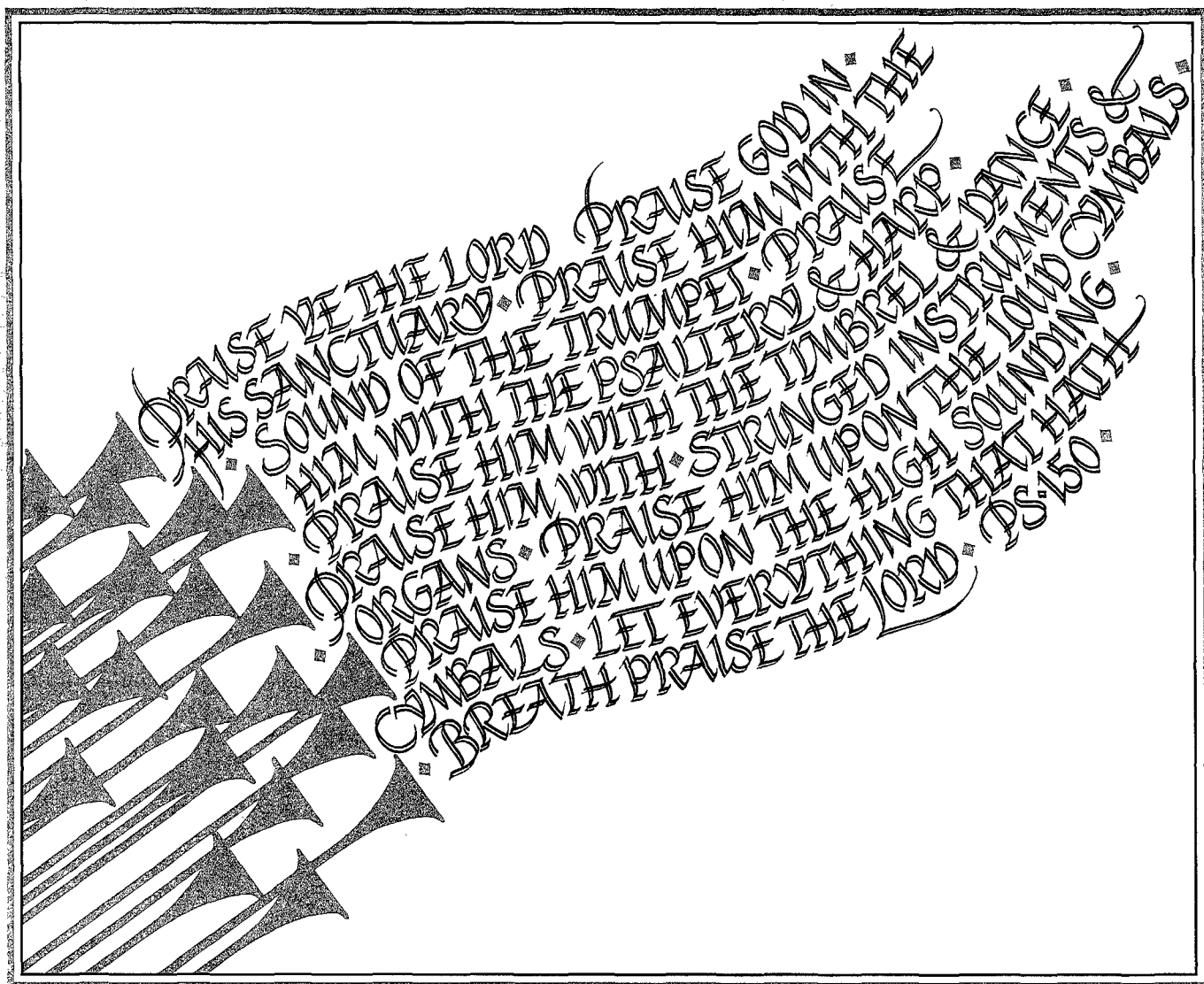


# Ministry

International Journal for Clergy

October 1991



**WORSHIP:**

**Coming together in  
God's presence**

## June issue one of the best

The June issue of *Ministry* is one of your best ever. The articles by George Knight and L. A. King gave excellent insights into where we find ourselves as a church.

It is time for leadership to give a clarification call in word and action for revival and renewal. We will either allow God to transform our church, or stand by and watch it become another fossil in history's graveyard. The status quo is neither viable nor acceptable. Nor can it be maintained. Failure to grow in the spirit and power of God is the ultimate death sentence upon a church.

Those of us at leadership levels must be willing to pay the price and lead our people back to God. Reorganization must come as the result of a body empowered and enlivened by His presence. Organizational priorities must be transcended by God's call for a people who walk with Him and are known by the effects of His presence in their lives, not merely by a set of doctrines or abstract truths.

May God lead us forward into the exciting day of our Lord's coming. He will have a people ready for His coming, and it is our privilege to be channels through whom His Spirit will form that people.—Ben Maxson, Ministerial secretary, Upper Columbia Conference, Spokane, Washington.

■ I need to let you know that I appreciate *Ministry*. It is like a breath of fresh air to see it tackle topics and issues that are relevant even if controversial at times.

The article by George Knight (June 1991) utilizing the systems approach of David Moberg to view the rise, development, and present status of our church was helpful. It provides a good perspective to understand where we are and what the future holds for good or ill.

I hope readers will not dismiss this perspective as a criticism of the church, or as a negative and hopeless outlook for the future. Healing and strength come only after a wound is exposed, aired, and proper treatment applied. May the Great Physician provide the proper treatment through the Holy Spirit.—Leo J. Poirier, associate director, Department of Pastoral Care, New

England Memorial Hospital, Stoneham, Massachusetts.

## Doom inevitable?

The June issue leaves me with a predominant feeling of "gloom and doom." The articles by Knight and King present such an air of inevitability that one would be led to believe the church is doomed.

I, for one, do not believe that history will repeat itself; nor do I believe that the church should be bent, folded, stapled, mutilated, and finally spindled with man-devised measuring theories and devices. Knight might just as well have said all he had to say by stating that the church, from the pioneers on, is burdened by the "Peter principle."

I do not believe this is true. The Holy Spirit works. Men may resist, but God is still a "majority of one" and will not permit the object of "His supreme regard" to fall because of human failure on the part of some.—Maj. Bernard M. Sievers, U.S.A. (Ret.), first elder, Seventh-day Adventist church, Williamstown, New Jersey.

## I married the shepherd, but . . .

I notice that my original submission of "I Married the Shepherd, but No, I'm Not *the* Shepherdess" has been edited in the June *Ministry* to read "I Married a Shepherd, but No, I'm Not *a* Shepherdess."

The original title allows a more accurate expression of a balance between the paradoxical role ideas as I perceive them. These ideas are the responsibility of the minister's wife for souls within her sphere of influence and her nonaccountability for automatically fulfilling the role of female counterpart of her minister-husband. I see myself as a willing supporter of my husband in his ministry rather than as the automatic shepherdess of his congregation.

In one sense every Christian woman is a shepherdess. But being the minister's wife does not make me *the* shepherdess.—Carolyn Livingston, Stanthorpe, Australia.

## Disappointed

I have been doing a lot of praying and thinking since receiving the June issue of *Ministry*. I have even composed a couple letters to you. I have found myself trying to preach to you. I

have read the Letters section and the articles concerning the same problem that I see emphasized in Don Hawley's book. Evidently I don't understand what you mean by radical discipleship.

I am disappointed in your canceling of this ad. I find the book very encouraging, as I have experienced much the same trauma as he. I have fallen into the trap of legalism. Your several articles in this issue, and in past issues, are pointing out the same trend of losing our first love and motivation. Only I see that Hawley points to a remedy. Elder Loor says the book has a tendency to destroy faith in the church and its principles and standards. Isn't that the very trap that Knight points to? We have a tendency to put our faith in a church, an organization, and lose faith in our Saviour. A church is people, not an organization.

I pray that you reconsider. Give the hundreds of thousands of former Adventists something to hope for. They have had enough principles and standards. What they need is to understand the wonderful "good news." We are saved by accepting our position in Christ. Our behavior will come as we learn to let Christ be Lord of our lives. Are you sure that it's Hawley who is out of balance? It is difficult to learn the lesson that God sent in 1888, isn't it?—Clifford Force, Hillsboro, Oregon.

## Both Jewish and Christian

Mr. Spritzer, the rabbi from West Covina, alleges that one cannot be a Jew and a Christian at the same time (Letters, November 1989). For the first 10 years the church was in fact a Jewish sect. For the first few hundred years there were tens of thousands of Jews who believed in Jesus and were loyal members of the church. It was the addition of the *Birkat Haminin* by the Yavneh community and other slanderings after the Bar Kochba revolution that caused the great rift between the church and the synagogue.

Like the thousands of other Jews who are for Jesus in this country and around the globe, we stand loyal to both historic communities. There are in each community things that make us proud and things that embarrass us.—Bob Mendelsohn, branch leader, Jews for Jesus, Washington, D.C.

**This special issue on worship** brings a variety of viewpoints to bear on this subject. We asked Eoin Giller and C. Raymond Holmes to present their ideas on the pro and con of "celebration" worship. John Fowler, *Ministry* associate editor, first presents the theology of worship, then we have tried to answer the following questions:

**Just how did people worship in Bible times?** How did our pioneers worship? How do other cultures and ethnic groups worship? Does the way we think have any bearing on worship preferences? How do we unravel the knot of opinions regarding what is appropriate worship? What is the best way to introduce change? How about 101 ways to improve your worship? And finally we list some books that might whet your appetite enough to dig further into this great subject.

**All of us have access** to the greatest manual on worship—the Bible. Let us study it so that we might extract the principles relevant for today. Closer to our time we have the writings of Ellen White, which offer fascinating and revealing insights into the dynamics of worship as practiced in the nineteenth century.

**If we fail at leading our people** in worship, we have failed at everything. If we can uplift the cross and magnify Jesus so that people fall down and, in deep repentance, worship, we have succeeded at everything.

*J. David Newman*

Cover by Michael Podesta

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*Ministry* is the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association.

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West Africa

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William C. Scales, Jr., Ministerial Secretary  
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Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

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Mikhail P. Kulakov  
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USSR

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*Ministry*, (ISSN 0026-5314), the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association © 1991, is published monthly by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and printed by the Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, MD 21740, U.S.A. Subscriptions: US\$22.00 for 12 issues worldwide. Single copy US\$2.25 US\$39.85 for 12 issues air mail worldwide. Member Associated Church Press. Second-class postage paid at Hagerstown, Maryland. This publication is available in microfilm from University Microfilms International. Call toll-free 1-800-521-3044. Or mail inquiry to University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Editorial Office: 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD, 20904. Stamped, self-addressed envelope should accompany unsolicited manuscripts. Office telephone: 301-680-6510

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Ministry*, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

VOLUME 64 NUMBER 10



# The cross, the center of worship

J. David Newman

**T**he Seventh-day Adventist Church has managed to avoid, to a large degree, the experimentation with new forms of worship which took place in the 1950s and 1960s in other church bodies, both Protestant and Roman Catholic," wrote Dr. Raymond Holmes in 1984.<sup>1</sup>

What a difference a few years make! Now experimentation is the order of the day, and celebration-style worship is being discussed by almost everyone. It is not my purpose in this editorial to say whether this is good or bad. Pronouncements by church authorities will not reverse the trend.

Rather, I want to say that we need to grasp the opportunity granted us to study again the purpose of worship. How have Adventists worshiped in the past? How do we decide what is appropriate worship music? What is worship, anyway? Do the ways our brains function have any bearing on how we worship? How do various cultural and ethnic groups worship?

While we cannot answer all these questions in detail, we hope that this special issue of *Ministry* will help stir your creative juices and cause you to reevaluate your worship service.

The dramatic scenes presented in Revelation 4 and 5 reveal what is foundational in worship. We see God the Father sitting in all His splendor and majesty upon the throne. He is surrounded by "flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder" (Rev. 4:5).<sup>\*</sup> The 24 elders and the four living creatures surround Him, the living creatures constantly crying "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come" (verse 8).

The 24 elders prostrate themselves

and lay their crowns before the Creator of the universe. Like the living creatures, they offer the Lord a doxology. The scene emphasizes the transcendence of God—His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.

Then the focus shifts from God the Father to God the Son, who is represented as a bleeding lamb. Now the living creatures and elders prostrate themselves before the Lamb and offer a combined doxology. The countless hosts of angels are just as eager to offer their praise. The scene is completed as every living creature in the universe adds its chorus of praise to God the Father and God the Son.

Revelation 5 ends with this powerful statement: "The four living creatures said, 'Amen,' and the elders fell down and worshipped" (verse 14).

So the imperative to worship is clear in Scripture. But what should our worship center around?

In his *Sing a New Song* Raymond Holmes stresses that the Adventist worship service ought to illustrate three distinctive Adventist doctrines: "the Sabbath, the heavenly ministry of Christ, and the second advent of Christ."<sup>2</sup> While the unique doctrines of Adventism do have their place, we must be careful lest we replace the cross as the fulcrum on which worship rests. While Jesus' ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is important, it would have no significance if He had not died for us. Without the cross the Second Coming would be a hollow mockery, and without the cross, why would anyone want to keep the Sabbath?

Paul was one of the greatest missionaries this world has ever seen. He was learned in all the wisdom of his day. He could hold his own in any debate and match wits with the greatest scholars of

his day. His letter to the Romans stands without peer in its penetrating insights into the plan of salvation.

Yet with all Paul's learning and sophistication, he told the people of Corinth: "I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Ellen White reminds us that "the sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster."<sup>3</sup> And to understand rightly every truth in the Bible, they "must be studied in the light which streams from the cross of Calvary."<sup>4</sup>

Worship is not entertainment, although it must be intensely interesting. Worship is not fellowship, although relationships must be nurtured. Worship is not listening to a speaker expounding the Scriptures, although the Scriptures must be explained. Worship is not liturgy, although there must be order and form.

Worship is simply unworthy and sinful human beings thanking and praising God that "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8), and that "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

"Christ crucified—talk it, pray it, sing it, and it will break and win hearts. This is the power and wisdom of God to gather souls for Christ."<sup>5</sup> This is what worship is all about. ■

<sup>\*</sup>All Scripture texts in this article are from the New International Version.

<sup>1</sup> C. Raymond Holmes, *Sing a New Song* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1984), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White, *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 221.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> ———, *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 67.

# Threats to worship

Rex D. Edwards

**C**an traditional forms of worship communicate to contemporary people? The critics of these forms react to them by so emphasizing human understanding and the human situation that the importance of God and His activity in worship is practically forgotten. Edward T. Horn describes the curious practices such a false, human-centered approach develops:

"There is, for instance, a tendency abroad in certain quarters to provide Christian worship with an 'atmosphere' which is almost theatrical in its techniques. Worship is 'built' around a theme. . . . Sentimental music, . . . spotlights, . . . sentimental poetry . . . all are carefully planned to make the worshiper feel as though he were drifting in a gondola along the lagoons of the river of the City of God! . . .

"Other services, rather than try to 'create a mood,' attempt to capitalize upon the mood of the moment—a mood which already exists. . . . Overnight, the service of the church becomes a peace rally or a political platform."<sup>1</sup>

A false preoccupation with the human element may also lead to the neglect of the importance of God's presence by making worship an occasion for theoretical instruction. Those who take this approach view the sermon as the "be-all" and "end-all" of worship, lightly dismissing all else as preliminaries.

But if a false preoccupation with human beings threatens true worship in one way, then an unbalanced concern with God and His presence threatens it in another—by leading us to neglect people and their needs. After all, God is present because He is concerned about people.

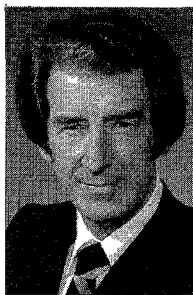
Raymond Abba suggests four guiding principles that will help us to maintain a balance between these antithetical pre-occupations:<sup>2</sup>

**First, Christian worship is founded on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.** Worship is God-centered. "The basis of Christian worship is not utilitarian but theological." Abba affirms that wor-

ship "begins not from our end but God's. . . . We come to God because God, in Jesus Christ, has come to us; we love Him because He first loved us; we ascribe to Him supreme worth because He has showed Himself to be worthy of our complete homage, gratitude, and trust. Worship is essentially a response, man's response to God's Word of grace, to what He has done for us."

**Second, true worship can spring only from the activity of the Holy Spirit.** A recital of God's saving acts through liturgical forms will evoke a response by the "inward testimony of the Holy Spirit." These liturgical forms, he says, need not restrict charismatic expression, for worship that is "truly prompted by the Spirit will be . . . restricted as well as evoked by the Christian revelation." "The reality of worship depends, not upon the presence or absence of liturgy, but upon the union of the worshipers, through the power of the Spirit, with the self-oblation of Christ."

**Third, worship is a corporate activity; it is not the act of isolated individuals, but of the whole church.** While our personal communion with God is founded on our union with Christ, yet "to be 'in Christ' is to be incorporated into His Body, which is the obedient, worshipping church." "Christian worship is the corporate approach to God of the people of God. It is a family activity. 'When ye pray,'



said Jesus, 'say, *Our Father* . . .'"

**Finally, worship is the only adequate preparation of the church for its work and witness in the world as the body of Christ.** Abba cites a German mystic as saying: "What we become in the presence of God, that we can be all day long." He suggests that the church can only become the instrument of Christ's saving activity in the world as the Holy Spirit unites it to Christ. So "effective witness depends upon sustained worship."

Abba then quotes Archdeacon Harrison as saying: "What matters is not whether worship makes us feel good or happy; what matters is whether it makes us Christlike, whether men take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus."

Taking God's presence seriously will put us on guard against eliminating God from worship by placing undue emphasis on humanity. The so-called mood type of worship that focuses only on what people feel or think or do misses the point by forgetting that it is the almighty and transcendent God who is the ground of worship. Worship cannot be real or relevant if it is a monologue of human creation with no reference to the hidden God who addresses His Word to humanity.

But on the other hand, if we take God's presence seriously, we must consider His whole design—which is to reveal Himself in Christ to humanity, to open up and mark out that two-way passage down which His grace flows and up which our faithful and fruitful response can move. We miss the point if we let our worship become a mechanical affair in which God may live and move and have His being, but which does not vitally touch people to change and renew them.

Certainly we need to subject our ways of worship to continual reformation, but the reformation required is not that of a creative mastermind, nor one shaped by aesthetic principles or popular taste, but reformation according to the Word of God. It is not our business here to be inventive. The example of Jeroboam "who made Israel to sin" (1 Kings 14:16) should discourage us from trying to devise novelties in this field.

If we were to set about refashioning our worship according to our own inventiveness, we might indeed conceivably succeed in producing a religious masterpiece, but as Karl Barth has pointed out, "religion with its masterpieces is one thing, Christian faith with its obedience is another."<sup>3</sup> ■

<sup>1</sup> Edward T. Horn III, *Altar and Pew* (Philadelphia: Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church of America, 1951), pp. 18, 19.

<sup>2</sup> The four principles that follow and the quotations that support them come from chapter 1, "Basic Principles," of Raymond Abba, *Principles of Christian Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 1-14.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Barth, *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), p. 206.

# O come, let us worship!

**John M. Fowler**

**Seven basic principles that define Christian worship as a moment of mystery and meaning.**



*John M. Fowler, Ed.D., is an associate editor of Ministry.*

# W

orship! The prerogative of the Creator. The privilege of the created. The delight of heaven. The first duty of angels.<sup>1</sup> From Genesis to Revelation, worship constitutes a major theme of the Scriptures. From Cain and Abel's controversy on approaching God to the universal celebration on the sea of glass the Bible is concerned with worship—either in condemning the false or in upholding the true.

That concern can perhaps be best understood by looking at some of the major principles of worship from a biblical perspective.

