Thinkers v. doers?
Should administrative positions have a time limit? Does the church too often neglect divine counsel and rely on secular advice? How much instruction should children have for baptism? Readers air their views.

Defining unproductive

It was with wonderment and concern that I read "What! Fire a Pastor?" (February, 1981). Of course a pastor should be fired if he is not doing his job well because of a lack of a "high sense of the sacredness of the work of a minister." But how this is determined becomes the issue. The author uses the term "unproductive" to describe ministers who should be retired or fired. No definition of this word is given, leaving it for ministers and laity to wonder who will decide the criteria for being "unproductive." Since we, the laity, receive the pastor's services, we are probably the ones best able to determine productivity or its lack. For a welcome change, we might be consulted since we, not the conference presidents who hire and fire pastors, pay their salaries!

It is apparent from the article that one main method used to determine productivity is the number of baptisms a minister performs. Any church member can tell you that most ministers are so busy trying to keep the saints from making the church unsafe for new converts that they have precious little time left to seek converts. A minister today must be all things to all people—anytime, anywhere. He faces problems and difficulties of which Ellen White probably couldn't conceive. Yet apparently her criteria for productivity will be the standard. Perhaps we ought to apply this criteria to conference leadership, as well. Would it be too bold to suggest that these ministers be allowed only a certain number of years in leadership positions and then be required to take a church pulpit again? I'm sure the standard of productivity would change in a hurry!—Bernhard A. Kopfer, Wenatchee, Washington.

Creatio ex nihilo?

The assertion in the excellent May feature "The Doctrine of Beginnings" that "like the animals, man was not created ex nihilo" requires reconsideration. Reference to earth, ground, or soil (also water) in connection with the creation of organisms may have the primary intent of specifying: (1) where the organism appeared; (2) the type of material with which it was constructed; or (3) the source of this material. Critical investigation of the statements made by Moses regarding plants (Gen. 1:11, 12; 2:9); fish (chap. 1:20); birds (chaps. 1:20; 2:19); and man (chaps. 1:26, 27; 2:7, 22) has led many students to conclude that in his various statements concerning the creation of organisms, Moses intended to specify either where the organism appeared or the type of material with which it was constructed (or a combination thereof), and that ex nihilo creation of organisms is not excluded, even in the case of man (excepting the relatively small proportion of Eve's body that was derived from Adam's rib). Christ's miraculous feeding of the multitude (Matt. 16:8-10) probably provides insight concerning the original fiat creation of organisms.—Robert H. Brown, Loma Linda, California.

The entire truth

We all appreciate the help we get from MINISTRY. Those who put out this fine magazine have helped us preachers in many ways. It's always my plan to back up our workers everywhere in the best way I can.

But I would like to share most of a letter that came to my desk and that caused me to do some serious thinking. A broadcast listener wrote:

"On all your literature, the words Voice of Prophecy are always quite visible. In broadcasting, those words are frequently used. In deciding which church to attend, those words were uppermost in my mind, and therefore I selected the Seventh-day Adventist church in ______. I attended for thirteen weeks and never once did I hear a sermon on prophecy. The pastor of the church was there only half the time, because he was also the pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist church in ______. During half of the Sabbaths each month the pulpit was occupied by students from your college. These men never mentioned the Voice of Prophecy, nor did they do anything but tell stories, some of which required quite a stretch of the imagination."

"Since the world in every segment has never been so disoriented and confused as it is at the present time, I would like to have known the thinking of your church regarding future happenings, which I believe indicate that we are in the end-days. Rev. _____ did not once in those thirteen weeks give a sermon on prophecy. He, in turn, told stories also which were, of course, of a little better grade than those told by the student preachers."

"Since all of your literature and all of your broadcasts feature the Voice of Prophecy, why isn't prophecy reflected in the sermons of those who occupy your pulpits? When I was in business for fifty years, if I advertised something that I didn't have, it worried me."

"Now, what should I say to this person? I don't think he was unduly critical, because he continued to search for at least thirteen weeks. I want to uphold our ministry."

I realize that this is one instance, and one instance only. Also, it may be that if he had attended that church fourteen Sabbaths he would have heard a good sermon on the coming of the Lord.

I don't know how often one should speak on prophetic subjects, which include, of course, the coming of the Lord and the signs of the times. Since we are Adventists, it seems to me that the general public has a right to expect something in our preaching on the Second Advent and the great prophecies that point to it.

As I understand it, we Seventh-day Adventist ministers are to emphasize Christ in all our preaching. How can I preach Christ fully if I preach only His first advent, at which time He suffered and died for our sins to make our salvation possible? If we are to preach Christ fully, how can we leave out the glory of the Second Coming, when salvation not only includes the forgiveness of sins, the help of Heaven in our earthly life, but that part of salvation which is still future—the salvation grounded in the blood of Christ, made possible "through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5)? This wonderful salvation is made possible by the cross, sustained by the Holy Ghost in our lives until we receive the end of our faith, "even the salvation of our souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (verses 9-11).

In 1 Peter 1:10 the apostle declares that these wonderful things about both the first coming of Christ and His second coming, all for our salvation, were prophesied long ago. One cannot fully preach Christ or the gospel without preaching the things these (Continued on page 29.)
Rightly Handling the Word of Truth/4. Emphasizing only one aspect of a Biblical truth will result in a distorted picture. Arthur J. Ferch pointedly describes the responsibility of the preacher to present God's Word in a balanced manner that takes into consideration all phases of truth.

Thinkers v. Doers?/6. James J. Londis. Why do pastors often suspect theologians of being abstract thinkers far removed from the world of action in which people sin and suffer? Why do theologians, on the other hand, often dismiss the pastor as an uncritical doer who is more concerned with results than with the study necessary for preaching the “meat” of the Word? In spite of such tensions, says the author, both theologians and pastors desperately need each other.


Prophetic Ministry/12. Elbio Pereyra. The Biblical prophet made a significant impact on his society both by word and deed. Should not God’s twentieth-century spokesmen also have a similar impact on their surroundings? A closer look at the prophetic model of ministry provides us with a pattern worth emulating.

Harnessing Volunteer Evangelists/14. Standing back and letting lay members stumble through an evangelistic series may be difficult for pastors, but a “hands-on” approach to learning soul winning is the most effective. W. B. Quigley interviewed Brad Thorp, British Columbia Conference evangelist, and found this theory being put to the test there.

Securing Decisions at Camp/17. Mike Deming.

Decision or Rationalization?/18. W. J. Hackett, from long years of experience as an administrator, looks at a contemporary problem facing decision-makers and gives some principles for making sound decisions.

Concerns of 24 Pastors/20. Recently twenty-four pastors from a variety of pastoral situations were invited to Washington to share their ideas, convictions, and suggestions with the administration of the church. J. R. Spangler summarizes some of their strongest concerns.

Health-giving Doctrine/22. Fred Osbourn.

Elephantine Papyri and Daniel 8:14/24. Siegfried H. Horn. Light shed on dating techniques by the Elephantine papyri has implications for the time of Ezra’s return from Babylon and for prophetic understandings.

To Be a Friend/28. Hattie Lee Rider.
Paul’s advice to young Timothy seems to imply a basic honesty to and with God’s Word. The preacher must use a balanced approach to the Bible that considers every phase of truth. He must not emphasize only one aspect of the multifaceted view given by Bible writers.

by Arthur J. Ferch

**Rightly handling the Word of truth**

Heresy assailed the fledgling Christian communities. Petty arguments and quarrelsome theological discussions retarded the progress of the church. Spiritual arrogance disguised itself as sanctity. Some unsettled and unsettling believers deserted the faith. Paul was at death’s door in a Roman prison, and the gentle, somewhat timid Timothy urgently needed help.

To meet these circumstances, the anxious pastor recorded a series of counsels in what has come to be known as his “last will and testament.” Among these counsels is the following advice:

“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me before many witnesses you entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” “Remind them of this, and charge them before the Lord to avoid disputing about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:1, 2, 14, 15, R.S.V.).

Apparently Paul considered a preaching ministry that “rightly handles the word of truth” an effective means not only to counter the crisis of his day but also to preserve the health of the Christian church. His advice is as pertinent today as it was when first addressed to Timothy.

What is implied in ministry that “rightly handles the word of truth”? At a technical level such preaching would presuppose Biblical interpretation based on textual-criticism analysis: attention to philological and grammatical details of the original languages; close examination of the historical context of the Biblical text; and an elaboration of the theological implications of the passage. Yet it seems that “rightly handling the word of truth” extends beyond these mechanical skills of exegesis. Paul’s advice seems to imply a basic honesty to and with the “word of truth.” By basic honesty, I mean a fairness to all that the Word says on a given topic.

