research methodology**

The targeted population for this research project was the entire cohort of 82 senior ministerial students enrolled during 1987. Although the cost factor and difficult logistics of a worldwide study limited our focus and generality to North America, the use of an entire group of subjects sharing a common temporal experience helped to avoid several possible sampling errors and maximized the validity and reliability of our data base.

Near the end of the 1986-1987 academic year—when their immediate occupational future should have been clear—each of the 82 students received a very carefully designed survey instrument. This questionnaire was structured to elicit a wide variety of in-depth demographic, attitudinal, background, and life experience information reflective of the following research questions.

1. Exactly who are our future ministers? Where do they come from and how are they recruited?

2. What are their career motivations and aspirations? How do they perceive the focus of their ministry?

3. Where do our new ministers stand on contemporary religious and social issues prominent in the church? And do their attitudes and values regarding these matters change over time? If so, what is the direction and strength of such changes?



4. Is there any evidence that God still calls individuals to the ministry today as dramatically and miraculously as is often recorded in the Scriptures (e.g., Isa. 6:8, 9; Acts 9:1-18).

5. Are there any identifiable patterns of family background, personal experience, attitudes, and behavior among new ministers that might enhance later prediction and problem-solving in their unfolding lives and careers?

The respondents were guaranteed individual anonymity. Data was assembled at Oklahoma State University by the principal investigator, who searched for overall patterns and trends among responses. This proved to be a sound research strategy, and intensive follow-up at the various schools finally resulted in a 100 percent respondent participation in the survey.

There were 127 questionnaire items that probed for information on scores of variables relevant to the minister's calling, convictions, and career. The findings reported here represent only a small portion of the data collected, which should provide a rich source for longitudinal comparisons within this and with other ministerial groups, as well as within and between the various Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities.

### The research findings

Table 1 summarizes the first after-graduation occupational assignments for the 1987 group of ministerial students. Note that their occupations are divided into six categories: full-time pastors/evangelists in denominational employment; seminary study; other Adventist employment such as teachers, literature evangelists; non-Adventist employment; non-Adventist graduate or professional school study; and unemployed. The data reported in Table 1 is also statistically controlled for each of our colleges and universities in the United States and Canada.

The occupational divisions of Table 1 are a useful format for the organization of data and are not intended by the researchers to represent any hierarchy of social status (though such a belief may exist in the church). Nor are the categories of the typology totally or permanently discrete. For instance, we can safely assume that at least some of the seminary students will ultimately find employment as Seventh-day Adventist ministers.

TABLE 1

### Number of SDA ministerial students entering various occupations after 1987 graduation, by college or university<sup>a</sup>

SDA Colleges or Universities	Full-time SDA Ministry <sup>b</sup>	SDA Seminary Students <sup>c</sup>	Other SDA Employment <sup>d</sup>	Non-SDA Employment	Non-SDA Graduate or Professional School Student	Unemployed
College A	3		1	1		3
College B	4				1	
College C	1	1	1	1		
College D	1	1	1		2	4
College E	7	1				
College F	3	3				3
College G	9				2	3
College H	3	2	1			1
College I	8	2	1	1		
College J	2	1				1
College K	2					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>

<sup>a</sup>The total number of ministerial students graduating in 1987 from all 11 Seventh-day Adventist institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada was 82. Individual colleges and universities are listed anonymously and randomly.

<sup>b</sup>Most of the ministerial student graduates in this category are on regular salary as ministerial interns; a few are on "stipends." All are employed by various conferences.

<sup>c</sup>About two-thirds of the ministerial student graduates in this category are sponsored by various local conferences as they attend the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary. The others are self-supported seminary students.

<sup>d</sup>The ministerial student graduates in this category have nearly all found Seventh-day Adventist employment as teachers or literature evangelists.

As an immediate interpretation, it appears that those 1987 ministerial students/graduates attending some colleges were more likely to enter "full-time Seventh-day Adventist ministry" than those attending other schools. For example, 80 to 100 percent of the ministerial students graduating from colleges B, E, and K immediately entered full-time professional ministry of the church. On the other hand, 38 percent of graduates from the ministerial course at college A and only 11 percent of those graduating from college D promptly entered full-time ministry. Similarly, some Seventh-day Adventist institutions of higher education saw a larger proportion of their ministerial students/graduates go directly to the seminary. If these are typical patterns each year, they could signify a stronger encouragement for seminary graduate work at some Adventist colleges or in some geographic regions. Or

perhaps the absence of immediate ministerial employment in some areas makes seminary attendance a more viable option.

In addition, the Table 1 data shows that some Adventist colleges and universities had a larger proportion of their 1987 ministerial graduates "unemployed" and without any vocational or educational prospects than at other schools. Is it possible that the college one attends could be a major factor affecting the probability of becoming an Adventist minister?

Table 2 offers a partial demographic profile of our 1987 ministerial student group as well as for each occupational subgroup that finally emerged from the group. An examination of Table 2 data suggests the following commentary on these selected variables.

*Average age.* The mean (X) age for the 1987 cohort of 82 ministerial stu-

TABLE 2

**Demographic profile of SDA ministerial students  
entering various occupations after 1987 college graduation**

Variables	Full-time SDA Ministry	SDA Seminary Students	Other SDA Employment	Non-SDA Employment	Non-SDA Graduate or Professional School Students	Unemployed	Totals From Cohort
Average Age in Years (X)	29	31	29	37	34	29	x - 31
<b>Race (Freq)</b>							
White	36	9	1	2	2	8	58
Black	3	2	4	0	3	5	17
Hispanic	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Asian	2	0	0	0	0	2	4
<b>Marital Status (Freq)</b>							
Married	28	7	2	2	2	11	52
Engaged	4	1	1	0	1	2	9
Single	11	2	2	2	2	2	21
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	43	10	5	3	5	14	80
Female	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Average Height <sup>a</sup>	5' 11"	5' 10"	5' 8"	5' 9"	5' 9"	5' 8"	5' 9"
<b>Social Class &amp; Status of Family of Origin</b> (Based on occupation of father)							
Upper	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Middle	13	3	0	0	1	3	20
Lower <sup>b</sup>	21	7	4	3	2	10	47
SDA Minister, Teacher, Etc <sup>c</sup>	6	1	0	0	2	2	11
<b>Education</b>							
SDA Academy Graduate	18	1	0	1	2	6	28
Public High Graduate	22	10	5	2	3	8	50
<b>Most common grade in college<sup>d</sup></b>							
A	4	2	2	0	1	1	10
B	23	2	3	3	0	9	40
C	16	7	0	0	4	5	32

<sup>a</sup> The heights of the two females were excluded from these average computations.

