

# Elder's Digest

A Quarterly Resource for Local Church Elders

Number Twelve

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**LEADERS UNITED**  
**IN JESUS**

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# Elder's Digest

NUMBER TWELVE

Special Section

## We are One in the Spirit



p. 12

*Without unity the church  
ceases to be the church.*

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## Only One Banner in the Army of the Lord

Joel Sarli



**E**ven before a new nation is organized people design a flag that eventually will become the national symbol of their ideal and goals. Flags in some way characterize the people of the country it represents. In some instances the color(s) show what the main natural resources of the land are; the strips, stars or any other figures may indicate the political units that make up the nation or they may tell a little about its historical background. But no matter the design or color, a flag always is the symbol of a nation. It fosters unity. People are willing to fight and even give their life to defend their flag because they see in the fabrics or colors ideals and values that must be respected and preserved.

Love for the country becomes related to this symbolic national representation. There is no nation with two flags. This would bring confusion among the people and would jeopardize the national unity. When revolutionary groups try to destroy the national unity they design a new flag.

The church has a flag which is strongly related to its message and mission for the present time and it is the basic factor of unity among the members. Ellen G. White says "I saw you holding up the banner on which are written the words: 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus'" (Revelation 14:12, *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, page 154).

Through the ages faithful and loyal believers have been willing to sacrifice even their life to defend the ideals embodied in the Christian flag. The more Christians keep themselves loyal to the flag that represents the divine ideals for the church, the stronger is the unity in the church as she moves on to her destiny.

In the apostolic time Christians faced some of the same problems we are facing today, i.e., some people have decided to have a kind of independent flag instead of upholding the flag of the newly born Christian church. This attitude brought confusion which jeopardized the unity of the Christian community and the apostles and the elders had to take effective action to keep the church united under the flag of Jesus (see Acts 14, 15).

In the beginning of the Advent Movement, a similar situation arose. The pioneers had to establish a system of credentials as a mean to avoid the confusion brought for some preachers that were lifting up the flags of their personal conclusions and messages. Today the church has to face another identical situation. There are in this present time some preachers and theologians who are using the freedom granted by the church and moving from one place to another, some holding

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# The Joy of Present Salvation

N. R. Dower

One of the most pathetic conditions that we find in the church today, and one for which there should be no real excuse, is the continual fog of uncertainty that surrounds so many of our dear people regarding their present personal relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of our church members, for fear of being misunderstood, hesitate even to claim that they are Christians, that they have been saved, and that they now possess the rich endowments of the righteousness of Christ. It seems to me that we as ministers are largely responsible for this.

In our endeavor to steer away from the well known and widely accepted theory of “once saved, always saved” we many times fail to accept and to emphasize the very plain and positive statements of the Word of God relative to our salvation.

We are either saved or lost today. We are either carrying the burden of sin upon us today, or we have been freed from it by the Lord Jesus Christ today. If we confess and forsake our sins, and if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have forgiveness for our sins and cleansing from all unrighteousness. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. These are facts which give certainty to the knowledge of our present favorable standing before God.

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7).

There are three very impressive texts in this connection which I should like to consider briefly:

“This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

“Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood,

hath eternal life” (John 6:54).

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life” (1 John 5:11-13).

To realize that eternal life is my present personal possession, that it will continue to be mine as long as Christ dwells within, is a revelation which brings peace, and light, and hope to my troubled heart. Here is something which removes the fog and gives me the sweet clear atmosphere of heavenly certainty. Here is something upon which I can build the entire structure of my faith. Here is something upon which my soul can fully rely.

Living as we do in this world of sin and death, with sorrow and decay on every side, we are now privileged in this present life to be partakers of eternal, heavenly things. My life is hid with God in Christ. I need no longer fear what men may do unto me. They may be able to destroy my body; but my life, eternal life, which is in Christ, cannot be destroyed, either by man or devil. It is a possession of my divine Lord and cannot be separated from Him—and He is mine. He dwells within, and in Him I have life and have it more abundantly. This is not theory; it is fact. It is based on the unchangeable Word of God. It is as sure and certain as the existence of God, and my heart claims by faith that this is my present personal standing before Him.

Although this is true, we should not fail to distinguish between eternal life and immortality. Immortality is a divine attribute belonging only to God, and is given to man not upon his acceptance of Christ Jesus, but upon his enduring to the end. It is bestowed when Christ comes the second time without sin unto salvation. The living are changed in a moment, in the

**We are either carrying the burden of sin upon us today, or we have been freed from it by the Lord Jesus Christ.**

twinkling of the eye, at the last trump. The dead are raised incorruptible. Immortality is then bestowed upon the saved of God. We should bear in mind, however, that only those who have eternal life will put on immortality at the coming of Jesus.

It is true that there are certain statements which caution us to refrain from boasting, or claiming that we are unchangeably saved this side of the kingdom. There are depictions of God's people during the time of trouble filled with anxiety over their spiritual condition and the certainty of their acceptance with Christ, yet there are many more which point out to us in no uncertain way that when Christ dwells in the heart we have as a present experience, as a certainty, the wonderful attributes of His divine character. He becomes to us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

In speaking of the message of righteousness by faith and other kindred truths the Lord's messenger sets forth the following impressive statements which God's servants today would do well to heed.

"Our churches are dying for the want of teaching on the subject of righteousness by faith in Christ, and on kindred truths" (*Gospel Workers*, page 301).

"The only way in which he (the sinner) can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner's account. Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son. This is how faith is accounted righteousness; and the pardoned soul goes on from grace to grace, from light to a greater light. He can say with rejoicing, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life'" (*Review and Herald*, November 4, 1890).

"If you would stand through the time of trouble, you must know Christ, and appropriate the gift of His righteousness, which He imputes to the repentant sinner. Human wisdom will not avail to devise a plan of salvation. Human philosophy is vain, the fruits of the loftiest powers of man are worthless aside from the great

plan of the divine Teacher. No glory is to redound to man; all human help and glory lies in the dust; for the truth as it is in Jesus is the only available agent by which man may be saved. Man is privileged to connect with Christ, and then the divine and the human combine; and in this union the hope of man must rest alone; for it is as the Spirit of God touches the soul that the powers of the soul are quickened, and man becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus" (*Ibid.*, November 22, 1892).

If it is for the want of these precious truths that the church is dying, if it is for these that our people are in such desperate need, if it is man's only hope, and if it is the one means whereby we shall be enabled to stand through the time of trouble, then, fellow workers let us search deeply into the riches of the love of God and come forth with these messages of certainty and hope for the church, so that it will be prepared for the closing scenes of earth's history and for the coming of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us remember that it is not in the fact of personal salvation that Adventists contend with other bodies, but it is in the interpretation of the impossibility of falling from grace that we differ. Let us then hold out to our dear people that which will clear away the fog of uncertainty. Let us present to them the glorious assurances that when Christ lives in our hearts by faith we have life, eternal life, as a personal possession just as surely as we have Christ as a personal Saviour.

"Our hope is to be constantly strengthened by the knowledge that Christ is our righteousness. . . . The meager views which so many have had of the exalted character and office of Christ have narrowed their religious experience, and have greatly hindered their progress in the divine life. Personal religion among us as a people is at a low ebb. There is much form, much machinery, much tongue religion; but something deeper and more solid must be brought into our religious experience. . . . What we need is to know God and the power of His love, as revealed in Christ, by an experimental knowledge . . . . Through the merits of Christ, through His righteousness, which by faith is imputed unto us, we are to attain to the perfection of Christian character" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 742-744). **E**

**"What we need is to know God and the power of His love, as revealed in Christ."**

*N. R. Dower served the Adventist Church as pastor, administrator and Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference. Presently he lives in Ooltwah, Tennessee.*

# Elder as Supporter of His Pastor

Floyd W. Bresee

## FIND TIME TO WORK

Elders are seldom chosen who are not busy, successful people. The time they can spend in church work is limited by their vocations, families, and health. The reason pastors sometimes feel they must do everything themselves is that they have given assignments to elders who have proven undependable. Elders should probably not be elders if they see their work exclusively as a Sabbath morning responsibility.

## MAXIMIZE PASTORS' STRENGTHS

No pastor is good at everything. Two reasons: The skills required are too varied for any one person to possess. Congregations expect their pastor to be skilled as: theologian, preacher, spouse and parent, administrator, soulwinner, trainer, counselor, visitor, promoter.

The expected skills are too varied. In the above list, skills at the top of the list tend to require a rather private, contemplative, introvertive personality. Skills toward the bottom of the list require a more public, gregarious, extrovertive personality. The skills are simply too varied for any one person to perfectly fit both ends of that continuum. No pastor is good at everything.

On the other hand, every pastor is good at something. Churches and local elders who expect their pastors to be good at and do everything may force them to spend most of their time doing what they like least and do worst. Some pastors admit they spend up to 80 percent of their time doing things at which they are second best. This not only frustrates the pastors, but deprives the church of the best the pastors can offer. Elders should cooperate with their pastors in identifying the pastors' strengths, then help them organize the church to take advantage of those strengths.

## COMPENSATE FOR PASTOR'S WEAKNESSES

Romans 12 likens the church to the human body. If one part of the body fails, the body does not reject it. Rather, it compensates for it. If the eyes cannot see, the touch and hearing compensate by becoming more acute. Unfortunately congregations confronted with pastoral

failures are quicker to criticize than to compensate. Compensating might be one of the most natural and significant roles of elders. Wherever the pastor is weak, surely some elder is strong, has the appropriate spiritual gift, and should volunteer to compensate. This creates the ideal pastor-elder partnership.

## PASTOR PASTORAL FAMILY

Pastors and their families need elders who will accept them and enjoy them as they are, without either awe or arrogance—in short, friends. There ought to be some program in every congregation for providing a support group for the pastoral family. This is one church activity where the pastor cannot give leadership. It is an elder's responsibility.

*Pastor the pastor*—Pastors are called shepherds, but they are also sheep. And sheep sometimes need shepherding. Pastors may choose a conference/mission ministerial secretary, fellow pastor, or someone else outside the congregation for their counselor and spiritual mentors. But primary support should always come from their own community of believers—the local church, led by its local elders.

It is not easy for most pastors to accept pastoral help from the people they pastor. They feel, "If I am a helper and I need help, what kind of helper am I?" But research indicates that those in the helping professions are most subject to stress and thus likely to sometimes need help. The elder who gives help and the pastor who accepts it are both practicing good incarnational theology. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). God comes to all of us, including pastors, by sending people to help us.

## HOW CAN ELDERS PASTOR THEIR PASTORS?

*Accept their humanity.* Pastors appreciate the love expressed to them, but sometimes feel it is because of what they represent, not because of the persons they are. Let them know they can be imperfect and still be loved.

*Be a Barnabas, a minister of encouragement.* Affirm them often and honestly. Share specific compliments. Tell them what point in the sermon helped you.

*Be a listener.* Listen with empathy if they choose to share problems. Keep necessary conversations strictly confidential.

*Publicly support.* If you have differences, settle them in private. This is one reason the elders' meeting is so important. In that meeting, pastors and elders may disagree, but plans that go from there to the church board and business meetings should be plans that the elders can support.

Give a testimony in church about something your pastor did that changed your life. Let members know you will not tolerate criticism of the pastoral family in your presence. Remember that, unlike you, pastors are directly responsible to their conference/mission. It means a lot to pastors when you affirm them to their conference/mission leaders.

*Have an annual pastor's day.* Let pastors sit with their families on that day. Give the pastoral family a memento such as a photo album filled with pictures from the life of the church.

