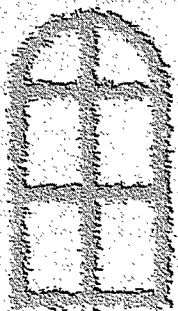


MINISTRY

International Journal for Clergy

June 1993

A CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS



Challenging the continuity of history

Knight's comparison of the problems of the Jewish church of Jesus' time and those of our modern-day Seventh-day Adventist Church ("Challenging the Continuity of History," December 1992) has raised a question that perhaps Knight or someone else could answer. Jesus' words and actions clearly showed His love and care for the church. However, for whatever reason, He did not choose to do His work within its structure. I have for a number of years worked within the structure of our church as a layperson. I have held some of the most responsible positions a layperson can hold and have thoroughly enjoyed it. However, I have also discovered some of the difficulties that are encountered when a person is seen to be too "revolutionary." Currently I do not hold any offices, but remain a dedicated and regularly attending member.

Knight suggests that our current problems can be overcome only by "conscious, heroic, and continuous efforts at reform and revitalization." My question is: How does one work "within the system" to help facilitate the necessary reform and revitalization without stirring up sufficient opposition to shut down the effort? Or does one need to follow the example Jesus gave us and work tirelessly for the good of the church but *outside* of any office?—Elbert Westcott, Fort Bragg, California.

■ People have always desired to set up an earthly millennium apart from God. As Knight points out, Marxism was one human experiment destined for failure because fallen human nature was not factored into the equation for success. Many people falsely define reality by some vague evolutionary idea that as the physical world evolves so do the moral sensibilities. But human nature does not naturally become more loving.

The socialist experiments of this century discovered this fact and provided for it with strong central governments and managed economies.

What arose was a dictatorship of the Communist party rather than that of the proletariat. Unbridled capitalism was no better. Where was the moral dimension in a dog-eat-dog determinism?

Knight concludes that the ultimate success of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's mission is possible only by collective organizational reform and daily surrender. Is that likely to happen? This is similar to expressing the often quoted ideal that all of the world's problems could be solved if everyone loved each other—a true statement, but not a very realistic one. Both fallen human nature and past history tell us it will never happen. The fact that we are sinners to the end will prevent any church organization from completely accomplishing its mission. People will never collectively reform nor will they collectively surrender.—James Supensky, Kettering, Ohio.

■ Given the perverseness of human nature in the exercise of governing authority, it follows that whenever reforms are needed in the government that would result in a loss of power and governing authority by the governor, those reforms will almost never be initiated by the governor. Such reforms will usually have to be introduced into the government by those outside the governing circle, and usually in the face of strenuous opposition from the governors whose power and authority would be reduced by reforms.

Among the "radical reforms," to use Knight's phrase, that are needed in the church I love is a church government that has been framed to implement such New Testament principles of ecclesiology as servant-leadership (see Mark 10:41-45) and a priesthood of believers (see 1 Peter 2:5, 9). A church government that had been framed to implement either one of these two concepts of ecclesiology would result in an enormous loss of power and authority by the church governors. Because of this there is little likelihood that these New

Testament principles of ecclesiology will ever be introduced into the government of the church from top to bottom.—Brantley Johnson, Pleasant Hill, California.

Adventists and Evangelicals

"Evangelical" is not a dirty word, but a glorious biblical word. Its perversions, properly castigated by Holmes ("Adventist Identity and Evangelical Criticism," February 1993), are not the views of Adventist evangelicals. MacArthur, Bloesch, Bonhoeffer, and Luther, quoted for support by Holmes, are among the heroes of evangelical Adventists who uphold the need of sanctification.

The deemphasis of sanctification doesn't come from Adventist evangelicals. It comes from the immersion of the church in a secularized society, exacerbated by a corresponding liberal, anti-legalist, anti-evangelical trend in Adventist academia. Legalistic checklists and aversion to the sin, law, and wrath of Paul's "bloody gospel" have offended the dignity of refined, modern people who welcome the new "revelation" that God is really a good guy who doesn't fuss about the venial sins of His loving kids. That's the left.

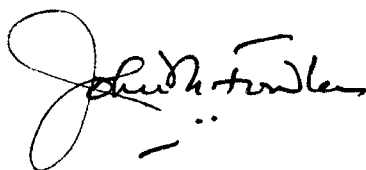
Now, the right. That God "used" Adventism to "rescue" or discover a new soteriology for all Christianity in 1888 denies the facts. E. J. Waggoner (principal 1888 advocate) declared, "I do not regard this view which I hold as a new idea at all. It would simply be [for Adventists] a step nearer the faith of the great Reformers from the days of Paul to the days of Luther and Wesley" (*Gospel in Galatians*, pp. 70, 71). In 1889 Ellen White clearly stated, "We have no new, strange path to tread. It is not a new truth that opens to the mind; it is not a new principle but a new discovery . . . [to Adventists] of that which existed before" (*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, vol. 2, pp. 490-497). We were merely rediscovering the centrality of the cross for Adventism. MacArthur and Bloesch need not

(Continued on page 27)

Among the Creator's first commands listed in Genesis is His charge to the human race to tend the earth. And yet this command has become a victim to human greed, particularly in our time. We in the last 40 years have done more to ruin the ecology of our system than all the generations since creation. The Christian cannot escape from the responsibility to a cleaner environment: the earth is not only the habitation of generations to come, but it continues to be the "footstool" of God. As such ecology involves the glory of God. Ella Rydzewski, a nature lover, a tender Christian, and *Ministry's* editorial assistant, draws our attention this month (p. 25) to a number of recent books on Christian stewardship of God's good earth. And Monica Gullon gives us seven principles of that stewardship (p. 20).

Christian responsibility also extends to the area of witness and soul winning. Mark Finley, born for evangelism, restates in a powerful article the what and how of persuading people for Christ. He begins with how Jesus did it, and challenges the pastor and the evangelist to do what He did.

Each one has a dream, each one a hope. When that dream and that hope combine to formulate one's philosophy of ministry, one has a powerful base of operation. After a lifelong commitment to pastoral ministry, and after being the president of South Central Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for a record 31 years, C. E. Dudley shares with us (p. 6) his dream for a church without walls, a church totally committed to the Lordship of Jesus.



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

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MARKETING:
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ADVERTISING SALES:
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SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:
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Ministry, (ISSN 0026-5314), the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association © 1993, 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, air mail US\$39.85. Single copy US\$2.25. Member Associated Church Press. Second-class postage paid at Hagerstown, MD. 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, MD 21740.



Predicament, prayer, and praise

John M. Fowler

For the seventh time the surgeon's knife probed his vital arteries, leaving him weak, perplexed, and pondering. As a pastor I was invited to pray, to affirm the faith and the hope of a family that had experienced pain for more than 10 long years. The fastings of a mother, the aching of a wife, the questions of two little girls, the prayer of a community, and the faith of the sufferer were partners in a long journey that raised more questions than answers. But one fact stood clear: life is often like that. In its majesty or mystery, in its beauty or hideousness, in its ecstasy or suffering, life is difficult to fathom or understand.

I turned to Psalm 13 for a basis to affirm faith when that seemed almost impossible. In a three-part hymn, the psalmist defines the life of faith in terms of a predicament, a prayer, and praise.

The predicament

The first stanza of the psalm (verses 1, 2) addresses a polarity in human existence: God on the one hand, and evil on the other. The seeming uncertainty of the one and the definite assertiveness of the other press heavily on the human heart, and the psalmist cries out four times: How long?

First, the cry confronts God. "How long, O Lord? Wilt thou forget me forever?" (verse 1).^{*} The desperate inquiry does not question the existence of God. God's reality, to the psalmist, is a given. Faith must always begin with the axiom that God is. But can faith ever wonder that God forgets His own? Obviously it

can and does. Don't we see on the cross a similar cry? But faith rooted in the permanency of God's faithfulness and able to relate to Him and dialogue with Him can overcome the onslaught of occasional doubt. Such a faith reaches out and grasps the timeless promise: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb?" Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you" (Isa. 49:15).

Second, the cry underscores a feeling of an apparent absence of God. The suffering psalmist describes his predicament in terms of a paradox: He knows that God is, and yet his God seems absent at a time when he needs Him the most. So he asks, "How long, wilt thou hide thy face from me?" (Ps. 13:1). The closer a person is to God, the greater seems the hiding of the divine face, particularly when that person is under enemy fire. But the issue is not the hiddenness of God; it is the human inability to comprehend the underlying purposes of history and existence. The ups and downs, the twists and torture of life often demand immediate answers and easy resolutions. When that does not happen, human frailty seeks a cop-out: where is God? But faith affirms even in the midst of failures, "I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me" (verse 6).

Third, the cry recognizes the reality of pain. An anguish of soul and a torment of body seem to have converged upon the psalmist. He could see no immediate relief. The grief is compounded by the apparent silence of God and prolonged by the unknown quantity of time. Life seems a chaotic battlefield between to be and not to be. And when defeat seems

possible, the question becomes inevitable: How long?

And fourth, the cry rises to a crescendo when the psalmist sees the apparent victory of the enemy. Whoever that enemy is—physical illness, economic collapse, shattered dreams, pursuing shadows, impending death, disloyal friends—all that the psalmist is conscious of is the polarity: the apparent absence of God and the possible victory of the enemy. "How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?" he asks in despair (verse 2). But despair left to itself leads to death, and the psalmist is a man of faith. Genuine faith does not succumb to despair, but turns to prayer.

The prayer

The second stanza of the psalm (verses 3, 4) petitions God to break the polarity and complete the joy of faith here and now. Faith, facing the pressure of suffering, turns to God in absolute assurance and demands of Him three things. "Consider me . . ." The psalmist's faith in God's personal interest in him may not be logical, but is certainly astounding. God the transcendental one, the altogether holy, the entirely other, the one involved in a cosmic controversy is also the immanent one, the loving one, full of grace and truth, who cares for him as though there is no one else in the entire universe.

Out of that personal faith comes the second demand: "Answer me." The fourfold how long pleads for a divine verdict. Does how long mean forever? Does God ever forget His believing children? Does grief mean an indifferent God? Am I born to suffer? The psalmist, being human that he is, cannot complete

the contours of God's answer.

So he makes his third demand: "Lighten my eyes." The psalmist discovers that the answer to all ills is not in argument, but in simple surrender. Even if God should explain to him the why and the wherefore and the how long of human predicament, it may not be what he needs. Better turn to faith's ultimate plea: Give me vision, give me understanding. While vision takes one beyond the immediate, understanding helps to

cope with the now and the here. Therefore the enemy shall not prevail or rejoice forever. And it's time for praise!

The praise

The final stanza of the psalm (verses 5, 6) bursts forth in confidence and praise. Trust in the Lord is never in vain. Come wind, come storm, come death, come life, God's love stands steadfast. "My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt

bountifully with me."

My present may be shaky. A surgeon's knife or a friend's betrayal or a castle's collapse may provoke the question How long? But faith finds its answer in that quiet confidence that God who began a good work in me will bring it to completion (see Phil. 1:6). ■

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

Laodicea and holiness

J. David Newman

I have been shown that the greatest reason why the people of God are now found in this state of spiritual blindness is that they will not receive correction."¹ Who would have imagined when Ellen White wrote this in 1873 that we would still be here 120 years later? Does this apply only to the laity? I believe not. We as leaders need also to take responsibility. Very few people like to receive correction. It goes against the carnal heart. That is why we resist the message to the church of Laodicea. What does God want us to correct? One area concerns our conceptions of what is true holiness.

Holiness is very important to God. "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15, 16)*; "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14); "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives" (2 Peter 3:11); "It is God's will that you should be sanctified.

For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life" (1 Thess. 4:3-7).

"The great mistake made by most of the Lord's people is in hoping to discover in themselves that which is to be found in Christ alone."²

The Bible describes two types of holiness: one we possess in Christ when we are justified; and the second in which we grow more and more. The first is the result of the work of Christ for us; the second is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in us. The first is perfect and complete and is ours the moment we trust Christ; the second is progressive and incomplete as long as we are in this life.

Hebrews 10:10 speaks of the first kind of holiness: "And by that will [of God], we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." There is nothing more to add as far as the basis of our salvation is concerned.

We can rejoice in the perfect holiness we enjoy in Christ. "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Eph. 1:4); "But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without

blemish and free from accusation" (Col. 1:22). Do we have to wait until the end of our life to be holy? No. When do we become holy? The moment we trust in Christ we receive His righteousness as a gift. And this righteousness is perfect and complete.

However, because we are perfect in Christ does not mean that the Christian can then relax because Jesus has done it all. There is a second type of holiness. Hebrews 10:14 explains that while we are perfect in Christ "By one sacrifice he [Christ] has made perfect forever those who are being made holy"), we also need to grow in intrinsic holiness—"being made holy." God emphasizes that He does not want us walking in the ways of the world. "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). "Be transformed" is in the passive present, which indicates a continual transforming.



Tension arises when the holiness that

(Continued on page 30)

A church without walls

C. E. Dudley

Dreams and hopes of a veteran church leader.



For the past 31 years C. E. Dudley, D.Div., has been the president of South Central Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Nashville, Tennessee.

Jesus instilled into His followers a belief in the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Himself. He taught love, forgiveness, mercy, grace, and unity among the believers. He showed them an example in love and obedience. These attributes must be carried over into His remnant people.