<sup>b</sup> In virtually all cases, the fathers in this lower-class category were employed as blue collar workers (e.g., carpenters, mechanics, or other building and service trades).

<sup>c</sup> While SDA minister, teacher, and administrator positions would ordinarily be considered middle-class occupations, this special category was isolated from the data.

<sup>d</sup> Most common course grade during the last two years of college.

dents was 30 years at the time of their graduation from college. It is clear to numerous observers that many current enrollees in the Seventh-day Adventist ministerial course are somewhat older than the typical ministerial student a generation ago. Twenty to 35 years ago when the authors attended Adventist colleges, most ministerial students were in their early or mid-20s—thus indicating a general pattern of college matricu-

lation soon after graduation from secondary schools. The data from this study suggests that older men—with families, backgrounds in other occupations, and adult conversions and affiliations with the church—significantly increased the average age of 1987 ministerial students.

**Race.** Fifty-eight (70.7 percent) of the 1987 graduating ministerial students were White, 17 (20.7 percent) were

unengaged). With 28 of the 52 married ministerial students (54 percent) and 11 of the 20 single (and unengaged) graduates (55 percent) going directly into full-time ministry of the church, marital status does not appear to be as significant a factor at the beginning of one's ministry as it may have been at earlier times in our church's history.

**Gender.** The vast majority of the 1987 ministerial students/graduates were

Black, 4 (4.9 percent) were of Asian background, and another 2 (2.4 percent) represented ethnic Hispanic groups.<sup>2</sup> It would be interesting to compare these percentages with the racial/ethnic composition of the total church membership served by the 11 Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities. While 36 of the 58 White graduates (62 percent) went directly into the ministry, only 3 of 17 Black graduates (18 percent) did so. Both of the Hispanic students (100 percent) and two of the four Asian graduates (50 percent) immediately entered the ministry.

**Marital status.** Just 52 of the 82 ministerial students (63 percent) were married at the time of their 1987 graduation. This finding surprised the authors, in view of the fact that the subjects averaged 30 years of age. The rest were single, although a sizable portion were engaged to marry—probably waiting to complete their education prior to marriage. Nonetheless, of the 43 who entered full-time ministry upon graduation, 11 (26 percent) were still single (and

male—80 of 82 (97.6 percent). One of the two females planned to enroll in the seminary; the other was unemployed as of the end of the summer of 1987.

*Social class and status of family of origin.* Social scientists have typically utilized one or more of three basic and closely associated variables in determining the social class and status of subjects (that is, level of formal education, occupation, and income). In this study, the occupation of each subject's father was used as an indicator of class and status. The data indicate that only 3 of the 82 senior ministerial students could be classified as of upper-class family origin. All three of these graduates went directly into full-time ministry. The far right column of Table 2 shows that even if we add the 11 sons of Seventh-day Adventist ministers and teachers to the middle-class category (giving us a total of 31), the majority of ministerial groups come from lower working-class backgrounds (47 subjects or 57.3 percent). As indicated with the three upper-class ministerial graduates, additional evidence emerges that supports a correlation between social class and immediate placement in the full-time ministry of the church. Some 61 percent of the 31 middle-class students (including the sons of Adventist ministers and teachers), compared with nearly 45 percent of the 47 lower-class students, were recruited promptly into the ministry upon their graduation.

TABLE 3

**Comparison of selected demographic, academic, and health variables of SDA senior ministerial students with control groups of SDA senior male nonministerial students<sup>a</sup> and non-SDA male nonministerial students<sup>b</sup>**

	1987 Cohort of Ministerial Graduates From SDA Colleges (N = 82)			SDA Male Non-ministerial Students in SDA Colleges (N = 50)			Non-SDA Male Non-ministerial Students in State University (N = 93)
<b>Religious Affiliation of Parents<sup>c</sup></b>	SDA 49%	Other 34%	None 17%	SDA 82%	Other 12%	None 6%	
<b>Secondary School Graduation</b>	SDA Academy 36%	Public High School 64%		SDA Academy 78%	Public High School 22%		
<b>Average (X) Age at Baptism</b>	18 Years			12.7 Years			10.3 Years
<b>Parents' Marital Status</b>							
Married & Together	57%			76%			79%
Divorced or Widowed	43%			24%			21%
<b>Profession Determined in Secondary School</b>	48%			60%			50%
<b>Most Common Grade While in College (last two years)</b>							
A	12%			28%			35%
B	49%			58%			45%
C	39%			14%			20%
<b>Voting Participation in National Election</b>	36%			30%			73%
<b>Political Party Preference (U.S. Citizens)</b>							
Republican	40%			62%			64%
Democratic	35%			18%			29%
Independent	9%			12%			3%
No Political Interest	12%			2%			3%
<b>General Happiness Scale:</b>							
Very Happy	61%			34%			51%
Fairly Happy	38%			62%			42%
Unhappy	1%			4%			7%
<b>Average (X) Extracurricular College Activities<sup>d</sup></b>	5.6			3.5			2.5
<b>Subjects' Personal Health Evaluation:</b>							
Excellent	44%			34%			38%
Good	54%			56%			61%
Fair	0%			8%			0%
<b>Average Hours Sleep Per Night</b>	6.8			6.8			7.1
<b>Average Meals &amp; Snacks Per Day</b>	3.0			3.2			3.6

<sup>a</sup> A control group of 50 nonministerial students attending Southwestern Adventist College and Walla Walla College were surveyed with portions of the same questionnaire that the 1987 cohort of 82 Seventh-day Adventist senior ministerial students received. Other than the major difference in future career expectations, this control group was similar to the ministerial students in gender, academic year attended, and church affiliation, thus facilitating comparative analysis.

<sup>b</sup> A second control group of 93 male college seniors without ministerial aspirations, and who were not members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, were surveyed at Oklahoma State University with portions of the same questionnaire to which the Seventh-day Adventist ministerial students were asked to respond. Again, interesting contrasts in response patterns become possible.

<sup>c</sup> The "Religious Affiliation of Parents" is subdivided into three categories: "SDA," meaning that one or both parents were Seventh-day Adventists; "Other," meaning that neither parent was Seventh-day Adventist, and that one or both held membership in another religious organization; and "None," meaning that neither parent had any declared religious affiliation.

<sup>d</sup> "Average Extracurricular College Activities" is the arithmetic mean (X) of the subjects' participation in such activities or organizations as college musical groups, publications (e.g., newspaper and yearbook), programs, plays, clubs, and leadership roles. Also included are special awards and honors received for meritorious achievements on campus.