Arthur J. Ferch is chairman of the theology department, Avondale College, New South Wales, Australia.
times be misunderstood as a lack of conviction, a lack of that balance has, and will, cost the church dearly.

It seems significant that the scriptural canon includes two discrete histories of Israel, four distinct Gospels, and several diverse models of salvation.

The history of Israel, particularly from the time of the monarchy to the destruction of Jerusalem, is recorded on one hand in the books of Samuel and Kings and on the other in Chronicles. Both collections actually used many of the same sources for this period, yet Samuel and Kings interpret these sources and historical events from the perspective of the religious principles enunciated in the book of Deuteronomy, while Chronicles views the same happenings from a priestly and cultic perspective. Both histories occasionally omit details reported in the parallel block or include materials not recorded in the companion volume as they augment their interpretations of the historical data.

Similarly, the four Gospels offer somewhat diverse accounts of the life, work, and words of Jesus. Though Matthew—Mark, and Luke parallel one another more closely in their account of Jesus’ ministry and preaching than does John (and for this reason are designated the Synoptic Gospels), their reports nevertheless differ even among themselves. Matthew presents Jesus as a Jew and great teacher. Mark displays our Lord as a man of action who by the witness of His divine power is the Messiah. Luke, in contrast to Matthew, traces the ancestry of the Man of Galilee right back to Adam and presents Jesus as the man of all races. John’s Gospel omits the accounts of Jesus’ baptism, transfiguration, and experience in Gethsemane, but includes hitherto-unrecorded speeches to the disciples, as well as the controversial Temple discourses. As a whole, the fourth Gospel seems to be more theological than historical.

Yet, Divine Providence saw fit to preserve these different accounts in what we now call the New Testament, for their diversity provides a more comprehensive picture of the life, work, and words of Jesus than any one depiction in and of itself could have offered. “Rightly handling the word of truth” will give due attention to the whole picture.

Like so many themes in the Bible, the story of our salvation is inexhaustible. Yet, while its intricacies can tax the sharpest intellect both in this life and throughout eternity, its good news is simple enough for a child to comprehend. It is particularly our new standing in Christ that is too rich to be encompassed by any one expression. For this reason the New Testament uses several terms to describe this new reality of a person in Christ. (Note a more extended discussion of this diversity in “The Dynamics of Salvation,” Adventist Review, July 31, 1980, pp. 6, 7.)

These different expressions or models of our salvation in Christ have been drawn from diverse secular settings and all have a distinctive Biblical usage and meaning. From the setting of the law court originates the word justification. This model of our new status in Christ depicts mankind as a criminal arraigned before God’s bar of justice, guilty with no hope of reprieve. Unexpectedly, however, Someone rises to speak on behalf of the condemned. More than that, while acknowledging the disobedience of the accused, He offers His own obedience and instead of agreeing to man’s death, He points to His own sacrificial death. As our substitute and representative, He accepts our condemnation while we hear the sentence “Acquitted.” In Romans 3:9-31, where Paul employs this law-court language, we notice that He mingles this model of salvation with that of redemption.

Redemption is a term related to the ancient slave markets and pawnshops. Mankind is described as being in absolute bondage to sin with no hope of escape until, at His own gracious initiative, the Divine Redeemer pays the exorbitant price that releases man to Christian freedom (see Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13, 14; Heb. 9:15).

Reconciliation is an expression drawn from human relations in which friends who have become estranged (see 2 Cor. 5:18-20). Although for one party the cause of ill will has already been removed, the other nurse his feelings of hostility until one day he recognizes the full impact of his estrangement from his friend and, touched by the generosity of his former friend, turns around and becomes reconciled. Jesus’ use of the parable of the two debtors describes the model of forgiveness (see Matt. 18:25-35) reminiscent of the world of financial transactions. Mankind is confronted with an incredible debt of sin that it can never repay. Yet in the midst of the debtor’s despair God freely cancels the obligation.

Again, the Bible depicts us in the unfortunate condition of “orphans.” There is a loss of belonging, identity, and purpose. Then one day, moved by grace, our heavenly Father adopts us as sons and daughters (see Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). Our wretched condition changes; we have a home, and belong.

All these terms, whether they depict mankind as condemned, enslaved, indebted, estranged, or orphaned, portray a central truth and simply highlight variations on this common core: man, left to himself, stands without hope before God until He hears the incredibly good news that God, at His own initiative, has done for and in him that which He neither deserves nor could ever do for himself.

Every model paints a picture that is complemented by the other expressions. To concentrate on one of these models exclusively would do an injustice to the totality. There must be no filtering out of any color.
Church history reminds us that there has traditionally been an uneasy truce between theologians and pastors. Recent events in our own church indicate that theologians must not work out their theology in isolation from the “real world” of the church, nor must pastors become dependent on theologians for readymade packages of theology.

by James J. Londis

Thinkers v. doers?

Every religion in every age has experienced an uneasy truce between the university and the local congregation, between theology and the pastorate. Seventh-day Adventism is no exception. In some respects, the meeting of church theologians and administrators last summer at Glacier View, Colorado, was a tacit admission of this problem. In this article I wish to examine some of the reasons for this tension and suggest steps that might establish cooperation between these two vital communities within the church.

When I speak about theology, I refer to the plethora of diverse questions, concerns, and disciplines that shape the beliefs and practices of the church. On occasion the term theologian will be used instead. The term pastorate refers to the entire life of the congregation, with its rich diversity, as well as church administrative structures. From time to time, I may substitute terms such as pastor or laity for pastorate, but I will always have the entire church in mind as a background, no matter what terms I use.

Stereotypes

When I taught religion at the college level, I heard pastors and evangelists remark that the colleges and seminaries get young people who are studying for the ministry so concerned about theological issues they lose their zest to do anything. Theologians were stereotyped as abstract thinkers who gave their students ideas but no passion for the world of action in which people sinned and suffered. Even conference presidents have chided theology teachers for producing interns who want to
study but balk at getting their hands dirty fixing the plumbing in the school building.

I attended one meeting in which several theology teachers responded sharply to such criticisms. They asked why young people who were so eager to get into the ministry became disillusioned after only one year in the churches. “Could it be,” one asked, “that much of what is being asked of these young pastors is irrelevant to true ministry?”

For their part, theologians are critical of the ways in which local congregations live out the gospel and particularly of how some pastors use the Word of God in their ministries. They feel that much of our preaching is un-Biblical, poor in quality, and that the church is starving for the “meat” of the Word. Spiritual malnutrition is everywhere, they charge. Furthermore, some in the universities wince at the “clergy,” or about the ways in which the church should relate to people who are divorcing and remarrying, or when non-believers come and admit that while they enjoy the fellowship of the church, they are struggling with the very existence of God in their spiritual lives, theology is arising out of the pastorate. These same questions are asked in the classroom, to be sure, but they are never asked in precisely the same way, and, as we are all aware, the nature of the question affects the kind of answer one receives. In addition, I must confess that I have found, to my chagrin, that real life is always considerably more complex than my classroom theories allowed and that glib answers sound more plausible behind a lectern than they do behind a pulpit.

Theology flowing from the pastorate would also focus on translating thought into praxis. For example, attempts would be made to turn the theological beauty of the Sabbath into the beauty of the Sabbath experience. A New Testament study of the divorce and remarriage passages would be concerned not only with theology but with how that can be translated into policies that churches can use both to hold its divorced/remarried members accountable and to manifest mercy in harmony with the gospel teaching.

Theology and real life are also joined together in our attempt to interpret the Bible. There is a sense in which one element in the interpretation of the text must be how our present situation encounters that text. Our “living,” human experience is a part of our hermeneutic. I cannot simply read a passage in the original languages, understand the necessary contextual and historical background, and automatically assume that I understand what the text is saying to me. I may know now what the original writer intended to say to his readers, but grasping what the writer is saying to me under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is a different matter. I must apply the text to the contemporary situation. Accomplishing that task depends to some extent on the way in which I, as the interpreter, perceive that situation and on the assumptions I inevitably bring to the text—assumptions that are a part of my situation.

A recent example is the question of ordaining women to the ministry. For centuries the church simply could not see through such passages on women as 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and 1 Corinthians 11:2-15. Because society had so clearly defined the role of women as subservient, we simply never thought there might be a conflict between Galatians’ great universal principle that in Christ there is “neither male nor female” and its application in the other Epistles. Our understanding of Scripture on this question was obviously the product of our coming to these texts from the standpoint of our own time. Only when conditions changed were we able to see these passages in a new way.