Christ also gives His people a sense of freedom. First of all, freedom of the mind. This yields us a sense of self-worth, a dignity, a self-respect, an assurance that we can achieve whatever the challenge may be. The mission of God's church is to help us hold ourselves in His esteem. As a result peace comes to mind and love reigns supreme. Today the devil works to take over the minds of people. He operates in many subtle ways, but the Lord promises to keep us in perfect peace that passes all understanding. When God becomes the ruling influence of the mind, fears are dispelled and biases are overcome.

Jesus also gives freedom to the body. Health is not just a doctrine, but a vital part of the total gospel. Good health liberates the body. It is difficult for a soul to serve the Lord in its fullness when ailments enslave the body. The gospel teaches us to care for the body as the temple of God. The church has a duty to tell the world about this principle that God has given us.

A third type of freedom through Christ concerns the soul. Jesus forgives all sins. When we accept Him, there are no more "guilt trips" (see 1 John 1:9). All our sins are taken away. The church must proclaim this assurance to all the world!

Our task

When the Seventh-day Adventist Church was born in 1844, historic forces in the United States were in a state of despair mingled with hope. The abolitionist movement was at its height, proclaiming equality and freedom of all human beings. A bitter civil war raged in the country. The institution of slavery received a fatal blow. But more than freedom from human slavery, there was the possibility of freedom from sin, its results, its guilt. Adventism offered such freedom to all humankind, to the free and the bond. The gospel of Jesus makes all persons free indeed (see John 8:32).

Early leaders of the Adventist Church did not have a presence of mind that the truths given to them were for all people worldwide. There could be no "home going" until the "everlasting gospel" had been shared. This early misperception was set right, however, through the gift of prophecy in the ministry of Ellen White. It was she who directed the church in its mission to every kindred, tongue, and people.

I love this gift of prophecy, for it helped to set the church on the right course. The church became a worldwide organization. Ellen White wrote: "The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the

church will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God (Eph. 3:10)."¹

"The church is God's fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. . . . From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived. These sentinels gave the message of warning; and when they were called to lay off their armor, others took up the work. God brought these witnesses into covenant relation with Himself, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven. He has sent forth His angels to minister to His church, and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against His people."²

Because the Adventist Church has been faithful to its commission, it is found in all parts of the globe. In America, Europe, Africa, Inter-America, South America, Asia, the islands of the seas, the gospel is being preached and the honest in heart are accepting the truth.

My dream for the church

Because of my love for the Lord, I dream for the future of my church. I envision a dynamic, inclusive, growing, and united church awaiting her Lord's soon return.

I dream of a dynamic church. The church is here to tell the story of God's love—transforming, powerful, compassionate, caring love. We seem to have gotten caught up in institutionalism, in balance sheets, in things, in shoving for leadership, and in a feeling that we will be on earth forever. Sometimes it seems that we have lost sight of our original mission. We must seek the old paths. We must not waver from the commission that was given by our Lord. The Lord is not slack concerning His promises. He that shall come will come in just a little while (see 2 Peter 3:9-11). Oh, that we would do the work that has been assigned to us that the kingdom might come. Away with frustration and worry as to how to get the job moving. God never sends us out for failure. The work will be done!

I dream of a church willing to use everyone in its global service. Several years ago one of our missionaries told of an experience that he had during his tour of service in Africa. In those days, the

custom for getting an audience to hear the gospel preached was to go to the center of a village and begin ringing a bell. The natives would gather and the missionaries would proceed with their mission.

In one particular village that the missionary and his native pastor entered, the usual procedure for getting a crowd was followed. However, none came. In spite of many efforts people failed to respond. The missionary concluded that "we must shake the dust from our feet and go elsewhere." The African pastor suggested that they pray for the Lord to guide them as to which direction they should take. He did not see the village as being unreachable. He convinced the missionary that they should not give up but try to reach the people once more. The missionary agreed. Thus, they knelt and prayed. After the prayer, the pastor asked: "Did you hear what He said?" The missionary replied, "No, did you?" "Yes," responded the pastor. "Then you lead us!" said the missionary.

The next evening the two of them entered the village circle and began to look up into the heavens. The curious villagers began to gather around them and they too looked upward. What did they see? When the circle was filled with people, the pastor pointed to the constellation Orion and said: "He will come from there! The Deliverer will return to earth for His people through that space in the heavens." They then preached to them about the love and sacrifice of God for humanity and of His return for those who love Him and desire to go with Him when He comes. The villagers became very eager for the "return." God had answered the prayer of the pastor and had opened the door so that the gospel could be preached.

The next day after they had prayed, once again the pastor was given the reins to lead the way. The people responded to his guidance until finally the Seventh-day Adventist Church was established in a village in which it seemed hopeless to get the people to respond. God will finish His work in all the earth if we will permit Him to use whomever He will. The gifts to the church are spread among many people of many cultures, languages, dialects, and backgrounds. The work will grow when the church can bring itself to allow others to lead when the Lord has shown them the way and

Away with frustration and worry as to how to get the job moving. God never sends us out for failure.

given them the know-how.

I dream of a church ever growing. With nationals leading the church in most areas of the world, the church has shown enormous growth and maturity. George Brown in Inter-America, J. J. Nortey and L. D. Raelly in the two African divisions, and P. D. Chun in the Far East are providing directions to mushrooming church growth. Manuel Vasquez has written a powerful document on the challenge facing the church in North America. In this treatise, entitled "America's Changing Face and the Church's Changing Voice," he states: "The 'Browning of America' which some ethnic minority writers spoke of in the 80s was more than just a nice cliché. It was a forecast of things to come in the rapidly changing population mix of America."³ And then he quotes *Time* magazine: "Already 1 American in 4 defines himself as Hispanic or nonwhite. If the current trends in immigration and birth rates persist, the Hispanic population will have further increased an estimated 21 percent, the Asian presence about 22 percent, Blacks almost 12 percent, and Whites a little more than 2 percent when the twentieth century ends."⁴

Church growth among Hispanics and Asians has grown under the leadership of their own leaders. The gospel is being preached! And I have no doubt about my dream that this everlasting gospel will be carried to earth's remotest bounds and that our Lord will soon come!

I must speak now about the sons and daughters of former slaves in America. They were shown in vision to Ellen White as pleading for someone to come and teach them the ways of salvation.⁵ When the good news was finally shared with this downtrodden people, their minds, bodies, and souls became freed

A barrier makes prisoners of people on both sides of it. If it keeps someone out, it keeps someone else in.

by the "truth" and they began to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord. When Black leaders were used by God to give the message to their people in America, the work among them began to grow. In 1900 there were 50 Black members in the church in the United States; in 1909 there were 900; in 1918 there were 4,500; in 1944, when regional conferences were organized, there were 17,000 members.

Under regional leadership the membership had reached 21,800 by 1956; by 1960 it had grown to 70,000; by 1980 it was at 130,000; and in 1990 it stood at 218,000, accounting for 28 percent of the total membership of the North American Division. Regional conferences account for an annual baptism of 10,000. We do not baptize people to get money; but money comes when we baptize people. Tithe paid to the North American Division by its Black membership in regional conferences/churches during 1991 amounted to 18 percent (\$75 million) of the division receipts. Of the 42,000 baptized in the division during 1991, 18,000 were born outside the United States and more than 10,000 were baptized in the regional churches. The gospel is being preached to all mankind! Jesus will soon come.

I dream of a church without walls. The work of the church has been hampered by the setting of quotas, limitations by "qualifications," ethnic backgrounds, and the control of the finances to determine who will lead. On the isle of Patmos, John the Beloved envisioned that "there was no more sea." He had been separated from his church, his friends, and his family and placed on this island. He rejoiced when told by Jesus that when He returns there will be no more separation, no more division, no more "groups" but all one body, we. No

more sea. The church must reach this state before the end finally comes. Whoever is chosen by God to get the job finished must be used, whether he or she be Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, female, youth, or layperson. There must be no more "sea"!

Barriers continue to impede progress. A barrier makes prisoners of people on both sides of it. If it keeps someone out, it keeps someone else in. Barriers can exist between two people, or two churches, or two conferences, or two races, or the sexes. The result is always the same. It stops the flow of communication and ideas. It holds back the progress of God's work.

Some of the most impenetrable walls are built out of the most insubstantial things: words. Words become rules and policies, procedures and attitudes. Because words come easy, walls spring up faster than they can be torn down. Some words used in the Seventh-day Adventist circles that tend to build walls are: "qualified"; "I think I can work with him/her"; "we will study and look with favor"; "let us set up a search committee"; "you people"; "I was raised with these people, I understand them"; "now brethren, let's be Christians"; "let us have patience"; "who is supplying the money?"

This problem of barriers is something that we should be concerned about, because advancement of the cause of Jesus Christ requires innovation. Innovation stems from creativity that is possible only when individuals are not hampered by artificial barriers.

Free interchange between different races of people, communities, churches, conferences, unions, and divisions in different parts of the world and the nation will help to bring great success in the spread of the "everlasting gospel." This cannot be accomplished in any community or among any people as successfully as it might be as long as barriers remain in the organizational structure of the church. Various groups can be used to swell the church population, but those same people are given limited leadership roles, if any at all, because of the "walls." When ethnic groups realize that they are being overlooked and deprived, they go on their own to get their jobs done, and then arises the cry "polarization." This is another wall!

The temptation to erect a wall is always strong. In the beginning, the idea

behind it is that it will protect somebody from something and make him/her strong. But in the end, it only makes him/her weak by making him/her dependent upon the wall. A wall cannot prevent someone on the other side from having a good idea. It will not protect an inferior person from a superior one. Too long the church has implied by its actions that a number of its ethnic groups have nothing to offer in business, finances, or administration. Because of this attitude, the church has been the loser. But the worst thing about a wall is that it takes away "incentive" to work constructively with one's brothers and sisters. And this ultimately prevents the church from getting the best product or service that all of its members, regardless of national origin or race, have to offer.

As we move toward the year 2000, we must confess that time is not on our side. Seven million Seventh-day Adventists on Planet Earth are charged to share the "truth" with six billion people around the world. This is quite a responsibility.

The commission to the church remains the same: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"! "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness . . . ; and then shall the end come."

In the midst of a tornado that struck Louisville, Kentucky, a few years ago, one of its citizens raced into the street to hail passing motorists and urged that they leave their vehicles and join the group that was being sheltered in a nearby ditch that was filled with water. This was done for their safety. The group locked arms with each other; pushed their feet against the ground and held on to each other for dear life until the storm had passed. It made no difference as to who the one next to another was. Survival was the objective. Let us join hands, lock arms, press together, for a finished work in the earth. ■

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), p. 9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³ Manuel Vasquez, "America's Changing Face and the Church's Changing Voice" (Silver Spring, Md.: North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), p. 1.

⁴ William A. Henry III, "Beyond the Melting Pot," *Time*, Apr. 1990, p. 28. Quoted in Vasquez, p. 1.

⁵ White, *Testimonies* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 7, pp. 223-225.

Project SDA clergy: part 2

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In the first part of this research report (*Ministry*, April 1993) we presented findings regarding the demographic backgrounds of our

Adventist senior ministerial students and their first occupational assignments immediately after college graduation. A number of significant patterns were identified, along with some interesting comparisons between the responses of our subjects and two nonministerial student control groups (one from Adventist colleges and one from a state university).

In this concluding report on Project Seventh-day Adventist Clergy, we summarize and analyze additional response patterns from the 82 ministerial seniors whom we surveyed.

Issues and Answers

Among the most important items on the 127-question instrument was a lengthy set of Likert scales designed to measure the attitudes and positions of our respondents on a variety of issues. Some of these scales and findings are reported in Table 4 on the next page:

Discussion of Table 4

The 27 value- and issue-related statements in Table 4 were extrapolated from the 1987 survey of senior ministerial students. Response categories form a continuum of "agree, uncertain, and disagree" and appear as the three right-hand columns of Table 4.

In reading Table 4, one should also note that the 27 attitude scales are con-

veniently grouped into six subdivisions in order to facilitate discussion. However, these categories are not distinct or mutually exclusive, and other reasonable combinations of survey items are possible. In fact, other combinations and correlations are being explored in the ongoing study, together with a large amount of data not reflected in this report. A brief commentary on Table 4 findings follows.

Group 1 survey items: Literal or symbolic interpretation of Bible. In response to the first item in group 1, our student/subjects almost unanimously agreed that biblical accounts of miracles are literally true. This finding underscores their confidence in the Scriptures and a generalized belief in a God deeply concerned with and involved in the affairs of people. Item 2 elicited an almost identical pattern of response regarding the reality of heaven and hell. On both group 1 items the subjects take the traditional and conservative Christian position.