*Educational background.* Just 28 (34 percent) of the 82 ministerial students in the 1987 graduating cohort had earlier graduated from a Seventh-day Adventist secondary school. On the other hand, 50 (61 percent) of the cohort were the products of public high schools.<sup>3</sup> The comparatively low percentage of our new ministers in this group who can point to an Adventist academy as part of their educational experience is a remarkable and troublesome finding that deserves serious etiologic attention.

*College academic performance.* Ten (12.2 percent) of the graduating ministerial students in our group of subjects reported that A was their most common grade during the last two years of college. Forty (48.8 percent) declared that B was their most common grade, and 32 (39 percent) responded that their most common grade was C. From this data, it appears that not only do few ministerial students achieve the highest level of academic performance, but, paradoxically, traditional scholarship (as demonstrated by the high grade-point average)

may actually be a handicap for those aspiring for immediate placement in the full-time ministry of the church. For instance, in this cohort, 4 of 10 (40 percent) of the A students, 23 of 40 (57.5 percent) of the B students, and 16 of 32 (50 percent) of the C students were hired directly into full-time ministry. An equally surprising finding that begs for interpretation is that 7 of the 11 graduates (64 percent) heading for the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary declared that C was their most common grade.

A number of additional, informative insights regarding our 1987 ministerial student cohort emerged when statistical comparisons were made with two other groups of male college seniors who were not ministerial students. Table 3 summarizes these comparative analyses.

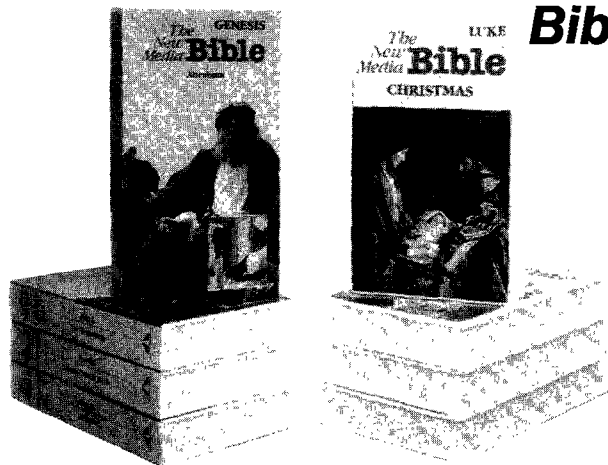
A surprising set of findings is depicted in the first, second, and fourth items in Table 3. Less than half (49 percent) of the ministerial students had one or both parents affiliated with the church. On the other hand, 82 percent of the Seventh-day Adventist nonministe-

rial group came from families in which one or both parents were affiliated with the church. Another disturbing statistic: Only a little more than a third (34 percent) of the Seventh-day Adventist ministerial students in this study were products of Adventist secondary schools—compared with 78 percent of our Seventh-day Adventist nonministerial control group in Table 3. Finally, the parents of the ministerial students were characterized by divorce or widowhood much more than the subjects from either of the two control groups.

From these comparisons, we could conclude that the ministerial students are much more likely to come from non-Adventist homes, public high schools, and parental relationships broken by death or divorce than their Adventist classmates in the nonministerial control groups. It is also interesting to note that nearly a third of these ministerial students whose parents were non-Adventist declared that one or both parents were members of the Catholic Church.

Our ministerial students were bap-

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tized at an average age of 18 years—probably reflecting the early non-Seventh-day Adventist background of many in the cohort. This is also related to the cohort members' older average age of 30 as college seniors. Nevertheless, nearly half (48 percent) of the ministerial student group indicated that they had decided on a future ministerial career while in secondary school. Thus, preprofessional career counseling might be profitable at the academy level for potential ministerial students.

According to Table 3, the senior ministerial student group did not produce the highest academic grades, compared with members of the two control groups. On the other hand, a comparison of the same three groups shows that the ministerial students were much more involved in extracurricular college activities. It may be reasonable to conclude that the leadership and social skill development that can be derived from participation in extracurricular activities is recognized by ministerial students as a vital component of their college training—perhaps of equal importance with more-academic pursuits.

A comparison of the data in the seventh and eighth variables in Table 3 reveals that the student group at the state university was much more politically active than the two Adventist groups, as measured by participation in a recent national election. An exception to this general pattern was demonstrated by the ministerial students at Canadian Union College—most of whom voted in their last national election. While a significant number of U.S. ministerial students seem to be apolitical, most of the remainder split their support between the Republican and Democratic parties.

The remaining items in Table 3 may be quite positive in their implications. While the ministerial student respondents slept and ate a little less than members of the two control groups, they also perceived themselves as healthier and happier than did their corresponding numbers in the other groups.

Overall, the research team was very favorably impressed with the Seventh-day Adventist ministerial students in our cohort. They often came out of adversity and difficult circumstances and had displayed considerable fortitude and commitment to their ministerial calling. In a later article we will explicate their responses to a number of important reli-

gious and social issues paramount in the world and church today. At the same time we will identify several inspiring, supernatural, and often miraculous aspects related to their calls to the ministry. ■

<sup>1</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1992), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> One subject did not respond to this question.

<sup>3</sup> Several members of the cohort did not report their secondary school background.

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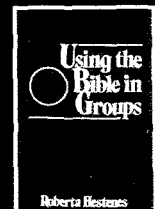
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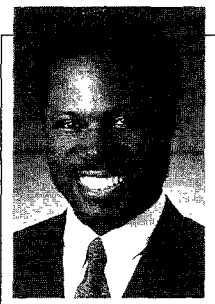
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# Worship: God's agent of contact

Wintley Phipps

**Worship is not only coming to the presence of God but experiencing it.**



*Wintley Phipps is senior pastor of Capitol Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church, Washington, D.C.*

**W**orship—both corporate and personal—is often a true barometer of the spiritual condition of people. As our worship goes, so goes our spirituality and destiny. As a pastor I have struggled to understand why our church is languishing in North America. In 1989 and 1990 the average Adventist church in North America increased its membership by only three to four members per church per year. This statistic alone ought to compel us to act. I have wondered whether we weren't marketing well enough. But I have come to the conclusion that our progress mirrors the spiritual condition of our worship, both corporate and personal.

One of the primary purposes of worship is to invoke among us a sense God's presence. This provides evidence of His favor and the key to our success as a church. God never meant worship and liturgy to be merely vehicles through which we disseminate information about His gospel. Instead worship and liturgy are God's agents of contact with the unseen Majesty of heaven. We must rid our worship of whatever does not sharpen our vision and whatever does not aid us in an apprehension of things eternal.