*Offer yourself.* "Pastor, I fear that you are working too hard. Is there something you would like me to do to lighten your load?" One pastor who was struggling alone with a problem was effectively helped when his elders approached him and lovingly said, "Pastor, we know something is wrong. You don't have to talk about it if you don't want, but we want you to know you are not in this alone. We love you and are praying for you."

*Resolve congregational conflict.* This is one place you as elder may be most effective in offering yourself. You have probably been in the congregation longer than your pastor and should understand the problems better. You have been chosen as elder because the congregation has confidence in you. Congregational conflict is one of the worst pastoral stressors, especially if the elders are part of the problem. If you can be used by the Holy Spirit to bring people together your pastor will be eternally grateful.

*Insist on spiritual renewal time.* Pastor's spiritual batteries may become drained. Encourage them to take adequate time for personal devotions.

*Insist on family and recreation time.* If the pastor's family life is not working, the pastor's work suffers. If the pastor's health is poorly cared for, the congregation will eventually be poorly cared for.

*Encourage provision of anonymous counseling.* Pastors and their families sometimes need professional counseling. They are reluctant to press for such privileges. The denomination, however, encourages every conference/mission to make such counseling available. Elders have great influence with conference/mission leaders and can plead that such services be made

available to their pastors.


*Pray.* Pray for them and encourage them by letting them know it.

*Encourage and affirm the pastor's spouse.* Research indicates that most feel lonely. Congregational expectations can be overwhelming. Members expect the pastoral family to be always ideal and the pastoral home always open. They subconsciously expect his spouse to fill the same role in the church as the previous spouse. Elders should openly defend the right of pastoral spouses to choose their own role in the congregation and use their own spiritual gifts rather than those of a predecessor.

Encourage someone to invite pastors' spouses out to lunch on their birthdays. Help with the pastor's children during church services.

*Pastor the pastor's children.* Try not to idolize them when they are good or criticize them when they misbehave. Being expected to live the life of a perfect Christian is too heavy a load for any one to carry, especially children. They have more expected of them which can cause them problems with their peers. Empathize with hurting pastoral parents. Congregations tend to be very supportive when pastors have hurts, but quite critical if they feel the problem reflects a weakness on the pastor's part. All parents hurt when their children go astray, but probably none more than pastoral parents. They need your support, not your criticism.

*Understand their uprootedness.* They are moving to a new house, the kids are starting a new school where their first reception as a pastor's child will likely be as though they were a little odd, if the spouse works there is job hunting to be done, and they must find a whole new set of friends. Be sensitive to their grief and challenges.

Find some friendly way for members to greet the new pastoral family and help them get settled. Perhaps their new home can be cleaned and polished and a little food put in the cupboards. As soon as convenient have the largest, best planned welcome and installation service possible. Be sure to include the entire family. It is usually much easier for the new pastor to feel accepted than it is for the rest of the pastoral family. This is one of the most significant assignments for local elders. The introduction service should be planned by the elders in cooperation with the conference. Details are available in the final chapter of the *Elder's Handbook* and in the *Minister's Manual*. (See also the video from the General Conference Ministerial Association entitled "How to Love Your Pastoral Family.") 

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*W. Floyd Bresee wrote this article when he was the Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*

# Hospital Visitation

George M. MacLean

Visiting the sick forms an important part of the elder and pastor's work. He can be a great blessing at the hospital as he ministers to the spiritual needs of those who are ill. The elder and pastor are really doctors of the soul, but they should also know something about sick minds and bodies.

Hospital visitation with its varied opportunities is a form of evangelism that demands the very best of the elder and pastor. He should know that the function of religion in time of stress is to build a more courageous self through an active faith in God.

What does the elder or pastor expect as he enters the sickroom? He may find a patient who faces unknown problems of fear over the outcome of the illness, anxiety over loss of work and cost of hospitalization, or concern over the family at home. Perhaps the patient is suffering from a feeling of guilt and condemnation, such as one who has killed someone in a car accident and badly injured himself while under the influence of liquor. Perhaps the person you are about to approach is one who fell asleep while smoking, thus causing a fire that burned the house down and caused the death of three children. Maybe the room holds the patient who heard voices telling her to destroy her husband with a butcher knife. In order to escape the voices she ran out into the traffic and was hurt. Is the picture overdrawn? No, these are experiences that actually happened to patients visited by a minister during recent months at a hospital.

The elder or pastor engaged in hospital visitation must be prepared for any situation, must be "all things unto all men." Before he enters the room he sometimes does not know whether the patient is old or young; about to have surgery or just returned from it; scared of what the doctors will find or of what they have already found; likes the food or

violently dislikes it; is an Adventist, or a Baptist; full of courage, or mentally ill. This is surely a field big enough to challenge every talent. After about 3,000 such visits in the past year, I can personally say that I feel very inadequate to approach the sickroom without first seeking the guidance of Jesus Christ.

## LISTEN TO THE PATIENT


There is no cut-and-dried formula that I could outline to you today for visiting the sick in the hospital. The elder and the pastor must be on their toes in order to relate themselves to the needs as the needs present themselves. They must be guided by intuition, and sense what to say and do at the right moment. They should remember that the first basic need of people generally is to have you listen to them with interest and attention. Those who are critically ill may not find this necessary, but those who are well enough to talk should be encouraged to do so, for the ventilation of feelings does bring tremendous relief. Permit people to express themselves in a friendly environment without fear of retaliation, and consider the things told you as confidential.

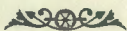
## SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE VISITATION OF THE SICK MAY PROVE HELPFUL

First of all, remember that you are part of a team trying to restore health to those who have lost it, and that you must cooperate with hospital administration policies.

If you see a "No Visitors" sign on the door, or if the door is closed, please check with the nurse on the floor for information or for the all-clear word. Nothing is more embarrassing to a patient than to have the elder or pastor walk in during a treatment.

When you enter the sickroom, do so quietly but confidently, and never on tiptoe. Do not talk in a loud

  
*The minister is  
really a doctor  
of the soul,  
but he should  
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bodies.*





voice with forced cheerfulness, but neither should you whisper. Act as natural as possible. If the sick person offers to shake hands, do so, but it is better not to shake hands, I believe. Wear rubber heels—the noise of leather heels is most undesirable. Personally I prefer to stand by the bed rather than sit down, because the eye level when seated beside a hospital bed is too low for comfort for yourself or the patient. In a home where the bed is lower, it would be preferable to be seated, but in either situation, be relaxed. Do not sit on the bed or jiggle it in any way, as this can be annoying and even painful to a patient.

Do not show horror or shock at sight of a missing arm or eye or terrible burns. It is not best to shield the handicapped. They must face reality, and you can help them right from the beginning by your own acceptance of them as they are.

A quiet humor can be an indispensable asset when visiting the convalescent. Of course, it would be out of place to stimulate a very ill person to laugh heartily even if he could enjoy the humor, and it would not be a good policy to cause an appendectomy patient to literally burst his sides with loud laughter. However, a good chuckle is often like a ray of sunshine, and you should bring cheer, not gloom, to the room.

### **SPEAK WELL OF PERSONNEL**

Speak well of the doctor and nurses to the person you visit. Expressing confidence in the ability of the doctor does a lot to reassure the patient under his care. If you are aware of incompetence or malpractice by any doctor, you should not express it to the patient, but you may take counsel with the hospital administrator, the chief of staff, or responsible relatives.

Do not discuss the illness with the patient except as advised by the doctor, or perhaps in the most general way. Of course, you cannot ignore it, but do not show a morbid interest. And do refrain from giving advice on the treatment. Some visitors may suggest interesting substitutes for what the doctors and nurses are trying to do. An old Irish sister who visited me one time when I was ill earnestly urged me to boil nails in water and drink the water. I was thankful she did not insist that I eat the nails too!

The visiting elder or pastor, knowing something about the gregarious nature of some people, will realize that the herd instinct gets strong in the public ward among those not actually feeling ill although confined to bed. The elder or pastor who gets acquainted with the others in the ward promotes good fellowship in the group, and thus contributes to the mental health of those who may need such therapy. An elder or pastor who

concentrates his attention entirely on one person, while others in the same room are ignored, limits his influence and is criticized when he leaves.

Should you pray or read the Bible? You are there to serve the best interests and needs of the patient, therefore it is impossible to follow the same pattern for everyone or for every situation. You must have a feeling for the right timing of even these desirable ministrations. There are often situations when you can read short passages from the Bible. People usually do not resent your request to offer a cheerful, earnest prayer on their behalf. Couch the wording of your prayer to suit the Roman Catholic, the Jew, the nonbeliever, or the church member.

### **BEST TIME TO VISIT**

What is the best time to visit in the hospital? I feel that the morning is not good, because treatments are usually given then, and it is also the time when the doctors make their rounds. The visiting hours are a poor time for an elder or pastor to make his call. Therefore, I would say the hour before or after visiting hours is the most suitable time. It is also better to call and have prayer with the patient the night before surgery rather than the morning of the operation. For one thing, he is probably groggy in the morning with medications. Your thoughtful visit and calming prayer the night before will help him get a good night's rest and he will be prepared spiritually for what he may have to face.

The length of the visit depends on the condition and interest of the patient. Under ordinary circumstances the visit should not be longer than five to ten minutes, and even three minutes can be very profitable. It is quite an art to appear unhurried even in a short visit, but this is important. When the time comes to leave, then leave.

The elder or pastor is getting close to following in the footsteps of his Master when he walks the corridors of a hospital. Christ's words, "I was sick, and ye visited me," are the best commentary that could be said of the thoughtful elder and pastor by those ill at home or in the hospital.

The elder or pastor who understands this responsibility and prepares himself for it can be a positive influence for health and happiness to those to whom he ministers. He can also be assured he is doing an important type of evangelism. The Lord will bless his efforts. **E**

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*George M. MacLean wrote from Toronto, Ontario where he served as chaplain in Branson Adventist Hospital.*

# A Series for Prayer Meetings

Georgiana G. Hayden

*In the Ministerial Association offices we are frequently asked to give to the field suggestions for prayer meeting topics. Bible instructors as well as ministers' wives on many occasions can be called on to give such a study, or even a series for a month. It is then helpful to have a few leads, especially when time is at a premium. We would appreciate elders and workers remembering us with their material for prayer meetings.—Editor.*

## I. Introduction: Men Have Always Prayed

1. For different things.
  - a. For lengthened life. 2 Kings 20:5, 6.
  - b. For help. Daniel 9:16.
  - c. For mercy. Psalm 51.
  - d. For rain. James 5:18.
  - e. For a son. 1 Samuel 1:11.
2. In many places.
  - a. In the deep. Jonah 2:1.
  - b. On the housetop. Acts 10:9.
  - c. On the bed. 2 Kings 20:2.
  - d. In the wilderness. Genesis 21:16.
  - e. In the street. Luke 8:41.
  - f. In jail. Acts 16:25.
  - g. In the mountain. Mark 6:46.
  - h. On the cross. Luke 23:42.
3. With varying types of expression.
  - a. Short prayers. Matthew 14:30; Luke 18:13.
  - b. Long prayers. 2 Chronicles 6:12-42.

## II. Definitions of Prayer

1. Prayer is an invitation to God. Mark 5:22, 23; 1:40-42.
2. Prayer is work. Deuteronomy 4:41, 42.  
"We must not attempt to achieve by supplication what can be achieved only by supplication and service."
3. Prayer is part of the Christian's defense equipment. Ephesians 6:18.
4. Prayer is taking time to talk to God, having time to listen to God.—Abraham's conversation with God. Gen. 18:22-33.  
Moses' conversation about the welfare of the people. Exodus 32:31-34.
5. Prayer is laying hold of God's highest willingness. Luke 11:9, 10.
6. Prayer is power. 1 King 18:36-38, 42, 45.
7. Prayer is communication with heaven. Psalms 86:7; 91:15; Isaiah 65:24.