## **Principle 1: Christian worship is God-centered.**

Worship antedates the creation of humanity. As such, worship exists not for the stimulation or fulfillment that it may bring us, but because of God's character and worthiness. Consider Isaiah's vision, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3);\* or the psalmist's acclaim, "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised" (Ps. 48:1); or Habakkuk's demand, "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence" (Hab. 2:20); or the proclamation of the angel of Revelation, "Fear God and give him glory . . . and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water" (Rev. 14:7). The message is clear: acknowledge that God is God, and "ascribe to the Lord the glory

of his name; [and] worship the Lord in holy array" (Ps. 29:2). This message becomes particularly demanding at such a time as the present, when "the concept of the majesty of God has all but disappeared from the human race."<sup>2</sup>

The first commandment emphasizes this priority and exclusivity of God in worship: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). In His confrontation with Satan, Jesus reaffirmed the absolute nature of the commandment: "Begone, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve'" (Matt. 4:10). This emphasis carries two important meanings. First, a service that deviates from or minimizes the uniqueness of God cannot be true worship. Second, true worship calls for a deliberate and radical rejection of all other gods that compete for human attention and adoration, whatever those gods be: mammon, power, status, sex, science, arts, philosophy, or any other preoccupation that charts for self a course independent of its Creator.

Thus Christian worship takes place at that moment when self is stripped of all its pride, pretensions, and deviations and moves toward the recognition of its Maker and Redeemer. The oldest hymn of praise and worship, composed and sung after the redemptive experience of the Red Sea crossing, pictures this emptying of self and recognition of the God who acts in human history for the redemption of His people. Out of such experience true worship is born: an acceptance of God not as some impersonal force but as my Lord, "my strength and my song" even as He remains the Sov-

ereign of the universe, "glorious in power" and "majestic in holiness," to "reign for ever and ever" (see Ex. 15:1-18).

In Christian worship the approach to God involves both mystery and meaning. Transcendence and immanence invite us to wonder at the profound and to experience the known. Even as we relate to God as "our Father," we are ever reminded that He is the Father in heaven, the entirely other. Even as we sing "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," we may expect coals from the living altar to transform our sinful lives so that we can experience the Lord "who walks with me, and talks with me along life's narrow way." While the divine otherness must instill in us a sense of awe and wonder, the approachableness brought about by divine grace must lead to a spirit of thanksgiving and humility (see Heb. 4:16; Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:18; 3:2).

Christian worship is neither fear nor familiarity, neither appeasement nor frivolity. Instead, it is, as Whitehead writes, "an apprehension of the commanding vision" as well as "an adventure of the spirit, a flight after the unattainable . . . the high hope of adventure."<sup>3</sup> Worship is God-centered, in the words of William Temple, "to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God; to feed the mind with the truth of God; to purge the imagination by the beauty of God; to open the heart to the love of God; to devote the will to the purpose of God."<sup>4</sup>

## **Principle 2: Christian worship is an experience of redemptive faith.**

Only the faith of the redeemed acknowledges God as Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer, and anticipates that in Him life meets its fulfillment. Without such a confession, worship is impossible. Other religions may utilize worship as a means to find or appease God or to affirm communal solidarity, but Christian worship is a result of a redemptive experience. "Do you believe in the Son of man?" asked Jesus of the man whom He liberated from blindness. Out of that healing and redemptive encounter came first the faith response, "Lord, I believe," and then the worship (John 9:35, 39).

Faith precedes worship: "For who-

ever would draw near to God must believe that he exists" (Heb. 11:6). And redemptive experience provides the urge and the community for worship: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). On this human response to divine initiative, Segler comments: "Before religion can be known as sweet communion, it must be known as an answered summons. . . . The central thing in our religion is not our hold on God but His hold on us, not our choosing Him but His choosing us, not that we should know Him but that we should be known of Him."<sup>5</sup>

## **Principle 3: Christian worship is Christological.**

The integrating reality of Christian worship is the cross. It is the cross that gave birth to the Christian community. It is the worship of the crucified and risen Lord that sustained, motivated, and energized the church (1 Cor. 1:18-31; Acts 2:22-36). It is the bleeding Lamb by the throne that moved the 24 elders, the four living creatures, and myriads of angels to bow and worship the One slain for the salvation of the fallen race (Rev. 5:9-14). Without the cross's revelation of God's character and the redemption of humanity provided there, Christian worship loses its very basis. We ascribe glory to God, but it is to God who "shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Without that Christological perspective, ascribing glory to God would, in itself, be no different from the dance of the sun worshiper, the fire-walk of the mystic, the prayer wheel of the monk, or the meditation of the philosopher.

Further, the promise of Jesus that "where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20) is an assurance that Christians gathered in worship experience the presence of Jesus. We gather in His name, in accordance with His teachings (Matt. 28:20), to glorify the Father through Him (1 Peter 4:11), to affirm the workings of His Spirit (Rom. 8:16, 26, 27), to hear His word (1 Tim. 4:13), to eat of His broken body and drink His cup (1 Cor. 11:23-26), and to give

## **The key is balance: between reason and emotion, order and variety, regularity and spontaneity, reverential and relational.**

notice to the world that we are His people (1 Cor. 1:1-9). As Hans Kung states: "Christ is present in the entire life of the church. But Christ is above all present and active in the *worship of the congregation* to which He called us in His gospel. . . . In this congregation there occurs in a special way God's service to the church and the church's service before God. Here God speaks to the church through His Word, and the church speaks to God by replying in its prayers and its songs of praise. Here the crucified and risen Lord becomes present through His Word and His sacrament, and here we commit ourselves to His service. . . . Here God's new people is reminded of the great deeds and promises of God, which are proclaimed aloud in thankfulness and joy—the creation and preservation of the world and of man, the calling and guiding of Israel up to the eschatological saving act in Christ's death and resurrection and on to the consummation of the world and of mankind."<sup>6</sup>

Hence, apart from Christ there is no worship.

## **Principle 4: Christian worship affirms fellowship—with the Spirit and within the body of worshipers.**

Without the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit, the church would have no life. It is the Spirit who makes Christ real to us and makes His indwelling possible (John 14:17, 18, 21, 23). It

is the Spirit who gives the assurance that Christ "abides in us" (1 John 3:24). It is the Spirit who teaches truth, endows us with spiritual gifts, and empowers us for mission (John 14:26; 16:23; Eph. 4:11; Acts 1:4, 5, 8). It is also the Spirit who can motivate us into a worship experience, marked by unity, fervor, and praise, as was the case with the apostolic church (Acts 2:41-44, 47; 3:8, 9; 4:24-26).

Jesus told the Samaritan woman that "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Michael Green's comment is worth noting: "'Spirit' for John, as for Paul, is the opposite of 'flesh,' and 'flesh' stands for all our fallen humanness. To say that God is Spirit, and that the only way to worship Him is in Spirit and in truth is first and foremost to slam the door in the face of our approach to God in our own strength or goodness. How can 'flesh' approach God who is 'Spirit,' how can sinners approach the Holy One? They cannot. But the good news is that God has opened a way."<sup>7</sup> The way of the Spirit: "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:14-16).

The Holy Spirit creates not only the vertical fellowship with God, but also the horizontal fellowship of worshippers with each other. The Spirit who brings about regeneration and motivates worship is also the Spirit who reconciles and unites. The barrier between people on account of race, national origin, sex, etc., stands abolished because of the fellowship of the cross and of the Spirit. Christ has reconciled us to God and breached the gulf between us, so that in Him we have become a new creation, a new humanity (Eph. 2:11-16)—with constituents that are different but united, free but dependent, and held together by the "grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor. 13:14). In the age of the Spirit, what was once the irreconcilable two become "one," with both having "access in one Spirit to the Father" (Eph. 2:13, 18).

The worship hour, therefore, more than any other occasion, must bear a testimony to Christian unity and pur-

pose. Is this not particularly so when worship involves the celebration of the Lord's table, the one symbol that recalls the price paid for, and reaffirms the necessity of, the ministry of reconciliation? That occasion, when the redeemed of the Lord come to proclaim visibly their loyalty to God and their unity with each other, is a moment of mystery and wonder. Isn't it tragic, then, that at times our indifference and disunity turn that moment into a pagan relic of routine and meaninglessness? Without the inner relevance of the Eucharist defining our liturgy, worship becomes, in the words of Barth, a "theological impossibility."<sup>8</sup> So are prayer, thanksgiving, and praise! All these take on meaning only within the context of a redeemed relationship. Hence the plea of Jesus: "So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23, 24).

### **Principle 5: Christian worship transcends and transforms its symbols to convey abiding meaning and purpose.**

Symbols are important. Both the Old and the New Testaments in their descriptions of worship services assign a significant role to symbols, involving time, space, form, and other tangible ingredients. The sanctuary and Temple services in the Old Testament provide graphic illustration of form and order in worship. When the Corinthian church was about to explode in experiments in freedom bordering on excess, Paul warned them of the necessity for dignity and order in worship: "God is not a God of confusion but of peace." "All things should be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:33, 40).

And yet form and order in themselves are not the end of worship. Form must not turn into formalism and order must not freeze into rigidity to the point where the outward beauty obscures the inner grace, the routine dominates the essential, the ritual quenches the spiritual, the secondary overtakes the primary, and the letter outstrips the spirit. Worship is not worship unless our spirit

holds communion with His Spirit. Such communion has room for interplay between reason and emotion, order and variety, regularity and spontaneity, reverential and relational. The key is balance.

Consider how our Lord lifted the Sabbath out of the routine and recognized its centrality to worship. First He acknowledged the need for form: "And he came to Nazareth; . . . and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day" (Luke 4:16).

To Him, the Sabbath was more than a form, more than a symbol. It was divinely consecrated time for worship, and He hallowed it by His own example. As an institution that preceded sin, the Sabbath was grounded in God's example and command after Creation. To keep it holy was to "delight in the Lord," and to confess the sovereignty of God (Isa. 58:13, 14; Eze. 20:20). The Sabbath constitutes an assurance in time that God is real and that He abides with those who seek Him in time, here and now. More than that, it is also a bridge from the pre-Fall earth to the new earth, when all creation will worship the Lord "from sabbath to sabbath" (Isa. 66:22, 23).

By the time of Jesus' incarnation, however, culture and tradition had corrupted the Sabbath, honoring its form but ignoring its spirit and making it a burden. Jesus reinstated the Sabbath's true nature by announcing that it was made for man, and that He is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:27, 28), and that it is a day marked for redemptive activities (John 5:17, 18). He let the spirit of Sabbath transform the form while submitting to the essentials of the letter.

Consider also His attitude to the place of worship, an issue that disturbs some people today. Nazareth was hardly an inspiring place. Its synagogue likely had nothing of significance in art or architecture or aesthetics. Its leaders were probably of no consequence. Nothing there would have attracted the average worshiper. But as His custom was, Jesus went there for public worship on the Sabbath day, setting an example worthy of emulation by succeeding generations.

Hills are beautiful, woods are dark, deep, and lovely, gardens so inviting, the home peaceful, the open skies of a velvety night so engaging of praise, the radio seminar so thought-provoking, while the church has a boring speaker,



a hypocritical leader, an uncouth member . . . and yet, corporate worship demands our presence. God's command to Israel, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst" (Ex. 25:8), is more than an invitation to build a temple in the desert. It is an assurance that in corporate worship the community of saints walks with the God of history and faith, with the church of the past and the present, all the while forging a path to eternity. Community of faith is essential for the continuity of faith. Hence the warning of the author of Hebrews and the acclaim of the psalmist: "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Heb. 10:24, 25); "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'" (Ps. 122:1).

The psalmist also recognized that we don't go into the temple empty-handed: "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts!" (Ps. 96:8). Although sacrifice and offering were a part of Old Testament worship ritual, the Christological emphasis in the New Testament taps the true intent of biblical sacrifice: self-denial (see Mark 8:34; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 4:10-12; Heb. 13:15; 12:28). Governed by such a spirit, worship becomes *leitourgia* ("to serve," "to prostrate," "to worship"), a mark of the Philippian church (Phil. 2:20). Monetary contributions and other material gifts become "a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God" when given by those who first "gave themselves to the Lord" (Phil. 4:18; 2 Cor. 8:5).

## Principle 6: Christian worship demands the proclamation of the Word.

When Jesus stood up in the Nazareth synagogue, He turned to the book of Isaiah and proclaimed God's Word and its relevance for His time. The apostles gave preeminence to the "ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4; 1:17, 25). Paul instructed that his Epistles be read in the churches (Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27).

Why is the reading and the proclamation of the Word so primary in Christian worship? First, because it is God's Word. Through the Word He speaks (Heb. 1:1), He instructs (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 4:2), and He accomplishes His purposes (Isa. 55:11). As D. T. Niles of Sri Lanka once wrote, the Bible read and proclaimed invites us to join life's most significant conversation—"between God and Abraham, or God and David, or Jesus and the men on the road to Emmaus. . . . That is the ongoing conversation. We join in the conversation on the road to Emmaus, and as we listen to Him as He talks, the words of Scripture become His words to us."<sup>9</sup>

Second, whatever expectations we may bring to worship, the greatest of them fades to nothing when we hear God's expectation of us. The Word during worship must confront the worshiper with that divine voice. Barth notes: "It [the Bible] is expectant of people who have eyes to see what eye hath not seen, ears to hear what ear hath not heard, and hearts to understand what hath not entered into the heart of man. . . . God expects, God seeks, such people. . . . The expectancy brought to the situation by the *congregation*, intense as it may be, is in truth small and insignificant in comparison to that expectancy . . . which comes from . . . the open Bible."<sup>10</sup>

The Bible proclaimed is in fact the guarantee of preserving Christian worship from the frigidity of boredom, on the one hand, and the frivolity of entertainment, on the other. Where the Book is central, all eyes and hearts turn to its Author.

## Principle 7. Christian worship is eschatological.

We worship in time, and time anticipates the future. The admonition to the Hebrews not to neglect congregational gathering was made in the context of the eschatological "Day drawing near" (Heb. 10:25). The final message to the world from the three angels of Revelation 14:6-12 is a call to distinguish between true and false worship, and to return to the worship of the Creator-Redeemer God. The Lord's Supper also reminds us of the eschatological nature of Christian worship. "For as often as

you eat this bread," says Paul, "and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26; see also Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-18). As Ellen White comments: "The Communion service points to Christ's second coming. It was designed to keep this hope vivid in the minds of the disciples."<sup>11</sup> Thus the table notifies the believer that the journey of faith begins at the cross and culminates with the second coming of Jesus.

Meanwhile the believers gathering around the table here on earth have a responsibility to "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." Every occasion of worship is thus an opportunity to affirm that hope and pray for its hastening: "Thy kingdom come."

Ellen White underscores beautifully the eschatological hope in the hour of Christian worship: "To the humble, believing soul, the house of God on earth is the gate of heaven. The song of praise, the prayer, the words spoken by Christ's representatives, are God's appointed agencies to prepare a people for the church above, for that loftier worship into which there can enter nothing that defileth."<sup>12</sup> ■

\*All Bible passages in this article are from the Revised Standard Version.

<sup>1</sup> The two most descriptive passages of God's throne in heaven—one from the Old Testament and one from the New—portray scenes of heavenly worship: Isaiah 6:1-6; Revelation 4; 5.

<sup>2</sup> A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1926), p. 276.

<sup>4</sup> William Temple, *The Hope of a New World* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1942), p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Franklin M. Segler, *Christian Worship* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1967), p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> Hans Kung, *The Church* (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1976), pp. 305, 306.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1975), p. 107.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in J. J. Von Allmen, *Worship: Its Theology and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 156.

<sup>9</sup> In Charles E. Bradford, *Preaching to the Times* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1975), p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> Karl Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, tr. Douglas Horton (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1928), pp. 121, 122.

<sup>11</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1940), p. 659.

<sup>12</sup> ———, *Testimonies* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 5, p. 491.

# Enthusiasm in early Adventist worship

Ronald D. Graybill

**Our spiritual ancestors had livelier services than many of us would be comfortable with today.**



*Ronald D. Graybill, Ph.D., is associate professor of history at La Sierra University, Riverside, California.*

**O**ne cold Saturday night in February 1845 found Ellen Harmon in a crowded farmhouse in northern Maine. As singing and shouting soared around her, she was struck down in vision. She lay unconscious on the floor while a young Millerite preacher, James White, held her head in his hands until a pillow could be found. From time to time she would arise to deliver the messages she was receiving.

As she spoke, a line of lanterns became visible in the darkness outside. "It's Sheriff Moulton!" someone shouted as the line drew closer. The worshipers barred the door.

Moulton knocked. The crowd inside ignored him, striking up another song. He knocked again, more insistently. Shouts of "Hallelujah" rang out, and the singing grew louder.

At this, Moulton sent his men into action. Throwing stout shoulders at the door, they snapped its latch and burst it open. After a few hurried questions, Moulton was pointed to Israel Dammon, the leader of the meeting.

Pushing his way through the crowd, Moulton confronted the flushed, shouting Dammon. "In the name of the state of Maine, lay hold of this man," the sheriff yelled. But after his men were unsuccessful in several attempts to do so, the sheriff gave up and called for reinforcements.

Returning with increased forces, the sheriff succeeded in arresting Dammon and carrying him off. The charge? Disturbing the peace.

There can be no doubt that the meeting that Saturday night in Atkinson, Maine, was exciting, and that the Adventists gathered there were praising God with such energy and volume that the neighbors were offended. At Dammon's trial a local farmer testified, "I have been young, and now am old, and of all the places I ever was in, I never saw such a confusion, not even in a drunken frolic."<sup>1</sup>

But despite all the noise and confusion, Ellen White believed the Holy Spirit was present in that meeting.<sup>2</sup>

## **Beating back the enemy**

Before long, James and Ellen White had split with Dammon, but neither they nor other Adventists soon abandoned the enthusiastic style of early Adventist worship. "I saw," wrote Ellen White, that "singing to the glory of God often drove the enemy, and shouting would beat him back and give us the victory. I saw there was too little glorifying God in Israel and too little childlike simplicity."<sup>3</sup>

In the 1840s and 1850s many Sabbathkeeping Adventists, like their Methodist neighbors, were busy "beating back" the enemy with their enthusiastic singing and fervent shouts of "Glory!" "Hallelujah!" "Praise God!" and "Blessed Jesus!"

Hiram Edson told of a Friday night meeting where "free and full 'Hallelujahs' ascended to God and He was glorified in praise, love, and adoration."<sup>4</sup> Another believer reported a Vermont meeting where "the Holy Spirit fell upon us, and shouts of victory ascended while tears of joy flowed freely from many eyes."<sup>5</sup> James White wrote that "while Mrs. W[hite] was speaking on first-day,

the house rang from full shouts of praise from several in the congregation. This refreshing season seemed a foretaste of heaven, sweet heaven."<sup>6</sup> Elias Goodwin told of a meeting during which "the loud praises of God ascended from most, if not all, in the house; and continued until after midnight."<sup>7</sup>

In Paris, Maine, in 1850, enthusiasm rose even higher. Ellen White noted: "Sunday the power of God came upon us like a mighty rushing wind. All arose upon their feet and praised God with a loud voice; it was something as it was when the foundation of the house of God was laid. The voice of weeping could not be told from the voice of shouting. It was a triumphant time; all were strengthened and refreshed. I never witnessed such a powerful time before."<sup>8</sup>

"None of you should keep silent in your meetings," she wrote in a report of this experience. "Surely everyone who has tasted of the powers of the world to come can say something in honor of the lovely Jesus."<sup>9</sup>

On another occasion Mrs. White observed that "religion is made to dwell too much in an iron case. . . . The outpouring of the Spirit of God will lead to a grateful acknowledgment of the same; and . . . we shall not hold our peace, we shall sacrifice to God with the voice of thanksgiving and make melody to Him with our hearts and voices."<sup>10</sup>

### **Spirit-caused laughter**

Shouting and singing were not the only ways in which early Adventists expressed their enthusiasm. "The Spirit caused Clarissa to laugh aloud," Ellen White reported.<sup>11</sup> And a Sister Eliza Smith told how, overcome by a sense of Jesus' love, "before I was aware, I was clapping my hands, and shouting, 'Glory to God.'" <sup>12</sup>

On a few occasions Advent believers spoke in tongues. Ellen White recounted that a Brother Ralph "broke out in a new tongue, unknown to us all." The interpretation of the utterance was that Ralph should accompany Mrs. White on a visit to reclaim a Brother Rhodes from discouragement.<sup>13</sup>

Early Adventists never encouraged speaking in tongues, but they did accept some instances of it as genuine. The interpretation of tongues, however, did not always prove to be reliable. In 1848 Adventists were debating when to begin the Sabbath. Some thought sundown was the proper time; some argued for 6:00

p.m. At one meeting "the Holy Ghost came down," and "Brother Chamberlain was filled with the power."<sup>14</sup> He "cried out" in an "unknown tongue." The interpretation was rather prosaic. "Give me the chalk; give me the chalk," he insisted. Chalk was produced, and Chamberlain drew a clock face on the floor and proceeded to argue for the 6:00 p.m. time. Later Bible study settled the group on sundown as the time to begin the Sabbath.