When the issue came up in the Sligo church of ordaining women merely as local church elders, I was surprised at the theological turn it took right from the beginning. Inasmuch as the General Conference had voted to allow the ordination of women as local elders under certain conditions, I assumed that the members would have few questions about the theological correctness of the idea. To my dismay, a number of members publicly challenged the theology of ordaining women for any position other than deaconess (for which there is no ordination service). To deal properly with such a challenge, the whole congregation had to be exposed to an incredible range of theological reflection including the nature of God, the Creation, the nature of human beings, revelation and redemption, ecclesiology and hermeneutics. Our division on this question as a congregation illustrated an important point: pastors and people must often interpret and apply the Scriptures in the midst of a critical situation for the community. The luxury of indefinite time and suspended judgment is not as available as it is in the classroom. That is why our theological thought must anticipate the problems we shall face and not merely react to them in a crisis.

**Development of theology**

Historically, Seventh-day Adventist theology has developed rather informally. Positions were preached by evangelists or taught by college teachers and administra-

I must confess that I have found, to my chagrin, that real life is always considerably more complex than my classroom theories allowed and that glib answers sound more plausible behind a lectern than they do behind a pulpit.
way of affirming the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. People are hungry for profound study. They want to dig deeply in the Word of God. Were their hunger satisfied in papers full of careful documentation, the appetite for tapes (a poor way to study) might assume its rightful place.

Even now, Adventists outside the English-speaking world are being forced to develop theological understandings in unique milieus. How does one preach the three angels’ messages in the People’s Republic of China, where the forces of oppression are not primarily religious ones at all? What, if anything, does the gospel have to say to the Third World, racked with hunger and the oppression of the poor? We must address these concerns without losing the distinctiveness of our theology.

Cause of spiritual sterility?

One notion that has contributed to the lack of involvement of the pastorate in theology is the idea of some pastors that studiousness and learning are sure signs of failing spirituality. Only those truly "active" in the Lord’s work are doing the work of the gospel ministry. Apparently, Ellen White thought otherwise: "Thousands of men who minister in the pulpit are lacking in the essential qualities of mind and character because they do not apply themselves to the study of the Scriptures. They are content with a superficial knowledge of God’s word, and they prefer to go on losing much in every way rather than to search diligently for the hidden treasure."—Gospel Workers, pp. 249, 250.

It is unfortunate that theology has acquired an ethos associated with the alleged sterility of academia. Pastors tend to regard theology as an area reserved for specialists; general practitioners better stay out. But Seward Hiltner wants the blame for this attitude distributed fairly: "On this matter, the specialists are not innocent. They have, in two ways, intimidated ministers into dissociating themselves as theologians. First, they have taught the various branches of theology so academically in seminars that the students come to regard all theology as the work only of specialists, and apparently nonministering ones at that. Second, while acknowledging that the ministry is a good place to use theology, they have not admitted that it also involves theological construction, and hence have helped remove from the minister any sense that he is a creative participant in the larger theological enterprise. Thus the minister comes to feel like a salesman who gets his products from the factory by way of the warehouse, but who would answer No to the question about his creative participation in making the product."—Ferment in the Ministry (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 158.

Within Adventism, pastors must be encouraged to be more theological. Those who are able to produce creative scholarship should perceive their ministry as including that scholarship. It is not anti-theoretical to visitation and evangelism. Because pastoring is by its very nature interdisciplinary, pastor/theologians may often see how theology interfaces with the whole of life in ways the academician cannot. But as long as pastors are isolated from theological work, leaving the local pastorate for the classroom will be seen as an elevation in stature. Perhaps it should be noted that pastors who go into the classroom almost never go back to the local parish. The few exceptions have been enticed back by unusual or prominent pulps that allow them ample time for study.

Some will object to my encouraging pastors to adopt this role, because it has little or nothing to do with “finishing the work.” Such objections do not impress me. Some time ago I watched an evangelist prominent in evangelical circles on a nationally televised talk show. As a conservative Christian I was embarrassed. His responses to questions from the audience about various doctrines and the meaning of moral terms were simplistic and naive. The Christian faith came across as narrow-minded, dogmatic, and unable to grapple with profound questions. Similar challenges to the faith are encountered every day by those in the pastorate. God’s Word must not sound ambivalent to people who are hoping to hear clarity.

Teachers in our colleges and graduate schools minister in important ways to their students and to the church at large. But they cannot minister to everyone. We pastors must also be teachers of the Word and, in a very real sense, encourage our members to be teachers as well, teachers even of us. Studying, praying, and working together for theological accuracy will produce, I believe, a rich harvest for the work of God in the earth.

One notion that has contributed to the lack of involvement of the pastorate in theology is the idea of some pastors that studiousness and learning are sure signs of failing spirituality.
If sacrifice means the giving of things, then a total sacrifice would mean a zero balance. But giving everything we have would place us in the position of having nothing, of being worthless to others.

by Mel Rees

What is sacrifice?

What is sacrifice? It bothered me for years. I was a reasonably successful Adventist businessman when one day I was sitting in church and heard the preacher talk about sacrifice, and I suddenly realized that with two cars, a couple of boats, a trailer, a nice home in which to live, and a deepfreeze full of food, I knew absolutely zero about sacrifice.

And so while my wife was fixing lunch that Sabbath day, I said to her all of a sudden, "Why don't we sell everything that we have, put it in the cause, and get the work finished? If heaven is as good as we say it is, what are we doing down here?"

And she turned and said, "What brought that on?"

"Well," I said, "I was just listening to the pastor talk about sacrifice today, and I don't know anything about sacrifice. Do you?"

I think if there had been a concerted effort for everybody to "sell everything and put it in the cause and get the work finished and get out of here," I probably would have joined that group. Still, I couldn't see why I should get rid of mine and everybody else keep theirs.

I took the word sacrifice and tucked it back in that little notch that we have in our IBM machines that God gave us for brains, and every time I heard it I didn't understand it, so I didn't worry about it.

I'm very certain that the devil wants everyone with a nice house and a good car and an extra suit of clothes in the closet to have a guilty feeling, because one of the most puzzling problems that faces the average Christian is the relationship between prosperity and sacrifice. The problem is that man exercises his God-given rights; he uses his talents and his time; and he becomes prosperous. Then he is constantly bombarded with sermons and articles on the subject of sacrifice. There are some very strange results. He may give liberally (but still feel guilty because he doesn't understand the word sacrifice). He may reject sacrifice entirely, because he dreads poverty. He may resent deeply that giving to the church means sacrificing all the things that he has scrimped and worked and saved for all his life. Or he may regard sacrifice as being limited to the giving of material things, a very serious result.

Is sacrifice giving?

The text that everyone knows so very thoroughly comes from Psalm 50:5. You've seen it show up on pledge cards, commitment forms, covenant forms. It gives the graphic picture of Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven and He calls to His saints, and He says, "Gather my saints together unto me; those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." It simply infers that
if you make a large commitment or if you donate a piece of property, you can become a part of this vast throng, and you'll be ready to hear this great call.

If it is correct that sacrifice means the giving of things, then a total sacrifice would mean a zero balance. In other words, we would give everything that we have. Wouldn't this place us in an interesting position? Having absolutely nothing, we would be totally worthless to ourselves, to our families, to our church, to the cause. As a matter of fact, we would be a burden upon the world, because we would be on relief.

Likewise, our testing period would come to an end, because we're told that God tests us here with materials in things. In other words, we are handling perishable things that He can decide whether we are capable of handling imperishable things. God can't take another chance. Selfishness is where it all began, and God can't take selfish persons to heaven, nor with pearly gates, golden streets. They'd have jackhammers all over the place!

If sacrifice means the giving of things, then Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Daniel, and many other people did not make a covenant by sacrifice, because they all died very wealthy men. Still they were all counted worthy of eternal life.

Is sacrifice trading?

We turn to another definition. One man says that sacrifice means trading. In other words, we trade things to the Lord for things that He would give us. We trade Him perishable things and He trades us imperishable things. False religions by the score are based upon the idea that you can buy your way into heaven. But what are we going to do about Psalm 50:12, in which God says, "the world is mine, and the fulness thereof"? "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord" (Haggai 2:8). What are we going to use for trading materials?