## III. Appeal

That we may enter into this communion with Heaven and enjoy the experience of conversation with the Lord.

## HOW TO PRAY

### I. Introduction

1. Christ's formula for triumphant living. Luke 18:1.
2. Prayer, the greatest and most neglected force in Christian service. James 5:16.
3. The law of prayer is as real as that of gravity, germination, or the movement of the heavenly bodies.

### II. God's Rules for Prayer

1. Pray without hypocrisy. Proverbs 28:9; Matthew 6:5; 15:7, 8.
  - a. Jesus refused to grant a sign to the Pharisees. Mark 8:11, 12.
  - b. He refused to give His credentials to those who opposed Him. Mark 11:33.
  - c. But Jesus never refused an earnest request for help.
2. Pray privately. Matthew 6:6.  
God said to Elijah, "Hide thyself" (1 Kings 17:3) before He said, "Shew thyself" (1 Kings 18:1).
3. Pray in faith. Matthew 9:27-29; Mark 9:23, 24; 11:20-24; Hebrews 11:6.
4. Pray definitely. Matthew 6:7, 8; Luke 11:5.  
Be specific. "What things soever ye desire." Mark 11:24.
5. Pray with importunity (with urgency of request, persistently).
  - a. Parables that teach the result of importunity. Luke 11:5-9; 18:1-7.
  - b. The pleading of the Syrophenician woman. Matthew 15:21-28.
6. Pray submissively.
  - a. God knows better than we. Romans 8:26.
  - b. Even Christ prayed that God's will be done. Matthew 26:39.
7. Pray forgivingly. Matthew 5:23, 24, 43-45; Mark 11:25, 26.
8. Pray in Jesus' name. Luke 11:11-13; John 14:14; 16:25-27.

### III. Appeal

That we may learn to follow God's rules for prayer and receive the blessings He promises.

## JESUS' PRAYER EXAMPLE

### I. Introduction

1. Jesus' command.
  - a. "Pray ye." Matthew 6:9.
  - b. "Pray always." Luke 21:36.
  - c. Pray for laborers. Matthew 9:38.
  - d. Pray for your persecutors. Matthew 5:44.
  - e. Pray for spiritual and physical protection. Matthew 24:20; 26:41.
  - f. Pray in secret. Matthew 6:6.
  - g. Pray as Jesus taught. Matthew 6:9.
2. Jesus' example.
  - a. "I pray" found four times in John 17.
  - b. Jesus' secret prayers. Matthew 14:23; 26:36; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 6:12.
  - c. Jesus' public prayers. Matthew 11:25; Luke 11:1; John 11:41; 17:1.
3. Jesus' prayer for Himself. John 17:1, 2.
  - a. The hour is come.
  - b. Jesus pleads His relation to God.
  - c. He pleads God's glory.
  - d. He pleads for His redemptive mission.
  - e. He pleads His holy living. John 17:4, 5, 8; Philippians 2:8.
  - f. He pleads His equality with God before the incarnation. John 17:5; Colossians 1:17.
4. Jesus' prayer for His disciples. John 17:6-19.
  - a. For the security of the eleven.
  - b. For the sanctification of the eleven.
  - c. For all who would ever believe in Him.
  - d. For the perfection of all believers.
5. Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane. Mark 14:35, 36.
  - a. He prayed that if man's redemption were possible some other way, He might be spared, suffering and death.
  - b. He prayed that God's will be done.
6. Jesus' present intercession. Romans 8:33, 34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24.
  - a. Jesus is our court advocate against Satan, our court adversary.
  - b. He is the high priest presenting His own blood in the heavenly sanctuary.

### II. Appeal

That we may have our joys and sorrows to the Lord in prayer *often* and avail ourselves of His willingness and power to present our petitions to the Father.

## HINDRANCES TO PREVAILING PRAYER

### I. Introduction

1. Statements emphasizing the value of prayer:
  - a. James, by the Holy Spirit: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16.
  - b. Andrew Murray: "In relation to His people God works only in answer to prayer."
  - c. Dr. Jowett: "I'd rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach."
  - d. Cortland Myers: "God's greatest agency for the winning of men back to Himself is the prayer of other men. How few ever enter into the positive, practical power of prayer! It is the mightiest force in the universe, and the Christian world is blind to this fact."
  - e. Joseph Neesima: "Let us advance upon our knees."
2. Satan tries his best to make effective all hindrances to prayer.

### II. Hindrances to Avoid and Overcome

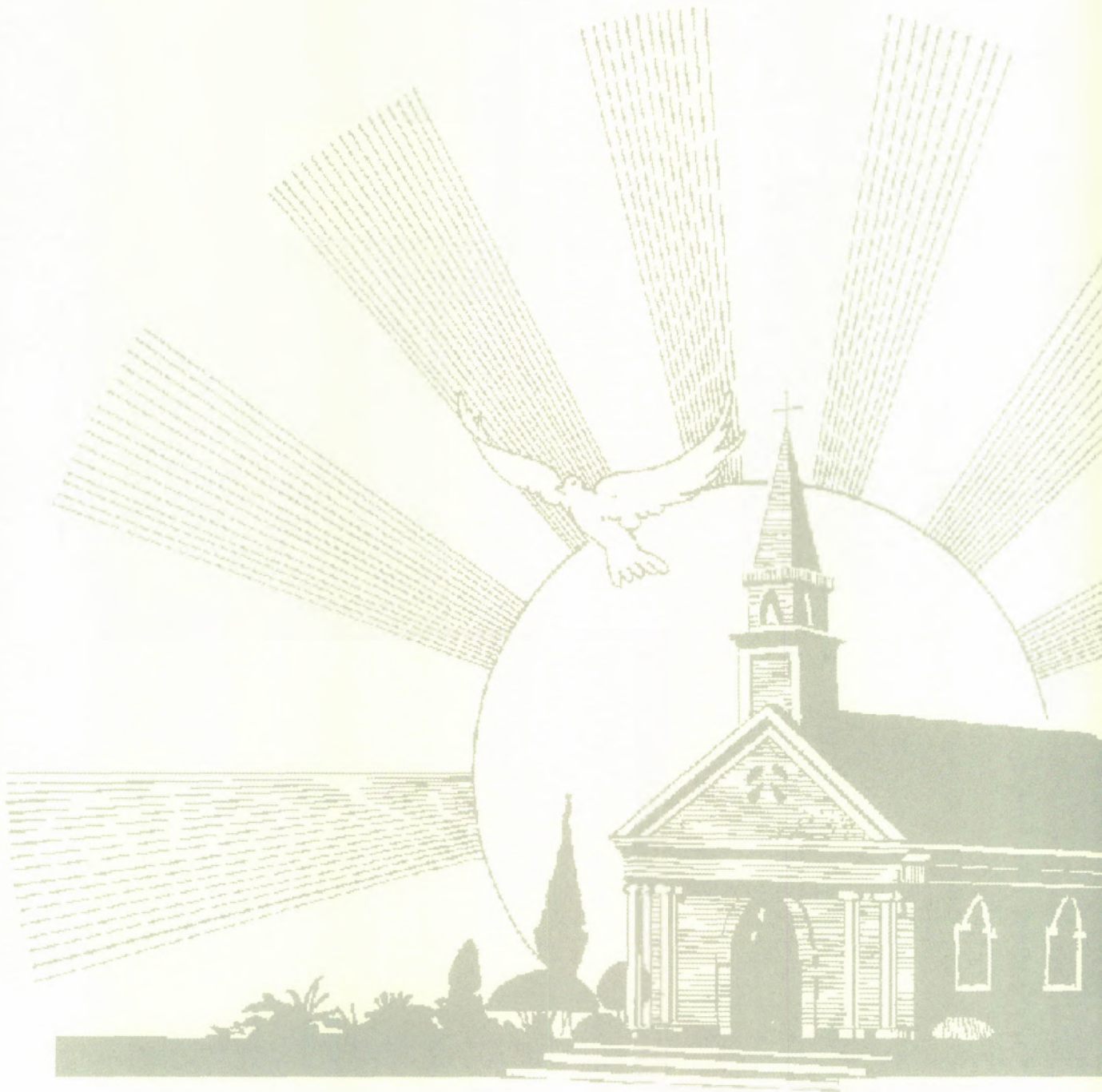
1. Disobedience to God. Deuteronomy 4:30, 31; Proverbs 28:9; Isaiah 1:15, 19, 20; Zechariah 7:13.
  - a. Abraham's prayers answered because of obedience. Genesis 22:18.
  - b. John's rule for answer to prayer. 1 John 3:22.
2. Sin cherished. Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:1, 2.
3. Unbelief. Mark 11:24; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:6, 7.
4. Marital discord or home discord. Ephesians 6:1-4; 1 Peter 3:7.
5. Pride. Job 35:12, 13.
  - a. Abraham's humility. Genesis 18:27.
  - b. God's attitude toward the humble. 2 Chronicles 12:5-7; 12:32-36; Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2; 1 Peter 5:5, 6.
6. Unforgiveness. Matthew 6:14, 15; 18:22; 1 John 4:20.
7. Selfishness. Proverbs 21:13; James 4:3.
8. Idolatry.
  - a. Jacob in search of God's blessing. Genesis 35:2, 3.
  - b. Idols in hearts. Ezekiel 14:3, 4.
  - c. Worldliness an idol. John 2:15, 16.
  - d. Covetousness. Colossians 3:5.
9. Unpaid debts.
  - a. Restitution, Zacchaeus' first thought at conversion. Luke 19:8.
  - b. Philippian jailer did all he could to right wrongs. Acts 16:33, 34.

### III. Appeal

For a decision to lay aside any of the above hindrances in our own lives.

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*Mrs. Georgina G. Hayden served for many years as a mother, nurse and Bible instructor in Peru.*



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# Unity

## The nonnegotiable sign of the church

*Without unity  
the church  
ceases to be  
the church.*

Mario Veloso

The unity of the church depends upon four basic factors. That's what this article is about. God, through Paul, defines the church as the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23), "joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied" (Eph. 4:16, RSV). The church is one in both quantity and quality.

As truly one, the church can be neither multiplied nor divided. Multiplicity would destroy its identity, because, being many, it would be nothing in particular. Dividing it into independent sections would eliminate its global, corporate unity. With each section acting independently, the whole would cease to act in unity, and therefore the whole would cease to exist. For example, congregationalist churches, with each local church acting without a corporate connection to the rest of its kind, do not have a universal organization that integrates them into one body.

The entire Bible, especially the New Testament, teaches a nonnegotiable unity. Without unity the church ceases to be the church. And the remnant church too would lose its identity and fail to achieve the specific mission that God Himself conferred upon it for the time of the end.

In the New Testament four passages clearly explain the church's unity in its various aspects.

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*True  
Christian  
unity can  
only be  
unity  
through  
integration.*

## UNITY THROUGH INTEGRATION

First, the church's unity comes by integration through the person of Christ (John 17:20-26). Christ is the great integrating or unifying element of the church. Without Christ, there is no unity.

The unity that Christ produces is not unity in doctrinal pluralism or reserving the right to maintain individual lines that separate. True Christian unity can only be unity through integration. In true Christian unity, diversity overcomes its natural centrifugal force in order to be concentrated in unity; when the various different viewpoints are integrated into one, diversity disappears and unity reigns.