In addition to singing, shouting, laughing, and speaking in tongues, early Adventists often experienced prostration, or being "slain by the Spirit." For instance, James White reported of a meeting in Wisconsin in 1860: "Last night I felt more of the power of God than I have at any one time for three years. Brethren Ingraham, Sanborn, and I were praying in another room. While a brother was anointing his wife, the room was filled with the power of God. I was standing, but with difficulty. I fell upon my face, and cried and groaned under the power of God. Brethren Sanborn and Ingraham felt about the same. We all lay on the floor under the power of God. We are perfectly free."<sup>15</sup>

Early Adventists also practiced the "holy kiss," or "salutation," when meeting and parting. In her first vision Mrs. White saw that God loved those who "could wash one another's feet and salute the brethren with a holy kiss."<sup>16</sup> Ellen White reported that "Brother Baker was healed, and he glorified God with a loud voice; he had a baptism of the Holy Ghost. . . . Brother Baker has come into the salutation and washing the saints' feet, which he never believed in before."<sup>17</sup>

Mrs. White's visions were sometimes given amid the cries and shouts of the saints: "The place was filled with the Spirit of the Lord. Some rejoiced, others wept. All felt that the Lord was drawing very near. . . . When seated, Mrs. W[white] began to praise the Lord, and continued rising higher and higher in perfect triumph in the Lord, till her voice changed, and the deep, clear shouts of Glory! Hallelujah! thrilled every heart. She was in vision."<sup>18</sup>

Except for speaking in tongues and laughing in the Spirit, dozens of examples could be cited of any of the types of experiences cited above.

### **Music evinces exuberance**

The music of early Adventism also contained evidence of the movement's

youthful exuberance. "There was in those days a power in what was called Advent singing, such as was felt in no other," James White recalled.<sup>19</sup> White spirituals such as "You Will See Your Lord a-Coming" were carried over from the Millerite hymnal, providing an occasion for the expression of deep feelings. White used the song during his journeys as a Millerite evangelist, sometimes entering the hall singing it and accompanying himself by beating time on his Bible.<sup>20</sup>

On one occasion James White and his sisters sang "You Will See Your Lord a-Coming" to introduce a Communion service. As they reached the chorus of each verse, "a good Brother Clark" would rise, "strike his hands together over his head, shout 'Glory!' and immediately sit down." Each chorus brought Clark to his feet with the "same shout of 'Glory.'" "The influence of the melody, accompanied by Brother Clark's solemn appearance and sweet shouts, seemed electrifying," White recalled. "Many were in tears, while responses of 'Amen' and 'Praise the Lord' were heard from almost everyone who loved the Advent hope."<sup>21</sup>

Early Adventist hymnwriters were by no means averse to writing religious words for popular songs of the day. For instance, Uriah Smith turned Stephen Foster's "Way down upon the Swanee River" into "Up to a land of light we're going," and Foster's "Round ye meadows am a-ringing," became "Round the world alarm is ringing."<sup>22</sup> James White published these adaptations in his 1855 hymnal at a time when Foster was at the height of his secular popularity.<sup>23</sup>

Even "Dixie" was pressed into service as a hymn:

"We're traveling toward a country bright

"Where all is peace, and love, and light,

"Look away, look away, look away  
"To that bright land."<sup>24</sup>

Over the years the secular connotations of these songs overwhelmed their religious usefulness, and they were dropped from Adventist hymnody. But the current Adventist hymnal retains some of the songs that were based on secular music popular at the time of their composition—those that did not remain popular outside the church. For instance, "How Sweet Are the Tidings" is based on "Bonny Eloise," an 1858 love song that began "How sweet is the vale where the Mowhawk gently glides."<sup>25</sup>

The use of instruments was limited among early Adventists, a few of the more straitlaced discouraging it altogether.<sup>26</sup> As late as 1877, J. N. Loughborough and other church leaders had to introduce biblical arguments to ease the acceptance of the first organ used by Adventists in California.

Ellen White's sons played the melodeon,<sup>27</sup> a small portable organ, and in 1886, during a visit to Sweden, Ellen White commented favorably on the use of a guitar: "A lady . . . was a skillful player on the guitar, and possessed a sweet, musical voice; at public worship she was accustomed to supply the place of both choir and instrument. At our request she played and sung at the opening of our meetings."<sup>28</sup>

### Moderating the early enthusiasm

Fervent enthusiasm marked Adventist religious experience during the 1840s and 1850s, and joyous outbursts continued to occur on occasion even in the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>29</sup> But by the 1870s religious feelings were apt to be demonstrated in a more sedate manner—by the "tearful eye and earnest looks" that Mrs. White spoke approvingly of observing at a camp meeting.<sup>30</sup>

How did the church get away from its enthusiastic roots? In part, it was a natural process as members became more educated and sophisticated. Change in the culture also had its influence, which Adventists were not the only ones to experience. In the early part of the nineteenth century, Methodists were often known as "shouting Methodists," but after the Civil War, enthusiasm waned in that denomination.

A third factor in this sobering of the Adventist Church was the abuses of some enthusiasts. In Wisconsin the Mauston fanaticism of 1861 was linked to ecstatic manifestations and extreme views of sanctification. One woman who believed she experienced visions lost her reason during the excitement.<sup>31</sup>

As early as 1850 Ellen White had begun sounding cautions about religious enthusiasm. She "saw that there was great danger of leaving the Word of God and resting down and trusting in exercises. I saw that God had moved by His Spirit upon your company in some of their exercises and their promptings; but I saw danger ahead."<sup>32</sup>

She warned one brother that his habit of shouting was no evidence that he was a Christian: "Half the time he himself

knows not what he is shouting at."<sup>33</sup>

The "holy kiss" sometimes lost its holiness, as in the case of Brother Pearsall, who was "indiscreet" in its practice and made "but little difference as to the time and place."<sup>34</sup>

By the 1890s Ellen White seemed to be discouraging any vocal expressions of enthusiasm. She spoke approvingly of some of the revival meetings of that decade in which "there were no wild demonstrations, for the praise of God does not lead to that. We never hear of any such things as that in the life of Christ, as jumping up and down and around, and screaming and hollering. No; God's work appeals to the senses and reason of men and women."<sup>35</sup> "Softly and silently the power of the divine Spirit does [His] work," she wrote in 1889, "wakening the dulled senses, quickening the soul, and arousing its sensibilities."<sup>36</sup>

The holy flesh fanaticism in Indiana in 1901 also called forth condemnations of religious enthusiasm, which again was linked to theological heresies.

How then does one reconcile Ellen White's early encouragement of shouting in worship with her later preference for a Holy Spirit who works "softly and silently"? Certainly the church and the culture had changed much between 1845 and 1885. What was appropriate to the rough and ready woodsmen of northern Maine was not appropriate or appealing to the earnest, sober farmers of the Midwest during America's Gilded Age. Does this suggest, perhaps, that what is appropriate for one congregation today might not be appropriate for another?

All who are interested in the current debate over worship styles must take seriously the fact that in its early history, the Adventist Church experienced, endorsed, and encouraged a more exuberant form of worship. The hazards of that form of worship—trusting experience above Scripture and thus falling into false teaching—also speaks to us from the pages of Adventist history. ■

<sup>1</sup> James Rowe testimony, in *Piscataquis Farmer*, Mar. 7, 1845, reprinted in Frederick Hoyt, ed., "Trial of I. Dammon, reported for the *Piscataquis Farmer*," *Spectrum*, August 1887, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts* (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1860), vol. 2, pp. 40, 41.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen G. White to Arabella Hastings, Aug. 4, 1850 (letter 8, 1850).

<sup>4</sup> Hiram Edson, "Brother Hiram Edson writes . . .," *Review and Herald*, February 1851, p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> George W. Holt, "Dear Brother White," *Review and Herald*, Sept. 2, 1851, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> James White, "Eastern Tour," *Review and*

*Herald*, Dec. 1, 1859, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Elias Goodwin to Editor, *Review and Herald*, Mar. 6, 1866, p. 110.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G. White to The Church in Brother Hastings' House, Nov. 7, 1850 (letter 28, 1850).

<sup>9</sup> Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Loveland, Dec. 13, 1850 (letter 30, 1850).

<sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Loveland, Jan. 24, 1856 (letter 2a, 1856).

<sup>11</sup> Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Howland, Aug. 15, 1850 (letter 12, 1850).

<sup>12</sup> Eliza Smith to Editor, *Review and Herald*, Feb. 3, 1853, p. 151.

<sup>13</sup> Ellen White "Beloved Brethren, Scattered Abroad—" *Present Truth*, December 1849.

<sup>14</sup> James White to My Dear Brother, Berlin, Connecticut, July 2, 1848.

<sup>15</sup> James White to Ellen White, Nov. 6, 1860.

<sup>16</sup> Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1945), p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> Ellen White to Brother and Sister Howland, Nov. 12, 1851 (letter 8, 1851).

<sup>18</sup> James White, "Report of Meetings!" *Review and Herald*, Oct. 22, 1857, pp. 196, 197.

<sup>19</sup> James White, *Life Incidents* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the SDA Pub. Assn., 1868), p. 94.

<sup>20</sup> William A. Spicer, *Pioneer Days of the Advent Movement* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1941), p. 147.

<sup>21</sup> James White, *Life Incidents*, p. 107.

<sup>22</sup> Ron Graybill, "Uriah Smith on the Swanee River," *Insight*, Apr. 24, 1979, pp. 9-13.

<sup>23</sup> Dwight's *Journal of Music* said Foster's "Old Folks at Home" . . . is on everybody's tongue, and consequently in everybody's mouth. Pianos and guitars groan with it night and day; sentimental young ladies sing it; sentimental young gentlemen warble it in midnight serenades, . . . boatmen roar it out stentorially at all times; all the bands play it, . . . the 'singing stars' carol it on the theatrical boards and at concerts" (*ibid.*).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*; *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985), No. 442.

<sup>26</sup> Lucinda M. Hall, "Camp Meeting," *Signs of the Times*, Sept. 27, 1877, p. 292; see also [J. N. Loughborough] "Present Truth on the Pacific Coast, L," *Pacific Union Recorder*, Jan. 10, 1907, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Adelia P. Patten, "Brief Narrative of the Life . . . of Henry N. White," in *Appeal to the Youth* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the SDA Pub. Assn.), p. 22.

<sup>28</sup> Ellen G. White, in *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Basel, Switzerland: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886), p. 195.

<sup>29</sup> Writing to Edson and Willie White in 1872 about an occasion of prayer for the healing of James White, Mrs. White said: "The healing power of God came upon your father. . . . We shouted the high praises of God" (Ellen G. White to Edson and Willie White, Dec. 7, 1872 [letter 20, 1872]).

<sup>30</sup> Ellen G. White to G. I. Butler, June 6, 1875 (letter 16, 1875).

<sup>31</sup> See Ellen G. White, "Jealousy and Fault-finding," *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1 (Mountain View, Calif.: 1948), pp. 311-323; T. M. Steward, "A Delusion Confessed," *Review and Herald*, Jan. 22, 1861, pp. 77, 78.

<sup>32</sup> Ellen G. White, Dec. 25, 1850 (manuscript 11, 1850).

<sup>33</sup> Ellen G. White to Brethren and Sisters at Bedford, c. 1861 (letter 14, 1861).

<sup>34</sup> Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Pearsall, July 12, 1854 (letter 3, 1854).

<sup>35</sup> Ellen G. White, "Sermon at Ashfield, Australia, camp meeting," Nov. 3, 1894 (manuscript 49, 1894).

<sup>36</sup> Ellen G. White to My Dear Brethren, c. April 1889 (letter 85, 1889).

# Authentic Adventist worship

C. Raymond Holmes

**Authentic Adventist worship must carefully maintain a balance between proclamation and acclamation, both rooted in faithfulness to God's Word.**



*Raymond Holmes, D.Min., is professor of worship and preaching, Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.*

**S**eventh-day Adventists consider Revelation 14:6, 7 a premier text on worship: "Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water'" (NIV).

This passage says that for the end-time church worship has a particular flavor, with two major focuses. The flavor is the sense of urgency that comes with the realization that the church worships in the context of eschatological crisis. The two major focuses are proclamation and acclamation, both vital elements in authentic Seventh-day Adventist worship. While urgency provides motivation for both preaching and praise, a balance between proclamation and acclamation is necessary to avoid distortion in worship. A congregation's praise is always in response to God's speech in Scripture and sermon. God speaks; His people respond.

## **Proclamation—acclamation**

Authentic Adventist worship is Word-praise centered, admitting no dichotomy between proclamation and acclamation. Balance between preaching and praise is assured by the preaching of "the old gospel doctrine, sorrow for sin, repentance, and confession"<sup>1</sup> within the context of worship governed by

order, discipline, and dignity.<sup>2</sup> Expository biblical preaching is perhaps the best way to deal with the issues of emotionalism, fanaticism, and subjectivism in worship. Such preaching "organizes our worlds, defines our identities, judges our activities, empowers our witness, publicly exhibits God's promises in Jesus Christ, offers Jesus Christ Himself, and evokes our freedom as 'persons' to respond to God or to reject Him."<sup>3</sup> When God's speech takes precedence over human response, balance in worship poses no problem.

Any trend that would unseat preaching as the central act in Adventist worship is out of harmony with Revelation 14:6, because human experience must never take the place of God's Word in worship—not even "mild ecstasy."<sup>4</sup> It is in response to the Word of God read and preached that redeemed sinners praise the Lord and the Lamb in worship. Which is why praise is out of place if it comes too early in the worship service. Penitence, in response to God's speech in Scripture and sermon, precedes praise. Acclamation is the natural climax of a theocentric worship service during which the reasons for praise have first been established by Scripture and sermon. Therefore, any trend that unseats praise as an appropriate response to God's speech is out of harmony with Revelation 14:7. Similarly, such a tendency is also out of harmony with the spirit of Sabbath, because "unless Sabbathkeeping opens up our deepest expressions of praise we're not experiencing its full potential."<sup>5</sup>

Old Testament preaching pointed to a future saving act of God in history. The

## Worship, especially in acclamation, reveals the radical nature of Christian experience.

New Testament community proclaimed and acclaimed this saving activity in Christ. New Testament preaching also looked forward to the final saving act of God in history, the second coming of Christ. Christ—the one who redeems us from sin, who is our Lord, who is seated at the right hand of the Father and serves as the high priest, and who at the completion of His heavenly ministry will return to the earth to take His people home—is the center of the Adventist faith. We belong to Christ. Corporately, we are called the “body of Christ,” and are exhorted to glorify Him by lives that are in harmony with His will for His church (Rom. 12; Eph. 4:17-6:18; Col. 3:1-4:6; 1 Thess. 4:1-5:11; Heb. 12:1-13:21; 1 Peter 1:13-5:11).

Consequently, in its worship the last-day church responds to the preaching of the “eternal gospel” by giving God “glory”: turning to Him in prayer, eagerly listening to His Word, singing hymns of praise, affirming the redemptive experience of grace through a life of surrender and witness. Thus, worship, especially in acclamation, reveals the radical nature of Christian experience. A renewed life of praise in response to His Word would naturally result in a renewal of both worship and evangelism.

As we respond to experiments in worship, let us stay in balance, and not take extreme positions that might cut off genuine worship renewal. Consider, for example, the position that because we are living in the antitypical day of atonement, praise is inappropriate. Penitence is an important part of worship, but if it became the primary focus to the neglect of praise, worship itself would tend to become distorted. The good news of

forgiveness of sin and the promise of the Lord’s soon return are certainly cause for rejoicing among God’s people, and can be legitimately expressed in worship. The point is clear: When one is faced with new ideas and expressions in worship, careful consideration, investigation, analysis, and education are required so that extremists do not determine the outcome.

### Celebration worship

One such expression is “celebration worship.” In the past some pastors have used “celebration” in reference to worship, but now, unfortunately, the expression is rapidly becoming a loaded term—so loaded that some people are alarmed by its very use and conjure up all kinds of bogeymen when they hear it. But the concept of joyful celebration is found throughout the Bible (Ex. 10:9; Matt. 26:18; Luke 15:24; Rev. 4-5; 11:10). Fairness and objectivity demand that we avoid uninformed accusations about the term and about those who use it. While we acknowledge the commendable motives of pastors attracted to celebration worship, the concept should not be accepted by an Adventist congregation without careful scrutiny. And such an inquiry should be based on sound worship principles rather than on misrepresentation and character assassination.

A year ago I attended a celebration worship service in a Seventh-day Adventist church. Three elements composed the order of service: praise, prayer, and preaching. Praise and preaching involved the most time. During the praise segment the worship leaders joined the congregation on the main floor as contemporary praise songs, with the words projected on the wall, were sung for about 20 minutes. During the service I neither saw nor heard anything that could be considered heretical or satanic. However, I was not moved by the worship service for the following reasons:

1. *The service had the flavor of entertainment.* The place of worship was not a sanctuary with an architectural focus on pulpit and Communion table, but an auditorium focusing on a large stage. With such a setting it was natural for the participants to function more like performers than worship leaders. The setting and the music, though tastefully done, made clapping seem natural as well. Good-quality religious entertain-

ment has its place, but not in authentic Adventist worship.

2. *The service had a subjective approach.* The service touched the emotions on a superficial level, as is true with entertainment, and not on the deep level addressed by the preaching of both law and gospel. I gained the general impression that many in the audience got the feeling that worship had taken place if they felt good about the service and, in the process, about themselves.

3. *The service seemed to stress as its major element celebration, giving expression to praise.* Praise preceded the sermon and permeated everything that was done and said. However, in authentic Adventist worship praise is but one of the many elements that contribute to a balanced and wholistic worship experience. To make it the major element is to dislocate the entire worship service, denigrating other vital elements such as confession, contrition, thanksgiving, proclamation, teaching, ordinances, testimony, dedication, and sacrifice in giving and serving.

4. *Praise came too early in the worship service.* Acclamation in worship is a response to the Word of God, read and preached, in which the redeemed sinner praises God the Father who is the Creator and God the Son who is the Redeemer. Human experience must never replace God’s Word in authentic Adventist worship.

5. *Contemporary gospel songs dominated the service.* Because they tend to touch only superficial emotions, contemporary gospel songs can never take the place of the great hymns of the church. They cannot accomplish what those hymns do. The hymns in *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* rose out of the Christian community’s struggle for survival in a hostile world. The great hymns, anthems, and chorals of the church fortify conviction and faith even as they touch emotions on a much deeper level.

Paul’s exhortation to the Ephesian congregation certainly must be taken seriously by worshipers today: “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:18-20, NIV). The temptation today is to move away from this injunction and to adopt religious “pop” songs and music. We must guard against re-

jecting that which is historical in church music for the contemporary fad of praise choruses. The fundamental point in Christian music is that it is not simply subjective emotional expression in an entertainment setting, but that it has as major content the confession of sin and of faith in a setting of reverence and adoration. Just like many of the Old Testament psalms, the hymns and songs of the Christian community from New Testament times recall the mighty acts of the Lord in providing for mankind's redemption. The primary focus must always be on the confessional exaltation of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

6. *The order of service was different, but changing the format of worship in itself does not produce revival.* Revival follows the kind of heart-searching that leads to confession, repentance, and transformation of life. And that is possible not by turning to a form of liturgical shuffling, such as in celebration worship, but to our spiritual sources: Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy. Revival comes when and where there is uncompromising proclamation of the Word of God, the preaching of the whole gospel, and the rejection of error.