Ever since the entrance of sin we have fled from the presence of God. We have lost the ability to see and hear Him. But through faith God allows us to commune with Him. Through faith we can experience the authentic reality of His presence. Hence whatever does not aid us in sensing God's presence must be reevaluated and discarded. Personal and corporate worship is at the heart of the

church's progress. We will advance no further and reach no higher than the spiritual condition of our worship and our liturgy.

Eight years ago I became the pastor of the Capitol Hill church in Washington, D.C. I accepted the appointment with a philosophy I hadn't even developed fully. I told my church: "I believe in the spiritual tone of the church. Raise the spiritual tone and you will raise the church. If God's presence can be felt in our worship, then we will find progress in every area of the church's endeavor." I have seen this philosophy work. In less than four years our church attendance has soared from 80 to more than 1,000. Our tithe base has leaped from \$80,000 a year to almost \$1,000,000 last year. What is the secret?

## Get rid of Egyptian ways

First, in our worship we need to rid ourselves of some of our Egyptian ways. And by Egyptian ways I am not talking just about African Egypt, but also European Egypt. Some of the liturgy we have borrowed from Egypt—both African and European—inhibits us from invoking in our churches a sense of the presence of God.

Consider the experience of Moses. In Exodus 32 and 33 we find Moses in one of the most incredible disappointments of his life. As he came down from Mount Sinai, Moses saw his people dancing before a golden calf. The people whom he set his heart upon to serve, the people with whom he chose to suffer affliction rather than reign on the throne of the pharaohs, the people with whom he had cast his lot when he forsook the glories of Egypt, the people for whom God had

parted the waves and made a highway through the sea were now rioting and dancing, worshipping an idol, just like they had seen it done in Egypt. Moses saw the liturgy Israel had so hastily constructed. He watched them as they frolicked and shouted, praising the virtues of the golden calf. They had forgotten that worship without the presence of God is bankrupt, empty, drowning in its own futility. It leads nowhere.

Ellen White says that "during all the wanderings of Israel, Christ, in the pillar of cloud and of fire, was their Leader."<sup>1</sup> The pillar of cloud met their desire for some visible manifestation of God's presence.<sup>2</sup> But over a period of time the children of Israel began to look upon "the cloud of the Presence"<sup>3</sup> as common and ordinary. As a result they lost, as we have lost in many of our churches, a sense of appreciation for and dependence on the presence of God.

God has made us with the ability to sense the approach of the Divine. Enoch walked with God. But how? He educated his mind and heart ever to feel the presence of God.<sup>4</sup> We too can feel His presence and sense the brush of angels' wings.

Because the children of Israel lost their appreciation for the sense of the presence of God, like an injured suitor, like a sweetheart rejected, the cloud quietly rose and withdrew itself from the people. "When men are careless of the Saviour's presence, and in their conversation make no reference to Him in whom they profess that their hopes of eternal life are centered, Jesus is not in their company and the holy angels are grieved from their presence. These pure and heavenly beings cannot remain where the presence of Jesus is not desired and encouraged, and where His absence is not marked."<sup>5</sup> God will not draw near to those who do not miss His presence. We must mark His absence before we can feel His presence.

Look at the children of Israel again. In repentance they shed their ornaments and began to pray. They prayed that God would restore the glory of His presence. Moses entered into the tent of meeting that He had pitched far from the polluted camp, and suddenly the pillar cloud—the signal of God's presence—started coming down from off the mountain. The people prayed and prayed until at last they had prayed God down off the mountain.

But look at the prayer of Moses: "Moses said to the Lord, 'You have been telling me, "Lead these people," but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, "I know you by name and you have found favor with me." If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.'

The Lord replied, 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.' Then Moses said to him, 'If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?' " (Ex. 33:12-16, NIV).

Mark the audacity of Moses. He had the daring, the boldness to petition God to change His mind. He had the courage to beseech God to alter His plans and reverse His judgments. In effect, Moses was saying to the Lord: "If Your Presence does not go with us, how will the people of the land know that we are the people of Your covenant? How will they know that we are the children of Your promise? How will they know that we are inheritors of a divine commission? How will they know that we are the remnant?" Moses led Israel to recognize that they had no land, no money, no treasures, no throne, to recommend them, nothing to distinguish them, nothing to set them apart from all the people on earth—except the presence of God.

### Strength in His presence

This leads me to the second principle of real progress in the church: Without God's presence in our life and our worship, we as a people and as a church will not progress as we should. God's presence alone can provide for us the strength and protection we need to face the final days ahead.

Many of our worship services are like a coronation without the presence of the King. We have the dignified processions and the orderly recessions, and so many people leave our churches saying "Oh, that was wonderful," but the unspoken word of their hearts is "But where was the King? Why did we not see His glory?"

Ellen White contends: "It is a miserable delusion to have a name, and yet be

## Many of our worship services are like a coronation without the presence of the King.

without a connection with God, without spiritual life, without Christ, without a sense of God's presence in the soul."<sup>6</sup> God made us to reach out and touch the Invisible by faith. "To none will it be granted to enjoy the presence of Christ in the paradise of God if they do not enjoy His presence and love in this probationary life."<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, enjoying the presence of God has another great purpose: "As a shield from temptation and an inspiration to purity and truth, no other influence can equal the sense of God's presence."<sup>8</sup> Nothing will inspire one more to be a Christian than to know that God has drawn near. "Although there may be a tainted, corrupted atmosphere around us, we need not breathe its miasma, but may live in the pure atmosphere of heaven. We may close every door to impure imaginings and unholy thoughts by lifting the soul into the presence of God through sincere prayer."<sup>9</sup> ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1958), p. 311.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> ———, *Testimonies to Ministers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1962), p. 388.

<sup>5</sup> ———, *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Basle, Switzerland: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886), p. 145.

<sup>6</sup> ———, *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 29.

<sup>7</sup> ———, *Signs of the Times*, Sept. 12, 1892.

<sup>8</sup> ———, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 255.

<sup>9</sup> ———, *Signs of the Times*, Dec. 16, 1889.



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# High standards for elders

**W**

hen Moses chose elders, he was counseled to find "men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain" (Ex. 18:21).<sup>\*</sup> They were to be Spirit-filled individuals (see Num. 11:16, 17). In New Testament times, Paul cautioned Timothy and Titus that church elders were to be "above reproach, . . . temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, . . . not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money" (1 Tim. 3:2, 3). An elder "must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined" (Titus 1:7, 8). Elders, along with all church leaders, should reveal the fruit of God's Spirit in their lives: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Peter offered similar advice in his Epistle: "To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder . . . Be shepherds of God's flock . . . not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. . . . Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another. . . . Humble yourselves. . . . Be self-controlled and alert. . . . Resist [the devil], standing firm in the faith" (1 Peter 5:1-9).