I learned about trading at a very early age. I lived out in the country, and on the farm we didn't have much to amuse ourselves. But we did have one thing that I miss to this day. We had a day called "trading day." I don't know who started it. It was something that just happened. Every boy had a box that he kept under the bed or in the closet. He kept all his treasures there—a jackknife with a broken blade, a watch that didn't run, extra marbles (not your best shooter, but the extra ones)—anything that he could collect went into the box. And then someday, somebody would start trading. Our parents simply gave up. The cornfields were neglected and the cows had to take care of themselves that day, because we went back and forth all over the community. It was fantastic.

This particular day somebody started it. I caught the fever, and it didn't take long. I got my box out, and away we went. My cousin had a magnifying glass. I had never had one. It was a really good one. It had two different magnifications; you put them together. I had to have it, that's all there was to it!

So I asked him, "What do you want for it, Karl?"

Well, he looked over my treasures, and he didn't see anything that he wanted. I offered him the whole box. No, that wasn't what he wanted. Well, what did he want? When he told me, I didn't even know who had one. (What it was, I've forgotten.) So I went to trading, and I made some terrific deals that day. I traded and traded until it was almost time for the sun to go down, and finally I had what Karl wanted. I went home the most ecstatic boy in the whole area. I had two weeks of pure, unadulterated joy. A whole new world opened up before me. Why, I even caught a poor, hapless fly and gave him a real close inspection.

And then came that fatal day when my mother sent me over to an aunt's house to get something. While I was waiting for it, my uncle came in. I was sitting there studying the back of my hand with the magnifying glass. My uncle looked over and asked, "What do you have?"

"I have a magnifying glass."

"Can I see it?" I handed it to him. He looked at it carefully and asked, "Where did you get it?"

"From Karl."

"That isn't Karl's, it's mine." And I saw my beloved magnifying glass disappear into my uncle's pocket. I swore that from that day to this, whenever I would trade with someone, I would be sure first that he owns what he's trading!

Sacrifice and covenant

Don't you think that God would be as particular as I? Let's look at Psalm 50:5 again. It says, "Gather my saints together, those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." It doesn't say those who have sacrificed. It's talking about a covenant. What is a covenant? A covenant is an agreement between two persons, or a group of persons, to do or not to do certain things.

With Abraham, God said, "I'll make you a great nation. You will be like the sands of the seashore. I'll give you a land grant. I'll be your God and you can belong to Me." Abraham was extremely rich, but God didn't ask him for his money. He asked him for his dedication. That was all.

Then one day the Lord said to Abraham, "I want your boy." If He had said, "Abraham, I'll make you a deal: either give Me all your money or give Me the boy," which would Abraham have chosen? The boy! He was his greatest possession. But God didn't give him any choice. After that agonizing trip to Mount Moriah, after the angel stayed his hand when he was about to plunge that dagger into the quivering flesh of his only son, God said, "Now I know Abraham's heart in that he has not withheld his son, his only son, from Me." If sacrifice meant the giving of things, he would have had to kill Isaac. But God accepted the fact that he was willing. I believe that this test only proved the genuineness of Abraham's acceptance of the covenant. God already knew he could pass it. Now Abraham knew he could pass the test.

Although God owns everything, there is one thing over which He exercises no control, none at all—our choices and our wills. I believe that God had no choice except to put the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, because the devil had accused Him of being a dictator, of forcing people to worship Him and to love Him. When He placed the tree there before the whole universe, they knew that the devil was a liar, because God's kingdom is based upon the foundation of love. And love demands freedom of choice. It's that simple. You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.

David understood this beautifully. He had just stained his illustrious career with a foul blot of adultery and murder, and now his friend Nathan the prophet came in. Nathan said, "We have a problem."

David asked, "What is it?"

"You know the big, wealthy sheep owner down the road—the fellow that owns thousands and thousands of sheep? Well, right across the road from him is an old man, and he lives in a house there all by himself. One day they gave him a lamb. It didn't have any mother, and that old man took it and nourished that little lamb like it was his own. He kept it right in the house with him."

David was interested, "Yes, go on."

"Well, the big sheepman had some guests come in and he was going to serve lamb for dinner. Guess whose lamb he took?"

David rose right up off the throne and

What did this horse have in common with us? A wild, ungovernable spirit, totally useless to man. The only sacrifice that we can give to God would be to give these wild, ungovernable hearts to Him.
said it should be the rich man's life for the life of the lamb. And then he saw the long finger of the prophet and heard him saying, "You're the man."

Suddenly David saw the enormity of his sin. He saw what he had really done. And so in Psalm 51 he pours out his heart, saying, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (verse 10). He was pleading with God for forgiveness because he saw how terrible sin is.

Verse 16 says, "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering." If Nathan had said, "The Lord has decreed that you give 10,000 lambs," David would have said, "Gladly, how about 20,000?"

A contrite heart

But God desireth not sacrifice. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (verse 17).

What's he talking about—a broken spirit, a broken heart?

Granddad was a cowboy and worked on a ranch near LaGrande. One time he and some of the other cowboys were away out over against the foothills when they saw standing on the hill a tremendous black stallion, the most beautiful horse that they had ever seen. They rode closer, and he stood there with his head held high. Then finally with a snort he kicked his heels and took off, a herd of mares with him. The cowboys said they had never seen anything like it, so when they came back to the ranch, they told the boss about this magnificent black horse.

The boss rode out with them one day to this area. When he saw him, he said, "Get him, that's going to be my horse."

After a lot of trouble they finally trapped this black stallion. He screamed, kicked, and bucked, but at last they managed to get four ropes on him, a cowboy at each corner, and get him back to the ranch.

Now somebody had to ride him. They drew straws, because every cowboy wanted to get on that horse. The first fellow got on. They cut the stallion loose, and he left that cowboy up in the air with no visible means of support! Numbers two, three, four, five—the whole outfit tried. Nobody could stay on that horse.

The boss started offering money, and when he got up to two months' wages, my granddad decided he had to have that money. He had a plan in mind. He simply got on and put his spurs underneath the cinch (that's the belly band that holds the saddle on). Now he couldn't get off, and he had a shot-loaded cord in his hands so he could pop the horse between the ears in case he came over backwards. On the third jump he wished his boots would come off! And when he got through and the horse ran away, Granddad was bleeding from his ears and his nose. He was in bed for a couple of weeks. I guess it didn't hurt him, for he lived until he was 92.

What did this horse have in common with us? A wild, ungovernable spirit, totally useless to man. He wanted to do his own thing, to go with the breeze. Our hearts are exactly like that—wild and ungovernable. The only sacrifice that we could give to God would be to give these wild, ungovernable hearts to Him. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." He won't refuse that.

Jeremiah said the heart was wicked above all things, desperately wicked (see Jer. 17:9). At the close of his life Paul could say, "I have fought a good fight" (2 Tim. 4:7). What was he talking about? Fighting the Romans? The Jews? His false brethren? Who was Paul fighting? He was fighting himself!

Isn't this your greatest battle? The greatest battle we have is with self. It isn't easy, this battle with self, this wild, ungovernable heart. This is all we have to sacrifice.

Sacrifice is using

If we consider sacrifice from a different frame of reference I think it will be clear. Rather than to think of giving or trading, why not think of using? This would be completely compatible with God the owner, man the manager or the agent. As agents we would be constantly receiving, constantly dispensing—drawing on the inexhaustible resources of Heaven. We would be directed in our business by the principles God has given in His Word, by a knowledge of need, by the impression the Holy Spirit could bring to us. And under these conditions we could belong to the firm of the universe. This knowledge and awareness of our stewardship relation to God would keep us from pride of ownership, for pride of ownership leads to self-dependence, and self-dependence leads inevitably to self-destruction.

God doesn't want us to self-destruct. He doesn't want us to feel guilty about our possessions, because our possessions are what stewardship is all about. It's not in possessing; it's in claiming ownership. Look at sacrifice in its broadest sense.

In Los Angeles the police picked up a boy for armed robbery. His parents were called. They had the normal reactions—embarrassment, irritation, and anger. They were embarrassed to be in the police station in the first place. They were embarrassed to think what their friends might say. They were also embarrassed because they were sure their names would be in the paper. They were irritated because it had disrupted their plans for the evening. They were angry at their son for subjecting them to this indignity, and they were angry at themselves. They blamed each other for what had happened. When they confronted their boy, he sullenly looked at the floor as he received a dual tirade.