### Responding to celebration worship

Celebration worship may be nothing more than a liturgical comet, dazzling on the way to a fade-out, leaving only a memory. Still, serious questions arise concerning this phenomenon flashing across the Adventist sky: 1. Where will it ultimately lead us? 2. To what extent is it a form of neo-Pentecostalism? 3. How far afield are we willing to look for inspiration today? 4. Can inspiration no longer be found in the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? 5. Is the real problem with the theology that supports celebration worship and informs the preaching that takes place in that context?

Up to now we have only reacted to celebration worship. What is needed is an intelligent response to those more basic questions. We do have the counsel that in facing people who like to have worship experiments involving much excitement and physical exertions, "we must not combat their ideas and treat them with contempt. But let . . . [us] give them an example of what constitutes true heart-service in religious worship."<sup>6</sup>

The right path does not lie in condemning either high-church or charis-

matic extremes in worship. Perhaps we should be grateful that celebration worship is calling attention to the long-overdue need for worship renewal in our churches. Not giving worship the attention Revelation 14:6, 7 demands has created a vacuum. We should not be surprised by what fills it. Perhaps God is giving the Seventh-day Adventist Church an opportunity to respond more fully to the first angel's message, and to begin to think seriously about an Adventist theology of worship.<sup>7</sup>

### Authentic Adventist worship

Unlike the Lutheran or Episcopal traditions, Adventist worship has much variety. Its liturgy is part of the free church legacy, and this increases rather than decreases the responsibility for planning worship services that bring people into God's presence, to hear Him speak and to respond in appropriate praise.

On a liturgical spectrum extending from low church to high church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is somewhere between low and the midpoint. Adventist worship, even in the most prestigious institutional churches with formal and carefully planned services, cannot be classified as high church. What we have is a low church worship with a basic structure and order, but marked by a broad sweep of variations.

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some of the fundamental features of authentic Adventist worship:

1. *Theocentricity.* Seventh-day Adventist worship views God, not the worshiper, as its center. To say of worship "It doesn't meet my needs!" or "I don't get anything out of it!" suggests that the worshiper is at the center. Worship is not just another entrée in a smorgasbord of activities planned to meet every possible human need. When the major focus of worship is on meeting needs rather than on giving glory to God, the Word of God gets buried beneath the rubbish of human self-elevation. Consequently, worship loses its real value. Certainly God desires that human needs be met, but the deepest human need is to be in God's presence in faith and submission. Because "the main gift we receive is God,"<sup>8</sup> the meeting of human need is a gracious by-product of theocentric worship. Pastoral responsibility demands that ministers lead their congregations to experience the highest,

## Authentic Adventist worship must take place in a framework of "disciplined liberty."

the loftiest, the most majestic, in worship.

2. *Centrality of proclamation.* In the context of the judgment age, worship must revolve around the proclamation of the Word of God. "The true prophet is more intent on interpreting the nature and working of God than on fulfilling the needs and wishes of the people."<sup>9</sup>

3. *Illustrating belief.* The distinctiveness of Adventist worship is to be found in what we believe and teach. It cannot come by copying either the high church or the charismatic service. Instead, our worship must illustrate our belief, proclaim our mission both audibly and visibly, and make a clear statement as to why the congregation has gathered. When worship does not illustrate what the church believes, when worship gives importance to celebrating events in secular history rather than redemptive history, such worship is ambiguous. Liturgical ambiguity does not permit theme, direction, or unity in worship.

4. *Acclamation in context.* Praise within the context of the preaching of the Word of God keeps emotionalism and fanaticism under check. Adventist worship needs to stay clear of any distortion. "If we work to create an excitement of feeling, we shall have all we want, and more than we can possibly know how to manage. Calmly and clearly 'Preach the Word.' We must not regard it as our work to create an excitement."<sup>10</sup> Feelings and emotions must not be permitted to "get the mastery over calm judgment."<sup>11</sup> "Mere noise and shouting are no evidence of sanctification, or of the descent of the Holy Spirit."<sup>12</sup>

5. *Avoidance of extremes.* Satan's plan is to tempt the church toward either



of two extremes: emotionalism or cold formalism, subjectivism with no objective base or objectivity with no subjective response, pure emotion without the Word or the Word without praise. When acclamation becomes the sole point in worship, extremes threaten. Often the sermon is denigrated, leading to either elaborate liturgies or charismatic manifestations in which shouting, clapping, and swaying are encouraged. If crowds are attracted to such gatherings, the church might even convince itself that increased attendance is an evidence of growth and spirituality.

What is needed is balance. Acclamation, giving expression to praise in song or testimony, is one of the vital elements in a balanced and holistic worship experience. It cannot replace other vital elements, nor can it be overshadowed by them. Authentic Adventist worship must take place in a framework of "disciplined liberty,"<sup>13</sup> subject to norms and conditions derived from the Adventist understanding of the faith based on texts such as Revelation 14:6, 7.

The corporate Adventist worship experience can always be improved in order that it might become more of what it should be. But while we seek for worship renewal and improvement, let us do so conscious of the need for the inclusion of all the essential elements. Let authentic Adventist worship be permeated by the flavor of urgency provided by the eschatological crisis, and let it always maintain in balance the two focuses: proclamation and acclamation. ■

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958), book 2, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 41, 42.

<sup>3</sup> Steven Franklin, "The Primacy of Preaching," *The Covenant Quarterly*, February 1990, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Norman Gully, "How to Survive the Coming Sunday Law Crisis," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 1991).

<sup>6</sup> Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, Dec. 3, 1895.

<sup>7</sup> See my book, *Sing a New Song!* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1984).

<sup>8</sup> William H. Willimon, *The Bible: A Sustaining Presence in Worship* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1981), p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> J. J. von Allmen, *Worship: Its Theology and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 104.

# Worship renewal in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Eoin Giller

**What we need is a reformation in worship that will kindle a desire to experience the presence of the transcendent God and accept His purposes.**



Eoin Giller, D.Min., is senior pastor of Desert Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church, Tucson, Arizona.

**W**orship" comes from the old English word "weorthscipe"—honor. Webster defines worship as "the performance of devotional acts in honor of a deity, as a church service; the act of paying divine honors to the Supreme Being or other divine power."<sup>1</sup> Honor is important in worship because it sets certain boundaries to the practice of worship.

G. W. Bromiley, after analyzing the biblical words connected with worship, notes: "The roots of biblical worship are to be found, not in human emotions, but in the divinely established relationship of God to man."<sup>2</sup> Yet human emotions are involved in worship. Awe, gratitude, wonder, and love may all be experienced in the worship service. But "the object of worship, at once its starting point and controlling factor, is not a projection of man [nor his emotions]. It is God."<sup>3</sup> Christian worship is, therefore, a rational-emotive response in specific forms to the God of the Bible, who has taken the initiative in a creating, revealing, and redeeming relationship with humankind, founded in love. This is important not only in establishing a theology of worship, but in the practice of worship.

Scripture gives us the reason that we call our formal worship a "service." In reference to Israel's celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, "Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites, who showed good understanding of the service of the Lord. For the seven days they ate their assigned portion and of-



ferred fellowship offerings and praised the Lord, the God of their fathers" (2 Chron. 30:22).<sup>\*</sup> Temple fellowship, offerings, and praise are called the service of God. This is worship.

The other side of service is God's. Jesus said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Matt. 20:28). Applied in worship this statement was demonstrated by the Lord's ministry to His disciples during the Last Supper. Thus, there is a sense in which we serve God in worship by our response to Him as Saviour and Lord; and there is a sense in which God serves us in worship today through the presence and ministry of His Holy Spirit. Jack Hayford calls this concept a "two-edged truth." "A worship service is convened (1) to serve God with our praise and (2) to serve people's need with His sufficiency."<sup>4</sup>

### Elements of worship

Paul admonishes the Corinthians that "everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (1 Cor. 14:40) in their worship services, thus implying that worship has specific forms. An analysis of biblical models<sup>5</sup> reveals a twin pattern: the confessional declaration of God's grace and mighty acts, followed by praising God for them. Practically, this means reading of Scriptures and preaching on the one hand and praising and praying on the other.

Bromiley recounts eight elements inherent in primitive Christian worship: (1) prayer; (2) praise; (3) confession of sin; (4) confession of faith (baptism); (5) reading of Scripture; (6) preaching; (7) the Lord's Supper; and (8) the collection.<sup>6</sup> Christian worship, in its essence, is the worship of the Father through God the Son, under the administration of the Holy Spirit.

### Theology, culture, and worship

Jesus said, "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). With this declaration Jesus disconnected worship from a place or a race and opened up its rational-emotive elements. Spirit has to do with attitudes—which are often bound up in our emotions—and truth has to do with reality and rationality. Our practice of worship is to be founded on a theology of worship. Cultural elements play their part in varying forms of liturgy, but we must ever remember that

Christ is the Lord and Transformer of culture.

An examination of Scripture demonstrates that the expression and form of worship varied in different ages. The worship of the patriarchs differed from that of the Israelites in the wilderness. The worship in Solomon's Temple differed in form, sacrifice, and content from that of the Jews in Babylonian or Persian captivity. In Jesus' day synagogue worship supplemented the temple worship—and the synagogue worship of the Greeks varied from that of Judeans.

If culture is "the acquired ability of an individual or a people to recognize and appreciate generally accepted esthetics and intellectual excellence" or "a particular state or stage of a civilization,"<sup>7</sup> then we cannot escape the interplay between culture and religion and worship. For the conservative Christian, however, culture will not be determinative in establishing various forms of worship. Special revelation will always take precedence over natural revelation. Therefore, worship forms will be based on theology and not on local custom or prevailing values. At the same time, worship forms will be culturally relevant, so those worshiping may experience the reality of the Lord who both judges and transforms culture.

An analysis of the various forms of worship in the Old Testament bears out the above thesis. Because of a change in culture, synagogue worship arose among the Jews of the Diaspora. Synagogue worship differed from temple worship in both form and content, but it kept Israel's faith alive through various ages and cultures.

Thus, cultural adaptation may be beneficial. But it may also be damaging to genuine worship, as in the rise of the papacy with the Mass as the central focus of worship.

With this caution in mind it still must be acknowledged that Christian worship has changed through the centuries. Mesianic synagogues merged into house churches. Byzantine churches grew into medieval cathedrals and village parishes. Protestants raised up the "House of God" as dominant buildings—protesting theologically and culturally against the extravagant abuses of the medieval church. Other groups worshiped in chapels and dedicated white-framed churches.

Further, worship in liturgy, form, and focus has undergone change in each age

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## Any reformation in worship services should facilitate people to experience the presence of God in the divine service.

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and culture. Medieval worship featured at its center the crucifix, altar, and the mass—a synchrony of religious and cultural practices. In revolt, the Reformation fathers placed the Lord's table at the center of the church and worship. Later, the pulpit with an open Bible became both central and primary in worship. The sermon became the great event. Mass printing and literate worshippers played their part in transforming the content, liturgy, and style of worship.

Our denomination has worshiped mainly in the tradition of the sermon as the "great event," with other elements in worship considered "preliminaries." This emphasis in worship should never be denigrated. It has served several denominations for several generations with a simple, warm, and genuine vehicle for worship and religious communication. The writer is presently pastoring a small country church as well as a larger city congregation. The typical pattern of three hymns from the hymnbook with a pastoral prayer and sermon suits admirably the smaller congregation, and we would not seek to change the liturgy unless the congregation sought new forms of worship.

On the other hand, the larger congregation's needs and perceptions are different. We are living in an age when an intellectually astute and advanced, yet relationally disintegrating and spiritually thirsty, society is challenging the relevance of the church.<sup>8</sup> Our culture has developed defense mechanisms for screening out information. Mass music and television entertainment have jaded it. A "take it or leave it" attitude

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## Renewal worship services open the way for more expressive worship and provide a vehicle for verbal expressions from the heart.

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prevails even among those who attend church.

To face this challenge, we need a new reformation. A reformation in worship that allows pressured people to experience in the divine service the presence of the transcendent God. A worship service that will open their hearts to the preaching of the Word in a new and vibrant manner. "An awakening to the power of worship to reinstate God's divine intent for man can answer contemporary questions as to human purpose."<sup>9</sup> To this reformation the Adventist Church is called.

In an increasingly secularized age in which mere information about God makes little impact we need to lead men and women into an experience with God through the grace of Christ by the Holy Spirit. This experience should acknowledge the transcendence as well as the immanence of the Divine. Thus a balance will be maintained in a congregation's worship that will allow fervor, yet inhibit fanaticism. People need not only to know about God, but to experience His presence in their lives. We can best introduce them to Him in our Wednesday evening and Sabbath morning worship services. With skillful and prayerful preparation, worship leaders can open the door for those who come to worship God. They will find Him present in their assembly.

We will now turn our attention to a renewal in worship that opens up a new dimension and focus, one that makes

use of innovative yet biblical liturgy forms.

### Worship in renewal

The word "celebrate" is listed more than 80 times in the NIV Bible concordance. Adventists have fond memories of the King James Bible's "from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath" (Lev. 23:32). We still celebrate weddings—which are supposed to be festive occasions. Our denomination publishes a magazine called *Celebration!* to help congregational leaders in ministry. The word itself means "to perform with appropriate rites and ceremonies; solemnize; to commemorate an event with ceremonies or festivities; to sound the praises of; extol; to make known publicly; proclaim."<sup>10</sup> Celebration is a grand word. God forbid we should impart to it a meaning quite apart from accepted usage.

Celebration worship differs from more traditional church services in that it includes more congregational praise and participation. The elements and forms of worship vary from church to church. Some are very expressive and contemporary. Others lean to an almost high-church format, with responsive readings and prayers. When we recognize that celebration has more to do with remembering, praising, and extolling than with frivolity or confusion, we place it in its correct perspective.

*The first characteristic of biblical celebration is to commemorate with proclamation and respond with praise.* We are called to proclaim the great acts of God in creation, redemption, and providence. Praise is not an optional alternative in biblical worship. Psalms—the songbook of the Bible—either enjoins or announces praise more than 150 times. "The high praises of God" (Ps. 49:6, KJV) are set in a solemn backdrop. New songs are used in the assembly of the saints to worship God (Ps. 149:1). Rejoicing and delighting in God are a part of praise. And the New Testament exhorts us to praise God through Jesus Christ. "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name" (Heb. 13:15).

Although Ellen White clearly says that a spirit of sorrow for sin should characterize repentant believers, she also speaks of praise, happiness, and joy. "God desires His obedient children . . . to come before Him with praise and

thanksgiving. . . . He has done for His chosen people that which should inspire every heart with thanksgiving, and it grieves Him that so little praise is offered. He desires to have a stronger expression from His people, showing that they . . . have reason for joy and gladness."<sup>11</sup>

So both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy stress the necessity of praise—a worshipful response God's children offer because of His great acts. Adoration, glory, and thanksgiving are integral to praise that ascribes honor and worth (worth-ship) to God and His name or character. A. H. Leitch observes that "praise is often spoken of in the Bible as a duty."<sup>12</sup>

Praise, then, is central to renewal in worship. The history of revivals and religious awakenings is marked with outbursts of new music, often scandalous in their own age, but adopted and revered by later generations.<sup>13</sup> Our own pioneers composed songs of joy and exhortation expressing their hope in the return of Christ,<sup>14</sup> and our movement matured when the popular form of song was either a testimony of one's religious experience or an exhortation to fellow believers—even in the process of praising God. Songs of proclamation were also popular. Our present hymnbook has collected for us the great hymns of Christian faith that we should ever teach our children.<sup>15</sup> To these hymns and songs we may add appropriate hymns and songs of praise from the contemporary Scripture in song movement. These praise songs and hymns, written during the past 30 years, appeal to contemporary people—especially new Christians.

Leitch makes a forceful observation on the role of praise in worship: "If a man is not inspired to praise God in the normal inspiration of the hour, he is nevertheless commanded to praise God. Failure to do so is to withhold from God what rightfully belongs to His glory. There is nevertheless a sound psychological principle. The very act of praising God in obedience to the requirement to praise may create the emotion that befits true praise. This is akin to the command of Scripture to love. It is in the act of loving that a person 'feels' more loving. A 'dryness' in desire to praise God may call for the obedience to the command to praise."<sup>16</sup>

*The second element that is prominent in worship renewal is the use of orchestral instruments in addition to an organ*

or piano. This again speaks to the aspect of participation and praise. Members of the congregation (including young people) who play in the orchestra are enabled to "own" the worship hour in a unique manner. More than one parent has commented to the writer that they regard their siblings' involvement in the music of the church a vital factor in bonding them to the church through the teen years.

Another characteristic of worship in renewal is that the service is actively led from the rostrum rather than "just happening" from the order printed in the bulletin. Skillful worship leaders may lead a congregation into a spirit of reverence and praise, of prayer and worship, of confession and repentance, of thanksgiving and glory, that can seldom be experienced in traditional patterns of worship. Psalm 22:3 (KJV) declares, "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." And there is a sense in which the presence of God is felt during periods of worship and praise that should not be confused with magic or a formula of songs.

Participation by everyone in the congregation is an important part of celebration worship. This element reaches back to the Reformation and the rediscovery of the New Testament truth of the priesthood of all believers. When the congregation becomes the true instrument of praise, when it is involved in every element of the service, then the release that God's people experienced from the high towers of tradition in the sixteenth century will become a new reality in the twenty-first century. Renewed worship brings renewed faith (and vice versa). God's people are liberated to speak of Him through the week and will return to church next Sabbath with friends to share their new experience of Christ.

Variations are common in celebration worship. Intercessory prayer, sometimes called garden of prayer, is one such. During this time people may gather quietly and without display at the front of the church, or in small groupings around the sanctuary, and offer personal prayers of intercession and thanksgiving, often to the accompaniment of a prayer song. The pastoral prayer becomes part of the intercessory experience.

Some congregations use Christian drama in worship. Set in a contempo-

rary mode, its role is to help prepare for the day's sermon. In about five to eight minutes, the skit presents a dilemma. The sermon then takes up the situation from a biblical perspective. The congregation sees not only a problem, but also the Christian answer.

When a congregation thus enters into worship that places God at the center of the service, people's hearts are prepared for the sermon as a word from the Lord. These sermons should be expository, Christ-centered, and life-related. The great and distinctive doctrines of the church should not be neglected; they should be related to the great issues of life today.

Worship in renewal, then, varies from our traditional services in that the liturgy may vary from Sabbath to Sabbath. Contemporary Christian praise songs as well as traditional hymns from the hymnal are used. Personal as well as corporate prayers find a place in the service. A song leader usually leads from the rostrum, and may or may not be assisted by lead singers and musical instruments in addition to the organ and the piano. Members of the body of Christ take time for fellowship, as they extend greetings to each other in the presence of Christ. The service involves the children through special music, a story, and offerings. (Some churches have a children's bulletin containing questions that relate to the sermon. At the end of the quarter, children who have answered the questions regularly and consistently receive special awards.)

A warm, accepting, and Christ-centered climate pervades the church. Love dominates the atmosphere both before and after the service and is evident in the high "noise" level in the foyer. People look forward to both worship and fellowship at church on Sabbath mornings. They come to church to serve God with their praise, and trust Him to serve them with His sufficiency.

### The full purpose of worship

Every pastor and congregation should settle this issue for themselves. It is no longer good enough to say "We've always done it this way." What reasons should we have for congregational worship? Worship serves in three general spheres. First, the *vertical* aspect, in which the worshiper communicates with the Lord. Rather than "Bless me, Lord," the heart call is "I will bless the

Lord!" We forget about ourselves in worshiping the Lord, realizing His presence among His people, and opening up for communication with God.