In light of the above, Ellen White commented: "Those who are appointed to guard the spiritual interests of the church should be careful to set a right example, giving no occasion for envy, jealousy, or suspicion, ever manifesting that same spirit of love, respect, and cour-

tesy which they desire to encourage in their brethren."<sup>1</sup>

In all aspects of leadership, elders must practice absolute truthfulness and honesty, showing a high standard of ethical behavior. They must be faithful and loyal to the teachings of Scripture and the standards of the church, refusing to compromise on any issue of truth or ethics. And always they need to look to Jesus to maintain their integrity.

## Strong family relationships

Because one's own family is among life's greatest treasures, elders need to pray constantly for wisdom and love so that their homes will reflect all that is pure, honest, faithful, and true. "The greatest evidence of the power of Christianity that can be presented to the world is a well-ordered, well-disciplined family. This will recommend the truth as nothing else can, for it is a living witness of its practical power upon the heart."<sup>2</sup>

The Bible suggests that one way to tell whether candidates are truly qualified to be elders is to evaluate their family relationships: "He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)" (1 Tim. 3:4, 5). "An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient" (Titus 1:6).

Because elders are the lay leaders of the local church, they can be assured that the eyes of fellow members are upon them. They can expect scrutiny of their home relationships. Those who through their capable and loving leadership have received love and respect from the members of their own home can hope to win a similar response from members of the larger church family.

In the home as in the church, good relationships are based on love, faithful-

ness, loyalty, and respect. These are all attributes of Christ's character, and they develop in our lives from close association with Him. "Hearts that are filled with the love of Christ can never be very far apart. Religion is love, and a Christian home is one where love reigns and finds expression in words and acts of thoughtful kindness and gentle courtesy. . . . Only where Christ reigns can there be deep, true, unselfish love."<sup>3</sup> "And as your love for Him increases, your love for each other will grow deeper and stronger."<sup>4</sup>

## Commitment to Christ

Commitment, deep spirituality, and strong moral character are attributes of Christian leadership that do not come naturally. They are the fruit of our fellowship with Jesus. Thus elders need to find time every day for Bible study, meditation, and prayer. No Christian leader can hope to have the power to lead people in God's way unless he or she makes a commitment to put God first in every part of life.

Christ Himself felt this need for the Father's presence to renew His strength. The Scriptures record that "very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (Mark 1:35). This was not an isolated occasion for Jesus. It was His custom to spend the early hours of each day in communion with His Father (see Matt. 14:23; Luke 5:16; 6:12). The type of devotion shown by Jesus in His leadership is a model for all Christian leaders today. ■

\* All Scripture quotations in this article are from the New International Version.

<sup>1</sup> E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 5, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> ———, *The Adventist Home* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1952), p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

## **Crisis of the End Time**

Marvin Moore, *Pacific Press Publishing Assn., Boise, Idaho, 1992, 253 pages, \$10.95, paper. Reviewed by Kenneth R. Wade, ministerial secretary, Southeast Asia Union Mission, Singapore, and former associate editor of Ministry.*

*Crisis of the End Time* does not give a blow-by-blow prediction sheet for end-time events, nor does it present a guilt-and-fear-inducing admonition to "get

your act together or else." Moore writes from a human perspective about the worst crisis that human beings will ever endure. But instead of focusing on the terror of the crisis, he focuses on the power of the Saviour who will carry us through it. Instead of focusing on the sins that we must overcome in order to be ready to meet Jesus, he focuses on how to know Jesus better here and now.

My one disappointment with the book

was that when Moore did deal with the topic of sin, he stayed mostly on a rather superficial level—coffee drinking, smoking, and other outward symptoms of inward problems. When he deals with unconfessed sin, however, he shows excellent insight into the nature of sin, what it does to relationships, and how it must be handled.

Moore bases his writing on years of experience in presenting seminars on his topic, so he addresses the type of questions that people typically ask. He is not afraid to break new ground in predictions about the role of UFOs and extraterrestrials. He even writes about how the 144,000 will worship. He dares to pen the word "celebration" in the worship context, but I won't reveal which side of that controversy he lands on.

Moore shows good understanding of the issues that those who live through the end of time will have to face. This book is well worth reading. I found it enlightening and spiritually enriching.

## **The Codependent Church**

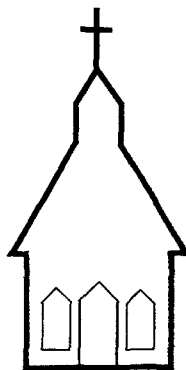
Virginia Curran Hoffman, *Crossroad Publishing Co., New York, 1991, 204 pages, \$12.95, paper. Reviewed by Len McMillan, Potomac Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Staunton, Virginia.*

The title intrigues, the introduction titillates (with a promise of revealed secrets), but the content often gets lost in a maze of Catholic theology. As might be expected from a theology teacher at Loyola University (Chicago), Hoffman bases her examples on the Catholic Church. But that doesn't mean Adventists have nothing to learn from this volume.

*Codependency* is a popular term for a kind of dysfunctional relationship with addictive qualities. The author builds a strong case for the existence of codependency in the church institution. In the process she makes a statement that most Christians will find alarming: "To the extent that a church assigns its members roles to play and expects them to live by rules that rob them of their inner selves, it is dysfunctional and teaches codependency. To the extent that a church is a closed system, it is dysfunctional and teaches codependence."

After wading through 1,600 years of Catholic history that can be as interesting as the begats, the reader is jolted by this statement: "In the name of religion, we have committed another act of insanity.

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We have claimed to have the only franchise on God. This underlies all other claims made by closed and rigid Christian denominations." Hoffman sees the "idol of conformity" in Protestant as well as Catholic camps, the only difference being the title under which this god reigns. The author suggests that in some denominations the idol of conformity can be a literal biblical interpretation that if consistent would force twenty-first-century persons to live as ancient Middle Eastern people.

Hoffman builds a challenging case that much of what we call Christian fundraising is actually codependent behavior because the institutional church pushes all the codependent buttons: guilt, diminished self-worth, gullibility, willingness to be manipulated, and the need to be needed.

Another symptom of codependency is dishonesty and denial. She says that rigid Christians lie to themselves about being happy with the denominational menu they are offered. They perpetuate the lie with their children and new converts because the pain of confronting the truth is too much. And so they continue to repeat doctrines they no longer believe valid.