Finally, his mother asked him, "Why, Freddy, why? We gave you everything. Anytime you said you wanted anything there wasn't a solitary thing that we didn't get for you. We gave you everything. What more could we have done? If you wanted something, why didn't you ask for it? All you had to do was ask. You didn't have to steal."

Freddy sat there for a long moment and finally he looked up. "Do you really want to know?"

"Sure, you gave me everything—too much. But when I wanted Dad to play ball with me, he said, 'Sorry, Freddy, I'm too busy. You know how it is. Here's a buck. Why don't you go down to the malt shop? OK, son? OK?' When I wanted you to stay home, Mom, and just be with me, you said, 'I'm sorry, Freddy, I've got a bridge date.' Or 'Your Dad and I have a dinner date with friends. You do understand, don't you? Here, why don't you take this money? I hear there's a new show down at the Paramount that's really terrific. Sure, I understood. I was in the way. I didn't want money. I didn't want things. What I wanted was you. I needed you!"

You see, there are some things for which money is no substitute at all.

I wonder how it is with God if sometimes we slip Him an extra $5 or $10 or $20, and we say, "You know, God, I'm really busy, and I'm sure You know how it is. You worked down here. You know what business is like. You understand, don't You? Don't You?"

What we really need to understand is the nature of our covenant with God, our willingness to relinquish all of us—time, talent, our whole lives. That's what sacrifice is all about.

Remember that if Jesus could have given things for our salvation, He could have given the whole universe or made two more. But it cost Him His life. And that's what it will cost us. Because that's the only thing we really possess.

Although God owns everything, there is one thing over which He exercises no control—our choices and wills. Love demands freedom of choice. You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.
Should not the contemporary gospel minister make an impact on his community similar in many respects to that made by the Biblical prophets on their society? Should not the minister of today experience, in a sense, the type of calling that characterized the Bible prophets? These ancient men of God become ideal patterns for those who long to have a Spirit-filled ministry.

by Elbio Pereyra

Prophetic ministry

It is a curious fact that in the days of Israel, even though a prophet himself might be generally rejected by the people, they usually listened whenever he proclaimed (either orally or in writing), “Thus saith the Lord.” They did not always accept nor act on the prophet’s message, but they listened with a degree of respect, because they believed God was communicating with them through the prophet’s words. The office and ministry of a genuine prophet implied authority and commanded attention.

But in order to be a true prophet, an individual needed more than a mere confidence that God had called him. The genuineness of such a prophetic ministry was revealed not only in his proclamation of God’s message but in every activity of his daily life as an instrument of God. The same is true of a preacher of God’s Word today, for there is a sense in which the contemporary gospel minister can have a prophetic ministry—the type of calling that characterized the Bible prophets, especially those who were reformers.

The following are some of the characteristics of a true prophet that made his ministry more efficient, captured attention, and radiated authority, and that, when appropriately incorporated into our ministries, can do a similar work for us.

Agent of the Holy Spirit

It was commonly believed in Bible times that no one—not even the agent himself—had the right or authority to oppose the message of one upon whom the Holy Spirit “descended” or “fell.” Jonah, for example, “escaped” from the Lord but eventually fulfilled his commission. When Elijah, following his own impulses, fled from Jezebel, he seemed to have fled also...
from the Lord, but God's angel overtook him. Similarly, when Jeremiah resolved to throw off the prophetic mantle, he could not, for the word of the Lord was like "a burning fire shut up in... [his] bones" (Jer. 20:9). Likewise Paul cried out, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16). Thus we see that when the Spirit of God takes possession of a prophet, his message overflows in an irresistible stream, regardless of the personal wishes of the prophet himself or the person to whom his message is directed.

**Spirit-filled reformer**

The prophet-reformer tried to curb both the political and religious abuses of the people and their leaders. Under the guidance of an illumined conscience he deliberately ignored established traditions and customs when that became necessary in order to obey the Author of his message and calling. He was uncompromising; he was not a conformist. He persisted in reform as long as his Master's will was clear to him. The sense of God's guidance imparted a confidence. In him was found no hesitation; he did not vacillate. And these characteristics were generally recognized by the people as proof of his divine calling.

To some he might appear to be a self-centered individualist, but behind appearances were circumstances that required him to stand alone for right when necessary. He was an individualist for God, aflame with an inner fire ignited by the Holy Spirit. He felt compelled to preach God's message, whether in the street, in the marketplace, in public meetings, or to individuals to whom he was sent. Only by so doing could he find peace and be filled with a sense of having fulfilled his mission. Only then could he stop proclaiming and return quietly to his home.

**God-called**

The work of the Bible prophet was not inherited, as was the Aaronic priesthood. There was no prophetic caste comparable to the priestly one that existed in the days of Israel. In a similar way, there is today no such thing as a "pastoral," ministerial, or preacher "caste." It may be an honor for a minister's son to follow in his father's footsteps, but the son is not obliged to do so. When Whitefield was ridiculed because he was not in the "apostolic succession," he retorted, "My powerful ordination comes from the pierced hands of the Lord." It was said of Jesus Christ that He was made a minister, and Paul states that he was placed in the ministry by the will of God (see Heb. 8:2; Rom. 15:8; Acts 26:16; Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:23, 25). This distinction seems to have been ignored by some Christian ministers. They have "made themselves ministers" by long years of study and by investing their all in this endeavor. But they overlook the fact that they cannot be made ministers by anyone except God Himself.

Can we declare humbly, yet confidently and without presumption, that we truly have been called and made ministers? We must face this question, for our times demand ministers and preachers made such, as were the prophets of old, by God and not by man. Tom Skinner, in his book Worlds of Revolution, said that one of the most unfortunate things about religion in this century is that we have so many religious leaders who have never really been called of God (see p. 255).

**Unconditionally in God's hands**

The true prophet was God's spokesman. Neither personal nor public interests deterred him in his mission. If the one to whom his message was directed was not in harmony with the will of God (be he the high priest or a teacher of the common people), he could not in the least influence God's servant. The prophet's whole being was subject to God and His cause. He bore a revelation that, even though understood, was at times despised by educated, intelligent men who lacked an enlightened conscience. As a reformer, it was the prophet's work to alter the normal course of matters and divert them to channels in which God would have them flow.

The prophet was a devoted follower of God and His holy law. To him, God's cause was paramount and made him the servant, not only of God, but of God's covenant people. This sense of divine responsibility frequently involved persecution, threats of death, and actual loss of life. He was a constant watchman for God, an uncompromising steward of that which he had received in trust. Grounded in the law of God, in justice, in equity, and in truth, he refused to dilute his message with ambiguities, formalism, praise, compromise, prizes, or gifts.

His awareness of being unconditionally in God's hands made him brave and bold, even daring. Indeed, his calling demanded this kind of stability and direction, because God Himself was that way, and he represented God by his attitudes and deeds. He did not cater to king or prince. He never exploited the people, nor did he employ demagoguery, for he did not seek or need votes to retain his office. He received from God all that he needed. At times he stood alone, like Elijah, although a minority usually received his message and renewed their loyalty to God. Being a prophet was seldom popular, for a prophet was called upon to speak plainly. He was not a sought-after man even in the circles of the church.

Cries seemed to draw him as iron to a magnet. God's message caused him to be restless with a holy dissatisfaction. At times when his mission crossed the paths of errant leaders he provoked conflicts. At other times he rushed tempestuously into situations with an energetic exhortation on his lips or some good news to instill hope. But always he was loyal to God, justice, truth, and the cause of the innocent.

**Frugal, austere, and modest**

Though a prophet was not usually from the ranks of the priesthood, in some cases men combined in themselves the offices of both priest and prophet. Jeremiah and Ezekiel are examples. Such a combination seems contradictory, for the priests tended to be traditionalists, whereas the prophets tended to be activists. The priests were formalists, tied to ceremonial monotony; the prophets were innovators who called the people away from the status quo. The former were identified by a uniform, the latter by attire that seemed to rebuke wealth and ease.

**The key**

The gospel ministry today needs the distinctive spirit, direction, style, form, and content of the reforming prophets of old. The ministry of these reformers and their distinctive characteristics resembled those of that prophet whom Moses declared would arise like unto himself—Jesus Christ, our divine Lord. It was "the Spirit of Christ which was in them" that made it possible for these men of prophetic ministry to reproduce Him whom they represented—the Prophet of prophets.