Group 2 survey items: Contemporary social issues. The same kind of conservative consensus was reached on item 3. Overwhelmingly, the subjects rejected the proposition that "the use of marijuana should be legalized." However, there was less agreement about the other social issues pinpointed in group 2. While a clear majority of the respondents (65 percent) take a pro-life, antiabortion stance on item 4, a substantial minority (24 percent) are pro-choice, with another 11 percent uncertain. The modest disagreement among the subjects re-

TABLE 4*

Attitudes and perspective of senior ministerial students regarding selected issues and questions (N = 82)

Survey item categories		Findings		
		Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
I. Literal Versus Symbolic Interpretation of Bible Doctrines				
	1. "All the miracles recorded in the Bible are literally true."	92%	2%	6%
	2. "Heaven and hell are very real to me."	94%	2%	4%
II. Contemporary Social Issues				
	3. "The recreational use of marijuana should be legalized."	5%	5%	90%
	4. "It is a woman's right to control her own body and have an abortion upon demand."	24%	11%	65%
	5. "Homosexuality is a victimless crime and should be decriminalized."	7%	20%	73%
	6. "It is very important to marry someone of your own race."	58%	13%	29%
III. Issues in the Church				
	7. "A Christian should not take up military arms to defend his country."	46%	29%	25%
	8. "There are some circumstances in which 'clean' meat may be eaten."	92%	0%	8%
	9. "Women who meet the customary requirements should be ordained into the SDA ministry."	63%	20%	17%
	10. "The activities of married women are best confined to the home and family."	26%	12%	62%
	11. "A little tea or coffee is harmless."	20%	8%	72%
	12. "Competitive athletic contests between SDA colleges and secular colleges are acceptable."	31%	28%	41%
	13. "The church organization could be improved."	88%	7%	5%
IV. Professional Clergy				
	14. "A minister should preach without expecting to be paid for it."	24%	10%	66%
	15. "SDA ministers are not paid a fair and adequate salary."	19%	16%	65%
	16. "A minister who is 'called' is better than one who is 'trained.'"	56%	11%	33%
	17. "SDA ministers should join the ministerial association in the cities where they live."	88%	7%	5%
V. Organized Religious Institutions (Church Authority and Doctrines)				
	18. "A person who is not willing to follow all the rules of the church should not be allowed to belong."	23%	14%	63%
	19. "Church doctrine is subject to future change or modification."	77%	6%	17%
	20. "In this complicated world of ours the only way we can know what is going on is to rely upon leaders or experts who can be trusted."	13%	6%	81%
	21. "Sexual relations before marriage are not morally wrong."	5%	4%	91%
VI. Christianity as Primary, Personal Relationship				
	22. "A person should feel his/her religion before joining a church."	30%	19%	51%
	23. "Ministers should preach more on the Bible and less on contemporary social issues and problems."	56%	21%	23%
	24. "In church, I would rather sing hymns than hear the choir sing."	34%	28%	38%
	25. "I like to sing the old gospel songs rather than the new hymns."	29%	28%	43%
	26. "I like the 'old-time' religion."	55%	32%	13%
	27. "We should emphasize education in religion more than conversion."	17%	12%	71%

* TABLES 1, 2, and 3 were included in the first segment of this report, PROJECT SDA CLERGY, PART I, published in April. Since this second segment is but a continuation, we begin with the summary of data in TABLE 4.

garding the legality of abortion and homosexual behavior probably reflects the much greater divisiveness of these issues in the secular world.

Disagreement is more apparent on item 6. While a small majority of the subjects (58 percent) still subscribe to the traditional homogeneity norm that people "should marry within their own racial group," a significant 29 percent disagree and an additional 13 percent are having second thoughts. And, in fact, interracial dating and marriage are more common in the United States today (and probably within the church as well).

Group 3 survey items: Issues in the church. The seven propositions enumerated in this section resulted in more surprising disagreements and departures from long-established Adventist policies and practices. Sizable minorities (and even majorities in some instances) disagree with statements that were almost "institutionalized absolutes" in earlier generations of Adventists. For example, 54 percent of the respondents were less than convinced that "a Christian should not take up military arms to defend his country" (item 7). Nearly all (92 percent) agree that "there are some circumstances in which 'clean' meat may be eaten" (item 8). Item 12 reveals that the subjects are much less willing to ingest tea or coffee, with 72 percent perceiving these products as harmful. On the other hand, the group of ministerial students is largely ready to break with tradition on the ordination of women, with 63 percent favoring ordination of qualified candidates and another 20 percent indecisive. This liberal position on ordination is supported by similar findings on the acceptable role(s) for married women. Sixty-two percent seem amenable to careers and occupations for women outside the narrow confines of spouse, homemaker, and motherhood (see table 4, items 9 and 10).

A more diversified response pattern emerged for item 12 concerning the participation of Adventist colleges in athletic competition with other schools. Although 41 percent of the subjects conservatively rejected such a notion, another 31 percent were in agreement, and the remaining 28 percent were uncertain. There is some reason to believe that ministerial groups such as this one are typically more conservative than the general church population, and a similar

survey of laypersons might produce even more liberal views on this and other variables under study.

The last proposition in this series, item 13, generated a strong and interesting finding. Some 88 percent of the respondents agreed that "the church organization could be improved." While the authors will leave the definitive interpretation of this finding to church leadership, in our judgment it represents dissatisfaction with administrative structure and/or process and *not* disloyalty or theological differences. It probably also reflects an openness to new ideas and perhaps innovation in church organization.

Group 4 survey items: Professional clergy. A *profession* is an occupational calling that usually requires specialized knowledge and intensive academic training. A *professional* is one who engages in such a role for appropriate remuneration, in contrast to an amateur practitioner. Moreover, the professional must conform to certain technical or ethical standards and probably holds membership in societies of colleagues who share the vocation.

Several survey questions probed for insights into the professionalization of Seventh-day Adventist clergy. For example, item 14 of Table 4 found that 66 percent of the graduating ministerial students disagreed with the proposition that "a minister should preach without expecting to get paid for it." An additional 10 percent were uncertain. In other words, the majority believe that "the labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7). This should not be interpreted as a loss of altruism, because item 15 shows that nearly the same large percentage (65 percent) believed that Adventist ministers are paid a fair salary. At the same time, item 16 apparently confirms a deep division among the respondents regarding the primacy of being called versus being trained for the ministry, with "the call" leading by a small majority (56 percent).

Finally, a definite indicator of professionalism is found in the responses to item 17, in which an overwhelming 88 percent endorsed the suggestion that Adventist ministers should join local ministerial associations.

Group 5 survey items: Attitudes toward the organized religious institution.

Some 88 percent of the respondents agreed that "the church organization could be improved."

Specifically, this group of questionnaire scales focused on attitudes and opinions regarding church authority and doctrines. In general, the response pattern was more liberal than anticipated. A majority of the subjects demonstrated flexibility and independence when addressing the propositions listed as items 18, 19, and 20. Only 23 percent agreed wholeheartedly that "church membership should be contingent upon acquiescence to all church regulations." Sixty-three percent disagreed and 14 percent were uncertain about such a proposition. In harmony with this position, 77 percent of these senior ministerial students agreed that "church doctrine is subject to future modification" (item 19). Additional evidence of the autonomous thinking of this group was the 81 percent who registered reservations about investing total trust and reliance in acknowledged leaders (item 20).

A reaffirmation of their conservative belief in the Bible (as previously indicated) and application of moral codes to everyday life was manifested in the almost unanimous condemnation (91 percent) of "sexual relations before marriage" (item 21).

Group 6 survey items: Christianity as primary personal experience or secondary relationship with the church. The survey items grouped together in this subcategory were collectively designed to assess each subject's perception of spiritual needs and the quality of interaction with the church in meeting those needs.

Some individuals seek a more personal and spontaneous encounter with God and see this as more likely and more satisfying in smaller, less structured religious groups and meetings whose pri-

It takes time before a person achieves a consistent pattern of responses and positions on all related issues.

mary interaction is sometimes thought to be more characteristic of former times in the church. Other persons are more attracted to formal worship services and are spiritually edified and uplifted by highly trained clergy and musicians in a religious milieu featuring secondary relationships and less personal involvement. Our 82 senior ministerial students gave mixed and often uncertain responses to the survey questions in this area. (See items 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27.)

Fifty-one percent disagreed with the statement that "a person should feel his/her religion before joining a church." The remaining 49 percent agreed or were uncertain regarding the efficacy of the personal, emotional, religious experience as a prerequisite for church membership (item 22). This lack of consensus is partially neutralized by the responses to item 27. Seventy-one percent rejected an emphasis on religious education over against conversion of new members. Regarding the content of sermons and worship services, a small majority agreed that Bible-based topics and "the old-time religion" are preferable. But sizable minorities disagreed (items 23 and 26).

Church music—as a vehicle for participation in religious services and spiritual fulfillment—also came under scrutiny. However, responses to item 24 ("In church, I would rather sing hymns than hear the choir sing") and item 25 ("I like to sing the old gospel songs rather than the new hymns") were spread inconclusively between "agree," "uncertain," and "disagree." Although the data may suggest a trend favoring modern, formal, and structured musical expression in our church services, the lack of comparative data from earlier ministerial groups studied limits the validity of such a conclusion.

The church-sect continuum

It is appropriate and perhaps important at this point for the authors to observe that we have no vested theological or political interest or objective in this research project. We see our task as objectively reporting the data and trends that may indicate significant and helpful findings for the church and its ministry. Concomitant data interpretations have been modest. Now, as we approach the conclusion of Project Seventh-day Adventist Clergy, Parts 1 and 2, it may be useful to review briefly a sociological construct that has been applied to social change and dynamics in numerous religious organizations, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹

A hasty and superficial perusal of Table 4 might suggest that the polarization of subjects on some survey items is a simple manifestation of the old "conservative versus liberal controversy" in the church. Such a dichotomous and stereotypical conclusion is an oversimplification of complex social variables and human behaviors. One confounding factor is that the same subjects are often inconsistent in their responses to typical "liberal" versus "conservative" positions on certain survey scales. This appearance of vacillation or fluctuation in subject responses, depending on the issue, may indicate that a process of change is underway. Major attitudinal changes occur unevenly. It takes time before a person achieves a consistent pattern of responses and positions on all related issues.²

A more specifically sociological interpretation of Table 4 findings indicates that we are seeing some evidence of an inexorable and classic march along the church-sect continuum. Ernst Troeltsch³ argued that the history of Christianity can be perceived as a cycle of compromise with the secular world and regeneration of fresh opposition to that spirit of accommodation.

Troeltsch, Max Weber, and others sought a theoretical resolution to this paradox by suggesting that religious bodies manifest sequential and alternating church and sect restructuring. In other words, ideological and organizational strain results in recurring separation and transition of a portion of a fully developed church to a more elementary form of religious society—the sect. The "church" is characterized as formal, affluent, liberal, universal, bureaucratic,

well institutionalized, with professional clergy, and generally respected in the larger society. The "sect" begins as a subgroup within the church that becomes disenchanted with the "worldly compromise" and "loss of original mission." This minority group calls for spiritual and organizational reform and a return to "the old-time religion." This alienation ultimately leads to a split from the parent church of a small religious sect characterized by conservatism, primary relationships, less formal rituals and organization, and great missionary zeal. In many ways, the sect is the very antithesis of the church.⁴

In time, the sect gains in membership, affluence, and respectability in the larger society. Gradually, Troeltsch and his colleagues observed, the growing sect patterns its organization, rituals, and codified doctrines more and more like those of the church that it originally rejected. In short, the sect evolves into a church from which, over time, the dialectic strain and social adjustment are repeated as newer sects emerge and embark upon their evolution into churches. This ongoing developmental process of church to sect to church to sect has been applied by numerous scholars and writers to help explain the development and dynamics of many religious movements and organizations.⁵ While it is possible to apply this reasoning as a partial interpretation of the data and findings presented in Table 4, such conclusions should remain tentative for the time being.

In evaluating the significance of the above hypothesis regarding the church-sect continuum, we must remember that these data reflect just one ministerial group at one point in time. We have no earlier group of comparable subjects or similar set of empirical data with which to compare and trace such hypothesized ideological and behavioral changes. Despite the intrinsic value and challenge of the data generated by Project Seventh-day Adventist Clergy, we caution against subjective and impressionistic (and perhaps invalid) conclusions. The future for Adventist clergy placement, the status of the church in general at some point on the church-sect continuum, as well as the direction and magnitude of movement would all be enhanced if we treat this data as a reference point for future data collections. Then our conclusions would rest upon careful, longi-

tudinal, and repeated contextual comparisons.

Ministerial motivations

The final dimension of Project Seventh-day Adventist Clergy focused on the motivations, circumstances, and cognitive processes involved in our respondents' decision to embark upon the college preparatory course for the ministry. This understudied and fascinating area of inquiry is reflected in Table 5.

The subjects' answers to survey questions about why they chose a ministerial major were subjected to a systematic content analysis. This methodology enabled us to separate the subjects' responses into topological categories reflecting dominant motives for pursuing a ministerial career. As the researchers processed the responses of these students regarding their motivation for wanting to be ministers, we often felt impressed and inspired by their sincerity and commitment.

At the top of Table 5 we see that nearly a third (31 percent) of the 82 subjects expressed a feeling that they were called by God into the ministry of the church. Another 6 percent of the ministerial students indicated that they felt no such particular "call" or sense of "divine mission." The remaining 63 percent—a clear majority—cited more specific reasons and motives for choosing the ministry, which we recorded as five subcategories in the top half of Table 5. The largest number of subjects with specific rationale fall into two motivational categories: "Moved and motivated by love for God and humanity" (19 percent), and "Emphasis on personal talents specific to the ministerial role" (20 percent).