In His high priestly intercessory prayer, Christ refers to this kind of unity. His followers, so different apart from Him, forsake their diversity in order to become one. Christ prays for His disciples and all believers—the universal church—“that they all may be one, [united] in Us” (verse 21, NKJV), that is, in the Father and in Christ. It is a unity similar to that which exists between the Father, the Son, and (as we find clearly in other texts) the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:3).

Unity by integration has profound missionary consequences. Christ prayed “that they also may be one,” “that the world may believe” (John 17:21). When diversities are magnified, unity is lost. And without unity the church ceases to be the church. It acts in a way that is contrary to its mission to grow and increase,

both in the numbers of its members and in the quality of their Christian experience.

## UNITY THROUGH TRANSFORMATION

Second, unity comes by transformation (Rom 12:1-21). This is not a formal transformation that brings no renewal of the understanding. On the contrary, it renews and revitalizes our perceptions.

The many members with their diverse gifts and multiplicity of functions that make up the body, the church, can all be integrated by radical transformation. The ego-centered spirit must be changed into a person dedicated entirely to God, a living sacrifice (verses 1, 2). Personal values will be held in a healthy balance—“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought” (verse 3, NIV). The transformation extends to administering the gifts with diligence, to spiritual fervor in serving the Lord (verse 11), cultivating personal relations without conceit, not considering oneself wise in one's own eyes, and being at peace with everyone (verses 16, 17).

Transforming the understanding, possessing the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16), and experiencing reconciliation (Rom. 5:1-11; Col. 1:21-23) are parallel concepts in Paul's writings. They produce in the true Christian the peace of authentic justification by faith, and a missionary life dedicated without reservations to the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18, 19). The unity of the church is the corporate

experience of new creatures, of born-again Christians.

## UNITY BY THE SPIRIT

Third, unity comes by the *Spirit* (1 Cor. 12:1-31). How are the multiple and the diverse able to act in unity? Paul responds to this question in 1 Corinthians 12, specifically in relation to the diversity of gifts, ministries, and operations, and the multiplicity of members (verses 4-6, 14). He insists that the body is one, and although we are members each one in particular, as a church we “are the body of Christ” (verses 20, 27). There is only “one body” (verse 12).

The unity of the church is spiritual; it results from the action of the Holy Spirit. We do not obtain it through goodwill, accord, a vote, convenience, or compromise. The Holy Spirit produces unity as a true integration of the members in order to constitute the church.

No individual, no group of individuals (whether they call themselves independent or supporting ministries), no administrative sector of the church, has the right to appoint itself in the church to exercise functions and responsibilities or establish orders and exercise authority as it might wish, independent of the body. God determines these things through the church. “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (verse 28). In Paul's list in Ephesians he includes evangelists and

pastors (Eph. 4:11). Only the church as a corporate power or body united by the Holy Spirit and following the revelation of God can exercise these powers and determine how such functions are to be administered.

The corporate power of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is exercised by the assembly of the General Conference, during which time the church acts as a united body under the action of the Holy Spirit. The doctrines are universal, the ministry is universal, the organizational structure is universal, the lifestyle is universal, the missionary action is universal, and so forth.

For this reason the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not accept congregationalist government, nor does it admit to dividing itself into national or territorial churches. There is no such thing as an Adventist Church of Africa or of Europe. What does exist is the Adventist Church in Africa or in Europe, or in whatever part of the world, because the church is universal.

Neither do we allow one of the doctrines to be abandoned in one sector of the world church or any part of the church to go its own way outside the voted policies and practices of the church.

Destroying unity and altering doctrines are evils that not only work against the church, marring its identity, but also attack the work of the Holy Spirit, who works to establish doctrinal unity and produce corporate unity in the church.

#### UNITY THROUGH GROWING UP IN CHRIST

Fourth, unity comes from growing up in Christ (verses 4:1-16). In this passage Paul defines unity of the Spirit, specifies the objective of the responsibilities and ecclesiastical functions, and establishes growth in Christ as an important factor for the unity of the church.

Paul reminds us that the unity of the church is “the unity of the Spirit,” which the church must keep through the bond of peace (verse 3). Paul then sets forth the seven elements comprising unity established by the Spirit: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God (verses 4, 5). This is a picture of complete unity—ecclesiastical, moral, spiritual, doctrinal, missiological, and theological.

The functions and orders—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers—are varied, but the objective is the same: building up the body of Christ (verses 11, 12). These functions and orders—or gifts—are not given to individuals to exalt themselves or their positions in the church. The gifts are granted to the church in order to build unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God in such a manner that the church does not have vacillating doctrines, nor is it deceived by error, since this would impede its growth (verses 13, 14). God has authorized no member, no group of members, to take the gifts He bestows for the unity and growth of the church and use them as the means of fragmenting the church

through doctrinal conflict or destroying its organizational unity.

To the contrary, leaders and members, compelled by love and following the truth revealed by God, are to work both for their own personal growth and for the corporate growth of the church.

Through the leaders God raises up the church is edified and unity maintained. Paul says that “the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love” (verse 16, RSV). The leaders must do all in their power to maintain the unity of the body.

#### THE BETTER WAY

Instead of suspicion and division how much better to dedicate our energies to mission! United with the Holy Spirit in this work, we will understand doctrine better, we will be integrated better into the body of Christ, and we will be motivated by the love of God more than by our personal egos. In short, we may live as individual Christians and as members of the united body of Christ—His church. **E**

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*The  
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body.*

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*Mario Veloso writes from Silver Spring, Maryland where he works as an Associate Secretary for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*



# The Bible and the Bible Only the Mark of Unity

*“The words of the Bible,  
and the Bible alone,  
should be heard from  
the pulpit.”*

G. E. Hutches

Once upon a time Adventists seemed to be familiar with every doctrine and teaching of the church. The Bible and the Bible only was used as backing and proof for all our positions. A famous evangelist of another denomination said in the early 1900's, "Every Seventh-day Adventist you meet is a preacher, even if he is a boy only seventeen years of age." This was indeed an enviable reputation and inspired me as a youth to want to be a minister or a Bible teacher.

*Prophets and Kings*, page 626, states that "the words of the Bible, and the Bible alone, should be heard from the pulpit," and this was taken very literally. Seldom was a minister seen in the pulpit with anything other than the Bible and a few notes. Statements from popular speakers, magazines, articles, and newspaper clippings were not recognized as necessary to bolster thoughts and inspire audiences.

Many key Bible texts were memorized in church school and in the home. Our youth were able, from the training in the home



and in the school, to give Bible studies on key topics from memory with the use of the Bible only. This was my own experience by the time I was fourteen years of age, and I now bow my head in thanksgiving for parents who recognized the importance of Bible study, family worship in the home, and the importance of the influence of the church school.

### TEACH REVERENCE FOR THE BIBLE

Each succeeding day brings to us again an opportunity to take stock of where we are going and resolve to make the Bible our first Book for study and reading. If reverence for the Bible is taught in early childhood, children will grow up to respect and love it throughout their lives.

A wealthy, elderly white-haired Jew was once the object of my interest while Ingathering. After several days delay we received an appointment with him. During our conversation he asked me if we had respect for the Old Testament Scriptures. I answered, "Oh, yes, we do," and explained that in childhood I had been taught to memorize many Old Testament passages. He commented that no Gentile could love and respect the Old Testament like the Orthodox Jew for they were not only taught to read and memorize but before they could even handle the Scriptures they must go to a basin of water and with soap thoroughly wash

their hands, and if they were to hold the Bible on their laps they must wear clean clothes.

There can be no better preparation for further study in depth and doctrine than a loving reverence for the Word of God and its Author. Fortunate indeed are all who have early learned to trust the Word. But, unfortunately, in nearly all of our churches there are young people who do not know the Bible in such a way



as to love it. These young people, who have not had the privilege of learning to know the Bible as a precious book, probably could best be served through organized study or baptismal classes. Then Bibles could be presented at the beginning of the class to those who do not have their own.

In all churches there are groups that need to be sought out and encouraged to join baptismal or Bible study classes. The very young, on the other hand, may request baptism. I have long believed that children who desire baptism should have that interest nurtured immediately in a special class. In such a group each child should have his own Bible. It isn't enough merely to have access to one.

Surely a child of nine is not too young to have a Bible with his name on it in full.

The words of Wycliffe are often quoted, when he stood at the pulpit with a chained Bible in his hands, "If I could but possess one of these volumes, I would ask no other earthly treasure."

Six centuries have passed since his translation of the Bible into English. Many books have had their day and slipped into obsolescence. But the Bible alone still

stands the test of time because it is the Book Divine a record of what God has done and revealed of Himself to man. It is

God's Word. There is proof in itself. "The word of our God shall stand forever" (Isa. 40:8). It is the foundation of our faith through truth, fact, history, and prophecy. It is the Sacred Volume that teaches the will of God, adequate for our salvation.

May we as Adventists of this generation follow in the footsteps of the pioneers and increase our knowledge of the Bible and continue to treat it with reverence. **E**

*G. E. Hutches wrote this article from Michigan where he worked as the Educational Secretary of the Lake Union Conference.*

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*If reverence for the Bible is taught in early childhood, children will grow up to respect and love it throughout their lives.*



# Strength in Unity Through Prophetic Gift

*“As we approach the last crisis, it is of vital importance that harmony and unity exist among the Lord’s instrumentalities.”*

N. W. Dunn

**M**any divisive forces are at work today which threaten the unity of the church. Hardly a day passes that we do not receive here at denominational headquarters a tract, booklet, or circular letter written by some person who seems to cherish a querulous, fault-finding disposition, and whose obvious intent and purpose is to stir up strife and contention among the brethren, to destroy that unity without which the influence of the church will be ineffective.

Although these men profess a high degree of godliness, they make it their business to give wide publicity to the supposed or imagined faults of the brethren, misinterpret their motives, circulate insinuations, arouse suspicion, and in every conceivable manner break down confidence in the integrity of the leaders and destroy the unity of the Advent Movement.

Every true minister and elder will guard the flock against the attacks of these enemies, for such they are regardless of their profession. Amid the perils of the last days every faithful shepherd will endeavor earnestly and perseveringly to keep the flock united, for when the sheep are scattered they are in great danger of being caught and torn by ravenous wolves.

“As we approach the last crisis,” wrote Ellen G. White

“it is of vital importance that harmony and unity exist among the Lord’s instrumentalities. The world is filled with storm and war and variance. . . . While he [the great apostate] seeks to unite his agents in warring against the truth he will work to divide and scatter its advocates. . . . The members of Christ’s church have the power to thwart the purpose of the adversary of souls. At such a time as this let them not be found at variance with one another or with any of the Lord’s workers. Amidst the general discord let there be one place where harmony and unity exists because the Bible is made the guide of life” (*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, page 182).

### STRENGTH OF THE CHURCH

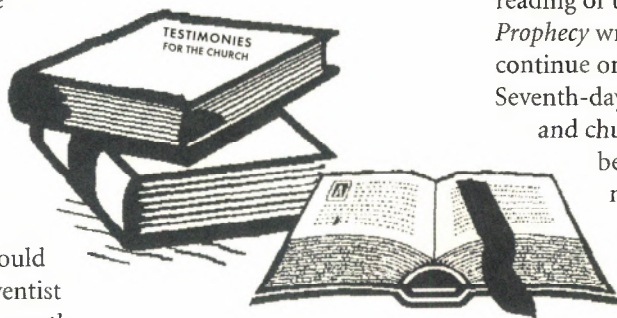
That “one place” should be the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “Unity is the strength of the church. Satan knows this, and he employs his whole force to bring in dissension. . . . Greater attention should be given to the subject of unity” (*Selected Messages*, Book 2, pages 159, 160). “We are coming to a time when, more than ever before, we shall need to press together, to labor unitedly. In union there is strength. In discord and disunion there is only weakness. . . . In our separation from one another we are separated from Christ. . . . Oh, how many times, when I have seemed to be in the presence of God and holy angels, I have heard the angel voice saying,

‘Press together, press together, press together. Do not let Satan cast his hellish shadow between brethren. Press together; in unity there is strength’” (*Ibid.*, page 374).