If we preachers today permit this Spirit to work in us, we will manifest the Saviour in our ministries. The hour through which God's church is currently passing requires that we give first priority to having the key characteristics of a prophetic ministry. The gospel ministry today needs the distinctive spirit, direction, style, form, and content of the reforming prophets of old. The ministry of these reformers and their distinctive characteristics resembled those of that prophet whom Moses declared would arise like unto himself—Jesus Christ, our divine Lord. It was "the Spirit of Christ which was in them" that made it possible for these men of prophetic ministry to reproduce Him whom they represented—the Prophet of prophets.

When the Spirit of God takes possession of a prophet his message overflows in an irresponsible stream, regardless of the personal wishes of the prophet or the person to whom his message is directed.
Harnessing volunteer evangelists

When W.B. Quigley visited the evangelism center in British Columbia, he discovered laymen working alongside pastors and an adaptation of plans designed to meet the needs of the city. He talked with Brad Thorp, center director, to find out more.

The Bible instructor, Trudy Long, answered the telephone. After listening attentively for a few minutes, she asked, “You mean he accidentally shot himself?”

In the conversation that followed, this patient Christian worker empathized with the person on the other end of the line, asking questions and expressing sympathy. Then Trudy said, “Can we come over and visit you?”

The person who called in this emergency was one of the recently baptized young people “caught” in the effective evangelistic net constructed and used by Elder Brad Thorp and his team of 22 workers in the sprawling metropolis of Vancouver, British Columbia. Not only a dynamic redemptive center, this evangelistic organization is a continuing source of spiritual nurture for those whose lives it has touched. Hundreds of phone calls, like the one Trudy Long handled, continue to come in.

The evangelistic center (“home” for the single young people on the 22-person evangelistic team) is a large residence that the British Columbia Conference pur- chased two years ago as a soul-winning base. Built on two and a half acres, it is located on the edge of Surrey, a suburb of the metropolis of Vancouver with its million and a half souls. In the past two years this active evangelistic organization has been responsible, through the blessings of God, for more than 150 converts—and these converts are staying faithful to the great truths of this message. Since the team remains in the area year after year, the center becomes not only an evangelistic agency but a nurturing program for those who have come to accept Christ and His truth through the center’s ministry.

Recently I was able to interview Brad Thorp, evangelist for the British Columbia Conference and director of the center in Surrey.

Quigley: Brad, what is your philosophy of how evangelism ought to be done?

Thorp: I believe that we are in the most exciting era of Seventh-day Adventist evangelism. But I believe, too, that our evangelistic principles need to be adapted much more to the secular age in which we live, especially in the cities. Because of intense secularism we must take a much longer approach to evangelism than the traditional short-term program we have followed.

Quigley: Does this mean that the average convert today does not come from a Christian background but from a secular orientation?

Thorp: We do have some from a strictly secular background, but the majority of our converts still come from a “Christian” background. However, I believe that the Christian consciousness of today is far different from the Christian consciousness of 20 or 30 years ago—something much less. We may have many people still coming from a Christian background, but they are not trained in Biblical principles as their forefathers were, and in attempting to reach them with God’s truth we must recognize this fact.

Quigley: There is among us at present a philosophy that we should evangelize by spending large sums of money on public meetings. Another school of thought says we should train the church members and develop many Bible study situations, then assist that situation with an evangelistic campaign. How do you see evangelism, Brad?

Thorp: Your question brings to mind two important statements: “The Lord does not now work to bring many souls into the truth, because of the church members who have never been converted and those who were once converted but who have backslidden” (Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 371); and “The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.”—Ibid., vol. 9, p. 117.
In order for evangelism to be successful, I believe, there must be church-centered revival and a union of laity and ministry working together. Public evangelism will only be as successful as the preparatory work. Our philosophy of city evangelism must be long-term and broad enough to encompass, on a continuing basis, the seed-sowing, cultivating, and finally the reaping phase of the public evangelistic meeting. City evangelism needs to be seen as a total program—not just a reaping or lay-training program, but both, on a long-term and ongoing basis.

Quigley: It's interesting to hear you say that because today's administrators and laymen are sensing the tenuousness of the commitments made in many campaigns. Far more than we would like, some people stay in the church only a short time after the campaign before going out the back door. Would you be willing to hold a campaign in any church at any time?

Thorp: No. Very careful prework must be done before public evangelistic meetings take place; careful plans also should be laid for follow-up of the meetings. This prework should include health evangelism—cooking schools, Five-Day Plans, stress management, et cetera—using the capabilities of the local church and evangelist team. There should also be careful cultivation of the church interest file and extensive use of community Bible classes, using the Daniel Seminars. We have had very good success using Daniel Seminars. Also our team and church members befriend people, then invite them to subsequent evangelistic meetings. Further nurturing contact is continued. We have developed a complete outline of our preparatory program that we would be happy to share with pastors or evangelists.

Quigley: That's a rather holistic concept! You see your team, then, as a training source, a reaping evangelistic thrust, and a follow-up nurturing program. It is a very complete program!

Thorp: That's right! A good illustration of this is in the next room. There we have a group of people who were baptized just a few months ago and who are now being trained in the art of personal evangelism themselves.

Quigley: What is your relationship to the six pastors in the city of Vancouver? How do you enter into training programs with them? In what ways do you cooperate so that you are one with their program and they are "on your team"?

Thorp: I view my relationship to the pastors as one of assisting them in their local programs. We are here to help the pastors in their evangelistic efforts with our Bible instructors and programs and to strengthen their local programs. Our work could not be a success without the pastors' active participation.

Quigley: I understand that you have 22 persons here on your staff. This is almost mind-boggling to me. Does the conference pay them a monthly salary?

Thorp: No. The majority of these workers are here on a volunteer basis. We supply room and board and a minimum amount of money every month to meet their travel expenses. They are responsible for meeting their own personal needs.

We have a one-year training program designed to prepare a person to be a thoroughly trained Bible instructor. This course includes eight classes, such as Field School of Evangelism, Personal Evangelism, Daniel Seminars, Factors of Church Growth, and also extensive field training. We invite both lay people and ministers to participate in this program.

I believe that as ministers we need to challenge our people to spend time gaining experience in the science of soul winning. We spend two or three years training a man to be a carpenter or a plumber, yet we think we can train a person to be a Bible instructor in one or two weeks! As a church we need to invest money, time, expertise, and effort in developing an army of properly trained Bible instructors to meet the challenge of the cities. But it will take time and a willingness to let these dedicated people do the programs and develop their skills.

Quigley: Brad, tell us something about a typical day in the life of the evangelistic center.

Thorp: We have worship at five minutes to eight in the morning, followed by breakfast. By 9:00 A.M. we have finished our home duties, and at ten o'clock we begin classes. Classes end at noon or 12:30. At 1:30 P.M. we have prayer bands and name organization.

Quigley: Prayer bands and what kind of organization?

Thorp: Name organization.

Quigley: Is this the organization of visitation?

Thorp: That's right. Pastor Gordon Smedley, one of our team members, is responsible for our field training program. He meets with our group at one-thirty each afternoon. If someone needs names to visit or help in handling a situation, this is the time we deal with that. At 2:00 P.M. we have our midday meal, and by 3:00 P.M. we are out in the field. From 3:00 P.M. until 9:30 or 10:00 P.M. we are doing field work—giving Bible studies, conducting Daniel Seminars, health programs, or evangelistic meetings. That's a typical day for us.

Quigley: Would you comment on the Daniel Seminar as preparation for a major evangelistic crusade?

Thorp: The Daniel Seminar is one of the most effective tools we have for thorough evangelistic preparation. I'm thrilled with it. Probably 40 to 50 percent of our baptismal candidates are from our Daniel Seminars. I would strongly urge and encourage anyone to use the Daniel Seminars. It's an excellent program and can be used very effectively.

Quigley: I've noticed that the city of Vancouver is very large and complex. How do you organize the task of reaching this great metropolis?

Thorp: City evangelism is the greatest challenge we face as Adventists. I believe that the cities demand an evangelistic approach that is much more than a one- or two-year program. In Vancouver we have six churches and ten major socioeconomic areas. It is our goal to establish in every major area of the city subteams of workers who can concentrate their full-time activities in the evangelistic outreach for that area. In time we want to develop health food stores/restaurants in each of these areas, as well as several health spas.

Then, as the evangelist, I go throughout the metropolitan area on a rotating basis, draw two or three of these areas together, and hold a major evangelistic series to reap that interest developed by the Bible instructors. I believe the Lord wants us to develop ten subteams that can literally go door-to-door and know the spiritual state of every home in the city.

Quigley: That is a rather ambitious undertaking. Do you envision ten centers like yours here?