One of the most interesting inquiries on the survey questionnaire had to do with miraculous experiences related to the subject's career choice. More than one-fifth (22 percent) of these 82 senior ministerial students indicated that they had experienced such phenomena (see footnote at bottom of Table 5).

The last section of Table 5 deals with the mental and emotional process involved in their career choice. Apparently, the large majority (83 percent) of decisions developed after considerable deliberation. On the other hand, a minority (17 percent) of these students reported making their decisions rather quickly and decisively. It may prove

TABLE 5

Dominant motives for taking college preparatory course for ministry (N = 82)

- A general, inward feeling that God, through His Spirit, has called respondent into the gospel ministry 31%

More Specific Reasons and Motives:

- Moved and motivated by love for God and humanity 19%
- Responded to biblical command, i.e., the gospel commission 8%
- Emphasis on God-given, personal talents specific to the task, e.g., leadership, experience, preaching, and teaching skills 20%
- Personal happiness and fulfillment associated with ministry 11%
- Fear of being "lost" if did not warn world of sin and judgment 5%

- No particular feeling of a "call" or sense of mission 6%

- Respondents in above categories who also cited miraculous experiences associated with their decision to prepare for ministry* 22%

Mental and Emotional Decision-making Process Involved in Respondents' Choosing a Ministerial Career

- Respondents making a thoughtful, careful, and purposeful decision 83%
- Respondents making a more spontaneous and immediate decision 17%

*The wide variety of supernatural phenomena cited by these earnest ministerial students include signs, dreams, doors of opportunity opened and closed that made their course of action clear; also healings, miracles, an overwhelming sense of the literal presence of God, visions (for one), rescue from drugs, alcohol, and crime (for a number), and the survival of a course in Greek.

useful in later phases of this research project to correlate the type of "call" and the nature of the response with subsequent developments in the ministerial careers of our subjects.

Conclusion

An unusual bond formed between the three college professors comprising the research team for this project and the ministerial students who so cheerfully cooperated with us. Thus, a final word to our subjects is in order:

As we have pondered your responses to our probing questions, we have come to regard you as special indeed—not only to us but to God. In time you will experience for yourselves the deeper meaning of those poignant words so

often spoken at ordinations: "Welcome to the joys and sorrows of the ministry." And we pray that you will always be courageous and true. ■

¹ Ronald L. Johnstone, *Religion in Society: A Sociology of Religion*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988), pp. 72, 73, 81-84.

² Keith A. Roberts, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1984), pp. 61, 62, 205-209.

³ Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1931 and 1950).

⁴ Rodney Stark and William Sims, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of Calif. Press, 1985).

⁵ Johnstone.

Decisions: persuading people for Christ

Mark Finley

Evangelism is not complete without leading people to a decision.



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In His ministry for souls, what Jesus was counted as much as what He said. Decisions were made not only because of the facts

He presented but because of the man He was. Jesus won hearts through relationship as well as through truth. He identified with people. Persuasion involves both logos (knowledge) and ethos (confidence) regarding the truthsayer.

But feelings may be both positive and negative. And negative feelings can lead to a negative decision. Thus, not only message and messenger but method is critical in getting a positive decision. How we speak truth affects results.

So does *when* we speak truth. A Messianic passage brings the above elements together: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how [method] to speak a word [what is said] in season [when it should be said] to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back [the kind of person Jesus was]" (Isa. 50:4, 5). Some of us haven't learned.

"I'm so excited with the truth," a convert told me, "that I've shared your tape on the mark of the beast with my relatives."

The wrong message. The wrong time. The wrong way. And certainly a setback in relationship.

Speak "the truth in love," advised Paul (Eph. 4:15). That's God's way—to present beautiful truth through loving

people. Decisions are rooted in interpersonal relationships. The more confidence one has in the messenger, the deeper the relationship established, the more likely is a positive decision.

Let's look at three aspects of leading people to decision: The ABCs of the process, the role of the will, and the language of the appeal.

The ABCs of decision

Let's follow Jesus and observe Him using the ABCs of decision: acceptance, belief, and confidence.

1. *Acceptance.* It quickly becomes evident that Jesus accepted men and women where they were. He ministered to them in the condition in which He found them. He did not work for change before establishing a relationship of confidence. We see Him meet a woman of Samaria at a well. He establishes confidence by asking a favor when His countrymen would not even speak to a Samaritan. At the Pool of Bethesda Jesus meets a physical need before seeking a decision. With Nicodemus He consents to a private night meeting to preserve the privacy of the seeking Pharisee.

Reflect on the contacts, and you'll likely isolate the ingredients of acceptance—agreement and approval.

(a) *Agreement.* In seeking decisions, first seek areas of agreement, however small. A small agreement will open the way to bigger agreements. To seek decision by saying "I disagree with you" is to fracture a relationship before it has had time to "set"; and broken relationships lead to negative decisions.

(b) *Approval.* When onlookers condemned Mary for "wasting" expensive

ointment on His feet, Jesus praised her for her kindness. Her act would be remembered through the centuries. He told her, as a symbol of loving kindness. Jesus complimented the centurion by declaring, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matt. 8:10). "O woman, great is thy faith," He said admiringly to the Canaanite woman (Matt. 15:28). Repeatedly, Jesus demonstrated acceptance by agreeing when He could, by approving, by complimenting, and by appreciating.

Jesus even found ways to express approval of those who had reservations about Him. Speaking of a scribe who had been questioning Jesus, Mark 12:34 states, "When Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Jesus looked for a good point. He demonstrated approval. Don't be repelled by negative attitudes or actions on the part of others. They shouldn't have to approve of you before you can approve of them. Don't appear shocked. Demonstrate genuine acceptance. Attempt to agree with them on every point possible. Look for something that you can reveal appreciation for, and then, as you can, by little confidences, by little compliments, attempt to build a bond of unity. Remember, acceptance is manifested by *agreement* and by *approval*.

To demonstrate acceptance of others, get them talking about themselves, their home, the town they live in, their work, their family, their business, their ideas, their accomplishments, their background, their hobbies, their sports.

Jesus accepted men and women where they were and began to build bonds of friendship that later would be bridges over which the truth could march into their minds.

2. Belief. This is the second key principle in our ABCs. Nobody is won by a person he or she doesn't like. Nobody likes a person who will not extend full acceptance. Believe that the individual sincerely desires truth and wants to follow Jesus. Believe he/she is winnable to Christ and His cause. Believe that this person is honest and desires to make the right decision. If you believe that people are hard-hearted, unresponsive, and unreachable, your own attitude will be reflected in the decisions they make.

In a study done by Andrews University of more than 8,300 Seventh-day

Adventists from 320 churches in North America, one of the major findings was the fact that those churches and individuals who believed that men and women were winnable were growing the fastest.

The survey stated: "Some have called it the self-fulfilling prophecy syndrome, but simply put, there is a strong correlation between a pastor's belief that his church *can* grow and the degree to which it does grow. Those pastors, and we might add as well, church members, who rated their church's growth potential highest were experiencing rapid growth in membership."¹

This belief principle also is illustrated by Jesus. He saw people not only as they were, but as they could become. When He looked at the woman at the well He saw, not an outcast coming from the lower level of society, but a woman who had been hurt and bruised, and He reached out in love. Jesus saw Peter not as a rough and outspoken fisherman, but as a mighty preacher. He saw Joseph of Arimathea, not as a sophisticated, wealthy businessman, but as one who needed to find the Pearl of Great Price. Jesus saw the centurion, not as a hardened military man, but as a master who loved his servant. He saw Nicodemus, not as a leader of the opposition filled with religious bigotry, but as one who desperately needed to have a new heart. Jesus saw the best in people. He believed in them, and He confidently expected them to make a decision to follow Him.

3. Confidence. In leading men and women to decisions for the Master it is imperative that we act confidently, as if it were impossible for us to fail or be disappointed. Expect the person to make the decision. People often act the way we expect them to. Have you ever noticed that when you smile at someone that person nearly always smiles back? Friendliness begets friendliness, trust begets trust, confidence begets confidence. Christ believed in people and confidently anticipated a positive response. He brought out the best in them. Thus they rose to His expectations.

The role of the will in decision-making

A mother took her children to the ice-cream store, and the ice-cream vendor asked, "Chocolate or vanilla?"

"Why don't you have more flavors?" the mother replied. "I get so tired of these two."

Jesus saw the best in people. He believed in them, and He confidently expected them to make a decision to follow Him.

"Lady," the vendor sighed, "if you knew how much time it takes them to make up their minds between chocolate and vanilla, you'd never add another flavor."

Some decisions in life are relatively unimportant, like a decision between chocolate and vanilla ice cream. Yet the power of choice is a God-given faculty. It is absolutely essential that the soul winners understand the place of the will in decision-making. The will is the master key of decision.

The ocean liner *Queen Elizabeth* weighs approximately 85,000 tons, yet is guided by a rudder weighing only 65 tons. The rudder, though small compared to the rest of the ship, still controls its direction. Human will is the rudder of life. It is not the soul winner's prerogative to manipulate the will or to force it. Yet we will not succeed in soul winning until we understand how the Holy Spirit relates to it.

"What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will."² "Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in the life. By yielding up the will to Christ, we ally ourselves with divine power. We receive strength from above to hold us steadfast. A pure and noble life, a life of victory over appetite and lust, is possible to everyone who will unite his weak, wavering human will to the omnipotent, unwavering will of God."³

Every decision that is made, whether it be to buy a vacuum cleaner or to accept Bible truth and become a Seventh-day Adventist Christian, involves four basic levels.

Implanting conviction

Mark Finley

CONVICTION comes, basically, when an individual has adequate information. But your having

given information does not mean your listener has *received* it. If the information is clear and free from major obstacles and apparent contradictions, God, through the Holy Spirit, brings about conviction. But information will not lead to conviction unless that information is *clear*.

Giving a Bible study on the second coming of Christ, for example, I desire to plant the conviction that Christ is coming soon. So, I might review the study in two or three minutes, saying: "John, *is it clear* to you that when Christ comes He's coming in the clouds of heaven with all the angels so that every eye can see him? Do you believe in your heart that we're living in the last days?" If the response is negative, I must back up and give more information before moving on to conviction. Receiving a positive response, however, I might go on.

Thus conviction has taken place not simply as a person has listened to Bible texts, but as he has *actively* responded to questions regarding obedience to the Word of God. It is important to emphasize here that the questioning must not be of a threatening nature. The idea is not to intimidate, but to discover the person's understanding and views of material presented. Also, emotional questions requiring vague answers, such as, "Isn't the Sabbath truth wonderful?" ought to be avoided. This type of questioning will only result in a defensive response or a passive nod of assent.

Specific questioning allows you

to discover the objections in the minds of the people. So on any topic, we ask a series of questions that may be phrased like this: "Is it clear to you that Jesus is coming soon? Is it clear to you that the Bible Sabbath is Saturday? Do you believe that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? Have you ever understood before our evangelistic presentation that baptism is by immersion?"

Each question, then, is designed to reveal both a personal understanding of, and belief in, the topic presented. Answers sought are specific and often fall into a "yes" or "no" format. Once these questions have been positively answered, conviction texts are read that reveal the action God requires and the seriousness of ignoring such directives. Here are a few examples.

1. *Personal salvation.* "John, the Bible says 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23). In Acts 4:12 it says, 'There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved' except Jesus Christ. Do you sense that the only way to be saved is through Christ? Knowing that without Him we are eternally lost, would you like to open your heart to receive this Christ tonight?"

2. *Second coming.* "The Bible teaches that when Jesus returns, you and I will see Him coming. Revelation 1:7 tells us that 'every eye shall see Him.' If you and I are going to greet Him with joyous and untroubled hearts, we must be doing everything now that we know is right. Do you understand that the only way to meet Jesus in peace is to allow Him, through His Holy Spirit, to take out of your life any habit that would separate you from Him?"

3. *Sabbath.* "As we have studied

the Sabbath together have you begun to feel a deepening conviction concerning what God wants you to do? Do you more clearly understand what God expects? Do you see that the Sabbath is part of the Ten Commandment law? Do you hear God calling you to keep the Sabbath? Do you see that the Sabbath is required for Christians today who love Jesus Christ—that true obedience is a necessity, if we really are Christians? The Bible says, in 1 John 2:4, that if we say we follow Christ and are not obedient, we are liars and the truth is not in us. Obedience is the test of the Christian life. Would you like to show your obedience to Christ by keeping His Sabbath?"

4. *Healithful living.* "The Bible teaches that our bodies are the temples of God. But it teaches, as well, that God desires us to keep those bodies pure and holy. 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17 says, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.' Do you want to show your love for Christ by keeping your body pure?"

5. *Baptism.* "The Bible says, in John 3:5, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' In Mark 16:16, it says, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' Would you like to express your belief in Christ by immersion baptism?"

You can be an effective soul winner. With your Bible open, supply men and women with clear and accurate information. Assist them by supplying answers to their questions. Read texts which will produce deepening conviction.

1. *Information.* Right decisions won't be made in life unless an individual has right information. In deciding to buy a new car, for example, we shop around, gathering information. We look at the advantages or disadvantages of purchasing various models, comparing facts on performance, gas mileage, comfort, and affordability. The information level enables us to gather the facts we need to move toward a more intelligent decision.