Second, the *horizontal* aspect, which (1) enhances the sense of unity within the congregation, (2) gives us the opportunity to minister to one another, (3) teaches and reinforces spiritual truth, and (4) provides believers with an opportunity to profess their faith to others.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, the *inward* consequence of that which takes place vertically with God and horizontally between worshipers. Renewal worship services open the way for more expressive worship and provide a vehicle for verbal expressions from the heart. Faith is increased, and the worshipers grow in holiness, being inspired to a deeper commitment to worship God each day of their lives as well as in the congregation of the saints. ■

\*Unless otherwise noted, Bible texts in this article are from the *New International Version*.

<sup>1</sup> "Worship," *The Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* (1971).

<sup>2</sup> G. W. Bromiley, "Worship," in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Corp., 1975), vol. 5, p. 975.

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

<sup>4</sup> Jack W. Hayford, *Worship His Majesty* (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987), p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the Temple services recorded in *Chronicles*, *Nehemiah* 12, and the early chapters of *Acts*.

<sup>6</sup> Bromiley, pp. 987-989.

<sup>7</sup> "Culture," *The Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary*.

<sup>8</sup> Hayford, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> "Celebrate," *The Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary*.

<sup>11</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 6, p. 364.

<sup>12</sup> A. H. Leitch, "Praise," in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 4, p. 834.

<sup>13</sup> For example, some of the songs of Martin Luther and Charles Wesley. When his band music was criticized, William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, is reported to have commented, "Why let the devil have all the best tunes!"

<sup>14</sup> *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1985) features many Adventist composers, with F. E. Belden contributing 16 numbers.

<sup>15</sup> Seven of the 38 hymns in the section "Adoration and Praise" actually address God. The rest are rather exhortations to address God with praise or adoration. This reflects the hymnody of an earlier era. Perhaps it was too early to include some of the music of the past 30 years—as there may be little consensus yet about the abiding qualities of our generation's praise music.

<sup>16</sup> Leitch, p. 834.

<sup>17</sup> See Bob Sorge, *Exploring Worship* (Buffalo: Trinity Media Press, 1987), pp. 107-124.

# Music and worship

Lyell V. Heise

**Praise and participation, not performance, must characterize worship music.**



*Lyell V. Heise, senior pastor of the La Sierra Collegiate church, Riverside, California, writes both as a worship leader and as a musician.*

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usic has always been an integral part of my ministry, which has centered in large Adventist institutional churches—churches in places where Western culture and traditions form the backdrop to the worship-music discussion.

Such churches face a continuing paradox. They are among the best placed of all Adventist churches to bring talent and training to worship music and to foster the continuation and development of the “grand traditions”<sup>1</sup> of worship music. But large sections of their congregations—and not just the youth and young adults—feel that the “grand tradition” should not necessarily be the preferred style in worship music. Many say that a more eclectic approach, even a total preoccupation with contemporary gospel music, would better suit their worship needs.

As a pastor of several such churches, I have felt the sharp edges of the paradox. I have suffered with both musicians and congregations through difficult times in coming to consensus. This article reflects some things learned during those times.

Adventist worship encompasses enormous cultural and stylistic variety. Caleb Rosado reminds us pointedly that in discussions of worship and music, for “Adventist” we need to read “multi-cultural” much more often than we do.<sup>2</sup> To his insights we need to add those of countless sociologists and church researchers who remind us that in our fast-changing times, various socioeco-

nomic and age groups in Anglo culture differ as much from each other as they do from other ethnic groups.<sup>3</sup>

Spiritually, Adventist worship desperately needs to reestablish two priorities. First, it needs to seek the presence of the Holy Spirit. Second, and intimately connected with the first, it needs to focus on experiencing and proclaiming the everlasting gospel. From these priorities must then flow the dedication of our best talents and energies to the worship leadership task. Great worship engenders great preaching!

Don Hustad, esteemed Christian leader and musician, identified the role music should play in worship: “I have become convinced that church music should be approached as a *functional* art, and judged by whether or not it fulfills its best function. This should not be understood to imply that it may be used for *unworthy* functions, such as excessive manipulation in worship or evangelism. It simply means that music in church is not a free art, an end in itself. It is art brought to the cross, art which is dedicated to the service of God and the edifying of the church.”<sup>4</sup>

## **Music's contribution to worship**

So how does music function in worship? Robert H. Mitchell lists five contributions music makes to Christian worship:<sup>5</sup>

*First, music brings to worship an opportunity for participation.* The primary instrument in worship music is the congregation. If your congregation spends more time in observation than it does in participation, then your music program is falling short, whatever your

preferred style of music. Participation in worship music offers opportunities for learning, remembering, and reinforcing gospel truth.

Perhaps even more significant, participation in music offers the congregation a more direct opportunity for worship than does participation in any other aspect of the service. As worshipers lift their voices in praise to God (not *about* God, or *about* each other or each other's spiritual experiences), praise, prayer, and adoration all fuse together, and the worshipers experience intense intimacy with heaven.

*Second, in worship, music functions as commentary.* Instrumental music can serve this purpose when it suggests specific texts. But vocal music fulfills this function better.

Mitchell says, "When both composer and interpreter operate with a high level of skill and inspiration, this exposition of the text by the music can be remarkably effective."<sup>6</sup> Think, for example, of musical presentations of the theme of the resurrection. Who can fail to be stirred and to have his or her hope in the resurrection strengthened when hearing Bach's "Credo" from the *Mass in B Minor*, or that ringing affirmation "The Trumpet Shall Sound" from Handel's *Messiah*? There is something profoundly supportive of the sentiments of the words in the music itself. A high degree of competence on the part of composer and performer makes for the most effective use of music as commentary.

*Third, music is a means of exhortation.* "There is a group of solos, quartets, and anthems whose objective is frankly exhortation. These have developed in the context of mass evangelism. They combine expressions of personal testimony with the invitation to the listener to enter into a similar experience with Christ. At this point the singer or the choir is actually sharing in or doing the task of preacher or evangelist."<sup>7</sup>

*Fourth, music establishes mood.* It is true that using music to create mood does risk leading a congregation to value feelings rather than the faith that ought to induce the feelings. This danger only makes it all the more important for musicians to favor using music that contains objective points of spiritual reference. A musical arrangement may carry significant, deeply personal, even emotional associations for a worshiper, but ideally, it also carries in the lyrics an

objective reference point that anchors the congregation to the God who acts in history.

In a strikingly up-to-date comment on the mode of celebration in worship, Mitchell suggests: "We would do well to be guided here by the dictionary definitions of 'celebration,' which place the emphasis upon *remembering* rather than upon feelings. Scripture is full of this kind of celebration. . . . To celebrate in these terms . . . is to remember who God is and what He has done. It is the remembrance of His mighty acts and the fresh awareness of their meaning for today that, if given opportunity, lead to confidence and hope, courage and anticipation, excitement and joy, and true peace."<sup>8</sup>

*Fifth, music becomes a means of revelation.* Of itself, music will never be a vehicle of special revelation in the same sense that Scripture is. Nevertheless, Christians believe in a *general revelation* observed in nature and human experience. With Mitchell I contend that through music "the transcendent, the ineffable, the incomprehensible, may be encountered as God's Spirit brings revelation to our human spirit."<sup>9</sup>

### Music appropriate for worship

What music is appropriate for worship? First, and most important, we must note that participatory music will always be the *most* appropriate. Whatever their preferred style of music, congregations err when they tilt too far in the direction of an elite corps of performers, however dedicated and committed those performers may be. As James White, one of our generation's more insightful observers of and contributors to the worship renewal discussion, has said: "We need church musicians far more than ever before, but their role is changing drastically from primarily that of performers to that of enablers. . . . Singers glorify God best by helping the congregation offer their praise."<sup>10</sup>

Rephrasing our question, we ask, What is the appropriate style of music for worship? I resist the temptation to lay down a list of preferred composers, or even to do what well-meaning Adventist consultants have sometimes done—offer lists of preferred harmonic or rhythmic patterns beyond which the Christian should not stray. I prefer rather to echo the words of Don Hustad,

who, while confessing that he prefers music from the cultivated tradition, suggests that "evangelicals should be open to a *broad*er experience in musical expression."<sup>11</sup> He calls for greater breadth at all points of the worship music experience.

Hustad has developed six standards for evangelical church music that pastors, musicians, and congregations should take very seriously:

1. Both the text and the music must express the gospel in ways that the culture for which they are intended can understand.

2. The music must be our best, and it should be offered in love, humility, gratitude, and grace, without arrogance or shame in comparing it to the offerings of others of either the same or different cultures.

3. It should express and enhance the best Christian theology.

4. It should express and support the best Christian activities related to the group's beliefs—worship, fellowship, and outreach, with due consideration of the musical needs of each.

5. It should speak from the whole person to the whole person, carefully balancing the physical, intellectual, and emotional.

6. It should be genuinely creative, shunning the hackneyed and trite as well as the elitist and abstruse.<sup>12</sup>

What about music for congregational participation? The apostle Paul encouraged Christians to sing songs of praise, relating this practice to the Spirit's presence in the life: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:18-20, NIV).

### Structuring worship music experiences

The following suggestions for the structuring of worship music experiences spring from my belief in the primacy of the use of music *for* and *by* the congregation:

1. Make every experience of singing special. Don't have your congregation "sing a hymn or two" while people are being seated.

2. Plan your worship singing systematically. Coordinate Sabbath school

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## A new people with a new life and a new song must sing it in a new language.

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and divine worship and even midweek meetings so that worship leaders don't stumble haphazardly onto the same selections week after week.

3. Monitor your congregation's total hymn and song repertoire. Develop a long-term plan, listing the hymns and songs you would like to use during the forthcoming year. Allow for repeats of new hymns and songs.

4. Don't be tied to the traditional expectation of three hymns only, in predictable places. The tradition of a hymn of praise, one of reflection or meditation, and one of commitment does have appeal and value. But other patterns of hymn singing can be even more rewarding.

Why not, on occasion, sing a cluster of hymns on a theme of praise or the theme of the morning worship? Use carefully selected stanzas, clustering hymns in a progression of keys and ascending levels of energy. Couch the morning prayer experience in a well-selected collection of hymns and songs. Offer a song as a prayer, or include a song in individual or group prayer, or conclude the prayer with a song.

5. On occasion, teach the congregation some simple harmonic parts. Use the choir or competent lead singers to assist the congregation.

6. Have soloists sing stanzas with congregational backing.

7. Use variety: provide varied harmonies and tunes for familiar words, or sing stanzas with or without instruments.

8. Use new material. The resources available to congregations today are almost overwhelming in their breadth and variety. Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs sound forth from every publishing house!

Conventional wisdom suggests that the average hymnal remains effective

for about 40 years. With the accelerating rate of change in society and in communications I predict an even shorter life span.

I am not saying that the recently published Seventh-day Adventist hymnal is already passé. It contains a great treasury of the past and some fine music from the present, and congregational singing in my church is solidly based on it. Nor am I saying that everything that purports to be worship music is of lasting value. But with the new comes an important reflection of our times, our concerns, our idioms. Our willingness to use fresh material opens us up to the creativity of people in our congregations.

Of innovations in congregational music a prominent churchman wrote: "It's too new, worldly, and even blasphemous. The new Christian music is not as pleasant as the more established style. Because there are so many songs, you can't learn them all. There is too much emphasis on instrumental music rather than on godly lyrics. This new music creates disturbances, making people act indecently and disorderly. The preceding generation got along without it. It's a money-making scheme. Some of these new music upstarts are lewd and loose."<sup>13</sup>

The clergyman, Thomas Symmes, was a New England Puritan pastor anxious to promote musical literacy in his congregation through the new practice of singing from musical notation. He wrote this parody of the objections he encountered in 1723! Some, if not all, of these objections can be heard even today.

### Introducing new music

How can you avoid a stir of controversy as you plan congregational music that includes both old and new?

1. *Don't neglect the great hymns of the past.* The Christian community draws strength from a sense of continuity with the past. God has done mighty things as the God of salvation history; these hymns keep this awareness alive. And it is because they are great music and because they facilitate great worship that these hymns have lasted through the centuries.

But in an age in which enormous energies are directed to making fresh translations of the Scripture, how I wish the editors of the new Adventist hymnal had applied a more uniform and contem-

porary standard to the editing of the words. A recent publication that has done this with great success is *Hymns for Today's Church*,<sup>14</sup> a hymnal that has generated a wide following among Anglicans in England and Australia. By seeing to it that their profound sentiments are communicated in an up-to-date way, we can guarantee the continuing value and impact of the great hymns of the past.

Raymond Holmes addressed the same issue. He made the point in connection with prayer and preaching, but his words are just as relevant to singing: "A new people with a new life and a new hope singing a new song, ought to sing it in a new language."<sup>15</sup>

2. *Choose new hymns and songs that are worthy of your time, then introduce and use them carefully.*

What factors can we use to judge the worth of new material?

First, the words. Make sure they speak to the great themes of Christian faith. When they are well-crafted paraphrases of Scripture, they are highly effective.

Be sure also that the words retain a sturdy objectivity. Avoid at all costs a drift into mere sentimentality. Words offering praise to the Godhead—Father, Son, and Spirit—demonstrate the essence of Christian worship.

Then there is the music. Repetitive and uninteresting tunes abound. Of course the same is true of hymns of the past—how many of the thousands of Wesley and Crosby hymns do we sing today?

To find which tunes will most likely last, watch for those with interesting melodic flow, with small leaps rather than large leaps in intervals, with a sense of drama and climax, and those that marry well with words. Remember that congregations learn more easily rhythms that are not heavily syncopated.

How can you best introduce new music? Remember that congregations cannot absorb large amounts of new material in a short time. Homespun wisdom says "Do the new in an old way, and do the old in a new way." For example, when you select new songs, present them to the congregation in a familiar instrumental style. New songs don't require new and threatening instruments to refresh your worship.

As you begin to introduce new songs, start with those that are most reminiscent of the familiar hymn style. And be

sure to plan for musical variety in those that you choose. Some devotees of the newer worship music use songs of the same musical style for everything the congregation does. When one makes that mistake, the music loses its freshness and interest—"new" though it is.

My congregations have appreciated having the old presented in a new way. For instance, using an overhead projector has made a remarkable difference in the effectiveness of our singing—so much so that now in our worship we sing all hymns, new and old, from the screen.

Why sing all hymns from the screen?

Musically, it makes better sense for the singers to have their heads lifted high than buried in the hymnal. In addition, the members of the congregation are more unified with each other and with the music leaders when all are focusing on the same point in the sanctuary. The use of projection makes possible well-planned, unobtrusive transitions in music and worship. And other worship materials, such as Scripture readings, litanies, and children's stories, adapt well to overhead projection.

Of course, use of copyrighted music in transparencies or in any other form

requires scrupulous observance of copyright provisions. Fortunately, there are organizations to assist you.<sup>16</sup>

So what shall we do about church music? Above all let us lead our congregations in experiencing it as *worship* music. In my opinion, church sanctuaries can and should be used often as concert halls for sacred music. But the worship service—whether the music be in the grand tradition, contemporary style, or better still a mixture of both—must provide for believers a path that runs to the gate of heaven. In our worship we must harness every talent

## What instruments shall we use?

Lyell V. Heise

In the Western Christian tradition, the organ continues to be the instrument most often associated with worship music. It supports singing well and has a wealth of worship music written for it.

But the organ wasn't always welcomed in Christian worship. Since earliest times Christians have struggled with the question of the appropriateness of instruments in worship. The tidy but extreme solution of some groups has been to dispense with instruments altogether. During Reformation times, beautiful organs disappeared from many Christian churches.

With equal sincerity but perhaps no more validity, some Christians today would remove from the worship orchestra a range of instruments whose newness or negative associations they think disqualify them. In a fast-changing society, this is unfortunate. What really counts is the qualities of worship music leaders and musicians, and not any particular instrument.

These qualities should include: (1) sensitivity, (2) musicianship—particularly a sense of good orchestration, knowing how to weld instruments together into an effective ensemble, (3) humility—the instrumentalists must be willing to respond to firm leadership on tuning, pitch, volume, style, etc., and (4) a commitment to worship and congregational involvement, not merely to performance—a quality that's essential in worship music of any idiom.

Besides strings and woodwinds, brass ensembles have long added energy and impact to worship music. But what about the new electronic instruments? I have

discovered that in the hands of sensitive musicians and, particularly, arrangers, these new instruments contribute significantly to worship. At large conventions, equipped with fine sound reinforcement systems, I have used orchestral combinations of brass, acoustic and electronic strings, acoustic and electronic pianos, and synthesizers. The music pleased and blessed large congregations from even the most conservative backgrounds.

The synthesizer's great advantage is its flexibility. In one convention worship service where instrumentation was otherwise scarce, a synthesizer functioned as the chimes calling the congregation to worship, the harpsichord in an offertory, the organ in the hymns, the timpani in the choral anthem, and part of a string ensemble in an orchestral backing. I am not saying that the new instruments are *essential* to any local church worship service, but their judicious use does send a valuable signal—namely, that the church is flexible, adaptable, and willing to embrace the best in today's culture and harness it for noble ends.

### What about percussion?

What about the vexed question of the percussion section? Today, percussion looms large in arrangements for the concert band and orchestra. Even in the high traditions of sacred music, the timpani and the cymbals play important parts.

Many a church member enjoys the complete orchestral sound of contemporary religious music that includes percussion, particularly in recordings where appropriate sound engineering gives proper weight to the vocal lines. But the

same music offered live in worship may very well offend. The negative associations that seeing a set of drums often raises—which are intensified if the percussion overpowers the vocal lines—make it difficult for even the most dedicated Christian percussionist to gain acceptance and involvement in worship music. Careful orchestration, sensitive presentation, and the use of electronic percussion, which does away with the look of the regular drum set, can allay much of the offense.

Donald P. Hustad notes: "Admittedly, today's contemporary gospel music is stronger rhythmically than that of Charles H. Gabriel in the 1920s, which in turn was stronger than that of P. P. Bliss and Ira D. Sankey in the 1870s. But at what point do we say, thus far we will go and no further? All music is rhythmic, and even Calvin's psalm tunes were called 'Geneva Jiggs.'"<sup>17</sup>

The important thing for worship music leaders, musicians, and congregations to remember is that no instrument, of itself, is holy or unholy. So an approach to instrumental music that values inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness, worship rather than performance, and consensus rather than mere dogmatism, will in the end be the most rewarding for musicians and congregations.

<sup>16</sup>Donald P. Hustad, *Jubilate! Church Music in the Evangelical Tradition* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Pub. Co., 1981), p. 330. Hustad states that in his opinion there are few forms of music that are incapable of any valid religious expression. This is not to say that all forms *ought* to be used in every congregation regardless of context and individual preferences.

Hustad, one of today's well-informed, serious musicians, also protests at the argument often made in conservative Christian circles that particular kinds of music contribute to drug addiction and illicit sex. He quotes Richard D. Mountford, who, having carefully examined the above notion, concludes, "The music could have [this] effect only if the person desired to let it affect him" (*ibid.*).



and artistic skill for the noble cause of extolling the God of the universe and helping human hearts to respond to His astounding grace. ■

<sup>1</sup> By the "grand tradition" I mean the time-honored tradition of church music based on classical forms, and including the great hymns, the great oratorios, and the accompanying music of organ, orchestra, and choir. I am indebted to my friend and colleague Chuck Scriven, pastor of Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church, Takoma Park, Maryland, for this useful term.

<sup>2</sup> Caleb Rosado, "Multiculturalism: A Challenge for the Church," *Music Ministry*, January-March 1989.

<sup>3</sup> The Valuegenesis study has given sobering accounts indicating that both Adventist schools and churches are offering religious programming that fails to meet the cultural needs of academy students.