Thorp: Very much so. I believe that is what the Lord wants. In the center ought to be a home where workers can live part time. And connected with it should be a simple health-food store and restaurant. In some areas there might also be a small Adventist health spa. Then that little center becomes the evangelistic base for that area. The workers for these subcenters would be based in a larger outpost located in the country outside the city. Maybe I am looking way off into the future, but I hope and pray that the Lord will soon give us at least 100 full-time workers for metropolitan Vancouver! We need an army of people in this city to do the work that

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needs to be done.

Quigley: Well, you already have 22 people, or 22 percent of that goal; it doesn't seem that your objective is an unreachable one.

Thorp: I believe we can reach it. And I believe that we need to be committed to long-term programs of evangelism so the cities can be thoroughly worked.

Quigley: I think you are on target. Now, in terms of persons actually baptized over the next five years, have you projected some kind of a goal for which you are praying and working?

Thorp: I believe that the effectiveness of our evangelistic outreach is in direct proportion to our number of effective Bible instructors. And I do not see any reason why a Bible instructor, thoroughly trained, cannot win ten people a year.

Quigley: I notice that you are placing great stress on establishing centers so that they stay with the church. You know, of course, that among Adventists criticism is leveled at evangelism; that many people come into the church but the majority of them go out some time after the meeting closes.

Thorp: In the two and one-half years that we've worked in Vancouver we have lost only four or five individuals.

Quigley: You mean of the 150 you have baptized only four or five have later slipped away?

Thorp: Correct—and some of these are still reasonably close to us.

Quigley: Now let me get this straight, Brad. Are you telling me that you have followed through on the experience of these 150 people you have baptized to the extent that you can know today, as we are talking here, that only four or five have left the church?

Thorp: Yes.

Quigley: That is marvelous!

Thorp: It is a thrilling thing to me to see people coming into the church and then becoming solidly established and involved in the program. Each Bible instructor has his or her own little parish of converts and interests to work with, so there begins to develop in each church a nucleus of excited, deeply committed people who are finding excitement for their new relationship with Christ.

Quigley: Brad, I recognize that your philosophy of evangelism is for long-range work and that you don't have much confidence in the “hit-and-run” type of campaign. Please comment on this.

Thorp: I believe that there is a very real place for short-term reaping meetings. I have no criticism of the short series as long as it is used for reaping purposes—in churches where a large core of people are taking Bible studies or in a strong Adventist institutional community. But if, as a church, we are really going to address ourselves to the challenge of city evangelism, which is the greatest challenge we face today, then we must approach the cities on more than a short-term projection of planning. We have a war to win, not just a battle to fight. And in order to win this war we have to lay a foundation of long-term, permanent evangelistic programs in each city.

Vancouver is typical of many cities throughout North America. We have approximately one and a half million people, including large ethnic groups. I believe the only way for us to do thorough work in training church members for evangelism, in establishing strong spiritual nurturing programs, in establishing long-range health and Bible ministries in the city—to truly minister to the needs of the city—is to commit ourselves to a long-term strategy of permanent, ongoing evangelistic outreach, utilizing companies of well-trained workers. And when we do this, Ellen White has said the result will be the setting in operation of a mighty movement such as we have not yet witnessed. This is the latter rain harvest we are all looking for.

Quigley: You mentioned to me earlier five principles of city evangelism. Please give me your philosophy on those as we close this interview.

Thorp: I believe that five key principles must be followed to implement long-term city evangelism. Number one is that evangelistic outreach must be accompanied by church-centered revival and reformation. Revival often takes time to implement within our churches, and true revival must find expression in outreach or it will die. Therefore, revival, reformation, and evangelism must go hand in hand. Revival prepares the way for evangelism, while evangelism encourages and fosters revival. New members are often the greatest catalyst for revival and reformation within the church, for as older members see enthusiastic new members coming in, they catch the fire and begin to become involved. In order for this to have its full effect evangelism and revival must be carried forward on a long-term basis.

Second, there must be a union of ministry and laity. We must train the laity and then allow them to work. One of the hardest things for ministers to do is to step back and let a lay person get up, stumble through a few seminars, give a few Bible studies and maybe have some trouble with them—but that's the only way he will learn and catch the joy of soul winning. We must be willing to step out of the limelight and to allow the laity to become involved. This is the only way we can harness the army of the church.

Third, there must be a union of medical and gospel evangelism. We must have a constant, ongoing partnership between these two ministries. We must effectively use the right arm of the gospel to proclaim to the world the holistic message God has given us. Only then will either ministry be complete and fully accomplish what God has intended.

The fourth principle is the union of the conference-paid, ordained ministry with a volunteer company of workers. This involves a real commitment on the part of the team leadership, but it is a vital concept that was found in the heart of Christ's ministry. Jesus spent far more time with the twelve than He did with the multitude. He instructed and trained them, but they also did preparatory work for Him and assisted Him in His large public meetings. Jesus combined both ministry to His team and to the multitude. And by this apprenticeship method He prepared them to become dynamic leaders of the Christian church. If we are going to be successful in our ministry and evangelism, we must also prepare a team effectively to work and reach others.

Fifth, city evangelism must be connected with the country outpost. The Spirit of Prophecy speaks of essentially three types of outposts from which to work the cities. One outpost center is in the inner city as a site from which to hold meetings. A second outpost center is in an isolated location and is primarily for intensive training of the evangelistic team. The third outpost center is in a rural area with easy access to the city to provide workers with the advantage of living in a quiet rural location and yet of being intensely involved in the grind and thrust of city evangelism. Alternating between the quietness of the country and the pressure of the city is vital for the health and morale of a team of workers. The outpost should never be regarded as an abandonment of the city but rather as an important tool to utilize effectively more workers to minister to the city.

These five simple principles are special tools that God has given us to reach the cities. We are trying to implement them here in the Vancouver area, and God has promised that as we do so, His mighty work will be victoriously accomplished.

There must be a unity of ministry and laity.
One of the hardest things for ministers to do is to step back and let a lay person get up and stumble through a few seminars—but that's the only way he will learn soul winning.
I was in a quandary. While I was serving as camp pastor last summer at a very beautiful youth camp well attended by 178 campers ranging in age from 9 to 12, the director asked me to make a call for campers to commit themselves to follow Christ. The call was to take place on Friday evening or Sabbath morning so that both pastor and campers would have all week to warm up to each other and I would have time to win the youngsters' confidence. That was not the problem. Nor was it that camp pastoring or making calls was new to me. It was simply that I had been disappointed with previous camp calls involving such momentous decisions.

The campfire bowl was not conducive for large numbers of campers to come to the front at the time of the call. Yet this was not the reason for my quandary.

The problem was peer pressure. It is not unusual for young people to come forward, simply following the lead of a fellow camper who has the courage to venture forward. Although such a response is not necessarily a wrong one, it is much better if a young camper makes a decision because he wants to make that decision—not because his best friend has said, "Come on, let's go forward. Everyone else is."

Peer pressure can also work in the opposite direction, of course. A young person feels a deep conviction that he ought to go forward. But a fellow camper, for whatever reason, may state openly that he isn't about to make a "silly" decision such as that. As a result, the residents of an entire cabin may sit motionless. They appear uninterested, yet for some that is far from the truth. How to deal with this problem—that was my quandary.

The camp director kindly allowed me to work my way out of the dilemma as I saw best, and the resulting solution was one that I found to be amazingly simple yet very effective. It is something that works not only for summer camps but also for Weeks of Prayer at the church school, Pathfinder camps, and other similar situations.

At the evening meal on Friday I gave to each counselor one blank card for every camper in his or her cabin. These cards were to be filled out with each camper's name, address, age, and cabin name or number. I then asked the counselors to bring these cards with them to that evening's campfire program, where further instructions would be given.

Following group singing and some excellent staff presentations around the campfire, I had the opportunity to conclude the continued story being told each evening and to make the call for commitment. I began by requesting the counselors to give each camper the card bearing his or her name. The campers were asked to refrain from folding, crumpling, or tearing their cards. Briefly I emphasized how the camp was a Christian camp, how each counselor and staff member had dedicated his life to Christ, and how the Sabbath was a special day for the campers. I pointed out how God wants His children to have fun while at camp, and this naturally led into a discussion of heaven as a real place where Jesus will be personally with us, where we will have endless enjoyment. After emphasizing how much Jesus wants each camper to be there, I said, "If we miss heaven we've missed it all."