When ministers and church members are living in harmony with God, they will be in harmony with one another. There will be complete unity and they will come closer to one another as they come closer to Jesus and become more like Him in character.

### A UNIFYING INFLUENCE

As a unifying influence among us the *Spirit of Prophecy* writings have been deeply



appreciated from the first appearance of the gift in 1844. In response to a felt need, the White Estate at the General Conference has prepared special materials regarding the Gift of Prophecy, Denominational History, and the Life and Ministry of Ellen G. White. These materials are available from Adventist Book Centers. Four videos entitled “*Keepers of the Flame*” highlight the history of the Christian church, reformation scenes, the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the gift of prophecy. For computer users there is “*The Published Ellen G. White Writings on*

*Compact Disk*.” This single CD-ROM contains all of Ellen G. White’s published writings, plus the six volume, *Biography of Ellen G. White*, and the King James version of the Bible.

### EXCELLENT RESPONSE

A minister writes, “I have prayed for twenty-five years for just such material.” A layman says, “I believe the Lord has definitely led in the timing of this material at this very season for us His people.” Another writes “I have enjoyed these wonderful material and my soul has been refreshed and watered. I do hunger for more reading of the *Spirit of Prophecy* writings and will continue on.” Thousands of Seventh-day Adventist workers and church members have

been blessed by those materials and have found it to be the answer to their personal need.

Pastors and elders will wish to recommend these resources to all new believers who are preparing for baptism, and to all church members as a sound basis for confidence in the gift of prophecy as a unifying influence among us in these times of peril. **E**

*N. W. Dunn wrote from Washington D.C. At the time of this writing he was an Associate Secretary of the General Conference.*

“Amidst the general discord let there be one place where harmony and unity exists because the Bible is made the guide of life.”

# Letting the Children Come to Jesus

Virginia L. Smith

**W**hat comes to mind when you think about the children in your church? Little Christians? Disrespectful? Participating members? A nuisance? A joy? Wiggly? Geniuses? Maybe you have several of those ideas as well as others. Children are a gift from the Lord, but they require a great deal of our time and attention in order to develop into the mature Christians that the Lord plans for them to be. Yet with all the stress and perplexities of life today, it is too easy to neglect the spiritual nurture of the children. After all, they need to be older in order to understand what it means to be a Christian. Don't they?

"In the children who were brought in contact with Him, Jesus saw the men and women who should be heirs of His grace and subjects of His kingdom. . . . He knew that these children would listen to Him and accept Him as their Redeemer far more readily than would grown-up people. . . . In His teaching He came down to their level. He, the Majesty of heaven, did not disdain to answer their questions, and simplify His important lessons to meet their childish understanding. He planted in their minds the seeds of truth, which in after years would spring up, and bear fruit unto eternal life.

"It is still true that children are the most susceptible to the teachings of the gospel; their hearts are open to divine influences, and strong to retain the lessons received" (*Desire of Ages*, pages 514, 515).

The church that wants an effective evangelistic program will capitalize on children's receptive minds. When parents brought their children for Jesus' blessing, the disciples tried to shoo them away because they felt that Jesus' time was too precious to be wasted on the children. Jesus then revealed His attitude that there was nothing more important to Him than taking time for the children.

"When Jesus told the disciples not to forbid the children to come to Him, He was speaking to His followers in all ages,—to officers of the church, to ministers, helpers, and all Christians. Jesus is drawing the children, and He bids us, Suffer them to come; as if He would say, They will come if you do not hinder them" (*Desire of Ages*, page 517).

When we look at our church statistics and note the

proportion of young people who have slipped away, it becomes obvious that we must bond them to us and the Lord at an early age if we want them to still be a part of the church in the future. By giving them a sense of inclusion, an awareness that they are needed and appreciated, we can help them understand that they, as well as we, are the church of today.

Children love to help. You don't have to work hard at designing complicated ways to involve children. Just be creative in letting them be a part of whatever is going on in your church community.

Helping was an important part of Jesus' childhood, and if followed, His example will be a blessing to every child. By participating, a child takes more interest, learns more, has less time to get into trouble, feels an important part of the spiritual community, and grows in capability. "The exercise that teaches the hands to be useful and trains the young to bear their share of life's burdens gives physical strength, and develops every faculty. All should find something to do that will be beneficial to themselves and helpful to others" (*Desire of Ages*, page 72).

Don't underestimate children's capacity to contribute. As we enrich their opportunities to learn and then use what they have learned, children will amaze us with their contributions. For example, in the last four years thousands of Adventist children in Venezuela have held evangelistic campaigns for adults. The resulting baptisms have been about one quarter of all the yearly baptisms in the Venezuela-Antilles Union. The spiritual effects on the children themselves as well as the growth in the church as a whole have been so great that the Union Committee voted that the children should continue these efforts every year.

Even with all your responsibilities, and duties, and hobbies, and complications of life, don't forget to take a good look at the children in your church. Look at them as Jesus did. On my desk I have a framed statement that is worth memorizing: "A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove. But the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child."

*Continued on page 22*

# The Christian's Highest Aim

Leo Ranzolin

**A**s we have recently witnessed, the Olympic Games is an exciting event! Every four years youth from every corner of the Earth compete to win a medal—be it gold, silver, or bronze! For years the athletes prepare themselves, sparing no sacrifice to reach their desired goal! Paul, the great pioneer of the gospel had another ideal: “Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, **that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings . . .**” Philippians 3:8-10.

## WINNING CHRIST

From these memorable words of Paul we find phrases that help us to understand his most cherished goal: “That I may win Christ and be found in Him!” These two expressions are practically identical and through a metaphor Paul helps us to understand what we should long for while on Earth.

*Paul considered things of this world as dung or refuse in comparison to knowing Jesus!* Paul wanted Jesus as part of his life. He recalled the Master's words: “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life!” (John 3:36, NIV). When the apostle looked up every earthly thing lost its value and brightness. Rome itself in all its pomp and luxury seemed like a varnish, a husk, when Paul gazed at the heavenly values.

It is said that: *“To gain Christ is to lay fast hold upon Him, to receive Him inwardly into our bosoms, and so to make Him ours and ourselves His, that we may be joined to Him as our Head, espoused to Him as our Husband, incorporated into Him as our Nourishment, engrafted in Him as our Stock, and laid upon as a sure Foundation”* (*The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. XX, The Epistle to the Philippians, p. 113, as quoted by Bishop Ellicott, from Bishop Hall, ‘Christ Mystical’, Ch. VI).*

*To be “found in Christ” means to have truly gained Christ!* Our relationship with the Master is that of the

Vine and the branches! *When we are connected to the Lord, the sap of life will flow freely through us!* There will be possession and indwelling! The experience is similar to the greenhouse for tomatoes in our agricultural school of Manaus, Brazil. When the tomato is grafted into a native plant known as *Jurubeba*, it survives! Thus the Christian will only be able to survive when he is grafted, or found in Christ. His life will be a fountain of blessings, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit will be revealed in his life.

## RECEIVING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST

*The great apostle recognized another dependence on Jesus.* His own righteousness, as Isaiah states, was “as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). He knew that on the very moment he was called to serve God he had been justified! He had gained Christ and was found in Christ. Now, he had received justification by faith in Jesus Christ! He understood that this righteousness came from God and was a gift of God. For Paul, to seek his own righteousness was to seek something that would never bring him inner peace—an utopia that would soon collapse for lack of a true foundation! God offers His righteousness to those who wait on Him, to those who serve Him and trust His wonderful promises with all their hearts!

*It is through faith that His righteousness is imputed to each one of us.* When we have Christ, we have His righteousness! Through Jesus' death is His righteousness imputed to us! According to the servant of the Lord, this righteousness is imparted when we repent of our sins and embrace the Savior! (*Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 241.*)

Ellen White says even more: *“Apart from Christ we have no merit, no righteousness. Our sinfulness, our weakness, our human imperfection make impossible that we should appear before God unless we are clothed in Christ's spotless righteousness”* (*Ibid., p. 333*).

During the Pan-American Youth Congress held in Mexico in 1984, I tried to make this message come alive to the youth in the audience. I asked a Mexican sister to make my shirt really dirty and soiled, being sure, however, that the collar and the cuffs were kept spotless. At a certain point of my sermon I took off my coat to

reveal the real condition of human beings without Christ! There was general consternation! *The shirt was indeed filthy!* But, shortly after I had presented my illustration, my colleagues “covered and clothed me” and all that filthiness was concealed!

There was only one problem: I was still filthy inside. With Christ, however, I am not only justified, but I also receive His righteousness. He covers me with His spotless garments and makes me a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17). *Faith is the channel through which righteousness reaches us; faith is the foundation of the righteousness in Christ.* When we trust Christ, His life sanctifies us. When we have Him, we are in Him, He dwells in us through His Spirit and begins the masterly work of sanctification.

*Christ’s transforming presence in our lives will work as an inebriant perfume that will help us to live the Christian life and to be a true witness of the power of the gospel to all those around us.*

For Paul, his own righteousness had died on the road to Damascus and his ego had been crucified with Christ. “I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, *I live by faith in the Son of God*, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20, NIV).

## KNOWING CHRIST

*After gaining Christ and having Him as an intimate part of his life, Paul presents a new goal, a longing for a closer relationship with the Savior! His ultimate desire was to know Christ.* The King James version says, “That I may know Him.” This was the theme for one of the General Conference sessions! This knowledge would come through the coexistence with Jesus Christ and would be built on an inward experience! Someone once said that one will only understand the wonders of love by experiencing marriage; one will only know the taste of grape juice by drinking it; one will only get to know the glory of music by listening to it! We will only know the beauty of a new day when we contemplate the dawning! We will only know Christ when we “win” Him, when we are “found” in Him and He is part of our lives.

*After a couple has lived together for 40 or 50 years, they get to know each other very well.* Love, companionship, understanding, and intimacy bring about a mutual knowledge of each other! *The greatest danger in the Christian life is having only superficial knowledge!* Jesus Christ our Savior, who died two thousand years ago to save humankind, must become a reality in our lives today! Not only must we believe He is our Savior, but also invite Him to dwell in our hearts!

*The greatest challenge of every Christian is to deepen his knowledge of the Savior!* The more we get to know Him, the more we distance ourselves from the futile and

ephemeral pleasures of the Earth and place within ourselves a little bit of heaven. *The more we know Him, the more we discover new dimensions of His love and become better able to communicate it to our neighbors!* Knowing Jesus, we will have access to an inexhaustive fountain of knowledge, for “the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14, NIV).

Knowing something about someone is completely different from knowing that someone personally! Many times we become disappointed when we get to know someone! That someone may talk too much about himself, be arrogant, or be a gossip! There will be no disappointment in knowing Christ deeper and deeper!

*Paul got to know Jesus on the road to Damascus! At first he asked, “Who are you, Lord?” After that he cultivated that knowledge through prayer, meditation, and work for the sake of the lost ones.* John says, “Now, this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

Ellen White adds, “*Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, partaking of Him, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures*” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 129).