<sup>4</sup> Donald P. Hustad, *Jubilate! Church Music in the Evangelical Tradition* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Hope Pub. Co., 1981), p. x.

<sup>5</sup> Robert H. Mitchell, *Ministry and Music* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), pp. 79-93. Mitchell's work is highly instructive for Seventh-day Adventist pastors, musicians, and congregations. Addressed to the interface between worship and music, the book "is an attempt to identify common ground where the biblical/theological orientation of the pastor can meet the musical expertise of the musician" (p. 7). Because Mitchell's background is the free-church tradition, his insights are particularly helpful to Seventh-day Adventists.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>10</sup> James F. White, *New Forms of Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 130.

<sup>11</sup> Hustad, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 39. I understand Hustad to be using the term "evangelical" to describe a particular group within Protestantism, and, in a broad sense, to describe the group's way of life and worship as well as its theological orientation. I found his approach helpful and relevant to many of the broader issues within Seventh-day Adventism.

<sup>13</sup> Leslie Flynn, *Worship: Together We Celebrate* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1983), p. 75. Flynn has paraphrased more extensive remarks by Thomas Symmes. For a more exact quotation and a statement of historical context, see David P. Appleby, *History of Church Music* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p. 127.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Baughen, consultant editor, *Hymns for Today's Church* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982). This hymnal's three prefaces (a consulting editors preface, a "words" preface, and a "music" preface) explain the philosophy of worship and music underlying the production of the hymnal. They make compelling reading for those who value the retaining of the grand tradition of worship music while communicating to a new generation.

<sup>15</sup> C. Raymond Holmes, *Sing a New Song!* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1984), p. 153.

<sup>16</sup> Our church has been using the services of Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc., 6130 NE 78th Court, Suite C-11, Portland, OR 97218-2853. This company acts as a broker between Christian publishing houses and church congregations. After paying a minimal fee, a local congregation can use on overhead transparencies, in church bulletins, and on song sheets, music from the list of publishers provided. The company then provides royalty payments to the publishers on behalf of the congregation.

# Don't forget the bridge

Craig A. Dossman

**As it has in the past, worship still serves African-American Christians as the bridge that traverses troubled waters.**



Craig A. Dossman pastors the Brooklyn Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church, Brooklyn, New York.

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o one needs to be struck by lightning to recognize that Christian worship in African-American churches is inherently different than

in Euro-American churches. It's not that one is necessarily superior to the other; they just differ.

This difference grows out of the peculiar social history of African-Americans. For nearly 250 years Black people were subjected to the most brutal and obscene human bondage. They had to deal with three dynamic, and often traumatic, cultural transformations. The first resulted from their capture and sale—when they were used to being free and productive in their own environment.

The second major transformation came when they were "freed." While they were free in theory, they were still politically powerless, economically exploited, and socially degraded and disenfranchised. Blacks had to start the protracted process of trying to pull themselves up by their bootstraps when they had no boots to wear and little means with which to acquire any.

The final transformation involved the mass movement of Black people out of the South to the North. They left an agricultural, personal, informal, slower-paced environment and entered an industrial, impersonal, formal, faster-paced society.

In all three instances Black people had their social institutions disrupted, either deliberately or through force of circumstances.

How has the Black community been



able to weather the continuous assault on their personhood inflicted by the systematic racism of American society? The answer, undoubtedly, is the Black church. For many Black people, the church is the only institution they belong to that is decidedly and exclusively theirs. And for many, the church service is the one moment in their lives when they can be open, free, relaxed—themselves. The church service permits them the opportunity to shout if they feel so moved, to let their full emotions show.

I believe that Black worship comprises three dynamic support systems—preaching, praying, and praising God. These are not the only ingredients of Black worship, but certainly they are the most essential. And these three elements are closely tied into each other.

### **The preached Word**

Without question, in the Black church preaching is the central feature of worship. And if preaching is central to the Black religious experience, it follows then that the preacher is the central figure.

Black preachers' contribution to African-Americans in particular and to Americans in general can never be adequately appraised. The substance of their role has changed little since slavery: to provide a sense of hope in a hopeless situation. The painful predicament of Black people remains constant; only the time and places have changed.

In African culture, knowledge, attitudes, ideas, and notions are traditionally transmitted orally—not, as in the Western world, through the written word. Naturally, then, among Black people leaders tend to be those with exceptional oratorical skills. So in the Black religious tradition, the successful preacher is an expert orator. The African-American preacher is strongly oriented toward the oral tradition.

The White religious experience is primarily spectator oriented. The congregation sits and listens. But Black preaching is always dialogue. Black preachers talk to their parishioners, and the parishioners reply. The congregation participates in the preaching. This is

expected. In many Black churches this feedback during a sermon is a firm measure of the preacher's effectiveness.

Consequently, many Black preachers have developed the habit of eliciting responses with such interjectory remarks as "Have I got a witness?" or "You ought to say amen!" And Black congregations respond with a variety of expressions: "Tell the truth, preacher." "Yes, Lord!" "Help him, Lord!" "Preach the Word!" "Praise the Lord!" "Amen, amen."

Pace is another essential mark of African-American preachers. Pace includes not only the rate at which the words are delivered, but the dramatic pauses, the empty spaces that preachers use to emphasize their points.

Black preachers' sermons are also filled with poetry and rhythm. For instance, a Black preacher talking about the sun is apt to say, "I looked and saw the first thin pencil line of dawn and watched God's ball of fire seek its noon meridian, continue its relentless journey to the twilight, and then lie down to sleep beyond the western hills."

Nobody can say that quite like the Black preacher.

I would be remiss if I concluded this section without mentioning some of the substantive factors involved in Black preaching. First, Black preaching has always been Bible-based. Now, I am

aware of the many European scholars; but when I go into the pulpit in Brooklyn Temple, I seldom make any reference to those gentlemen.

Black preaching is also centered in the "old, rugged cross"! The cross reminds us of Christ's sufferings, and it gives us hope for victory. We know that the Man who died on that cross outside the city wall has the power to transform lives.

Last but not least, the messages of Black preachers are full of faith. Black people live in the midst of test and trial. They live in a world that doesn't really care—existing from day to day in cramped quarters, surviving on meager wages. Black preachers share with them that the Lord will see us through.

This unwavering faith in the absolute sovereignty of the supreme, infinite Creator is the key to worship in the African-American church. Because Black people have been cramped into oppressive confinement, their very existence has demanded that they give their devotion to the sovereign Supreme Being outside of themselves. When they meet to worship their Sovereign Lord, it is because they know through faith that only He can unify their fragmented existence.

### **The petitions of prayer**

In the African-American church, one of the most vital aspects of care that

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ministers provide is helping their people get in touch with God through prayer. Traditionally, if not outright instinctively, Blacks have prayed on every important occasion since slavery. If preaching is indeed the center of Black worship, then prayer has been its strength.

Whole ministries—both local and over the airwaves—have been built on prayers for individuals. Successful pastors have confessed that their influence was built on the ministry of prayer rather than on great preaching.

Prayer has undeniably had the healing effect of providing something to do when there was nothing else to do, and thus prevented Black people from being crushed by a sense of powerlessness. So in the Black experience, prayer is the antidote for utter frustration. But dependence on prayer is not mere escapism. It is, in fact, a means of seeking power, a means employed by persons who often have no other access. Few aspects of any caring tradition could be more fruitful.

The leader in prayer, often a layperson, is supported by the same congregational support as is the Black preacher. And just as the preacher is affirmed and fulfilled, so is the prayer leader—and the congregation experiences much the same vicarious affirmation and fulfillment.

Six basic themes recur in the prayers of the African-American church: praise, thanksgiving, repentance, intercession, petition, and eschatology. Seldom would a Black person think of closing a prayer in a service of worship without clearly mentioning the last things. As preaching is eschatological, so is praying; perhaps more so.

### **The power of praise**

The primacy of preaching in the Black religious experience has persuaded me to assert that it is the core of Black worship. Our peculiar social history made praying necessary, and it is undoubtedly the strength of Black worship. Music and celebration have also played an essential role in the Black worship experience—that of giving birth to a spirit of praise toward God in both preachers and parishioners.

Like preaching, music is not usually thought of as a form of spiritual therapy. But songs of the soul serve as one of the most healing aspects of the Black church tradition. To put it in Western

terms, music is effective as catharsis and as affirmation, the latter applying both to personhood and to the just-mentioned affirmation of faith by which Black folk manage to survive and remain creative.

A Black congregation is not likely to do all it can to heal its members if it does not sing, from time to time, such cathartic lines as: "I am weak, but Thou art strong," "Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?" "Are we weak and heavy laden?" and "In seasons of distress and grief."

But catharsis comes also through laments with roots as old as the African religious tradition poured forth in the sorrow songs of the slaves. In the midst of loneliness and deep alienation slaves sang, "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child, a long way from home." When they sang "I been 'buked and I been scorned," powerful healing came with the affirmation that followed: "Ain't gwine lay my 'ligion down."

In the midst of slavery the Black church was nourished and raised on spirituals. The spiritual came into being largely out of the practical need for a means of communication within the slave community in and out of the presence of the master and overseer. Spirituals became the Black telegraph around the plantations and across the Southland. While these songs were composed during the slave period, they clearly exhibit their creators' thirst for freedom from slavery and oppression at any cost!

Certain benchmarks identify the authentic African-American spiritual:

*Bible-centeredness.* However well it may fit otherwise, if the music under consideration does not have explicit or implicit reference to the Bible, it is not an authentic spiritual. Our slave ancestors exhibited remarkable spiritual perception by capturing the essence of the Bible as it fell in fragments from their owner's table.

Examples: "Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho," "De Blin' Man Stood in de Road and Cried," "Dere's a Han' Ritin' on de Wall."

*Repetition.* During our preliterate era, this characteristic served as a memory device. Example:

"Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh, oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?"

*Rhythm.* Two facts will help greatly to understand the emotional flavor of worship in traditional African-American churches: First, the primary characteristic of European music is the melodic line. Second, and in contrast, the primary characteristic of African music is the beat! By its nature, African music is intended to induce body movement—thus the dominance of beat or rhythm.

*Celebration.* I would do an injustice to the Black worship experience if I did not mention celebration. In the Black experience, the call to celebrate is done with such unrehearsed, undirected, joyful enthusiasm as to amaze most other churches.

What is it that makes Black people so joyful, so supremely happy? Why do they make so much noise about Christ and their joy in their Lord? What is it that holds them in church often all day on Saturday or Sunday from week to week?

Black congregations meet to celebrate the sovereignty of God. When you see them crying and falling into one another's arms and shouting "Thank You, Jesus," they are not acting any more inappropriately than did the children of Israel after God led them through the Red Sea. That was not a time to be quiet. It was a time to celebrate—so they broke out with a shout: "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation" (Ex. 15:2).

This celebration in worship is at the heart of the African-American church, for it is the only act of worship that no other body claims or attempts in the Black tradition and manner. Black people meet to celebrate because the church is a survival institution that all people may enter through an open door that no one can shut.

There's a colloquialism in our tradition that admonishes, with some wisdom: "Don't forget the bridge that brought you over." Preaching, praying, and praising have made up the bridge that carried African-American Christians along this pilgrim's journey. ■

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# More than half a brain

**Saustin Sampson  
Mfuné**

**Our services tend to appeal to left-brained thinkers, leaving the right-brained out in the cold. If we designed them for both, everyone would be happier.**



*Saustin Sampson Mfuné is working on a Doctor of Ministry degree at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.*

**M**any psychologists associate different thinking styles with the two hemispheres of the brain, the left brain (LB) and the right brain (RB).<sup>1</sup>

Accumulating evidence suggests that when we communicate in such a way as to be understood well only by those who primarily use one hemisphere, we "turn off" those who primarily use the other. For example, our educational system is basically oriented to LB thinkers. Evidence now surfacing suggests that school dropouts are predominately RB thinkers.

Generally, the Adventist style of worship and methods of public evangelism strongly reflect LB strengths (see box). This leads me to wonder whether we haven't narrowed the spectrum of people to whom our services appeal, thus making them less effective than they could be. I also wonder whether this one-sided approach hasn't:

- retarded the growth of the Adventist Church, especially in industrialized countries.
- contributed to many RB people leaving the church or becoming inactive.
- encouraged the development of the predictable format of worship that has in turn resulted in the youth and perhaps many adults viewing the church as meaningless, lifeless, boring, and lacking in warmth and fellowship.
- impeded the conversion of many.
- contributed, in some areas, to the birth of an Adventist culture that lacks the motivation for witnessing.

• contributed to the trend toward secularism.

## **How the halves function**

Barbara Meister Vitale writes that the two hemispheres mirror each other physiologically, yet differ in structure and function.<sup>2</sup> She summarizes the functions of the two hemispheres in categories of *skills* and *modes of consciousness*. Skillwise, the LB controls handwriting, reading, phonics, locating details and facts, talking and reciting, listening, interpreting symbols, language, auditory association, and following directions. The RB is associated with such skills as haptic awareness (sense of touch), spatial relationships (seeing how parts go together to form a whole and where things are in relation to other things), singing and music, feelings and emotions, shapes and patterns, mathematical computation, color sensitivity, art expression, creativity, and visualization.<sup>3</sup>

As for the modes of consciousness that have to do with the processing of information: The LB is verbal (using words to describe, name, define), reality-based, temporal, abstract, linear (thinking in linked ideas leading to a convergent conclusion), symbolic, sequential, and logical in its functions. The RB, on the other hand, is holistic (seeing whole things at once, leading to divergent conclusions), fantasy-oriented, nontemporal (without sense of time), intuitive (making leaps of insight, often based on incomplete patterns, hunches, feelings, or visual images), analogic (seeing likeness between things and understanding metaphoric relationships), concrete, random, and nonverbal (aware of things, but making minimal

connections with words).<sup>4</sup>

That the two halves of the brain specialize in different functions, however, should not lead us to conclude that they work independently of each other. It has been shown that the two hemispheres function together.<sup>5</sup> No one uses only one hemisphere. People use both sides of their brains. They differ as to which side they prefer, as to which side they give dominance.<sup>6</sup>

### Balanced approach more effective

In the second half of the twentieth century, researchers began to direct attention to the importance of the RB. Sperry reported that while the RB is as complex as the LB, the nineteenth-century research that recognized the functions of the LB led the educational system, as well as science in general, to neglect the nonverbal, holistic, and intuitive form of intellect localized in the RB.<sup>7</sup> This unbalanced approach resulted in the strengths of RB students not being fully recognized and appreciated.<sup>8</sup>

The findings of a study by Piatt seem to support the belief of many researchers that lecturing as a vehicle for imparting information does not work for those with a RB orientation.<sup>9</sup> His study showed that a little more than 80 percent of high school dropouts "were either right or 'mixed brain' and only 19 percent were left-brain dominant."<sup>10</sup>

In *How to Create Effective TV Commercials*, Baldwin correlates the above observations with real life. In the first chapter of his book, in which he discusses LB and RB television advertising, he concludes that it is whole-brain advertising that is truly effective: "Rarely does a commercial rely entirely on one or the other. Rarely is it all information [LB]. . . . Rarely is it all mood and visual imagery [RB]. . . . Most often, a commercial is a blend of linear and nonlinear elements. The emotional setting helps make the rational message relevant and enjoyable. The copy message gives form and relevance to the imagery. Advertising, to be truly effective, must appeal to both sides of the brain, simultaneously and without conscious distinction. The two should mesh to deliver a single impression."<sup>11</sup>

It seems, then, that, in contrast with messages that reach just one hemisphere, information and activities presented so that they stimulate both sides of the brain (1) provide greater enjoyment, (2) make a greater impression, (3) are remembered

longer, and (4) are more readily accepted by the total being.

### Reaching right-brained worshipers

How then do we involve both hemispheres of the brain in our worship services?

*Parables.* With only about three years to establish His identity and mission, Jesus must have selected the most effective methods to unveil the plan of redemption. We note that He used parables almost exclusively.<sup>12</sup>

Unger wrote that a parable makes truth intelligible because it presents it more vividly to the mind. It brings natural delight to the hearer because it does not appeal "to the understanding [LB] only, but to the feelings [RB] . . . imagination [RB], in short to the whole

### Left brain format

The format of Seventh-day Adventist worship mirrors the left-brain orientation of the education system in the following ways:

- One person dominates the period; the participation of attendees is extremely limited.

- The focus is on the intellect, while the emotions are inhibited. (The name "Sabbath school" suggests this.)

- The church service is almost entirely predictable.

- "Entertainment" is considered disruptive to worship.

- Dramatization is used sparingly, if at all.

- Scripture's "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40) is interpreted as requiring organized pews (in linear arrangement), quietness that means a lack of participation by members, restricted use of musical instruments, and restrained physical and vocal responses.

- As the young people progress through the various levels of the Sabbath school they tend to move from participatory activities to presentations that are increasingly characterized by the lecture format (which probably explains why we're losing the adolescents).

- Leaders tend to consider verbal skills as a sign of intellect and qualification to be involved.

man, calling all its powers and faculties into pleasurable activity; and all things thus learned with delight are those longest remembered."<sup>13</sup>

*Drama.* When the disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus if He was the Messiah, instead of giving a descriptive analysis of Himself, Jesus chose to dramatize the truth. He told them to watch what He did (Matt. 11:2-6; Luke 7:19-22). When He dismissed them, He told them to tell John what they had "seen [RB] and heard [LB and RB]."

*Visual aids.* To answer His disciples who had been arguing about who was the greatest in God's kingdom, Jesus, instead of giving a scholarly treatise, chose to use a child as a visual aid to imprint in His disciples' minds the importance of humility (Matt. 18:1-6).

Much of the rest of Jesus' communication was also highly illustrative in nature.

*Music.* The suggestions that music is a universal language and that it is an avenue to the soul are more than just conventional expressions. Music has the unique quality of generating different reactions in each half of the brain simultaneously.<sup>14</sup> And Leno cites a study that showed that music affects similarly the moods of people of different backgrounds.<sup>15</sup>

Research has shown that people have no choice but to respond to music.<sup>16</sup> Sometimes it seems that the devil understands this better than does the church.

*Musical dramas.* Combining music and drama can be very effective in activating both hemispheres of the brain, and so can be used very effectively in imparting the desired messages.

*Public speaking.* It is interesting to note that Wonder and Donovan list preaching as an activity that leans heavily to the LB, while listing public speaking as activating both hemispheres.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, they don't indicate why they consider these two activities different. Perhaps using one's voice artistically and creating the right images in the listener's mind can stimulate both hemispheres of the brain.

*Responsive activities.* Activities that allow people to respond emotionally and physically as well as intellectually during the service make worship more meaningful and effective.

The RB is primarily associated with feelings, emotions, visualization, dreams, relationships, the nonverbal (meditation), etc. This fact indicates that of the two hemispheres, the RB is

more inclined to accommodate spiritual activities. If this is true, is the traditional Adventist slant of liturgy, which shows a LB focus, contributing to the development of a secular society?

May many SDA churches help their members to praise their Lord with their *whole beings*!

<sup>1</sup> Researchers differ on certain details. However, clear-cut evidence confirmed by neurological research indicates that the LB and RB specialize in different activities.

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Meister Vitale, *Unicorns Are Real: A Right-Brained Approach to Learning* (New York: Warner Books, 1982), p. 1. On the physiological differences, see also Jacquelyn Wonder and Priscilla Donovan, *Whole-Brain Thinking* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1984), p. 62; and John L. Creswell, Claire Gifford, and Debbie Huffman, "Implications of Right/Left Brain Research for Mathematics Educators," *School Science and Mathematics*, February 1988, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> Vitale, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15. Macdonald Critchley and R. A. Henson (*Music and the Brain* [London: William Heinemann Medical Books, 1980], pp. 7-9) observe that of the different types of stimuli given to patients, music is peculiarly able to generate reactions in the two halves of the brain. They suggest that music can achieve this wide spectrum of response because its recognition depends on several factors, such as melody, rhythm, dynamics, harmony, meter, and words. Research shows that the left ear (RB) perceives melody and the right ear (LB) identifies words.