Hoffman summarizes by saying, "Security seekers and the power seekers complement each other and have a vested interest in keeping one another in those roles." It is at the end of the book, where she speaks about intervention and how to break the codependency cycle that her rather extreme view comes to light. Her desire goes deeper than eliminating codependency. She appears to advocate the breakup of the institutional church.

Hoffman's idea of recovery would be to work through small community groups with no permanent leaders, no property, a simple structure, and complete anonymity. For many Protestants and Catholics, the cure could be worse than the disease.

Realizing how radical this sounds, Hoffman vacillates in an attempt to maintain some structure. She distinguishes between faith (a personal relationship with God) and religion (a community relationship with like believers). She concludes that if we can come to see that God and the institutional church are not the same, we can start seeing contemporary churches as successful attempts to support their members' faith relationships with God.

*The Codependent Church* serves its greatest purpose by inspiring conservative Christian leaders to address

codependency within their religious communities. For those who wish to learn more of the inner workings of the Catholic Church and about the 12-step program for recovery from addictive and codependent behavior on the institutional level, this book is worth having.

### Christian Basics

*John Stott, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1991, 166 pages, \$9.95, paper. Reviewed by J. David Newman, editor, Ministry.*

John Stott, rector emeritus of All Saints Church, London, England, has completely rewritten his basic primer on Christianity. *Christian Basics* tells us how to become a Christian, how to be sure we are Christians, and how to grow as Christians.

Stott emphasizes that we are saved only through the blood of Jesus. He makes it clear that our salvation is based on the complete and finished work of Christ, but then he makes this important statement: "Jesus Christ wants to be our Lord as well as our Saviour. He is in fact 'our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3:18), and we have no liberty to cut Him in two, responding to one half and rejecting the other. For He makes demands as well as offers. He offers us salvation (forgiveness and the liberating power of His Spirit); He demands our thoughtful and total allegiance."

I like his refreshing emphasis on the importance of obedience for the Chris-

tian, without coming across as being legalistic. He strikes the right balance between law and grace.

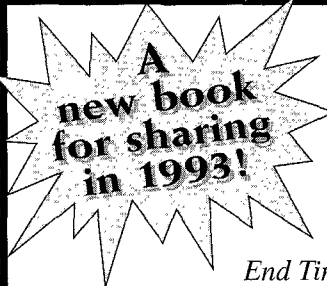
This book may be used as a study guide for new converts. Each of the 10 chapters ends with questions for discussion and decision. Stott writes with easy grace and lucid prose, and even mature Christians would benefit from reading *Christian Basics*.

### Window Frames: Resources for Youth Leaders

*Ted Wick, ed., North American Division Church Ministries Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland, 1991, 216 pages, \$16.95. Reviewed by Steve Case, president, Piece of the Pie Ministries, Sacramento, California.*

Looking into these window frames reminds me of peeking into the personal youth ministry files of the editor, Ted Wick, a seasoned youth minister. Wick currently serves as the youth and young adult coordinator for the North American Division. With this volume as a resource, a new youth leader could quickly have an overview of youth ministry with goals, objectives, job descriptions, loads of program ideas, small group strategies, and a dozen scripts for drama. The 30 pages of duplication forms—such as budget sheets, calendars, permission forms, announcements, and graphics—provide an extra bonus.

Even the experienced youth leader

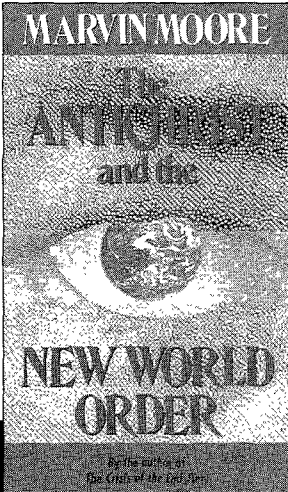


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will find significant portions of the notebook to be a valuable addition to one's own files. The notebook format is initially catchy, but can be rather cumbersome because of its odd 9" x 12" vertical size. A book format or normal binder size would have been better.

With so few youth ministry materials produced by the denomination (outside the quarterly curriculum of *Cornerstone Connections*), *Window Frames* could serve as an Adventist-produced gift from the pastor or church board to youth leaders. It will certainly give them a sense of support that could deter youth ministry burnout. For a quick order, call the NAD Distribution Center at 402-486-2519.

### The Marked Word

*A series of 38 Bible studies by Gertrude Battle, North American Division Church Ministries Department, Silver Spring, Maryland, published by Review and Herald Publishing Assn., Hagerstown, Maryland, 1992, \$9.95. Reviewed by Brian Jones, Bible instructor, Auburn, Washington.*

*The Marked Word* presents Bible truth in a systematic, easy-to-understand way. The author does not pretend to offer an exhaustive series of lessons but successfully gives a foundation for the distinctive features of Adventism. She enhances the studies with useful charts and visual aids.

The carefully worked out Bible-marking plan precedes the study program (con-

stituting about a third of the package), and will take some patience and time on the part of those who use it. The marking guidebook moves sequentially through every book in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, showing what to underline and cross-reference and annotate at every step. While marking the Bible one wonders how the various texts will eventually be tied together in the lessons that follow. But once you complete the mechanical aspect of Bible marking, you can give every lesson in the study plan.

The series includes collateral readings from Ellen White. Anyone unacquainted with her writings will gain a judicious and appealing exposure to them, because the studies use them solely to illuminate and magnify Bible truth.

These studies reveal a clear vision of the gospel and a skillful arrangement of subjects. Their appealing treatment of life-changing truths is Christ-centered. Usually Adventist Bible study plans place the Sabbath before lessons on the sanctuary and the judgment. However, the Sabbath derives its prophetic significance from Christ's sanctuary ministry, especially in the Most Holy Place. After all, the first angel's message proclaims the hour of God's judgment *before* pointing to the Sabbath (Rev. 14:7). Recognizing this, the author places the Sabbath after an in-depth study of the atonement. I know of no other major series of published Bible studies that arranges the subject matter in this way.

Battle's treatment of the new birth, though interesting and sound, could use fuller development. On the whole the lessons are clear, enjoyable, inspirational, and practical. I would especially recommend them for new Adventists and to those who want to gain a fuller grasp of present truth. This series not only conveys the fundamentals of Adventist faith, but develops careful Bible students.

### Christ's Way of Reaching People

*Philip G. Samaan, Review and Herald Publishing Assn., Hagerstown, Maryland, 1990, 160 pages, \$9.95, paper. Reviewed by Patrick Boyle, pastor, Watford, Hertfordshire, England.*

The author organizes this book around a statement from Ellen White: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people." Samaan uses this insight to develop "the fine art of relational witnessing." He explicates his thesis in six steps: 1. Christ mingled with others, desiring their good. 2. He sympathized with them. 3. He ministered to their needs. 4. He won their confidence. 5. He invited them to follow Him. 6. He promised to make them fishers of people.