Why not begin today the development of a deeper knowledge of Christ? “My Lord, it’s a pleasure to know you! Lord, it has been a great pleasure knowing you!”

The result will be wonderful! “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know ME” (John 10:14). **E**

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*Leo Ranzolin writes from Silver Spring, Maryland, where he works at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists as General Vice President.*

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## Letting Children Come to Jesus

*Continued from page 20*

Your local church programs, as worthwhile as they are, will only be important in the lives of the children who participate in them. By seeking their involvement, you are bonding them to the church family and making it far more likely that they will choose to come to Jesus. **E**

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*Virginia L. Smith writes from Silver Spring, Maryland. She is the Children’s Ministries Director for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.*

## We Would See Jesus

**John 12:21**

## The Cost of a Christ-Centered Life

**2 Samuel 24:24**

### I. Introduction

- A. *Sign on a Pulpit for a New Preacher*
  1. "Sir, we would see Jesus"
  2. Next week: "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord"
- B. *The Setting of This Text*
  1. Jesus had returned to Jerusalem to die
  2. The Triumphal Entry
  3. Thousands of Jews gathered for Passover
- C. The Greeks and Their Desire

### II. Body

- A. *The Heart Cry of All Races*
  1. "And there were certain Greeks among them"
  2. A few Gentiles at the Passover
    - a. They longed to know God
    - b. Grecian philosophy had failed them
    - c. Now they sought God through Judaism
  3. They heard about Jesus
    - a. Perhaps intrigued by word of His miracles
    - b. Curious about how He could speak with authority
    - c. They wanted to see Him, thinking He might enlighten them
  4. All people need Christ because all have sinned (Rom. 3:23)
  5. All can be saved by faith in Him (Rom. 10:9, 10, 13)
- B. *The Heart Cry of All Who Seek Relief Through Religious Ceremony*
  1. These Greeks at Passover were still seeking
  2. There are millions in churches like them
    - a. People who have been baptized but are lost
    - b. People who have taken communion but are lost
    - c. People who have joined churches but are lost
  3. Eternal life is not given through religious ritual
    - a. Not by the will of the flesh (John 1:13)
    - b. Not by the will of man (can't be conferred) (John 1:13)
  4. Only Jesus saves (John 1:12)
- C. *The Heart Cry of All Who Seek Reality in the Lives of Christians*
  1. These Greeks came to Philip with their request
    - a. It is a reasonable request
    - b. It might be asked of every Christian
    - c. The world wants to see Jesus through His people
  2. We must face up to this responsibility
  3. We are to be the light of the world (Matt. 5:16)

### III. Conclusion

- A. *Would You See Jesus?*
  1. He is revealed in the Bible
  2. He invites you to trust Him and receive eternal life
- B. *Would Souls Seeking Jesus Come to You?*

### I. Introduction

- A. *The Setting of This Text*
  1. David's sin and the prophet's instruction (vs. 11-13)
  2. David's offer to buy Araunah's threshingfloor (v. 21)
  3. Araunah wants to give David the floor and oxen (verses 22-23)
- B. *David Insists on Paying (verse 24)*
  1. He refuses to offer God something that costs him nothing
  2. There is always a cost in full surrender
- C. *Consider the Cost of a Christ-Centered Life*

### II. Body

- A. *A Christ-Centered Life Will Cost Your Favorite Sins*
  1. The sin that so easily besets us (Heb. 12:1)
  2. What sins do you knowingly tolerate?
  3. What sins keep you in bondage?
    - a. What grieves your Lord (Eph. 4:30)?
    - b. Of what would you be ashamed if Jesus returned?
    - c. What do you keep secret from others?
    - d. What makes others wonder if you are genuine?
  4. Full surrender demands dealing with favorite sins
- B. *A Christ-Centered Life Will Cost the Favor of the World*
  1. "Love not the world" (1 John 2:15, 16)
  2. The world loves darkness (3:19)
    - a. We are to let our light shine (Matt. 5:16)
    - b. This will bring rejection by the world
  3. World rejected Christ & His followers (John 15:19-20)
  4. J. C. Ryle on the surrendered Christian: "He must be content to be ill thought of by man if he pleases God"
- C. *A Christ-Centered Life Will Cost Financially*
  1. David bought the threshingfloor and oxen
    - a. Now he was ready to make his sacrifice
    - b. His cost was fifty shekels of silver (verse 24)
  2. Serving Christ cost financially
    - a. How boldly the Bible speaks of money!
    - b. From the King's purchase to the widow's mite
  3. We know little of financial sacrifice for Christ
  4. What would you give if Christ were really Lord of your life?
- D. *A Christ-Centered Life Will Cost First Place in Your Heart*
  1. The difference between salvation and surrender
    - a. Salvation is a free gift (Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 6:23)
    - b. Salvation is by faith alone (John 3:15; Rom. 5:1)
    - c. Discipleship is costly (Luke 9:23, 24; 14:27)
  2. Seek first the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33)
  3. "Not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39)

### III. Conclusion

- A. *Are You Offering Christ That Which Costs You Nothing?*
- B. *Consider the Cross*
- C. *Choose the Christ-Centered Life*

# The Future of Evangelism

Kimbleton S. Wiggins

**T**his statement will disturb some people: The Seventh-day Adventist Church will do more and more evangelism, and evangelism will become more and more successful.

I can hear some say, “Elder Wiggins does not know what he is talking about. It is becoming increasingly difficult to get people out to crusades these days.” I know all the pessimistic arguments and predictions, but my faith is in the spirit of prophecy. Listen to this: “Evangelistic work, opening the Scriptures to others, warning men and women of what is coming upon the world, is to occupy more and still more of the time of God’s servants.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus the church is going to do more evangelizing, not less. And it will become more and more successful. “Thousands in the eleventh hour will see and acknowledge the truth,” says the Lord’s messenger. Then she adds, “These conversions to truth will be made with a rapidity that will surprise the church, and God’s name alone will be glorified.”<sup>2</sup>

The future of this church will be in the hands of men and women who believe in the final and relentless march of the truth to ultimate and glorious victory. This truth will triumph despite obstacles and seemingly insurmountable odds. We need leaders who believe this, preach this, and plan with this belief as the motivating power behind dynamic, optimistic programs of evangelism.

God has ordained that the remnant church will gather all His people to prepare them for the return of Jesus Christ. The book of Revelation makes it clear that the call out of Babylon will be the most successful call ever given by man, by God, and by His church. And this leads me on to another fact.

God wants this church to be successful. Did He not die on the cross for man’s salvation? Did He not inspire the Holy Scriptures so that truth may be known and believed? Has He not promised and provided power the accomplishment of the task He has given to us? It is not God’s fault that thousands are not yet won by us in one day in one place. Then whose fault is it?

“Much careful thought and fervent prayer are

required to know how to approach men and women upon the great subject of truth.”<sup>3</sup>

Now that is a bombshell! That statement tells me that there are some things that we must do if our evangelism is to be successful.

## A BIG MISTAKE

Because we know that soul winning depends on God’s Spirit, we have made the big mistake of assuming that it depends only on God’s Spirit. Listen to this: “When divine power is combined with human effort, the work will spread like fire in the stubble.”<sup>4</sup> That’s dynamite!

Now get this. Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit will it quicken the conscience or transform the life.<sup>5</sup> The soul winner needs the presence and power of the Holy Spirit more than he needs anything else. But we have known this all along. That’s not the problem with our evangelism. What is our problem?

Our big problem is that we have ignored the truth of this next statement: “The agency of the Spirit of God does not remove from us necessity of exercising our faculties and talents.”<sup>6</sup> In the church we have not paid enough attention to the human element in evangelism. This is tragic, for “what human power can do divine power is not summoned to do. God does not dispense with man’s aid.”<sup>7</sup>

How dare we say that people will not come out to hear the gospel, when Billy Graham and others are attracting the biggest crowds in the history of evangelism? The fact is that these men are using human means that we are not using, much to our shame and failure. “When in our work for God right methods are energetically followed, a harvest of souls will be gathered.”<sup>8</sup> Much of our failure lies in methods—the wrong methods for a particular place or group. Right methods can be created and will produce success.

## AN OBVIOUS WEAKNESS

In the light of the above, a crippling weakness among us becomes obvious. Most of our soul winners are one-



method men. When they meet people to whom the method is suited, they succeed; when they meet people to whom the method is not suited, they fail. That's a truth cogently stated.

Ellen White warned us against this mistake. "We must work in different ways, and devise different methods, and let God work in us to the revealing of truth and Himself as the sin-pardoning Saviour.<sup>9</sup> Why have we not taken that statement seriously? I'll tell you why in a moment, but first let me emphasize the need I am pointing out.

"Let us not forget that different methods are to be employed to save different ones. . . .

"The classes of people you meet will decide for you the way in which the work should be handled."<sup>10</sup>

### WHY HAVE WE BEEN SO SLOW TO DEVELOP METHODS?

Is it not surprising that, despite this counsel, many of us have only one method of soul winning? Why have we been so slow to develop numerous methods to meet varied conditions and classes of people? The answer is given to us by the Spirit of Prophecy:

"In order to lead souls to Jesus there must be . . . a study of the human mind."<sup>11</sup>

That is to say, the soul winner must understand the principles of psychology that apply to the teaching of truth, the persuasive presentation of truth, the opening of men's minds to truth, and how men make decisions about truth. Only as we understand the laws that govern human behavior can we create methods to suit any situation or class of people.

Here is where our problem has always been. First of all, we were suspicious of psychology. The suspicion has been so widespread and ingrained that we have not stopped to ask ourselves what kind of psychology is worthy of our attention and what kind deserves our suspicion.

There is much speculative and philosophical psychology that is of no use to us as soul winners. However, the social psychologists have carried out numerous empirical studies that have yielded practical results that are acceptable and workable. To accept these findings does not require that we belong to any school of thought in psychology or that we dabble in parapsychology. The social psychologists and anthropologists are engaged in research about man's behavior in society and groups—how men develop attitudes, change their attitudes, and act according to, or contrary to, those attitudes. And they have come up with principles and laws that every soul winner should know and apply. "He who seeks to transform humanity must himself understand humanity."<sup>12</sup>

Second, perhaps those who have taught psychology in our colleges and schools have not challenged the ministry to apply the findings and insights of psychology to church work in general and evangelism in particular. The truth is that psychology presents invaluable help in vital areas such as these:

- How to attract a crowd to meetings anywhere in the world.
- How to keep crowds coming night after night.
- How to present truth in such a way that people will accept it easily.
- How to help people break bad habits quickly.
- How to secure decisions from the great majority of your listeners.
- How to get people to remember sermons longer.
- How to decrease the rate of backsliding.
- How to decrease dissatisfaction with the church.
- How to motivate church members to work for Jesus and the advance of His cause.
- How to analyze an audience to discover what will appeal to them.
- How to make advertising more effective.
- How to reach the hard-to-reach.

### AN INEVITABLE CONCLUSION

In the light of all we have discussed so far, is it not obvious that we have a solemn obligation to study practical psychology seriously so that we may cease lamenting how difficult it is to win souls? "The Lord wants us to be sanctified. We shall have to contend with people of varied dispositions, and we should be in a position where we know how to deal with human minds."<sup>13</sup>

My conviction is deep, and my optimism is high. Marvelous exploits for God in evangelism are just ahead of us. My own crusades have demonstrated the possibility of discovering and creating methods to suit any circumstance. These crusades have demonstrated that God will use right methods to do a work we cannot now imagine.