To call for decision before there's adequate information creates barriers in the human mind, and at that point the will makes a negative rather than a positive decision. Therefore, in leading men and women to decision, it is necessary to ask the following questions: Do they have adequate information to make the decision? Are they intelligently informed regarding the decision I am asking them to make?

2. *Conviction.* After gathering information, an individual begins to sense what seems to be the right decision for his or her particular situation—what he or she really ought to do. In a decision for Christ, an individual's conscience suggests, "This is what I believe God wants me to do. This is what I believe is God's will. If I fail to take the appropriate action, I will be outside of God's will."

When a person is under conviction, on the positive side there is the deepening sense of rightness by taking the appropriate action, and on the negative side there is the deepening sense of guilt by not taking that action. On the other hand, decisions usually are not made just because a person is convicted to do something. Some may have a conscience so sensitive that if they are prompted by a sense of rightdoing and plagued by a sense of wrongdoing, the right decision will be made. Yet the next level of decision is crucial.

3. *Desire.* In the desire step, one sorts out one's own feelings, identifying not merely what one ought to do, but what one wants to do. "You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink." But salt can.

Place a block of salt next to the water, let the horse lick the salt, and he soon will become so thirsty he will want to drink. Salt awakens desire.

As soul winners we are the salt of the earth. It is necessary to present the gospel to people in such a way that not only will they have adequate information and

be convicted that they ought to do something, but they will want to do it. Throughout the Bible God Himself presents the joy of heaven, the terrors of hell, and His own love as powerful motives to heighten our desire.

4. *Action.* When conviction and desire are heightened, an individual acts. Thus the key to the final action is to go beyond information to conviction and desire. J. L. Shuler puts it this way: "Since knowledge, conviction, and desire lead to decision, the sermons, the Bible studies, and the personal talks should be an artful interweaving of the factors of desire and conviction in respect to the given subject. This is needed for bringing about the requisite interplay of knowledge, conviction, and desire for acceptance, decision, and action. As we analyze certain texts we discover that some are especially designed to bring knowledge, others to bring conviction, and still others to bring desire. And often the same text has in it the elements of all three. We need to focus on these texts that will implant conviction and at the same time arouse desire for accepting and following God's great principles as we present them in our Bible studies to the student."⁴

The language of appeal

Successful soul winners are sensitive to the use of language. Would-be soul winners rely on glib religious phrases and clichés without considering the different personalities with which they are working. Remember, each listener has a unique perceptual set. Use it to win that person. Ignore it, and you may lose him or her.

1. *Three perceptual sets.* Students of human behavior place people in one of three classes: visual, audio, and kinesthetic. *Visuals* solve problems by seeing the solution in the form of pictures in the mind. Since their analytical thought processes are visual, such people respond well to slides or charts and diagrams. They are the kind of people who, when thinking about a vacation, see themselves on the beach relaxing, picturing the strong glint of sun on sand and water.

Audios, on the other hand, structure their thought patterns around the mode of sound. The husband hears his wife talking to him, the boss shouting at him, the children's voices as they play. Audios do not picture themselves sitting in the shade or lounging on the beach when

Remember, each listener has a unique perceptual set. Use it to win that person.

they think of vacation, but they hear the sweet music coming over the radio, the sound of surf pounding on rocks. Their predominant sense is audio—hearing.

Kinesthetics center their thought patterns largely around the mode of *touch*. They relate well to back patting, embracing, solid handshakes. Thinking of their vacations, they feel the warm sun soaking into their bodies, the exhilaration of the cold plunge into the ocean.

Naturally, people do not fall solely and exclusively into one of these categories. Yet each of us does have a strong tendency to operate primarily within the realm of one of the three sense impressions. The implications for soul winning are obvious. When dealing with an individual who *sees* things, my most effective approach will not be to plug in a tape recorder, but to set up a slide projector.

2. *Jesus reached all three sets.* Perfectly tuned in to the personalities of those around Him, Jesus demonstrated His ability to reach different people by different means.

When conversing with those who were *visually* oriented, He painted pictures in rich hues to illustrate His message. He talked of the shepherd going out to find his sheep, the man hunting for the treasure hidden in a field, the prodigal's father running to his son with tear-stained cheeks. As they listened, people saw the message of the gospel in panoramic scenes before them and felt the answering chord of response.

When speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus used an *audio* appeal. Knowing his background as a Pharisee, his custom of listening to the reading of the law, Jesus said, "The wind blows where it listeth, but you cannot see it. You hear the sound thereof." Jesus knew that as surely as

(Continued on page 29)



Adventists and Evangelicals: another viewpoint

Michelle Rader

Dr. Raymond Holmes's article "Adventist Identity and Evangelical Criticism" (*Ministry*, February 1993) makes an assumption and a charge that leave me uncomfortable. First, the article creates an impression that Evangelicals are for cheap grace. Second, the article charges as untrue the Evangelical criticism that Adventists walk the tightrope of legalism even as they continue to profess justification by faith. In addition, the article alleges that Evangelicals require of Adventists to abandon their insistence on sanctification if they wish to be considered evangelical. These points demand a fair inquiry and a rebuttal.

Evangelicals and cheap grace

Some Evangelicals may speak of a salvation experience that can be interpreted as cheap grace, but that does not mean cheap grace is the main thrust of

Evangelical doctrine. Dr. Holmes himself quotes Donald G. Bloesch, a leading Evangelical scholar, as saying that the hallmarks of devotion to Christ are "(1) the believer being made righteous and (2) victorious living," and that "justification is to be fulfilled in sanctification if it is to benefit us."

But what is Evangelicalism? Evangelicalism is a movement that spans denominational affiliations. The identifying mark of an Evangelical is not a name but conformity to certain theological emphases. Historically, such emphases include belief that "salvation is an act of unmerited divine grace received through faith in Christ, not through any kind of penance or good works. . . . The guilt of sin is removed immediately, while the inward process of renewing and cleansing (sanctification) takes place as one leads the Christian life. By grace believers are saved, kept, and empowered to live a life of service."¹

To understand contemporary Evangelical view on the "interdependence of justification and sanctification," we must look at what they themselves claim to believe:

1. *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, which contains the contributions of more than 200 Evangelical scholars, defines the relationship between justification and sanctification this way: "Justification and sanctification are not separate in time (1 Cor. 6:11), for God's justifying act sets the sinner apart for service; not separable in experience, but only in thought. . . . To those who wondered whether men counted right-

teous on the ground of faith might go on sinning with impunity, Paul retorted that the faith expressed in faith-baptism so unites the convert to Christ that he dies with Christ to sin, is buried with Christ to all that belongs to his past life, and rises with Christ to new life in which sin's reign is broken."²

2. *Testimony of Willow Creek*. Willow Creek Community Church, Chicago, is one of the largest Evangelical churches in North America. Its mission statement on small group ministries includes the following: "To connect people relationally in groups (four to ten individuals) for the purpose of growing in Christlikeness, loving one another, and contributing to the work of the church, in order to glorify God and make disciples of all nations."

The Evangelicals of Willow Creek then elaborate on that mandate: "It is God's plan that those who call on His name should be like Him in attitude and behavior. The church exists not just to collect the saints, but to transform them."

3. *Testimony of a contemporary writer*. John Stott, longtime prominent Evangelical leader and biblical scholar, writes the following about sanctification: "The cross is the means of our sanctification. . . . We have been crucified with Christ (2:20). We have crucified our fallen nature (5:24). And the world has been crucified to us, as we have been to the world (6:14). So the cross means more than the crucifixion of Jesus; it includes our crucifixion, the crucifixion of our flesh and of the world."³

Michelle Rader writes from Nashville, Tennessee.

Viewpoint is designed to allow readers an opportunity to express opinions regarding matters of interest to their colleagues. The ideas expressed in this feature are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church or the opinions of the Ministry staff. —Editors.

And later in *Christianity Today*: "The fruit of the Spirit is Christlikeness. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that 'we . . . are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.' Christlike holiness is God's purpose for you and me."⁴

Clearly, a broad range of Evangelicals are well balanced in their understanding of the relationship between justification and sanctification and do not teach cheap grace. There are some within Adventism today who claim, as historic Adventist doctrine, beliefs that the Seventh-day Adventist Church officially rejects. Likewise, some call themselves Evangelicals but may preach beliefs that are definitely not a part of Evangelical theology.

The Adventist dilemma

In refuting the criticism of some Evangelicals that Adventists are legalists in practice, even though they profess justification by faith, Dr. Holmes makes an astounding claim: "Seventh-day Adventists have long believed and preached justification by faith. . . . Much of the criticism of Adventism as legalistic is based on ignorance, prejudice, changes within the Evangelical understanding of justification by faith, and an unwillingness to see the lordship of Christ and Christian obedience as essential components of salvation and discipleship."

Admittedly, there have been individuals in the Adventist Church including Ellen White who clearly understood the faith basis of salvation. But this does not mean the church as a whole has always been clear in its belief, proclamation, and practice on the doctrine of justification by faith. In fact, the recent Valuegenesis study shows that the majority of Adventist young people are not at all clear on this subject. Eighty percent of them testify: "To be saved I have to live by God's rules." Sixty-two percent believe that "the way to be accepted by God is to try sincerely to live a good life."

The perception that Adventism suffers from legalism is not based on ignorance, as Dr. Holmes argues, but on *our own scientific studies!* To say that there is no division or misunderstanding in our church on the subject of justification by faith is not realistic.

In arguing that Evangelicals "are prepared to relegate Seventh-day Adventists

to the cult heap if we persist in maintaining a balance between justification and sanctification," Dr. Holmes quotes a *Christianity Today* article, "The Recent Truth About Seventh-day Adventism," by Kenneth Samples. In that article Dr. Holmes sees an "implied threat": "For Adventism to become 'thoroughly' Evangelical would require abandoning its understanding of the interdependence of justification and sanctification in salvation." But Samples holds no such threat. In fact his article reflects a thorough understanding of the Adventist dilemma and the debate over the gospel. I wish Dr. Holmes's article had quoted the appeal of Samples: "Like any Christian group, if Seventh-day Adventism is going to be blessed of the Lord, its identity must come from a fidelity to the everlasting gospel. . . . May it not be said that Seventh-day Adventism is more sure of its denominational distinctives than it is of the gospel."⁵

Dialogue, not isolation

Walter Martin, the late Evangelical scholar whose research on Seventh-day Adventists led to the removal of the cultist label from Adventism, said of us: "They are sound on the great New Testament doctrines including grace and redemption through the vicarious offering of Jesus Christ 'once for all' (Heb. 10:10) and give evidence of 'life in Christ.'"⁶

Such statements show clearly that

prominent Evangelicals who study Adventism fully support our official doctrinal statements on salvation. Even though they do not agree with certain of our distinctive doctrines, they do not call for us to abandon belief in sanctification.

The fact is, many Evangelicals do preach Christ and the importance of holy living. This is the case with a broad range of Evangelicals of both yesterday and today, in line with the position of the Reformers. And there are many Adventists still confused over the basis of their salvation and who believe God accepts them on the basis of their works. Rather than retreating into defensive isolation, Adventism and Evangelicalism should continue an open and friendly dialogue. We should encourage each other in looking to Christ alone for salvation, while dying to the old life of sin and rising to a life of holiness and service.

¹ John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1986), p. 380.

² *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 970.

³ Stott, pp. 350, 351. Scripture references in parentheses are to the epistle of Galatians.

⁴ —, "The Unforbidden Fruit," *Christianity Today*, August 17, 1992, p. 36.

⁵ Kenneth R. Samples, "The Recent Truth About Seventh-day Adventism," *Christianity Today*, Feb. 5, 1990, p. 21.

⁶ Walter R. Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1965), p. 419.

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Environmental stewardship

Monica Gullon

Seven things your church can do.



A free-lance author and the daughter of a minister, Monica Gullon writes from Glendale, California.

Tropical rain forests destroyed, the Grand Canyon engulfed in smog, dolphins found dead with discarded plastic roped around their necks—these are the environmental tragedies we witness on television. Newspaper headlines trumpet similar tidings, yet many Christians ignore environmental issues. “And why not?” they reason. “Isn’t Christ coming soon to destroy the earth Himself?”

The Bible warns: “You do not know which day your Lord is coming” (Matt. 24:42).^{*} Until then we must remain faithful stewards of the resources entrusted us. “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much” (Luke 16:10).

Here are seven simple things you as a pastor can do, along with your church, to be better stewards of the planet God has given us. The first four deal with ecological awareness; the last several with energy conservation.

1. *Gather up the fragments: print your church bulletins on recycled paper.*

Paper accounts for 40-50 percent of what we throw away, both in weight and in volume. By printing on recycled paper your church is *precycling*—reducing waste *before* it happens. You’re also increasing the demand for recycled paper. So print all bulletins, brochures, study guides, and flyers on recycled stock.

You may have to ask your printer to place a special order for recycled paper.

In some cases you will have to order it yourself. Because recycled paper is slightly more expensive than regular paper, consider making a group purchase with other local churches.

If recycling is still too costly, then recycle the paper your church currently uses. People in the United States use 50 million tons of paper each year, costing about 850 million trees. No one knows how much of that is church-related paper, but you see how much is left on the pews after a service. Why not send it to a recycling center? Almost all paper can be recycled if it doesn’t have a slick coating like glossy magazines and brochures.