<sup>5</sup> Neurological evidence points out that this interchange takes place through the "corpus callosum and other elements," which connect the two hemispheres—"integrating whatever processes take place in them" (*ibid.*). The corpus callosum makes it possible for the "right hand to know what the left hand is doing" (Wonder and Donovan, p. 4).

<sup>6</sup> Creswell, Gifford, and Huffman, p. 120.

<sup>7</sup> Creswell, Gifford, and Huffman, p. 121, citing R. W. Sperry, "Lateral Specialization in Surgically Separated Hemispheres," Schmitt and Worden, eds., *Neurosciences: Third Study Program* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press), pp. 5-19.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>9</sup> J. Piatt, "Hemisphericity and Divergent Youth: A Study of Right-brained Students, Their School Problems, and Personality Traits" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1979). Cited in Clifford H. Edwards, "Brain Function: Implications for Schooling," *Contemporary Education*, November 1982, p. 59.

<sup>10</sup> Creswell, Gifford, and Huffman, p. 122. The term *mixed brain* appeared only once in the article and was not defined. The context would seem to suggest that it refers to students who were predominantly RB but had a relatively high LB function also.

<sup>11</sup> Huntley Baldwin, *How to Create Effective TV Commercials* (Lincolnwood, Ill.: NTC Business Books, 1989), p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> Jesus also used allegories, similes, and metaphors—but these function much as do parables.

<sup>13</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1960), p. 825.

<sup>14</sup> See endnote 4.

<sup>15</sup> H. Lloyd Leno, "Psychological and Physiological Effects of Music," *Review and Herald*, Feb. 12, 1976, p. 164.

<sup>16</sup> William W. Sears, "A Study of Some Effects of Music Upon Muscle Tension as Evidenced by Electromyographic Recordings" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1960), pp. 11-14.

<sup>17</sup> Wonder and Donovan, pp. 268, 269.

# Selling change

**Darryl Comstock**

**How to bring about change in your church without losing your members.**



Darryl Comstock is teacher and principal at Central Valley Junior Academy, Tangent, Oregon.

**I**n the past few years radical changes in liturgy have been introduced by several Seventh-day Adventist churches—churches that are making a real effort to reclaim former members and those who seldom, if ever, attend traditional services. These churches have created worship services that are warm, lively, and markedly less traditional; and they are experiencing an exciting growth in membership.

Typical changes of liturgy and furniture Adventist churches operating in the "celebration" mode have made include removing the pulpit to bring the pastor closer to the congregation; singing choruses and Scripture songs from words projected onto a screen (too bad we didn't foresee this before we bought all those new hymnals!); singing livelier songs, sometimes accompanied by guitars and drum sets; using drama more frequently; revising the order of service; changing the forms of public prayer; subordinating or eliminating parts of the traditional Sabbath school program, allocating more time to small group discussions; preaching shorter sermons with less emphasis on doctrine and more on the gospel, praise, personal relationships, and contemporary social issues; and encouraging greater audience participation through vocal, acoustical, and visual feedback, including responses such as "Amen" and "Praise the Lord," and clapping and raising of hands.

Success attracts attention. Pastors of Adventist churches whose growth has

been mediocre or worse have visited the bellwether institutions that are trying these innovations to pick up a few ideas about rejuvenating their own sometimes lackluster services.

But the changes have upset some people. The natural tendency is just to write the naysayers off. After all, you can't win 'em all: "Many are called, but few are chosen." Yet while on the one hand we can't allow the recalcitrant few to sandbag progress, on the other, not all the proposed changes are necessary for church renewal or the outpouring of the Spirit—and, in fact, some may be divisive. It would be tragic indeed to adopt a liturgy that unnecessarily weakens the unity that is a prerequisite for the latter rain.

In addition, many of those objecting are not part of the usual coterie of negative thinkers that afflicts most congregations. Among the objectors are church leaders and others who up until now have been strong supporters of our programs. Since many of us believe that we are long overdue for liturgical reform, why the opposition? It seems to me that there are rational reasons that good people oppose some of the above changes. Further, if we will take the time to listen to what these people are saying, we may be able to effect necessary changes without alienating those who might otherwise join us in a quest for the phenomenon that should mean more to our church than all else—the gift of the Spirit.

### **Reasons for opposition**

Why are some good people displeased with pastors' plans for change?

First, because of personality type. Whether acquired through nature or nurture, an individual's personality plays a big part in determining how that individual relates to change.

Second, because of need for stability. We live in a world that is changing rapidly. Because of this, insecurity abounds, and many have rightfully come to look to the church for stability. So it is not surprising that such people feel threatened when the one institution they thought they could count on begins a radical alteration in its most visible aspect—its forms of worship. It is a virtue, not a vice, that their church is important to them. We must remain sensitive to the needs of all, not just some, of our members.

Third, because of conservative con-

cern. Conservatives are not all legalists or reactionaries. Many are committed believers who look only to Christ and His righteousness as the source of their salvation. More than that, they love their church and are among its strongest supporters. Because they care deeply about the church, they fear threats to its essential doctrines. They are concerned if they perceive that the Sabbath morning messages consistently ignore basic beliefs. And they are uneasy with changes that make the liturgy quite different from the one they have grown up with and that they believe, rightly or wrongly, to be that of the pioneers.

Fourth, because of anxiety about Pentecostalism. Our church has repeatedly warned its members about the dangers of modern Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement with its consequent contribution to ecumenism. Is it any wonder, then, that adopting what many believe to be charismatic forms of worship makes them uneasy? While an error-teaching church can have ideas worthy of emulation, we must recognize that such a distinction is easier for some to make than others.

We should never move people so fast as to cause undue distress. If we do, we may create disunity, a condition incompatible with Pentecost.

Fifth, because of discomfort with contemporary music. Celebration churches tend to have music that is unlike what most Adventists are used to in their services. In our homes, schools, and churches, music has always been one of the most controversial topics. We are kidding ourselves if we think that we can make sudden changes in this area and not run into flak.

Two extremes threaten us here. Some conclude that what they don't like must be sinful. And on the other hand, many sincerely believe that to serve unholy purposes, Satan has involved himself in tinkering with tunes and arrangements as well as lyrics. So when selecting music appropriate for worship, we must consider both Satan's stratagems and our own biases, a neat trick to say the least.

If that isn't challenge enough, add the difficulty of making services attractive to the young and to those who like a lot of warmth and life in their worship while at the same time satisfying the desire of others who associate a worshipful atmosphere with traditional anthems.

## **We should never move people so fast as to cause undue distress.**

In some churches conflict has occurred because their pastors have ignored the five fears we have noted and instead have succumbed to the temptation of using the weight of their office to effect changes with greater dispatch. Unfortunately, each time a pastor takes the rapid route to innovation, he or she alienates another segment of the congregation and diminishes the roster of supporters.

It is far better to use the slower but ultimately more effective democratic process. The church board, the music committee, the Sabbath school council, etc., are the proper forums for new ideas. When all segments of the congregation are adequately represented and the discussion is free, the congregation is more likely to reach a consensus that will allow change without division. Furthermore, the slow process of running the changes through the church's machinery allows members more time to adjust to the new ideas.

### **Consider these guidelines**

You and your congregation face an awesome responsibility—that of operating an Adventist church at a time when our churches are under severe attack by Satan and when they are also experiencing the stirrings of the Holy Spirit that will grow into that long-awaited explosion of love known as the latter rain. As you do so, consider these guidelines:

1. *Don't be afraid of change.* Repetitious ritual can kill personal piety and corporate worship. Look for ways to improve your liturgy and all other operations of your church.

2. *When introducing significant changes, easy does it.* Make changes

(Continued on page 39)

# 101 ideas for better worship services

**C**onsider the following suggestions, designed to add life and vigor to worship services. They are not described in great detail, giving ample opportunity for each congregation to tailor them to local needs. Keep in mind that some ideas are great once or twice a year, but would wear thin quickly if overdone. Also, remember that even the most innovative approach to worship becomes a rut if done all the time.

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## Sermon

1. Encourage the congregation to speak up during the sermon. If they remain passive, cease talking periodically and ask for their reactions or questions concerning what has been said so far.

2. Why not try a "musical sermon"? Choose the hymns so that they convey the desired message. This works exceptionally well if the sermon topic is praise.

3. Try a role play for Scriptures read in the sermon. Act out one of Jesus' parables, casting it in a modern setting. Involve some of the younger church members.

4. Dramatize a passage of Scripture as part of the sermon.

5. Try a dramatic reading of Scripture as the total sermon. This works particularly well as a short sermon on the sacrifice of Christ, used as a prelude to Communion.

6. Intersperse the sermon with performed and congregational music, selected to drive home the points being made.

7. Don't tell a children's story at the beginning of the sermon, but introduce a "suspense box." Pause to check its contents periodically during the sermon, as a curiosity builder. As a climax, bring out the object(s) in the box to use as an object lesson/visual aid.

8. Make a feature of letting the juniors or earliteens choose the sermon topic for the next week. Then have them participate on the platform, provide special music, collect the offering, or greet people at the door. Involve them in as many ways as possible.

9. Invite a youth or a number of youth to present the sermon.

10. Invite a layperson to preach on a topic dear to him or her—such as a mother, on the home; or a teacher, on education.

11. Prepare handouts on the sermon topic for the children to fill in or color in. The handouts could include a quiz based on the texts to be used during the sermon.

12. Don't try it often, and be careful that it does not detract from the reverence of the worship service, but a staged interjection/interruption can be a good attention-getter.

13. By all means, prepare a sermon every year to guarantee the proper balance in sermon topics and style of presentation.

14. We live in a visual age. Use graphics and visuals. Give the congregation a chance to look at more than just the speaker.

15. Follow Christ's example. Use plenty of simple object lessons. The simpler and the more visual, the better.

16. Do a little research into the different sensory types—audio, visual, kinesthetic. It will aid in ministering

more effectively to each member of the congregation.

17. Present a 15- or 20-minute sermon, then allow reaction and discussion from the congregation for the next 20 minutes.

18. Give the historical/cultural background to a chapter of the Bible. Sing a hymn or have a musical item. Then show how the passage speaks to today's situation, giving it a pastoral application.

19. Try a more conversational sermon than usual. Move away from the pulpit—or move the pulpit—and get closer to the people.

20. Use a roving microphone and try an interview sermon. Seek responses from specific members of the congregation for the points being made.

21. How about two short sermons presenting opposite viewpoints on a topic that remains unresolved? Have a fellowship meal and allow the congregation to react during an afternoon meeting.

22. Get two people to present a sermon through dialogue. It could involve some role-playing as well.

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## Performed music

23. Schedule some unusual instrument for the special item—a harmonica, saw, musical bottles, etc. Have the performer tell how he or she happened to learn that instrument.

24. Have an entire family provide the musical item.

25. Include the story behind how the song happened to be written.

26. Try the old-fashioned musical monologue—background music while the words are read or recited.

27. Try an "illustrated song." An



artist can do a chalk drawing or sketch while the song is sung. Or slides can be shown on a screen.

28. Have a group of singers lead a rousing praise service, providing an item or two themselves.

29. Introduce the service with a brass fanfare. It really captures the attention.

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## Congregational music

30. Feature a variety of instrumental accompaniments to complement the organ and/or piano. It can be stringed instruments one week, brass the next, etc. Any instrumental addition will help to raise the decibels and increase the quality of the congregational singing.

31. Conclude a moving sermon that features an appeal with a song of commitment, sung while the entire congregation holds hands as a symbol of commitment and unity.

32. Take 20 to 25 minutes to create an "entire-church choir." Have the basses, sopranos, tenors, and altos all move to different quadrants of the church so they can learn their part. After a practice run or two, have the "choir" render the special item.

33. Learn a new hymn from the hymnal.

34. Sing one hymn's words to another hymn's tune. The hymn's meter is listed in the hymnal. If the meters match, the words and tunes are interchangeable.

35. Sing Scripture songs one week instead of hymns from the hymnal. Use an overhead projector so people can see the words.

36. Feature choruses for the young one week.

37. Read a verse or every other verse of a hymn rather than singing all the verses. Anything that breaks the routine captures people's attention and helps them focus on the hymn's meaning.

38. Divide the church into two or more groups and try some of the canons (rounds) in the new hymnal.

39. Have those who announce the hymns choose their favorite and tell why that hymn means something special to them. It will help the congregation get to know that member better. It may even give the hymn new meaning for some of the others in the congregation as well.

40. Have two or more "support singers" sitting in the front row singing

into microphones during the hymn singing. It helps to "fill out" the sound and encourages better singing.

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## Prayer

41. Have people from different groups within the congregation offer the prayer each week. Introduce the person as representing that group—grandparents, parents, youth, singles, young marrieds, university students, etc.

42. Use a written prayer for variation. Many books of prayers are available, offering a variety of beautiful prayers.

43. Have three people share the prayer. One can be responsible for praise, another for thanksgiving, and another for intercession.

44. Invite a child to offer the morning prayer. The words may be simple, but the impact may be great.

45. Instead of a person up front offering the entire prayer, he or she can invoke God, then suggest topics for the congregation to pray about silently. The prayer leader should pause after each topic suggestion. Topics can include things to praise God for, things to thank God for, and various people and activities for which a blessing is sought. It is crucial to explain before the prayer begins just how it is going to proceed.

46. Try a responsive prayer, with a refrain from the congregation. Psalm 136 could be used as a prayer for this purpose. Or the prayer leader could compose a prayer with a congregational refrain, following the pattern of Psalm 136.

47. Have a family, Sabbath school class, children's division, etc., all pray, each offering only sentence prayers. Active participation is a crucial element to long-term enjoyment of the worship hour. Get as many people as possible involved.

48. On a special occasion plan a "season" of prayer, with several people praying. Be careful not to make it too drawn out or it will have a negative impact, particularly on the younger worshippers.

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## Scripture

49. Use mime or drama to highlight the message of the Scripture reading. This is particularly effective if the reading is a Bible story.

50. Have a family read the Scripture, each taking a segment.

51. Try antiphonal Scripture reading, with young and old or male and female responsively reading segments of the Scripture.

52. Have a shut-in or isolated member read the Scripture. Videotape it, then replay it on Sabbath. Churches often make provision for the shut-ins to hear the sermon, but rarely provide for their active participation in the service. If video facilities aren't available, voice tape and photographic slides will work well.

53. Vary the people reading the Scripture—singles, couples, single parents, ethnics, etc. Reflect the diversity of the church through the participants.

54. Prepare an illustrated Scripture reading. Many of the psalms lend themselves to illustration through nature slides, film, or video.

55. Provide a musical background to the Scripture reading.

56. Invite the congregation to read the Scripture responsively. If diversity of translations is a problem, put the verse on an overhead transparency.

57. Invite someone to paraphrase a well-known passage, showing how he or she perceives the passage and its message.

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## Offering

58. Have several families be responsible for collecting the offering.

59. If it is Christian Education Day, have children in school uniforms collect the offering.

60. Invite the congregation to "bring" their offering to God by actually coming forward and depositing it in a basket at the front of the church. It provides movement for the younger worshippers and has significant symbolism.

61. Sing a hymn while the offering is collected.

62. Read Scripture—i.e., the story of the widow's mites—during the offering collection.

63. Have someone read poetry while the offering is collected.

64. Invite each member of the congregation to offer a silent prayer on his or her offering before it is taken, rather than having the prayer from the front.

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## Welcome

65. Read the visitors' names from the visitors' book as part of the wel-

come. And be sure someone gets every visitor to sign.

66. Make a special feature of the welcome, inviting members to introduce any visitors they have brought.

67. Allow time for people to greet those next to them.

68. Encourage the greeters at the doors to invite one or two guests to come onto the platform during the service and tell about the most exciting thing being done in the church they regularly attend.

## Children

69. Use an object lesson rather than just telling a story.

70. A little sleight of hand always captures children's attention. It can be used to drive home the point that things aren't always what they appear to be.

71. If the schedule is full, drop the children's story, but prepare pictures for the children to color during the sermon. Invite them to come to the front during a hymn to pick up their supplies. That gives them a chance to move around, but doesn't add to the time.

72. Invite the children to draw their interpretation of the sermon's message. Collect the drawings at the door as they leave, and put them on the notice board the next week. Make a feature of the display.

73. The week before Communion, have the children draw their interpretation of the meaning of Christ's death on the cross. Then put the drawings on the walls around the church on Communion day.

74. Plan a children's church once or twice a year. Let them be responsible for as much as possible.

75. Include the children's story in the sermon itself, telling them in advance some cue to watch for that will mean that their story is about to begin. It adds an element of suspense.

76. Encourage the older children to prepare an outline of the sermon.

77. Have a five-minute "adults' corner," then preach the entire sermon to the children, getting it down to their level.

78. Make a baby dedication part of the children's corner, using it as a springboard for a discussion about God's love for children and families.

79. Have the children do charades for the congregation. These can be spontaneous or planned. They can be

done with or without costumes.

80. As the congregation sings or the organ plays "Jesus Loves Me," invite all adults in the congregation to go to a child and tell him or her how happy they are that the child is part of the church family and how much they love having children in the church.

81. While the foot-washing ceremony is in progress during the Communion service, have a meaningful section for children that includes more than just nice little stories.

82. Invite all children to spontaneously dramatize some well-known Bible story in front of the congregation. Be sure to have ample adult help to keep it moving smoothly.

83. Have the children come to the front of the church, form them into an impromptu junior choir, and have them provide a special item for the adults.

84. Form a mass choir of children. After a few rehearsals, have them provide a special item for the worship service.

## Testimony

85. Interview someone in the congregation about his or her conversion, profession, outreach, etc. If something really good has happened to someone, interview the person about it. Let people share their joy and their gratitude toward God with the entire congregation.

86. Videotape an interview with a member, giving the person a chance to share his or her testimony. Show the person in the workplace, in the home, participating in a pastime, and at church.

87. Videotape a shut-in member, letting him or her share with the congregation the joy found in serving God—despite adverse circumstances.

88. Provide opportunity for members to express emotion when something has happened that affects the entire congregation—a major tragedy, a wonderful blessing, a crisis, etc.

89. Prime two or three people to react to the sermon, outlining how the truth just presented has affected their lives. Then open up to spontaneous comment. Be careful not to let comments run too long.

90. Don't limit reports of exciting outreach to Sabbath school or the Personal Ministries period. Give people a chance to share with the entire congregation.

The interview format may help to keep them on track and to the point.

## Miscellaneous

91. Always have some optional elements in the worship plan that can be deleted at a moment's notice if time is getting away. That allows the services to maintain both a prompt beginning and ending time.

92. Let a family comprise the platform party. They can be responsible for the prayer, welcome, hymns, Scripture reading, etc.

93. Attempt to represent the congregation's age spectrum every week.

94. Change the sequence of events. Don't fall into a rut.

95. Schedule a Communion service for Friday night. Use larger pieces of bread and larger glasses of wine. Candles and sitting around a large table or tables can add to the effect.

96. Have a sermon in the morning lead up to an unhurried Communion service in the afternoon. Announce it well in advance.

97. Capitalize on the public's interest in Easter (as many Latin American Adventist congregations do so effectively). Schedule an Easter weekend of religious activity. Thursday night, a Communion service. Friday night, focus on the Crucifixion. Sabbath, an outline of "the day of rest." Sunday, a celebration of the Resurrection. Drama could be used effectively. Or the services could just feature good preaching and well-organized music, Scripture reading, testimonies, etc.

98. Most nations have a national day. Capitalize on it to prepare programs about what the country means to immigrants, brotherhood, or multiculturalism. This can be a good lead-in to a Communion service.

99. Don't forget poetry. Good poetry is magic. Let the congregation's poet(s) share an original piece from time to time.

100. Carefully plan periods of meditation. Silence has its place.

101. Appoint a worship committee so that each Sabbath's worship experience will be a treat. ■

Reprinted with permission from *WORSHIP*, a publication of the Department of Church Ministries, South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 148 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga, N.S.W. 2076, Australia. Copies are available at the following prices: single copies, \$A6.50 each; 50-100, \$A6.40 each; more than 100, \$A6.25 each.