Let no one speak pessimistically of evangelism in this late hour. We have not yet seen big evangelism. When we see it, we shall all be surprised. But it will come to men who believe that God's work cannot and will not fail. It will come to men who prepare themselves for miracles in evangelism. It will come through men who understand that God awaits our cooperation in the most worthwhile task assigned to man. **E**

#### References

- 1 *Evangelism*, page 17.
- 2 *Selected Messages*, Book 2, page 16.
- 3 *Testimonies*, Vol. 4, page 67.

- 4 *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 118.
- 5 See *Evangelism*, p. 291.
- 6 *Counsels to Teachers*, p. 361.
- 7 *The Desire of Ages*, p. 535.
- 8 *Evangelism*, p. 330 (emphasis supplied)
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 291.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 106.
- 11 *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 67.
- 12 *Education*, p. 78.
- 13 Ms. 41, 1908 (emphasis supplied).

*Kembleton S. Wiggins was an evangelist in the Inter-American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when he wrote this article.*

## Only One Banner in the Army of the Lord

*Continued from page 3*

denominational credentials and others are not. Some in the name of the right wing and some in the name of the left wing, who instead of holding up the unique message and mission of the church, are circulating personal conclusions and theological nuances that in no way help to foster that unity that Jesus mentioned in His high priestly intercessory prayer (John 17:20-26). Many times those teachings are taken out of its global context, and some unbalanced proportion is given to them and used as a personal banner. And these flags can be upheld by means of publications, lectures, video-tapes or audio-tapes. Surprisingly there are always people willing to pay attention to these independent flag-holders. The result is always confusion, deception, frustration, criticism, loss of souls and undermining of the unity of the church.

Years ago Ellen G. White wrote about a similar situation in one of our health institution. "My brother, you are situated where you can be a representative of the truth for this time. . . . Several men, some of them those with whom you are connected in the sanitarium, were presenting to you a banner on which was a different inscription. You were letting go the banner of Seventh-day Adventists, and were reaching out to grasp the banner presented to you" (*Testimonies*, Vol. 8 pages 153, 154).

The Special Session in this issue focuses on the importance of upholding the flag of the church as a factor of unity. Elders are guardians of the flock of the Lord (Acts 20:28) and responsible to preserve unity among the believers.

Unity has been questioned in some places among new members because they are confused by the small flags lifted up in the congregation. It doesn't matter how it is called. It doesn't matter if it is held up in the name of orthodoxy, liberalism, progressivism, revisionism, and historicism or any other *ism* that you can add. It doesn't matter if it is in theological, ethical or administrative ground. The truth of the matter is that it jeopardizes the unity of the local and universal church of Jesus Christ. The spirit of unity is the mark of the presence of the true Director of the church—the Holy Spirit.

Pastors, elders and leaders of the church, let us work together. Let us be united in message and spirit as we deal with the Lord's business. Let us uphold just one unique banner in the army of the Lord. Let us be faithful and loyal to our General Jesus Christ and His church. **E**



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# Seven Facts About DEATH, IMMORTALITY, and RESURRECTION

## Seven Facts About Death

"Brief and powerless is man's life. On him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. . . . One by one as they march, our comrades vanish from our sight, seized by the silent orders of omnipotent death."—Bertrand Russell, "Mysticism and Logic," page 56.

### 1. THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

- Powerless to prevent. Ecclesiastes 8:8.
- The lot of all. Hebrews 9:27.
- It levels all ranks. Job 3:17-19.
- It strips of earthly possessions. 1 Timothy 6:7.

### 2. THE CAUSE OF DEATH—"WHY"

- Primary—disobedience. Rom. 5:19 (Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:1-24).
- A consequence of sin. Rom. 6:23; 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22.

### 3. A DEFINITION OF DEATH—"WHAT"

- Christ referred to death as a "sleep." John 11:11-14.
- Paul describes the dead as "asleep." 1 Thess. 4:13; 1 Cor. 15:20.
- David taught the same. Psalm 13:3. (Cemetery means "sleeping place.")

### 4. THE PLACE OF THE DEAD—"WHERE is he?" Job 14:10

- In the dust of the earth. Daniel 12:2.
- In the grave. Job 17:13; 30:23.
- Righteous and wicked go to the same place. Ecclesiastes 3:20.
- Even David, Acts 2:34 (Psalm 17:15).
- At the resurrection will come out of grave. Matthew 27:52; John 5:28, 29.

### 5. THE STATE OF THE DEAD—"HOW?"

- Totally unconscious. Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6.
- No mental, emotional, or physical activity. Psalm 146:3, 4; 88:10-12; 6:5; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Isa. 38:18; Job 3:17, 18.
- Cannot praise Creator. Psalm 115:17.

### 6. THE FUTURE OF THE DEAD—"SHALL he live again?" Job 16:14

- The dead are not forgotten. Psalm 139:15, 16; Acts 26:8.
- Jesus' promise. John 11:25.
- Christ's resurrection guarantees the

resurrection of the saints.

- 1 Corinthians 15:13, 14, 16-22.
- When? At the second advent. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Corinthians 15:52.
- Immortality then bestowed. 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54. John 6:40.

### 7. ATTITUDE TO DEATH

- Confidence. God values. Job 13:15 (Revelation 14:13).
- Not to sorrow. 1 Thess. 4:13; Rom. 8:37-39.

"THY DEAD SHALL LIVE."  
Isaiah 26:19, R.S.V.

## Seven Facts About Immortality

"The doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the name are alike unknown in the Bible."—Herman Olshausen, *Biblical Commentary on the New Testament*, Vol. 4, page 381.

### 1. THE NATURE OF MAN IS "MORTAL"

- "Mortal" means subject to death.
- The word occurs six times in the Bible and in every instance it refers to man. Job 4:17; Rom. 6:12; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53, 54; 2 Cor. 4:11.

### 2. THE NATURE OF GOD IS "IMMORTAL"

- The only reference to this word applies it to God. 1 Timothy 1:17.
- "Immortality" is an exclusive attribute of God. 1 Timothy 6:16.

### 3. MAN WAS NOT CREATED IMMORTAL

- The continuation of life was dependent upon his obedience to the requirements of God. Genesis 2:17.
- Sin deprived man of eternal life. Genesis 3:18-24; Romans 6:23.

### 4. NO PART OF MAN IS IMMORTAL—Genesis 2:1

- a. The "living soul" is not immortal.
  - Animals are called "living souls." Genesis 1:20, 21, 24, 30 (margin).
  - The souls of sinners die. Ezekiel 18:20 (even "living souls" Revelation 16:3).

- A "SOUL" is not a conscious entity which survives physical death. The word soul has three usages in the Bible:
  - (1) It may refer to the entire person. 1 Peter 3:20; Acts 27:37.
  - (2) It may refer to the natural life of a man. Job 12:12 (margin); Luke 12:20.
  - (3) It may denote the functions of the mind Psalm 139:14. Therefore man possesses a "soul" only in so far as he IS one.

- b. The "breath of life" is not immortal.
  - Every living thing possesses it. Genesis 7:21, 22 (Ecclesiastes 3:19).
  - The "breath of life" is not a conscious entity, but merely the "spirit of God" or the life-giving activity of God. Job 27:3.

Equation of LIFE:

BODY of DUST + BREATH of LIFE = A LIVING SOUL. (Man was not given a "soul," he was made one.)

### 5. NO CONSCIOUS PART OF MAN LEAVES HIM AT DEATH

- Death is the reverse of what took place at creation. Ecclesiastes 11:7.
  - a. Man dissolves back into dust. Genesis 3:19.
  - b. Breath or spirit returns to the One who originally breathed vitality into Adam. Ps. 146:4.

Equation of DEATH:

BODY of DUST - BREATH of LIFE = A DEAD SOUL.

### 6. MAN CAN OBTAIN IMMORTALITY THROUGH CHRIST

- Through the gospel. 2 Timothy 1:10; (1 Corinthians 15:22).
- We are urged to "seek" for it. Romans 2:7.
- Those who accept and obey Jesus can have eternal life now. 1 John 5:11, 12.

### 7. IMMORTALITY BESTOWED ON BELIEVERS AT THE SECOND COMING

- 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 ("put on").

Equation of ETERNAL LIFE:

RESURRECTED BODY of DUST + BREATH of LIFE = IMMORTAL LIFE.

Rex D. Edwards, D. Min., is the director for continuing education of the General Conference Ministerial Association, Silver Spring, Maryland.

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"Man is not immortal by nature or by right; but he is capable of immortality and there is offered to him resurrection from the dead and life eternal if he will receive it from God and on God's terms."—Dr. William Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, page 472.

### Seven Facts About Resurrection

"O glory of the lighted mind,  
How dead I'd been, how dumb, now blind!  
The station brook, to my new eyes.  
Was battling out of paradise;  
The water's rushing from the rain  
Was saying Christ is risen again.  
I thought all earthly creatures knelt  
From rapture of the joy felt"

—John Masfield

1. **BIBLE PROPHECY FORETOLD CHRIST'S RESURRECTION**
  - Prophecy of David (Psalm 16:9, 10; Acts 2:24-27)
  - Prophecy of Isaiah (Isa. 53:10): "He shall prolong His days" implies that the Messiah must live after His sacrificial death.
2. **CHRIST HIMSELF PREDICTED HIS RESURRECTION.**  
John 2:19-21
  - He told the disciples. Matthew 16:21; 20:19.
  - The Jews knew of His prediction. Matthew 27:62, 63.
3. **THE POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES CONFIRMED IT.**  
The Testimony of Witnesses:
  - Mary Magdalene. Mark 16:9.
  - To women. Matthew 28:9.
  - To the Apostle, Simon Peter. Luke 24:34.
  - The two disciples on the Emmaus road. Mark 16:12; Luke 24:15.
  - Appearance to the assembled disciples. Mark 16:14.
  - And again to the assembled disciples, one week later. John 20:26-29.
  - Appearance to the disciples on the Sea of Galilee. John 21:1-22.
  - To the 500 brethren and disciples. 1 Corinthians 15:5, 6.
  - Appearance to James. 1 Corinthians 15:7.
  - And to eleven disciples at the Ascension. Luke 21:50-52.
  - The testimony of the angels. Luke 21:6-8.
  - The testimony of heaven. Acts 7:56.
4. **THE RESURRECTION WAS THE FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH OF APOSTOLIC PREACHING.** Acts 2:32; 3:15; 4:10; 10:39, 40; 17:18, 31; 25:18, 19.
  - The resurrection was the principal argument used by the apostles in support of Christianity. Acts 1:22. "The Church of Christ came into existence as the result of a belief in the resurrection of Christ"

—Griffith Thomas.
5. **THE RESURRECTION WAS VITAL TO THE REDEMPTION OF MAN.**  
Without it there would be:
  - No point in preaching the Gospel. 1 Corinthians 15:14.
  - No forgiveness of sin. Verse 17.
  - No resurrection from the grave. Verse 18.
  - No hope for us of a hereafter. Verse 19.
6. **THE RESURRECTION DISCLOSED NEW POWERS AND A NEW LIFE AVAILABLE IN THE LIVING CHRIST.**  
Romans 6:4-11; Philippians 3:10.
7. **THE RESURRECTION ELEVATED CHRIST AS THE SUPREME CONQUEROR.**  
John 16:33; Acts 2:24; Revelation 1:18.

"The resurrection of Christ is the basis of the Christian hope and the guarantee of the resurrection of all those who are in Christ."

—Professor E. Y. Mullins.