The author emphasizes the need to socialize as a productive means of witnessing. Christians who separate themselves do not win people to Christ. An equally important emphasis addresses the necessity of prayer. Prayer has no substitutes; soul saving and intercessory prayer are inseparable. Pastors, in particular, need to reflect on how much they value persistent intercessory prayer in their ministries.

### Recently Noted

*Kneeling in Jerusalem, Ann Weems, Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1992.*

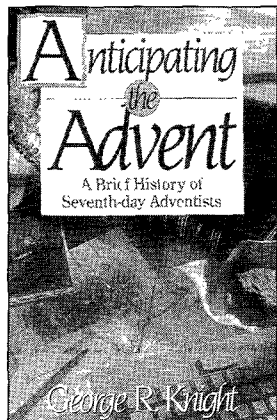
The insightful poetry of Ann Weems goes deep into the soul. (See pages 7, 8, and cover.) It exposes our ineptness yet understands our longing. Though produced for Easter and the days leading up to it, most of the poems express a rich spirituality applicable for any time of year.

One example of the author's intuitiveness, "Forgive, O Holy One," reads:

Stressed and anxious,  
the people come  
to be comforted  
and are put in committee.  
Forgive, O Holy One,  
our weariness  
with Your world  
and with Your word.

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## Paul's big mistake

From page 5

claring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:1, 2).

No fancy rhetoric anymore, Paul said. Just Christ and Him crucified. Ellen White comments: "In preaching the gospel in Corinth, the apostle followed a course different from that which had marked his labors at Athens. . . . [He] determined to avoid elaborate arguments and discussions, and 'not to know anything' among the Corinthians 'save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.'"<sup>1</sup>

Not that Paul became irrelevant, drab, or lax in his logic. But now he put the spotlight on the Saviour—and not just Jesus in general, but Jesus on the cross. He realized such an emphasis would be disparaged: "We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:23, 24).

Liberals want a Christ who stimulates their intellect, while others want a Christ who empowers them to become worthy through keeping the law. Paul did present the wisdom and overcoming power of Jesus, but the primary theme was His death to forgive sin. The Lamb of God uplifted at Calvary—herein is the source of both wisdom and power. Unless we continually look up at the cross, we sink into legalism or liberalism.

So let's present the truth as it is in Jesus. Not just the Sabbath, but Christ the Lord of the Sabbath. Not just the sanctuary, but Christ our High Priest. Not just the "state of the dead," but Christ the Lifegiver. Not just the Spirit of prophecy, but the testimony of Jesus in that gift. Moreover, not just Christ in these doctrines, but Christ *crucified*. This is the lesson from Paul at Athens.

May God save us from becoming too sophisticated for the cross of our salvation. Without Christ crucified, we would have no message, no ministry, no reason to exist. Our churches might as well be kingdom halls. Our colleges would be

sand castles of worldly wisdom. Our health system would be a withered right arm. Every institution, every policy, and every program in the church needs to magnify Christ and Him crucified, or we have forfeited God's purpose.

When Christ crucified becomes the consistent theme of our songs, sermons, and Sabbath school lessons, the long-awaited revival and reformation will

follow. God's remnant will blossom out of the lukewarm mud of Laodicea with something to offer refugees from Babylon. ■

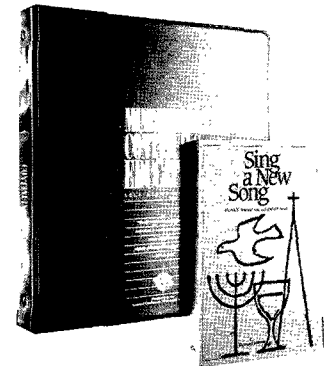
\* All Scripture texts are from The New King James Version.

<sup>1</sup> Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 244.

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## Letters

From page 5

sin is their future task, not Christ's finished task; that God's kindness, not Christ's life and death, is what saves us; that the Holy Spirit, not Christ, is their link to the Father; that their choice, obedience, repentance, faith, or love adds something to Christ's life and death as a formal cause for their salvation.

Let it be shouted from the house-tops that true Adventism proclaims the same gospel as Paul and the Protestant Reformers. We do not come with a new gospel. As in every communion, deviant voices will never be silenced. Nevertheless, let leadership and pastors join their voices to declare that Christ is the Saviour and Lord of authentic Adventism!—Norman L. Meager, Sonora, California.

■ “Spiritual auditors”? What marvelous characters they would need to be! And therefore, isn't there greater work for them to do? I think that the angels are doing this job; and with all the stresses to which leaders are subject, it might be better to leave it to the angels to keep a faithful record. Let those elected to office face that record in due course. Meanwhile, editors must do their best: tell the truth.

I'm with you. If I have one regret more than another, it is that I never succeeded in presenting Jesus and all the truths that center in Him in their right relation. It always seemed that when I preached about Jesus, doctrine got pushed to one side. When I preached doctrine, there did not seem to be time to delineate the teaching simply and intelligibly. But over the past 20 years or so I have discovered Jesus as the Lord of the Sabbath and this has informed my presentation of the Sabbath itself.—Victor Hall, Crieff, Perthshire, Scotland.

■ Truthful statistics? A lack of integrity clings to known misrepresentation for whatever reasons—internal or external. I have seen its outworking both small and large. I talked with a son-in-law who is trying (for at least the twentieth time) to get the current

pastor in his small church in the U.S. to get real about a membership list that is now about twice as long as reality. I spent 16 years in that church and was an elder and then head elder trying to do the same. I won't list the excuses given for not doing anything. You have heard them all anyway. They spring from mythology and unbelievable self-protectionism versus being truthful.

An epidemiologist in population experience studies has to first enroll, identify, and describe population members in order to find disease rates, do follow-ups, compare and draw some conclusions. I once worked on a study on the status of Adventist health. As I went around to every church to gather data, I was consternated to find that in most churches 40 percent of the membership could not be accounted for—Frank R. Lemon, Beaumont, California.

■ Whether intended or not, we've given the impression that justification is a gift we may receive, sanctification is an accomplishment we must achieve, and glorification is a reward for our achievements! This is why some of us are not very excited about the subject of sanctification. When we understand more about why we are invited to not only wash in the blood but also eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Lamb, we will have new enthusiasm for the cross and sanctification!