To get detailed information on recycling paper, write the San Francisco Recycling Program, 271 City Hall, San Francisco, California 94102. For US\$5 you will receive an office paper recycling guide. Make your check out to “City and County of San Francisco.”

You can order recycled paper direct from Conservatree, 10 Lombard Street, San Francisco, California 94111; telephone (415) 433-1000. The company carries recycled white and colored paper, copier paper, envelopes, and computer paper.

2. *That nothing be lost . . . start a recycling program.*

Only about 10 percent of all newspapers are recycled. Since less energy is required to make newspaper from “old” paper than from wood pulp, recycling makes ecological sense. It also raises money for equipment, special projects, or missions.

The most common recyclables are

aluminum, glass, and paper. Aluminum dealers accept such things as soft drink cans, aluminum foil, and disposable pie tins. Glass should be sorted by color, and newspaper must be separated from slick-coated paper.

To learn how to start a recycling program, write for "Coming Full Circle," a publication of the Environmental Defense Fund, 1616 P Street NW., Washington, D.C. 20006 (US\$10.00). For a free pamphlet on recycling glass, contact The Glass Packaging Institute, 1801 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

3. *Let your ministry branch out: plant trees.*

Trees absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen into the atmosphere. Planting trees around your church combats pollution as well as the threat of global warming. Clusters of trees around your church also act as insulation. In summer they cool the air by as much as 10 percent. In winter when branches are bare, they let the warm sun shine through. Your church benefits from lower cooling and heating bills.

If you want to know more about planting trees around your church, call a local nursery. You could also contact the American Forestry Association, Global Relief Program, P.O. Box 2000, Washington, D.C. 20013; telephone (202) 667-330.

4. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink . . . don't use Styrofoam at potlucks.*

Polystyrene foam, commonly known as Styrofoam, is nonbiodegradable. In other words, the Styrofoam cup from which you drink your potluck punch could be on this earth until the Lord comes. As if that's not enough, the gases used to manufacture styrofoam deplete the earth's protective ozone layer.

Consider using paper cups and plates. If your church is really progressive, ask members to bring reusable plastic dinnerware to potlucks and save paper products for visitors.

5. *Whenever two or three gather together . . . let them carpool to church.*

In recent years even rural areas have suffered an alarming increase in air pollution from automobiles. The carbon dioxide emitted may also accelerate global warming.

Carpooling in our churches can make

a difference, even though it's impracticable and in some cases impossible for everyone to stop driving and start walking to services. Scientists estimate that if every car carried just one more passenger we would save 600,000 gallons of gas a day and prevent 12 million pounds of carbon dioxide from polluting our air. Small families can double up, singles can offer rides to elderly neighbors, and large families can arrive together in one car instead of three.

6. *Whither thou goest; drive a fuel-efficient car.*

Cars and trucks emit 20 percent of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels in the United States. Carbon dioxide pollution is directly related to the amount of fuel our vehicles consume. A car gives off 20 pounds of carbon dioxide for every gallon of gasoline consumed, whether it travels 15 miles or 50 miles on that gallon.

Fortunately, fuel-efficient cars are still affordable. You probably already drive one. Keeping it well-tuned assures good mileage.

Plan trips wisely. Think about stops you can make on the way to your destination in order to save extra trips. Whenever possible, walk or bike to nearby places. If necessary, pretend you're in the mission field.

7. *Let the lower lights be burning:*

conserve energy around the church.

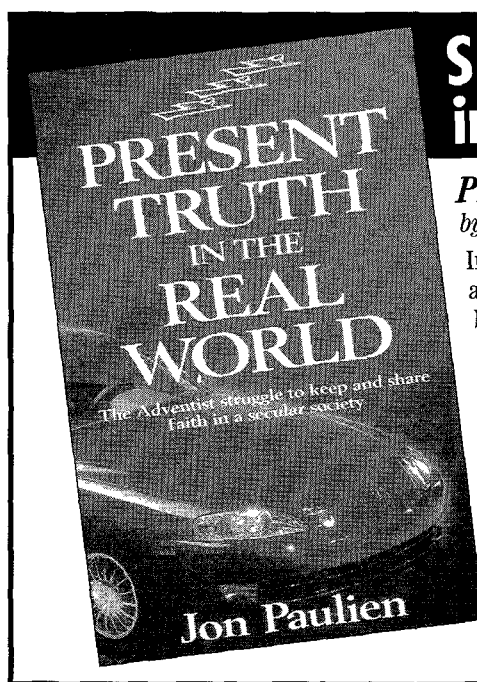
Heating, cooling, and lighting your church use up valuable natural resources. Although you need not conduct church services by candlelight, a few basic steps can reduce utility bills and conserve energy. For winter, make sure your church is well insulated. Eliminate drafts. Keep your furnace working efficiently. While gas furnaces should be serviced every two years, oil furnaces need an annual tune-up. With a forced-air system, change air filters regularly. In summer, don't turn on the air conditioning unless absolutely necessary.

Lighting your church with compact fluorescent bulbs also saves energy. They cost more than incandescent bulbs, but they last 13 times longer and consume much less energy.

Energy stewardship is much a matter of common sense. Lights in Sabbath school classrooms need not remain on during the sermon. Smaller services can be held in smaller rooms.

Besides saving your church money through lower utility bills, concern for the environment fosters community goodwill and may even garner your church positive media attention. All of this can help you be faithful in the bigger things, such as evangelism and church growth. ■

*All Scripture quotations in this article are from the *New American Standard Bible*.



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Every sermon should call for a response

James A. Cress

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hy did you preach last Sabbath's sermon? Did you expect your listeners to do something in response? Or were you just filling the time

between offering and benediction?

Perhaps it's time we rethink preaching. Perhaps the times demand that we think about intentional preaching—preaching on purpose! Intentional preaching involves planning what you will say and what you expect in response from your audience. A sermon that does not demand a response is not a sermon. It may be a discussion, a presentation, a monologue, or even cleverly disguised religious entertainment, but not a sermon. Unless what you preach motivates the audience toward some positive reaction to what they have heard, your sermon is incomplete.

Peter's sermon at Pentecost was so powerful that the listeners made the appeal themselves: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Unless you can preach with such power and conviction, it will be necessary for you to make your own appeal to extend an invitation that calls for a response.

In fact, planning your appeal before you construct your sermon is one of the greatest tools in building a powerful sermon. Ask yourself, What action do I want my audience to take as a result of this message? The question will change not only your sermon but also your sermon preparation. The process will be different because your objective will be clearly delineated at the beginning. Everything you say will be focused to-

ward the goal of motivating the desired response.

When I first told my congregation that I would extend an appeal at the close of every sermon, they reacted with surprise. But soon they discovered that the appeal not only guided my sermon preparation each week, but also demanded a balanced schedule of texts and topics throughout the year. Further, an invitation every week requires careful worship planning in order to allow sufficient time to accomplish the spiritual business at the end of every sermon.

How can you implement an appeal into your weekly worship service?

Condition your audience to expect an appeal after every sermon. Tell them your intention at the beginning of the sermon: *I intend to give you an opportunity to respond to Jesus Christ today.* If your people know that a response is expected from them, they will listen to the sermon differently, and let the Holy Spirit work more effectively.

Prepare your audience by preaching a Christ-centered sermon. "The object of preaching is not alone to convey information, not merely to convince the intellect. The preaching of the word should appeal to the intellect, and should impart knowledge, but it should do more than this. The words of the minister should reach the hearts of the hearers." * Sermons rooted in Jesus and bathed in the good news of salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit will reach the hearts of your hearers!

Establish a familiar routine for your appeals. This assures your congregation that the appeal is planned as a vital part of your worship service and allows a

person to think ahead of decisions that need to be made. For ongoing use, a generic response card is quite helpful. Such a card could include an opportunity to accept Jesus as personal Saviour, an opportunity to request baptism or church membership (by profession of faith), a request for prayer for specific needs, as well as requests for Bible studies, pastoral visits, etc.

Because I wanted my members to respond every week (attendance records), I found it helpful to include some choices to which they could always respond: *I would like the Holy Spirit to continue working in my life. Pray that I will personally apply the lesson of _____ from today's sermon.* In order to allow sufficient time, I arranged a musical presentation each week at the time of the appeal.

Consider each response an opportunity to minister. My members appreciated a postcard or telephone call assuring them that I had seen their requests for special prayer and would indeed remember them that week. Guests always received acknowledgment of their responses. Even if they registered only their attendance, they received a postcard expressing appreciation for their visit. Always prioritize those who are seeking further Bible studies, acceptance of Jesus Christ, or baptism. During one year we had more than 50 requests for baptism.

Begin now. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you willing to extend regular appeals and to give you the desired fruit for your labor.

* Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 62.

Sabbath morning fellowship

Elders can stimulate friendliness.

G

ood fellowship does not come by happenstance. Every member has a part in fostering an atmosphere that is both spiritual and congenial.

One rudiment of that is meeting the needs of visitors. They are essential to the life and growth of the church. When they venture through your church doors, they are looking for something. It's part of a local lay elder's responsibility to help them find it.

Every church service ought to be planned with the assumption that visitors will be present. Arrange for them to be greeted in the parking lot. Assign somebody to take children to their Sabbath school divisions. Have a welcome team in the foyer. Get visitors' names in the guest book and read them from the pulpit as part of the welcome. Allow time in the worship service for people to exchange greetings and welcome visitors. Asking them to stand can be embarrassing in some cultures. Some would love it, but others may not.

In a sense, warmth cannot be organized. Fake fellowship is repulsive. The best greeting is one from a member who simply cares about people. Encourage members having the gift of hospitality to approach visitors informally and begin, not by awkwardly reminding them they are visitors, but by expressing a desire to get acquainted. Don't ask unwelcome questions, but a simple introduction encourages visitors to share whatever information they would like. If they don't wish to share much, respect their privacy. Let social instincts take over from there.

Most churches don't really know whether they're friendly or not. Oddly,

those whose members feel the warmest fellowship with one another often seem coldest to visitors—members are enjoying each other so much they don't realize how excluded this makes a visitor feel. Ask someone to visit your church unannounced and fill out a checklist reporting reactions to parking, greeters, ushers, the worship service, members' personal greetings, etc.

Caring for members too

Put postal-sized cards in the pews. You might call them "Encouragement Cards," based on Hebrews 10:24, 25. Place names of the sick and shut-ins in the bulletin. Invite members to write an encouraging note to one or more of them and turn it in. Some members can make it a special ministry to hand-deliver or mail these.

Make the acceptance of new members a big event. Sing an appropriate song, such as "Blest Be the Tie," as church leaders welcome them. Have them stand by an elder at the door after church, where they can be personally welcomed by the congregation. Don't ask them to stand there without a host. If they are timid, people will forget and go by without a greeting, and you've done more harm than good.

Some Sabbath ask the congregation to sing or the instrumentalist to play "Jesus Loves Me." Invite adults to seek out the children, greet them, and let them know how much they love having children in the church.

Have an annual memorial service. Read names of members who died during the year. Ask relatives to stand and receive a flower. Preach on the Christian's hope in the resurrection.

Several times a year, organize a special recognition day when appreciation is expressed for members who have given long and exemplary service to the church.

Now and then choose a family of the week. Have an insert in the bulletin dedicated to a biographical sketch of the family. Sing their favorite hymn, remember them by name in the morning prayer, and have them stand by the door as people leave.

Interview someone in the congregation about his or her conversion, profession, outreach, etc. If someone has had a prayer answered or if something especially good has happened, let that person share the joy with the congregation.

Videotape members at home or at work telling how they share their faith on the job, and at an appropriate time show this testimony to the church. Also videotape shut-in members sharing their hope in Christ despite difficult circumstances. Audiotape worship services and deliver copies to shut-ins.

Miscellaneous suggestions

In addition to maintaining regular Sabbath fellowship dinners, elders and deacons with their spouses can organize other features that foster fellowship in the church body. Put a "dial-a-ride" phone number in the bulletin for those who need emergency transportation to a church function. You may have members who don't do much else for the church but would excel at providing transportation.

Invite a photography-minded member to take pictures of church events throughout the year. Once a year at a social (or better yet, at a business meeting), show these on the screen to encourage the church over the good things they've accomplished together.

One more element that contributes toward a loving, encouraging Sabbath morning atmosphere: learn the names of both members and visitors. You can't convince people you care about them if you don't know their names. ■

Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance

Roger Dudley, *La Sierra University Press, Riverside, California, 1992, 304 pages, \$12.95, paper or hardcover. Reviewed by Steve Case, president, Piece of the Pie Ministries for youth, Sacramento, California.*

Valuegenesis is the largest research project undertaken thus far to assess the attitudes of Seventh-day Adventist young people. Few can talk about youth or even the church today without referring to this landmark study. Valuegenesis gets lots of attention, but it seems too mammoth to go beyond one or two statistical studies chosen to justify whatever point a speaker wants to make.

We have needed a comprehensive report on the Valuegenesis study. *Faith in the Balance* is just that. In his easy-reading style, Roger Dudley presents the data along with implications and commentary. Good news and bad news receive equal treatment. Anecdotes introduce and provide occasional breathing room in this corpus of numbers. At times the reader will experience a sense of swimming in a whirlpool of statistics, with the potential of misquoting from memory or using data out of context. Dudley includes correlations of various measures, but always with a disclaimer that a correlation is not proof of causation. In other words, just because a high thinking climate at church correlates with the value of service does not mean that it causes the value of service to be high. They only appear to go together.