# Unity in Faith and Doctrine

Ellen G. White

**M**y husband, with Elders Joseph Bates, Stephen Pierce, Hiram Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, was among those who, after the passing of the time in 1814, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure.

We would come together burdened in soul, praying that we might be one in faith and doctrine; for we knew that Christ is not divided. One point at a time was made the subject of investigation. The Scriptures were opened with a sense of awe. Often we fasted that we might be better fitted to understand the truth.

After earnest prayer, if any point was not understood it was discussed, and each one expressed his opinion freely; then we would again bow in prayer, and earnest supplications went up to heaven that God would help us to see eye to eye, that it we might be one as Christ and the Father are one. Many tears were shed.

We spent many hours in this way. Sometimes the entire night was spent in solemn investigation of the Scriptures, that we might understand the truth for our time. On some occasions the Spirit of God would come upon me, and difficult portions were made clear through God's appointed way, and then there was perfect harmony. We were all of one mind and one spirit.

We sought most earnestly that the Scriptures should not be wrested to suit any man's opinions. We tried to make our differences as slight as possible by not dwelling on points that were of minor importance upon which there were varying opinions. But the burden of every soul was to bring about a condition among the brethren which would answer the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one as He and the Father are one.

Sometimes one or two of the brethren would stubbornly set themselves against the view presented, and would act out the natural feelings of the heart; but when this disposition appeared we suspended our investigations and adjourned our meeting, that each one might have an opportunity to go to God in prayer and, without conversation with others study the point of difference, asking light from heaven. With expressions of friendliness we parted, to meet again as soon as possible for further investigation. At times the power of God

came upon us in a marked manner, and when clear light revealed the points of truth, we would weep and rejoice together. We loved Jesus; we loved one another.

Our numbers gradually increased. The seed that was sown was watered of God, and He gave the increase. At first we assembled for worship, and presented the truth to those who would come to hear, in private houses, in large kitchens, in barns, in groves, and in schoolhouses; but it was not long before we were able to build humble houses of worship.

## RESULTS OF UNITED EFFORT

Our work was not sustained by large gifts or legacies for we have few wealthy men among us. What is the secret of our prosperity? We have moved under the orders of the Captain of our salvation. God has blessed our united efforts. The truth has spread and flourished. Institutions have multiplied. The mustard seed has grown to a great tree. The system of organization has proved a grand success. Systematic benevolence was entered into according to Bible plan. The body has been "compacted by that which every joint supplieth." As we have advanced, our system of organization has still proved effectual.

Let none entertain the thought that we can dispense with organization. It has cost us much study and many prayers for wisdom, that we know God has answered, to erect this structure. It has been built up by His direction, through much sacrifice and conflict. Let none of our brethren be so deceived as to attempt to tear it down, for you will thus bring in a condition of things that you do not dream of. In the name of the Lord I declare to you that it is to stand, strengthened, established, and settled. At God's command, "Go forward," we advanced when the difficulties to be surmounted made the advance seem impossible. We know how much it has cost to work out God's plans in the past which have made us as a people what we are. Then let everyone be exceedingly careful not to unsettle minds in regard to those things that God has ordained for our prosperity and success in advancing His cause.

Angels work harmoniously. Perfect order

characterizes all their movements. The more closely we imitate the harmony and order of the angelic host, the more successful will be the efforts of these heavenly agents in our behalf. If we see no necessity for harmonious action, and are disorderly, undisciplined, and disorganized in our course of action, angels, who are thoroughly organized and move in perfect order, cannot work for us successfully. They turn away in grief, for they are not authorized to bless confusion, distraction, and disorganization. All who desire the cooperation of the heavenly messengers must work in unison with them. Those who have the unction from on high will in all their efforts encourage order, discipline, and union of action and the angels of God can cooperate with them. But never, never will these heavenly messengers place their endorsement upon irregularity, disorganization and disorder. All these evils are the result of Satan's efforts to weaken our forces, to destroy our courage, and prevent successful action.

Satan well knows that success can only attend order and harmonious action. He well knows that everything connected with heaven is in perfect order, that subjection and perfect discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. It is his studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from heaven's arrangement as he can; therefore he deceives even the professed people of God and makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to spirituality, that the only safety for them is to let each pursue his own course, and to remain especially distinct from bodies of Christians who are united and are laboring to establish discipline and harmony of action. All the efforts made to establish order are considered dangerous, a restriction of rightful liberty, and hence are feared as popery. These devoted souls consider it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They will not take any man's say-so. They are amenable to no man. I was shown that it is Satan's special work to lead men to feel that it is God's order for them to strike out for themselves and choose their own course independent of their brethren.

#### **INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY & CHRISTIAN UNITY**

God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing and another having faith and views entirely opposite, each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without regard to the opinion of his brethren, and

justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ? And if another and still another arises each asserting his right to believe and talk what he pleases without reference to the faith of the body, where will be that harmony which existed between Christ and His Father, and which Christ prayed might exist among His brethren?

Though we have an individual work and an individual responsibility before God, we are not to follow our own independent judgment, regardless of the opinions and feelings of our brethren; for this course would lead to disorder in the church. It is the duty of ministers to respect the judgment of their brethren; but their relations to one another, as well as the doctrines they teach, should be brought to the test of the law and the testimony; then, if hearts are teachable, there will be no divisions among us. Some are inclined to be disorderly, and are drifting away from the great landmarks of the faith; but God is moving upon His ministers to be one in doctrine and in spirit.

It is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial. . . . We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.

When a brother receives new light upon the Scriptures, he should frankly explain his position, and every minister should search the Scriptures with the spirit of candor to see if the points presented can be substantiated by the Inspired Word. "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:24, 25).

In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us. **E**

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*Ellen G. White was one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A prolific writer, she produced more than 100,000 pages by the time she died in 1915. Her work continues as a prophetic voice within the Adventist church. This article was taken from her book Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers pages 24-31.*



Put this information in your file. It may be useful to you in the future.

#### Exhortations to Unity

A high school orchestra was preparing for a concert that featured a pianist in a rendition of Grieg's A-minor concerto. Before the performance, it was customary for the orchestra to tune up with an "A" sounded by the oboe player. But the oboist was a practical joker, and he had tuned his instrument a half step higher than the piano.

You can imagine the effect!

After the pianist played a beautiful introduction, the members of the orchestra joined in. What confusion! Every instrument was out of tune with the piano.

In Paul's letter to the church at Philippi, the apostle mentioned two members who were "out of tune." In an otherwise peaceful and growing assembly of believers, Euodias and Syntyche were spiritually "off key." This prompted Paul to write, "I implore Euodias and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord" (Phil. 4:2). He wanted them to know that unity among the Christians was important to the ongoing work of that church.

#### Exhortations to Unity

It is estimated that if all

of the American colonies would have been more unified at the time of the American Revolution, we could have won the war for independence in 1 year. Instead, because of division, it took 8 bloody years of battle.

#### Exhortations to Unity— Join Hands!

A beautiful little girl wandered out one cold day into the countryside of Canada. The family finally realized she was lost and started a search. Then they called the people of the community together. Each went his own way. It became dark and the cold of the Canadian winter settled down. After some time someone suggested the searchers join hands and cover the grass fields. But it was too late. They found the girl curled up, frozen in the cold. Then the shout went up, "If only we had joined hands before!" The spiritual meaning of this story is clear. Christ's love demands unity among His believers.

#### Exhortations to Unity—On Being Unified

Swimmy is the only black fish in a large school of tiny red fish who live happily in a corner of the

sea. One day a huge hungry fish appears and swallows all the little red fish in one gulp.

Only Swimmy escapes. He swims all alone through the deep sea, until . . . hidden in the dark shade of rocks and weeds, he saw a school of little fish, just like his own.

"Let's go and swim and play and SEE things!" he said happily.

"We can't," said the little red fish. "The big fish will eat us all."

"But you can't just lie there," said Swimmy. "We must THINK of something." Swimmy thought and thought. Then suddenly he said, "I have it! We are going to swim all together like the biggest fish in the sea!"

He taught them to swim close together; each in his own place, and when they had learned to swim like one giant fish, he said, "I'll be the eye."

And so they swam in the cool morning water and in the midday sun and chased the big fish away. (Swimmy by Leo Lionni.)

#### Unity in Christ

Shortly after the close of the Civil War, in a fashionable Richmond church, members of the congregation were invited

to come to the altar rail to receive *Holy Communion*.

After several rows of worshippers came and left having received *Communion* side by side, a Black man walked down the aisle toward the altar.

A tense silence gripped everyone. No one got up to come down to receive the bread and wine, although many had not yet received *Communion*. The Black man started to kneel alone. Quietly, a tall, graying man with a military bearing stood up and strode down the aisle to the Black man's side. Together, they knelt.

Before the officiating clergyman could continue, people recognized that the person kneeling beside the Black man without showing any distinction was General Robert E. Lee.

Although Lee said nothing, everyone realized he had shown his faith through his act of joining that lonely Black worshiper at the altar.

Lee's example is an example for all. We must not be content with any system that divides us as fellow-Christians. We must seek to demonstrate our essential unity. Only then can we say truly: "We are one in Christ."

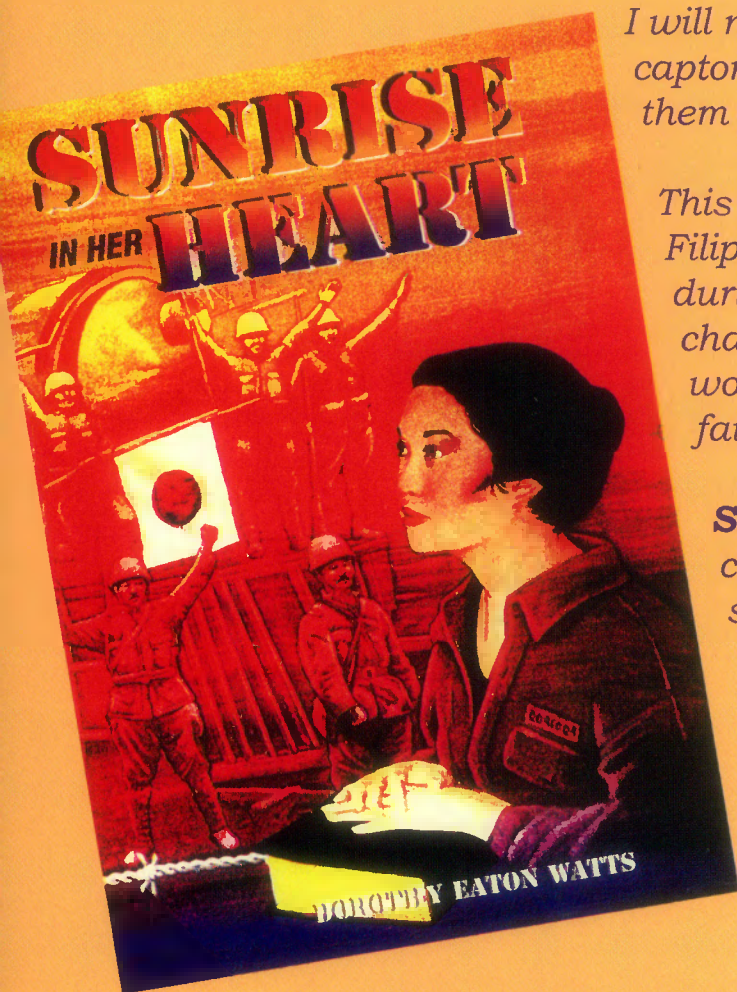
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*I will not cry! She promised as her Japanese captors locked the massive gates behind her. Let them do what they will, but I will never talk.*

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