In His blood there is life! To partake of His flesh and blood is to partake of His life, His nature. The October *Ministry* quotes Ellen White to say Christ's “sacrifice was offered for the purpose of restoring man to his original perfection. Yea, more, it was offered to give him an entire transformation of character, making him more than a conqueror” (*The SDA Bible Commentary, Ellen G. White Comments*, vol. 6, p. 1113). When we understand this, I believe we will see one interest prevail, one subject “swallow up every other—Christ our righteousness” (*Ellen G. White, Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 259)—Pat Hart, chaplain, Porter Memorial Hospital, Denver, Colorado.

■ In your open letter (October) the most basic “r” word was omitted: genuine repentance must precede

“revival” and “reformation.” “The life we live is to be one of continual repentance and humility. We need to repent constantly, that we may be constantly victorious. When we have true humility, we have victory” (*The SDA Bible Commentary, Ellen G. White Comments*, vol. 7, p. 959).

So would “spiritual auditors” really help? Perhaps our greater need is to “pour forth the straight truth,” and the “shaking” will thin out the falsehearted. The “destiny of the church hangs” upon heeding the “testimony of the True Witness” (*Ellen G. White, Early Writings*, p. 270). The True Witness knows our works, and He certainly knows about padded membership lists for whatever the reason!

God sends reproof and correction to guide His people in all ages. The True Witness of Revelation 3 promises “rebuke and discipline” (verse 19, NIV) because the church has a great need and God has great love. Is it surprising, then, that as the great controversy intensifies, God's instruction becomes more earnest, covering thousands of pages, even down to the minutiae of life? The One who was lifted up for us has lifted us up on a path “high above the world” (*ibid.*, p. 14), and He has a perfect right to straighten out perverse, crooked ideas.—Esther McCluskey, Colton, California.

n In the article “‘I, If I Be Lifted Up’—A Response” (December 1992), Larry Christoffel documented four major beliefs in the SDA Church on the atonement of Christ and personal salvation (I agree with him on the evangelical view). In essence what this means is that the SDA Church is based on a diverse coalition rather than a strong unifying consensus. One of the forces driving many independent ministries is the widespread question of whether the coalition is workable (hinted at in the statement on independents in the same issue). As far as sticking together with the coalition at all costs, we need to look at the question debated during the Reformation era, of whether the church is primarily a visible institution, or whether it is the assembly of Christian believers.—Ron Thomsen, Houston, Texas.

## Learning the guitar

Ever wish you could learn to play the guitar but don't have the time? Your solution may be the *30-Minute Guitar* video training tape available from Creation Enterprises International, P.O. Box 274, Siloam Springs, AR 72761. Or call 800-522-4234 in the United States. Cost is US\$27.45, postpaid. Outside U.S.A., add US\$2.50 for shipping.

## Clinical Pastoral Education

Kettering Medical Center is offering six positions (\$14,500 each) in a one-year residency in clinical pastoral education (CPE), beginning August 31, 1992.

The program is designed for persons who wish to improve their pastoral care and counseling skills for parish ministry, or to obtain certification in a specialized ministry such as hospital chaplain. A seminary degree (preferably Master of Divinity) and at least one unit of basic CPE are prerequisites for the residency. Applications may be submitted through May 15, 1993.

For further information and application forms, please contact Chaplain Henry Uy, Kettering Medical Center, 3535 Southern Blvd., Kettering, OH 45429. Phone: 513-296-7240.

## Ministry Care Line

A confidential support program for pastors, teachers, and their spouses and children is now offered by Ministry Care Line, a national service of the Kettering Clergy Care Center, an affiliate of Kettering Medical Center.

Ministry Care Line offers subscribing-organization employees and their family members toll-free telephone access to support and consultation for the problems and stresses of being a Christian leader. Pastors or their spouses may check with their administrators to determine the availability of Ministry Care Line in their respective conferences. This program has been approved for use by the North American Division. For information, call 513-299-5288.—Ken Ursin, Kettering, Ohio.



Ministry Care Line staff (seated) Bob Peach, director; (standing, from left) LoNita Fatic, Richa Stevens, Lorraine Beaven, and Gaylon Worch.

## Fellowship afternoons

Sabbath afternoons can be quite a challenge! There are the usual organized walks, youth meetings, and literature distributions. So what else can you do to meet the needs of your church members for fellowship and spiritual nurture?

How about a fellowship afternoon? We've tried these get-togethers quite a few times in our churches, and they have always met with success. After a bring-and-share lunch we all gather in a church room and sing praise songs. When

everyone is relaxed, we divide into groups and play Christian games. There are games and puzzles for the children and a variety of games for the adults—including a crossword designed to test who was really listening to the pastor's sermon! Ideas for the games can be collected from various books, or games can be purchased from a Christian bookshop (for example, Bible Trivia). Or each family can bring a favorite Sabbath game.

This kind of activity can involve every church

member. Many elderly members sit alone on Sabbath afternoons, unable to participate in the walks or literature distribution—but just watch their eyes sparkle when they can show off their biblical knowledge! This is an informal time when church members of all ages can spend time together, have fun, and

learn more about God!—Mary Barrett, Cambridge, England.

## Fair Booth

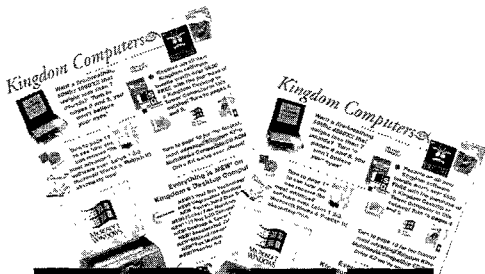
For a change of pace for a fair booth, we concentrated on our school. We set up a mini-classroom in the booth complete with old lift-up-type desk, blackboard with the ABCs bordering it, addition problems and subtraction problems written on the board, and a computer (to show we are modern). We had a drawing for a new dictionary and thesaurus, gave away pencils with our school name printed on them, sold big red apples (a nice change from fair food), and displayed a school bell. We also had brochures to give away on the Adventist education system, our local school policy, and other items of interest. Application forms and a visitation day were also promoted.—Becky Anderson, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

## \$25 for your ideas

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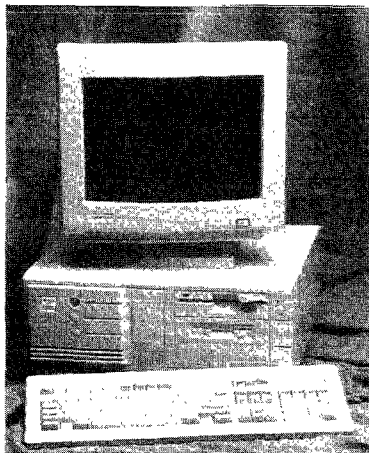


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