Faith in the Balance represents the first in a series of Valuegenesis books being published. The format includes wide margins with highlights, discussion questions, reviews, and related quotes in the margins.

If you are weary of being told what Valuegenesis says and want to know for yourself, you can obtain your own reference guide. You will find it at Adventist Book Centers, or you can order it through the Hancock Center for Youth Ministry at La Sierra University.

The Irrelevant Church

Robin Gamble, *Monarch Publications, Eastbourne, England, 1991, 184 pages, £6.99, paper. Reviewed by Billy Leonard, pastor, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Dublin, Republic of Ireland.*

Written by an Anglican minister, *The Irrelevant Church* is a serious in-

dictment of his church. Steeped in the life of the industrial northern England, Gamble finds his church increasingly irrelevant and warns that it must change or "go bust." But Gamble writes for all Western churches that face the charge of irrelevancy.

The author divides his work into three sections. The first gives a history of the

church in nineteenth-century Britain, highlighting its concern for the working classes. The second outlines a Christian perspective on the class struggle, and the third examines what the Bible says on wealth and poverty.

Gamble challenges his readers to strip away their conditioning on how to interpret the Bible. For example, he ques-

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tions the belief that worldly prosperity is a sign of God's blessing. He then profiles Israel's history in four periods, analyzing how wealth and poverty are dealt with in each one. He then summarizes the New Testament in a similar manner.

Gamble's analysis is particularly relevant to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in areas where it has become settled, middle-class, and secularized. He uses quotations from Amos and Isaiah—uncomfortable ones for those who avoid the topics of justice and fairness.

For those who question how much we should side with the underprivileged, Gamble states that Jesus "signed up" to play for the poor as "they had always been His Father's favorite team." My response, however, is that talk of a favorite team detracts from a God who is interested in all people.

The third section of the book tells of the task facing today's church. Though the author primarily deals with his own situation in England, pastors everywhere can empathize with the issues he faces. For example, differences between middle-class and inner-city churches; the church as an institution or as a movement; prophecy today and the need to blend strategy with an openness to the Spirit.

This book does not espouse any Marxist gospel, but it does refer to areas that Seventh-day Adventists often evade. We can no longer afford to do so, or *we too* will become "the irrelevant church."

Christians and the environment

Environmental concerns remain among the most important of our day. As with other pressing modern issues, a church that ignores the environment is considered irrelevant. Adventists should care for the environment for the same reason they care for their own bodies—for God's glory. Although we wait for resurrected bodies we do not ignore our present ones. For the same reason while we wait for a new earth, how we care for this one says something about our character and values. Caring for our environment must be part of today's church standards.

The following books have come to the *Ministry* office for review. They represent a plethora of books now available concerning the Christian's responsibility to nature and a healthy environment.

While Creation Waits: A Christian Re-

sponse to the Environmental Challenge, *Dale and Sandy Larsen, Harold Shaw Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1992, 197 pages, \$8.95, paper.*

This volume answers the question How can we be ecologically minded without falling into earth worship? The Larsens give a history of the ecology movement and then focus on the related ethical aspects of our lifestyle, responsibility, and stewardship as Christians.

Fifty Ways You Can Help Save the Planet, *Tony Campolo and Gordon Aeschliman, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1992, 144 pages, US\$6.95, Cdn\$8.95, paper.*

These well-known Christian authors bring ecology into the realm of everyday life and tell us what we can do to save our resources. These modern "standards" are important to all Christians.

Environmental Stewardship, *Ruth Goring Steward, Global Issues Bible Studies, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1990, 48 pages, \$4.99, paper.*

Through the six Bible studies in this guide the author helps us look at the crucial issues involved in caring for the environment from a biblical perspective.

About Stewardship of the Environment, *Channing L. Bete Co., Inc., Deerfield, Massachusetts, 1991 (available in quantities, call 1-800-628-7733 for details).*

This 15-page scriptographic booklet illuminates the relationship between Christian stewardship and environmental responsibility. The booklet provides church leaders a way to present a theological basis and motivate members to become involved.

Celebrating Earth Holy Days: A Resource Guide for Faith Communities, *Susan J. Clark, Crossroad, New York, 1992, \$14.95, paper.*

Though produced for liturgical churches, this volume gives the pastor ideas on what he or she can do to inspire members, through worship and study, to care about the world they live in.

The Gift of Creation: A Discussion Guide on Caring for the Environment, *Virginia Vroblesky, NavPress, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1992, \$5.99, paper.*

In eight sessions designed to promote lively discussion around biblical texts, this book will help you develop

A church that ignores the environment is considered irrelevant.

your own views on the environment.

God Is Green, *Ian Bradley, Image Books, Doubleday, New York, 1992, US\$8, Cdn\$10, 118 pages, paper.*

Bradley rebuts the charges against Christianity's alleged arrogance toward nature. Though this indictment may have merit in a perversion of the Christian message, the author shows from the Bible how at its heart Christian belief recognizes the sacredness of nature and the interdependence of life. A problem with this book is that some might read a subtle pantheism in some of the material.

Earthkeeping in the Nineties: Stewardship and the Renewal of Creation, *Loren Wilkinson, ed., William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1991, \$19.95, 391 pages.*

The original *Earthkeeping* came out in 1980 when few people were discussing the environment. This revised edition reflects the insights of Christian scholars in many fields. The book describes the state of the planet and explores views of creation. The authors examine biblical and theological views of ecology and offer guidelines for an earthkeeping Christian ethic. Several good cartoons throughout the text add spice to the reading.

This updated edition discusses recent cultural and religious ideas on ecology. The authors make a clear stand on pantheism: "Christians have always disassociated themselves from all such confusions of God and creation, and they always should. . . . Biblical religion is abundantly clear, it is that God is the maker of all things; thus He is not to be confused with those things."

Earthkeeping includes a bibliography, index, and a list of Scripture references for further research.

Prophetess of Health: Ellen G. White and the Origins of Seventh-day Adventist Health Reform

Ronald L. Numbers, *The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1992, 322 pages, \$19.95, paper. Reviewed by Ella M. Rydzewski, editorial assistant, Ministry.*

In the preface to this revised and enlarged edition of *Prophetess of Health*,

Ronald Numbers claims, "I have tried to be as objective as possible. Thus I have refrained from using divine inspiration as a historical explanation."

But can one who does not consider the supernatural claims of the subject of his study be objective in his research of that subject? The thesis of the original book—that Ellen White copied ideas on health from her contemporaries—has

been critiqued ad nauseam. But this revised volume adds a psychological profile of White, which deserves comment.

The psychological study of Ellen White, given so many schools of thought, remains at best speculation even for the humanist. (What would they do with David in the Psalms?) Walter Martin and even secular feminists have been kinder and gentler with White's psyche. But if evidence indicates from her own records that in her early years she suffered emotional and/or physical stress, we can only praise God. That means God can use any of us—from the mentally retarded or severely depressed to those of us nursing our own little garden-variety neuroses. We can all relate! Maybe we can thank Numbers for showing us that!


The phenomena of Ronald Numbers causes the church to ask itself questions unrelated to the book's content. The book contends that some have attempted negative psychological profiles of the author, but on what basis? His father is proud of him, and rightly so. Numbers has gone far as a scholar, yet away from his heritage. What makes one person who studies in a secular community keep his or her original faith and others not? Is one more open, or is he or she more suggestible? Did Numbers unconsciously use his church as a stepping-stone to fame in a secular university? Quaint religious claims make good sociological treatises that serve as steps up the stairs of the ivory tower.

None of us can judge Numbers' motives. But we do have a hint of the mindset from which he approaches his subject. In his book *The Creationists, the Evolution of Scientific Creationism*, the author tells us poignantly about being labeled an "agnostic." "The tag still feels foreign and uncomfortable, but it accurately reflects my theological uncertainty. . . . I no longer believe in creationism of any kind."

No believer in the inspiration of Ellen White could easily do an objective review of Numbers' book. But one can take issue with his perception of honest scholarship and the objectivity of secular education. Is sound scholarship at variance with basic faith? Can Christians immerse themselves in secular thought without losing their faith commitment? Is not constant prayer and study of the Word essential to keep such a commitment alive?


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Letters

From page 2

come to us to learn it.

For the complacent, the message of Daniells' 1920s book, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, like 1888, elicited no ongoing effect in Adventism. In college 20 years later, I suffered from the total lack of the 1888 gospel. But then, in the late fifties, coinciding with a rush of heretofore unseen Ellen White gospel materials and a few newly enlightened seminary professors, the Reformation gospel began its long overdue journey out of legalism. The right and left continue to fear it and snipe away at it, but thanks to *Ministry* and a growing host of pastors and some administrators, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Success awaits those whose message is Christ, and Him crucified.—Norman L. Meager, Sonora, California.

■ Thank you for Raymond Holmes's timely article. But so sorry you took away part of its power by your note that the ideas expressed in the article "do not necessarily reflect the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church." So sorry! Holmes's burden needs to be shouted from the housetops of every Adventist periodical. It's true in former Adventist preaching the pendulum too often swung to law only, but recently it is swinging too much in the opposite direction, rightly emphasizing Christ and free grace, but not enough equal emphasis on the fruit of free grace, loving obedience. With too many half-converted Adventist ministers occupying the sacred pulpit these days, give them an inch and they'll take a mile.—Ted Herr, Sequim, Washington.

■ I suspect Evangelicals and others tend to view Adventists as a sectarian cult not so much on account of any, in their eyes objectionable, formal theology that we may have crafted, but rather on the basis of what is hidden behind the theological mask; the actual catalog of particular do's and don'ts and the attending sectarian-elitist attitude, and how these are woven into an apocalyptic tapestry

with its impact on our ability to interact constructively and redemptively with the larger Christian community around us.

We appear to be prisoners of a self-imposed apocalyptic determinism.—Hans Killius, Edmore, Michigan.

■ I appreciate Holmes's concern that we maintain proper balance between justification and sanctification. He is correct in stating that one cannot be justified without also being sanctified. Justification and sanctification are distinct but never separate.

However, I feel that Holmes's criticism of Kenneth Samples is unfair. Samples writes from outside our denomination. As Adventists we may not agree with the entire perspective of his *Christianity Today* article, but it is false to claim that he rejects the necessity of sanctification.

Samples is not an antinomian; he believes that sanctification is an essential fruit of justification. His concern is with that segment of Adventists who destroy assurance by making character perfection the basis of acceptance in the judgment. I believe that this concern is warranted. Biblical Christianity is simply incompatible with such a lack of assurance.—Robert T. Helm, Louisville, Kentucky.

Laodicea and corporate repentance

Your article "Laodicea and Corporate Repentance," February 1993, has brought courage to many who see in the message of the True Witness an understanding of the long delay in the promised latter rain and the return of Christ.

I want to express my personal appreciation for your honesty and courage. I am sure I am joining many others in my prayers that this crack in the wall of resistance to the message will encourage other church leaders to stand with you. With the world disintegrating so rapidly, surely the church must arouse soon and carry out its mission of giving the final warning.—Helen F. Cate, Weimar, California.

■ Christ as central to our faith is indeed our greatest need as a church. You have articulately and perceptively addressed a great need of the church.

This need involves a process of extending our habits of thinking beyond contented self-congratulatory patterns to earnest and sometimes painful searching out of problems and needs.

Christ Himself is our encouragement and courage to do this. May He be this to you in the burden of your heart to help our church do better.—Michael Dabson, Parkes, N.S.W., Australia.

■ I agree that the cross of Christ must be the center of our attention and work. It seems to me that the grace and mercy expressed there have an amazing way of redirecting life and focusing one's motives and goals on the essentials. I find, for example, that it is often the smallest of things that truly expresses His grace: a thoughtful card, a word of encouragement, a little errand; something that surprises with love. (I feel this, too, is part of the secret of grace.)—Tom Shepherd, Arthur Nogueiro, Brazil.

■ Your editorial is one of the most encouraging pieces we have seen in recent denominational literature. As I read it, I said, "Yes, Yes, Yes!" Surely God is using *Ministry* to call our attention to a long-neglected theme: Christ and Him crucified. Only as we behold Him will we begin to see how spiritually blind and naked we really are.

We pray our church leaders (along with the rest of us) will heed your appeal to "be earnest, therefore, and repent." Every time I read of another tragedy in the news or think of the untold suffering that abounds around the world, I ask with you, "How long must He wait?" for He suffers with those hurting ones more than we will ever know.—Patricia L. Guthrie, Hendersonville, North Carolina.

I, if I be lifted up

Thank you for printing Larry Christoffel's "Viewpoint" (December 1992). I say, "Amen!"

Until our church takes a clear stand on the central issue of the gospel, real unity will be impossible and so will our ability to fulfill our global mission. For too long we have been giving the trumpet an uncertain sound, as if the gospel were a side issue. The

confusion has been destructive to ourselves and also to our witness before the world. How can we possibly give the loud cry of the everlasting gospel if we can't proclaim it clearly, with one united voice of biblical authority and spiritual power?

The apostle Paul condemned the propagation of false gospels in no uncertain terms (see Gal. 1:6-9). The reformers gave their lives to restore the pure gospel cornerstone to the

church. How dare we take it lightly? May God help us to correct this great wrong!—Bill Carsley, Norway, Maine.