# Must the pastor's spouse do church work?

Floyd Bresee

A

century ago the role of the minister's wife was pretty well defined. *Hints for a Clergyman's Wife*, a book published in 1832, advised, "A

minister's wife should be a copastor, social worker, visiting nurse and educator, an evangelist dedicated to saving souls, and, if possible, Sunday school superintendent and the leader of neighborhood study groups."

But what about today? What if she's busy raising children, or employed outside the home and church? *Must* the pastor's spouse do church work?

Roy Oswald asked the question of 20 ministers' wives. Nineteen said "Yes."

But why must the pastor's wife become involved in church work?

First, because she is a church member, and all members should exercise their spiritual gifts in some ministry. She is the first lady of the congregation, a role she has whether or not she chooses it. If she won't work in the church, why should the other women?

Second, she must do church work because if the members believe she doesn't care about them, her husband's work will suffer. She must do church work to support his calling. No career can compensate for the dissatisfaction she will feel if she thinks she's botching her role as wife.

## Write your own job description

Confronted by the role her husband, the congregation, or church leaders thrust upon her, the pastor's wife generally reacts in one of three ways. She becomes angry and *rebels*. She *resigns* herself to it and becomes more tool than

person. Or, she *redefines* the role to fit the unique gifts God has given her, writing a job description for herself.

The pastor's wife will do best if she begins by accepting herself, liking what God has given her to work with. Depression starts with self-criticism, then moves on to blaming others. If I think I'm too fat, I'll expect others to think so too, and blame them for thinking it. If I think I've no gift, I'll expect others to think so too, and blame them for believing it. On the other hand, if I think a good God must have given me gifts worth having, I'll thank Him—and set about using them for Him.

Very likely the minister's wife who is feeling frustrated hasn't defined her role for herself. Trying to live up to the expectations of others without having decided what she wants to give, she feels taken. She should counsel with her spouse, with leading women in the church, with other ministers' wives, and especially with her Lord. Then, with only the Holy Spirit at her side, she should sit down and write her own job description.

## Find the niche only you can fill

There are roles more important to the job description of the pastor's wife than church offices such as Sabbath school superintendent, Pathfinder leader, or church organist.

She can be the pastor's *encourager*. Many pastors say they chose the ministry because they want to serve people. That may be a thinly veiled way of saying they chose the ministry because they need to be appreciated. But serving people doesn't always lead to being appreciated. Every pastor needs an encourager—hopefully at home.

She can be the pastor's *compensator*. I knew a pastor who was a strong administrator: efficient, progressive—and blunt. He was forever hurting people's feelings. His wife, on the other hand, was sensitive and diplomatic. She was forever applying balm or smoothing ruffled feathers. If she had been doing it because she had to, she would have been miserable. She found their team ministry fulfilling because she knew the man who loved her deeply needed her desperately.

Saying no is especially difficult for those who grew up feeling loved only if they did what they were told. But many people love the minister's wife more when they learn there are some things she can't do. The congregation is caught in a dilemma between wanting her to be perfect so they can admire her and wanting her to be flawed so they can feel comfortable with her.

Perhaps the following story best sums up the role we have been considering. A pastor's wife was rushing through the house, finishing last-minute chores before dashing off to an appointment. Her little girl asked why she was hurrying so. "Because I have a Bible study in 20 minutes," she answered breathlessly.

"But why are you going to a Bible study?"

Mother started to reply "Because your daddy's the—" Stopping herself short, she reversed the question, "Why do you think I'm doing it?"

Back came the perfect reply, "Because you love Jesus."

If you serve the church because you love Christ, not just because the church expects it or because your husband expects it, serving is less frustrating. ■

## An Annotated Bibliography on Worship

The following worship books in print are recommended by Merle J. Whitney, pastor, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lakeside, California.

### Sing a New Song! Worship Renewal for Adventists Today

C. Raymond Holmes, Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1984, 190 pages, paper, \$9.95. Includes three appendixes with suggested orders of service, E. G. White comments, glossary, and bibliography.

Previously reviewed in *Ministry*, this book is a must for Adventist worship leaders. It builds on the church's Christian heritage while including a distinctive Seventh-day Adventist perspective.

### Participating in Worship

Craig Douglas Erickson, Westminster/John Knox, Louisville, Kentucky, 1989, 223 pages, \$14.95. General and Scripture index. Each chapter has a study guide and extensive bibliography.

This book's subtitle, "History, Theory, and Practice," summarizes its contents. Erickson emphasizes practice and involving the entire congregation in worship. He covers all areas of worship including silence and gestures. The book provides numerous ideas and resources to make worship deep, meaningful, and participatory.

### Up With Worship

Anne Ortlund, Regal Books, Ventura, California, 1982, 120 pages, \$6.95.

This clever and readable book tells how to get totally involved in church worship.

### Introduction to Christian Worship

James F. White, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1980, 288 pages, \$13.95.

Written by a foremost Protestant worship scholar, this book is academic but with a strong pastoral thrust. The author stresses the historical, theological, and pastoral dimensions of worship.

### Liturgies of the Western Church

Bard Thompson, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1980, 448 pages, \$12.95.

This collection of 13 liturgies (plus variations) includes many complete worship services. Thompson gives historical and contextual introductions covering Western Christianity from Justin Martyr to John Wesley.

### Worship Old and New

Robert E. Webber, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1982, 256 pages, \$14.95. Extensive bibliography and indexes.

The main purpose of this book is to examine the biblical roots, historical development, and theological meaning of worship. The secondary purpose is to seek ways in which the old practices can be applied to modern worship. Well-written and oriented to evangelicals, this book provides material geared to pastors.

### Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition

James F. White, Westminster/John Knox, Louisville, Kentucky, 1989, 288 pages, \$15.95. Index of persons and subjects. Glossary and good bibliography classified by worship tradition.

Written by a leading scholar on worship, this book is the best available on the differences and strengths of various worship forms practiced by American Protestant churches today. After contrasting Protestant and Roman Catholic worship, the author covers the origin, development, and present characteristics of nine traditions: Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, Anglican, Separatist and Puritan, Quaker, Frontier, and Pentecostal.

### The Pastor-Evangelist in Worship

Richard Stoll Armstrong, Westminster/John Knox, Louisville, Kentucky, 1986, 216 pages, \$11.95. Appendixes, including one for evaluating the church bulletin as an evangelistic instrument.

This unique book discusses both preaching and worship in light of their contribution to evangelism. Armstrong deals not only with the weekly worship service, but also the evangelistic poten-

tial of the ordinances and other services of the church.

### The Leadership of Worship

Grady Hardin, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1980, 110 pages, \$6.95. Resource lists included.

"A carefully planned service is of primary importance in leading participants to experience Christ in the fullest sense." This book provides a detailed explanation of how to lead a worship service. Hardin includes discussion of spoken words, visible words, the planning team, and the use of color, texture, and time.

### Real Worship—It Will Transform Your Life

Warren W. Wiersbe, Oliver-Nelson Books, Nashville, 1990 (expanded edition with study guide), 219 pages. Appendix with questions and answers and bibliography.

Much that Wiersbe writes relates to corporate worship, but the strength of this book is its personal, devotional value. The book is recommended for corporate and personal worship, and the reader will benefit in both areas. Wiersbe divides the book into four parts—invitation to worship, worship and wonder, worship and witness, and worship and warfare.

The author's fundamentalist background adds an important slant to this volume.

### Let the People Sing

Harold E. Hannum, Tom Davis, ed., Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1981, 112 pages, currently at a clearance price of \$1.

One of the few Seventh-day Adventist books dealing with worship; the primary emphasis is on music.

### Jubilate!—Church Music in the Evangelical Tradition

Donald P. Hustad, Hope Publishing, Carol Stream, Illinois, 1981, 368 pages, \$19.95. Glossary, supplemental readings, bibliography.

While the subject of this volume is

church music, it impacts on all of worship. I feel this book is the best in the field of evangelical church music. Readers do not need to translate from works written from a liturgical church bias (as most books on church music are) to make it eminently practical.

### **Full Circle—A Proposal to the Church for an Arts Ministry**

*Nena Bryans, Schuyler Institute for Worship and the Arts, San Carlos, California, 1988, 81 pages, \$9.95. Excellent classified bibliography, resource list.*

One sentence from page 15 explains the purpose of this book: "The arts can help us take worship out of the routine and expected into a place of wonder and celebration."

### **Ritual and Pastoral Care**

*Elaine Ramshaw, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1987, 128 pages, \$8.95.*

Ramshaw tells how ritual provides order and meaning, gives normative, ethical force to the community, creates

familiarity, and reaffirms our place in the social order.

### **The Service of God: Christian Work and Worship**

*William H. Willimon, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1983, 240 pages, \$11.95.*

Worship makes a difference in how one lives and the decisions he or she makes. The author challenges us as he discusses the relationship between worship and ethics.

### **Worship as Pastoral Care**

*William H. Willimon, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1979, 237 pages, \$13.95.*

How do you blend worship and pastoral care to enrich and support each other? The author believes true pastoral care cannot take place apart from an active community of faith. He examines four acts of worship: baptism, the Lord's Supper, the wedding, the funeral.

### **Companion to the Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal**

*Wayne Hooper and Edward E. White,*

*Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1988, 701 pages, \$36.50.*

This volume includes sections on Adventist hymnody, commentaries on the hymns, and biographies of authors and composers.

### **The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal**

*Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, 1985, 832 pages, \$13.95.*

The introduction and paragraphs prefacing the worship aids contain brief, helpful suggestions for worship services.

### **Acting Out the Gospels With Mimes, Puppets, and Clowns**

*William DeAngelis, Twenty-Third Publications, Mystic, Connecticut, 1982, 92 pages, \$9.95. Appendix of additional helps.*

The book includes instructions for 19 plays. Written for Catholics, it can be easily adapted to any church.

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## **Dedication Services for Every Occasion**

*Manfred Holck, Jr., compiler, Judson Press, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1984, 96 pages, \$7.95. Additional sources included.*

This handbook provides 35 services for events as diverse as dedications for the new church kitchen or choir robes. They can be duplicated, adapted, or changed in ways to suit your congregation.

## **Dedications and Readings for Church Events**

*Manfred Holck, Jr., compiler, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1991, 147 pages, \$7.95.*

Holck's latest book of services for special events; all are entirely new and may be used or adapted as you wish.

## **Fabric Applique for Worship**

*Rebecca Jerde, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1983, 80 pages, \$10.95. Glossary.*

Subtitled "Patterns and Guide for Sewing Banners, Vestments, and Paraments," this book will be helpful to worship innovators. Even if you don't use vestments and paraments, you'll get ideas from them for banners and hangings to enrich your worship atmosphere.

## **Writing Your Own Worship Materials**

*G. Temp Sparkman, Judson Press, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1980, 111 pages, \$6.95. Bibliography and index.*

If you don't have it, get this book! Filled with examples, it also teaches you how to write your own calls to worship, invocations, prayers, responsive readings, etc. Your worships can move from trite to creative and personalized.

## **Worship**

*Evelyn Underhill, Crossroads, New York, 1982, 350 pages, \$14.95.*

Long a classic on the spiritual life, Underhill does not write a handbook but rather delves into those primary realities of our relationship to God that our devotional acts express.

## **Periodicals**

**The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song**, The Hymn Society of America, Fort Worth, Texas. New hymns, research, and hymn stories.

**Modern Liturgy**, Resource Publications, San Jose, California. Practical resources for worship planning.

**Reformed Liturgy and Music**, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Louisville, Kentucky. Very helpful music and worship suggestions; organized according to the Christian year.

**Worship**, Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota. Journal of the Academy of Worship, it has a scholarly liturgical orientation.

## **Recently Noted**

*Come and Worship, Tap into God's Power Through Praise and Worship, Michael Coleman and Ed Lindquist, Fleming H. Revell Co., Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1989, 159 pages, \$6.95.*

"Over and over again people are telling us they want more teaching on praise and worship," the authors noted several years ago, and so they organized Integrity Music. Today more than 175,000 people receive Hosanna! Music Praise and Worship tapes every eight weeks. The authors wrote this non-denominational book to show how to enter God's presence through praise and worship music. They include numerous testimonies of how God-directed worship music has blessed lives.

*Protest and Praise, Sacred Music of Black Religion, Jon Michael Spencer, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1990, 262 pages, \$14.95, paper.*

*Protest and Praise* is divided into two parts—"Protest Song" and "Praise Song." In Part 1 Spencer, a musicologist and historian, analyzes sacred Black music and its evolution from inside slavery looking out (spirituals) and antislavery hymnody to social gospel and civil rights songs.

Part Two, "Praise Song," also follows history starting with the unique ring-shout dance, the sweet and exotic tongue-song, Holiness-Pentecostal, and gospel music. The author devotes the last chapter to the chanted sermon practiced as an emotional adoration of God, and binds the 10 chapters together in what he calls theomusicology—musicology as a theologically informed discipline.

Spencer not only provides scholarly insight into the development of African-American sacred music but gives us an appreciation for its beauty, honesty, and expressiveness.

**Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship**, Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi, eds., *The Pilgrim Press, New*

*York, 1990, 256 pages, \$12.95.*

This collection of writings from more than 60 gifted contributors comes from a variety of liturgical perspectives.

Among the many worship books available today, this one stands out as particularly beautiful and sensitive. Divided into three sections, the book provides readings and prayers for three types of services: the liturgical year; the sacraments and rites of the church; and regular worships. With occasional modifications, any church can use the material. This book can add freshness and a touch of elegance to any worship service.

*Mastering Worship, Jack Hayford, Howard Stevenson, John Killinger, Multnomah, Portland, Oregon, 1990, 166 pages, \$12.95.*

The fourth volume in Multnomah's Mastering Ministry series, this book provides ideas for enriching the church worship experience. It also gives guidance in incorporating classic and contemporary expressions of worship.

*Small Group Outreach, Kurt Johnson, Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1991, 96 pages, \$6.95, paper.*

A step-by-step guide to successful small group Bible study. Johnson tells you what you need to know to start a small group and direct its members toward a new life in Christ. Johnson, personal ministries director of the Oregon Conference, wrote the book from his own experiences and those of other successful group leaders.

*Sing the Psalms, Dale A. Schoening, CSS Publishing, Lima, Ohio, 1989, \$7.50, paper.*

Churches can reintroduce the element of song into the use of the Psalms with this volume of metered psalms based on the Common Lectionary. The author provides metrical versions and suggested tunes for many psalms.

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## Selling change

From page 31

gradually and prepare the congregation in advance. The people in the pews do not take kindly to sudden shocks. The educational approach is best.

3. *Use the democratic process.* Work in harmony with the church board, the local elders, and others. To bring about a major change, the pastor needs the support of these folks. (It's not all bad if they think it's their idea.)

4. *Carefully consider expressed concerns that certain changes may not harmonize with counsel from the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy.* The people who express these concerns may really love their Lord and support their church. They deserve thoughtful, prayerful responses.

5. *Don't try to duplicate the entire program of another church.* While it

may work well for them, the uniqueness of your situation makes a wholesale adoption of their ideas unwise. For example, successful celebration churches are usually located in population centers in which members can choose among churches with different worship styles. Attempting to impose radical changes on a more isolated congregation may only stir up dissension.

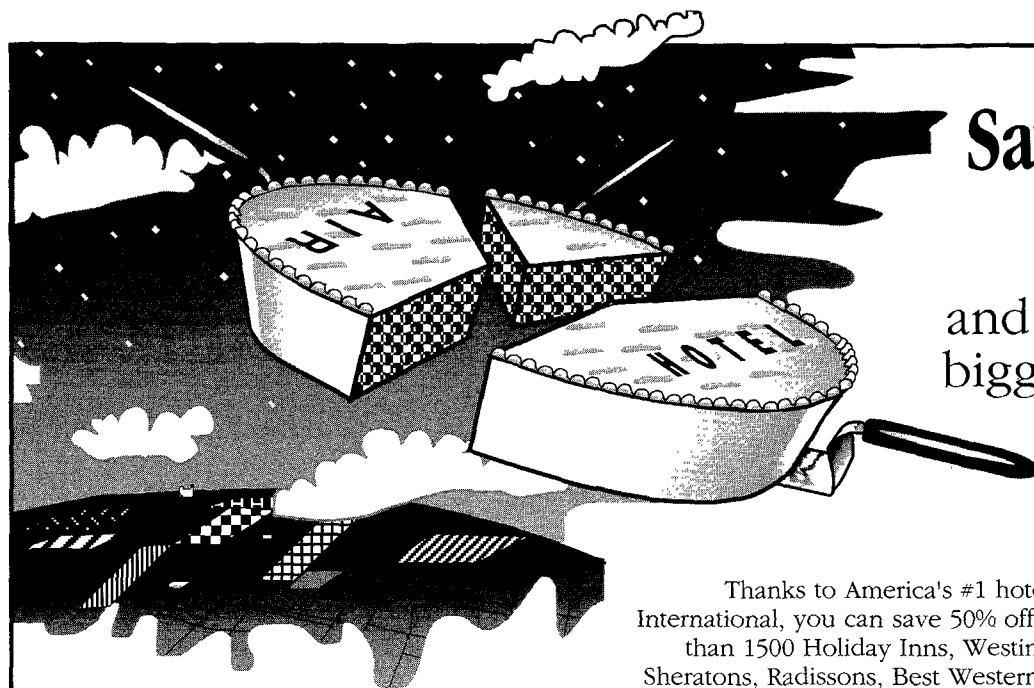
6. *Understand that excitement is not a prerequisite for receiving the Holy Spirit.* When He comes in His fullness, there will be excitement aplenty, but it will be the product of the experience, not an end in itself.

7. *Recognize that true revival does not depend on the form of worship.* It is a gift bestowed by a generous Father on hungry hearts united in their love for Him and one another. He may pour His Spirit on a church with no pulpit, one in which the members sing from an overhead screen, or He may grace a church that sings with a pump organ and hears sermons read by the local elder.

8. *If your members reject your ideas after you have done all you could to educate them and to bring about change democratically, solace yourself with the fact that few historical innovations came easily.* And there is, of course, the barest possibility that the ideas weren't all that red-hot to begin with. The other day a doctor told me that he was not, in fact, infallible. That seemed to me to be a very good thing for a doctor to say.

So you want to be the pastor of a celebration church. OK, but please initiate changes prayerfully, wisely, humbly, and democratically. More than that, put your best efforts into educating your congregation to hunger for the Holy Spirit. Teach them to besiege the Father with pleas for His great Gift, the Holy Spirit, who will bring all other gifts in His train.

When the Spirit comes, filling the hearts of your members with God's unconditional love for others, you will have a celebration church that will knock the socks off your community—and perhaps the world. ■



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# Evangelism Council

North American Division  
Daytona Hilton, Daytona Beach, Florida  
December 15-19, 1991



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We, the North American Division Officers, are totally committed to evangelism, the heart of His work, and, therefore, invite **YOU** to attend the outstanding Evangelism Council being planned for—

public evangelists, pastor evangelists, evangelism coordinators, Bible instructors, ministerial secretaries, college practices professors, seminary students, college theology students, lay evangelists, church administrators, and anyone seriously committed to outreach evangelism.

## Registration Form

I desire to participate in a sustained commitment pattern to reach the objectives of Global Mission by reserving a minimum of 92 hours in 1992 for outreach evangelism. I wish to experience the joy of introducing people to Jesus and His truth.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

\$140 per person (\$125 before October 1, 1991)—\$25 for accompanying spouse

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Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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I would like:

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- ☐ hotel information
- ☐ a brochure with full details
- ☐ creative financing ideas for attendance

**Make check payable to North American Division  
and mail this form with payment to:**

W. C. Scales, Jr., NAD Ministerial Director  
12501 Old Columbia Pike  
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600  
(301) 680-6418

- Conference clearance is necessary for reimbursement.
- Registration does not include hotel.