■ Christoffel writes, "For the sake of the glory of God for which the unity of the church exists, we must come into consensus of the biblical meaning of the gospel and settle the internal warfare over the gospel."

Then he says that he and his

friends were forming "an association of those who understand the gospel as justification."

The two statements are contradictory. The biblical meaning of the gospel includes the whole of salvation, not just justification.

The conflict of how the gospel should be defined is an old one, not limited to our church. The current writings of John MacArthur are causing conflict among Evangelical Christians.

The gospel is more than "good news" about a great accomplishment. Romans 1:16 proclaims that the gospel of Christ "is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes." Through Jesus Christ the power of God comes and saves me.

If all that the gospel does is to set my record right, to declare me justified before God, I will keep right on sinning. Sin changed the human personality. We are "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3, NKJV). We need changing. The gospel does that. "It is the power of God to salvation." The basis of salvation is not great information from God. The basis of salvation is new life from God. We proclaim the great good news, and the gospel "creates its own agencies." "It does not find friends, it makes them" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 5, p. 1138). "It is the power of God to salvation."

Verse 17 tells us that in the gospel "the righteousness of God is revealed" (NKJV). Jesus' victorious life and His sacrificial death established the righteousness of God's law, while at the same time establishing that it is righteous for God to forgive sin and to impute righteousness to the one who has faith in Christ.

"From faith to faith" (verse 17) implies a growth in grace and faith, for the righteous *live by faith*. This is always true in the life of the believer. Living by faith is always in the present. As the justified leave the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, they live by faith, and they will do so until that instant they are changed and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. There is no other way that it is possible for children of God to live.—David Manzano, Rockwood, Tennessee.

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Decisions: persuading people for Christ

From page 17

Nicodemus could hear the sound of leaves rustling before a storm, hear it whistling around the corners of his house, he could hear the calling of the Holy Spirit to his heart.

The woman at the well, having gone through many husbands, still did not feel the *touch* of love. Jesus knew just how to reach the core of her being. Appealing to her on the basis of feeling, He said simply, "Give Me to drink." She knew the feeling of thirst, this woman who had trodden dusty roads in a desert land and lowered earthen pots into the waiting cool of darkness. So Jesus used the kinesthetic sense impression to bring to her the strength and vitality of the gospel. "You have a thirst. If you drink the water I'll give you, you'll never thirst again."

Similarly, we should use all three approaches, for all three types of people are sure to be in the audience. It's wise to begin by appealing to all three sense impressions, then eventually focus on that which appears to be the predominant mode of that person's perception.

When speaking with visually oriented individuals, I emphasize my message in pictorial scenes: "Picture Jesus dying on the cross for you, with nails through His hands and blood trickling down His cheeks. As you look into His eyes, is there anything more important than surrendering your whole life to Him?"

For the audio, I tie the message into the sense of sound: "Don't you hear Christ calling you today?" "Think of that glorious angel chorus and that loud, clear trumpet fanfare! What a joy those sounds will bring to your heart." "Listen to the voice of Jesus as He says, 'Well done, My good and faithful servant.'"

When speaking with a kinesthetic person, my conversation might go something like this: "As you surrender your life to Jesus you will receive that healing peace, that inner contentment that all

humanity longs for. The feeling of peace that you desired for so long will be yours."

Jesus has created each individual to be different. People have grown out of an environment uniquely their own. This variety of backgrounds necessitates a variety of approaches. You must step out of yourself and enter into the needs and longings of others—identify with their perceptual patterns. Allow God to tune you in to the perceptions of others. Watch results multiply. ■

Adapted from the author's Decisions: Persuading People for Christ (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Center of Continuing Education, 1984).

¹ "Major Church Growth Study Completed," *Institute of Church Growth Newsletter*, February 1981.

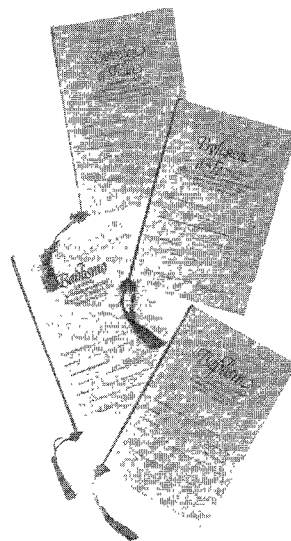
² Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956), p. 47.

³ *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1905), p. 176.

⁴ J. L. Shuler, *Securing Decisions*, Part II, p. 1; Quoted in Mark Finley, *Decisions: Persuading People for Christ* (Silver Spring, Md.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Center of Continuing Education, 1984), p. 17.

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Laodicea and holiness

From page 5

God's people are to achieve is emphasized over the holiness they possess in Christ. Both are received by faith. Both are vital in the dynamics of salvation. No one will receive the imputed holiness of Christ without also receiving the im-

parted holiness of Christ. But the right order needs to be maintained. If we emphasize the latter to people who do not know the former, they will only become frustrated and desperate. Holiness of character must always be based on Christ's holiness.

Another danger occurs when we limit holiness to certain easily observed behaviors—diet, dress, recreation and forget “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Gal. 5:22). This was

the mistake the Pharisees made when they cleaned only the outside of the cup while leaving the inside filthy (Matt. 23:25, 26).

We can easily miss Jesus' emphasis that how we relate to each other is the true mark of being one of His disciples: “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

“The badge of Christianity is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a crown, but it is that which reveals the union of God with man. . . . The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian.”³

Jesus and the Pharisees often tangled over the issue of behavior and relationships. The Pharisees taught very high standards. They developed more than 1,500 rules for keeping the Sabbath. They criticized Christ and His disciples for rubbing a few grains of wheat together on the Sabbath. Jesus replied by quoting from Hosea 6:6: “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice” (Matt. 12:7). God had ordained the sacrifices, but sacrifice without love, mercy, a tender regard for others, is pointless. It is tragic that so often those most intent on straightening out others when it comes to behavior often exhibit the most intolerant attitudes themselves.

Laodiceans should be known as those who “obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us” (1 John 3:22, 23). According to John, commandment keeping involves two things: believing in Christ and loving one another. Don't misunderstand me. I am not minimizing the regular Ten Commandments or victory over sin. I am saying that it is easy to miss what the true biblical emphasis is when it comes to holiness.

Are you and I known as loving and lovable people? Holiness is being like God, and God is love. Is that the kind of holiness we as pastors and leaders are teaching and modeling? ■

* All Bible texts are from the New International Version.

¹ White, *Testimonies* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), vol. 3, p. 255.

² W. Pink, *The Doctrine of Sanctification* (Swengel, Pa.: Bible Truth Depot, 1955), p. 200.

³ White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1942), p. 470.

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PREACH Project struggles

Thanks to the Waco tragedy, the name "Seventh-day Adventist" has become familiar around the world. Unfortunately, misperceptions abound. Now, more than ever, your fellow clergy need to know who we are and what we believe. No evangelistic tool can facilitate this more effectively than the PREACH project, in which *Ministry* is mailed bi-monthly to pastors not of our faith.

Just when it's needed most, however, the Project for Reaching Every Active Clergy person at Home is in jeopardy. Formerly financed by unions and the General Conference, PREACH must now stand on its own without subsidies. Support must come from the local level. But only half of North American Division conferences are able and willing to care for the nonSDA pastors in their territory—*pastors who have requested the journal*. Unless additional funding is provided soon, 45,000 of these non-SDA ministers will have to be dropped from *Ministry*.

If you need further convincing about the importance of maintaining the program, note this from Martin Feldbush, associate director, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries: "During the years since the beginning of the PREACH program, I have noted a significant change in the attitude of many of the pastors toward our church. Many have told me that *Ministry* is a valued part of their library and they look forward to receiving it regularly."

Before PREACH, we had no outreach targeted toward nonSDA clergy.

Little wonder these ministers had distorted ideas about our church and spread misinformation to their congregations—sometimes in "cult" seminars. And now there's the Waco debacle, which isn't going away soon. Even when the situation is resolved, there will be court cases, analyses by media, and much negative publicity about our church. Since much of the harmful criticism is coming from some religious leaders, there was never a time when PREACH was needed more.

One pastor receiving *Ministry* can make a difference in community acceptance for your church and your outreach. Many believe the PREACH program will play a vital role in these last times. We hope you will help keep it going. Here's what you can do: if impressed, you can urge conference leaders to provide *Ministry* for the pastors in your territory who have requested it. You might also suggest this project to your local church board. Subscriptions in North America are only US \$2 a year for six issues. Think of it—just \$200 covers 100 subscriptions! And contributions are tax deductible.

Send checks to *Ministry*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904

Clinical Pastoral Education

Kettering Medical Center offers a one-year Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) residency in college campus ministry beginning August 31, 1993.

The program is designed for persons who wish to improve their pastoral care and counseling skills for campus ministry, or to

obtain certification in specialized ministry. A seminary degree (preferably Master of Divinity) and at least one unit of basic CPE are prerequisites for the residency. Applications may be submitted through June 1993.

For further information and application forms, please contact Chaplain Hen Uy, Kettering Medical Center, 3535 Southern Boulevard, Kettering, Ohio 45429. Telephone (513) 296-7240.

Sabbath activity "library"

It is difficult to keep young children happily occupied on Sabbath in a home when one parent is not a churchgoer, or when one parent may be exhausted from a week of trying to do the work of two parents. It can even be a challenge when both parents are active churchgoers! Three families in our church helped solve this problem by pooling finances to purchase the *Bible Story* video.

Such an idea could also work as an official church project. A Sabbath activity library could be established containing videos that can be borrowed, saving each family from having to buy the same ones. Activities for every age group can be included, such as appropriate books, photocopied activity sheets, Bible computer games, and Bible-story-based toys. Explore your local ABC and other Christian outlets for useful

resources. Even educational toy shops have items that could be included. Church members can borrow a special item each week, as a Sabbath treat to take home, enjoy, and return the following week. Have an attractive display clearly visible to the children.

All this involves expense. You could ask parents to contribute money, if they can, or families could lend items to the library or donate materials their children have grown out of. Or the library could be the focus of a special fund-raising event.

Appoint a regular librarian who can keep track of who has borrowed what, seek out new materials, and keep everything in a good and usable order.

—Karen Holford, Colchester, Essex, England.

Computer software

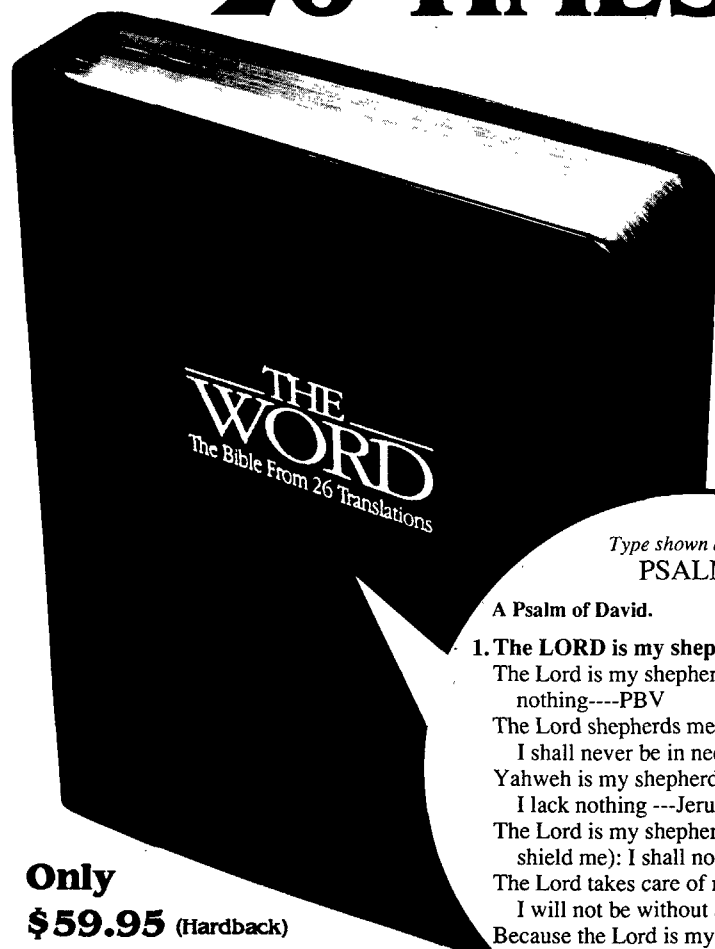
I have assembled a library of computer software. Most of this is shareware, though some is freeware. I have a good selection of Bible studies, church management software, Bible concordance programs, and Bible games. I have also placed several books, including some of Ellen White's, on disks.

Readers may receive a free catalog by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to: The Baptized Computer, P.O. Box 1642, Bentonville, AR 72712-1648.—Wayne Willey, Bentonville, Arizona.

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PSALM 23

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1. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
The Lord is my shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing---PBV
The Lord shepherds me.
I shall never be in need ---Har
Yahweh is my shepherd.
I lack nothing ---Jerus
The Lord is my shepherd (to feed, guide and shield me): I shall not lack---Amp
The Lord takes care of me as his sheep;
I will not be without any good thing---Bas
Because the Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need!---Tay

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