At the climax of the presentation, as the embers of the campfire were dying, I asked each camper to take his card and hold it so that his or her name was right-side up. Then I asked the following three questions:

1. "Would you like to commit your life to Christ?" I briefly explained what is involved in such a commitment. If they wanted to respond positively, they were asked to tear off the top left-hand corner of the card just above their name.

2. "Have you been baptized by immersion?" Again, this was carefully explained for the sake of those who might not be familiar with what is involved in baptism. Those responding affirmatively were asked to tear off the top right-hand corner at the end of their name.

3. "Would you like to be baptized?" Again, proper explanation was given. If the camper's answer was Yes he or she was to tear off the lower-left corner below the beginning of his name.

I followed these questions with a prayer of commitment and asked the counselors to collect the cards, which were to be given to me immediately following the service. I could hardly wait to go through the cards. The results were most encouraging. Of 178 registered campers, 165 made some response by turning in the cards. Of those who turned in cards, 159 made a commitment to follow Christ in response to the first question. Fifteen of those responding to question number one indicated that they had already been baptized (question number two), and 128 requested that they be baptized (question number three). This means that only 16 of a total of 159 who committed their lives to Christ were hesitant about baptism. As soon as camp closed I mailed each camper's card to the pastors of his home church.

Some pastors who serve as camp pastors view it as a time to have an extra vacation, to do little more than give a morning devotional, present a camp council talk, and tell a campfire story. But I found that if I can identify with the campers by riding horseback, hiking, swimming, and working on crafts with them, and even by sitting on the fence at their rodeo and joining in their pie-eating contest, then when the time comes for asking them to make a life-long commitment to follow Christ, they will respond positively—especially if that decision can be made in the privacy of their own conscience.

Mike Deming is pastor of the Arroyo Grande, California, Seventh-day Adventist church.
Because of the pressures brought to bear by competing special-interest groups, the church leader today is tempted to yield to rationalization in arriving at decisions. But the honest administrator or church pastor must have reasons for each position he takes, based on objective evaluation and divine guidance. Then he must courageously go forward.

by W. J. Hackett

**Decision or rationalization?**

The mood of our day seems to carry with it a certain distinction—if not admiration—for the person who attacks the Establishment and traditional methods of operating. No doubt the emphasis on research, the thirst for knowledge, and new methods of analysis that characterize the modern world have contributed to bringing about this condition. Nor is it without its merits. Nevertheless, this situation has also intensified the pressure on pastors and conference officials to yield to rationalization in arriving at decisions. Unless such pressure is resisted, we will find ourselves tending to make the decision that will create the least reverberations and that will put us in the best light with our constituents or members.

Although the English words decide or decision can be found in only two places in the King James Version of Scripture (1 Kings 20:40; Joel 3:14), the idea of making decisions can be found in numerous passages. For example, after weighing many philosophies and approaches to the preaching of the gospel, Paul came to a decision. He said, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). I propose that all decision-making by ministers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church ought to be based upon Paul’s decision; all we do and say must reflect a commitment to Jesus Christ. If we know Him and put Him first, it will affect all our decisions. Paramount in the lives of all Seventh-day Adventist decision makers must be a relationship with Jesus Christ that enables one to transcend merely human wisdom, with its often fallible, ineffective decisions. Speaking of leadership, Ellen White says: "Without divine wisdom, their own spirit will be woven into the decisions they make. If these men are not in communication with God, Satan will surely be one in their councils and will take advantage of their unconsecrated state."—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 560.

Such decision-making is becoming increasingly difficult for church administrators, whether pastor or president. More and more, we live in a world of escalating conflict and differing opinions, a world of competing special interests. Even within the church we find these pressures, which result from the wide variance in education, experience, and expertise among church members. Most of these individuals are truly sincere in believing that the way of their special interest is best for the church. But the faithful and honest administrator must look beyond these special interests; he must survey the whole field and look objectively at the entire situation. Then, after sincerely seeking divine guidance, he must have the courage to make a decision in the best interests of the whole church, based on the facts as he understands them. It is much easier, of course, to make decisions based on what will be most readily accepted and least disturbing. But as men and women called of God, we cannot follow such a course.

We have been greatly favored, as a church, by the special messages that have come to us from God. This divine commentary outlines, often in detail, certain procedures and principles that the church must follow in its promulgation of the gospel. One of our greatest dangers is the tendency to rationalize our decisions in harmony with the easiest course, rather than to face, by faith, the course of action dictated by the Spirit of the Lord, even if it appears impossible. It is so easy to make decisions in harmony with what seems reasonable to us even if in doing so we must ignore God’s explicit instruction. Objectivity is such a rare quality that most of us exercise it only by degrees.

In these decisive times leaders of the church must be exceedingly careful that their decisions are not contrary to a "Thus saith the Lord." It is not easy, at all times and in all circumstances, to determine whether there is indeed a "Thus saith the Lord." It seems to me that Spirit-filled inspiration, as we trace its working through the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, has at least two phases. The first deals with the nature of God’s plans, the nature of His righteousness, and the holiness of His character, often expressed in principles of right and wrong. In the second phase, these righteous principles are often reflected in methods. Methods of achieving these enduring principles may not be relevant for all time. God’s principles never change, but His methods of achieving these principles in a changing world are always subject to change.

Ellen White often laid down methods (which I believe were inspired counsel), the hidden principles of which we must search to discover. For example, she instructed the conferences in her day to move camp meetings from place to place—from city to city—each year. The early camp meetings were largely evangelistic in nature, and this was a method of...
achieving the God-given plan of evangelizing the cities. Today we may need to achieve that same goal of evangelizing the cities by other methods. The God-given principles stand fast, but the methods change. Of course, this in no way depreciates the inspiration of the counsel given as methods for an earlier day.

How can the dedicated church leader who sincerely tries to make decisions based on "Thus saith the Lord" actually determine what God's will is for a particular situation? How is he to interpret inspired writings? I am going to venture into the hazardous task of listing a few brief principles of hermeneutics for the Spirit of Prophecy. Most of these would also be applicable to the interpretation of Scripture, but they are by no means exhaustive.

1. It must be affirmed and recognized that the whole body of the Spirit of Prophecy is God-inspired and carries full authority.

2. The reader must approach these writings with as much objectivity as possible.

3. The common meaning and usage of words in the days in which they were written must be considered.

4. Statements must always be read in context.

5. Each statement must be interpreted in the light of all that Ellen White wrote on that given subject.

6. Conditions existing when the counsel was given must be a factor in any interpretive application.

7. The underlying principles behind certain recommended methods must be determined.

8. It must be determined whether the method and the principle are inseparable. Often this can be done only by knowing the historical setting.

9. It must be determined whether the passage under consideration is specific instruction to a particular individual or a group in which time and place, circumstances and conditions, make the instruction of limited rather than general application.

10. Look carefully at the idealism expressed in the principles; then determine whether the prophet, in the application, allowed a balance dictated by a pragmatic approach. I believe that a study of both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy would, on occasion, reveal a beautiful balance between idealism and pragmatism.

Having concluded what the proper decision should be, a church leader needs the fortitude to follow his conviction. The quality most needed in this day of pressures and pressure groups is courage. I do not mean physical courage, but the kind of courage that enables a man or a woman to face up to responsibilities and to take a stand when the situation requires it. A lack of this type of courage often rules out many otherwise well-qualified persons from leadership positions. More executives fail because they lack the courage to make unpopular, but right, decisions than fail for a lack of technical knowledge or expertise.

Sometimes it is the failure to make any decision that casts a cloud over a person's leadership. In general, people are hesitant to make decisions; it seems to be more comfortable to rest in indecision. Procrastination in decision-making is a disease of far too many church leaders. Some act as if problems will go away without a decision having to be made if given enough time. But the price of leadership demands the risk of decision-making. A leader must at times stake his future on bold, just, and equitable decisions. Ellen White wrote to one individual: "Much may be done in training the mind to overcome indolence. There are times when caution and great deliberation are necessary; rashness would be folly. But even here, much has been lost by too great hesitancy. Caution, up to a certain point, is required; but hesitancy and policy on particular occasions have been more disastrous than would have been a failure through rashness. My brother, you need to cultivate promptness. Away with your hesitating manner... Your slowness of decision in connection with the cause and work of God is sometimes painful. It is not at all necessary. Prompt and decisive action may accomplish great results... The ability to do business with dispatch, and yet do it thoroughly, is a great acquisition."—Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 498, 499.

Leaders in God's church today need to make clear decisions with dispatch. They need to decide issues, not on the basis of expediency or of pressures brought to bear upon them, but from a conviction that the decision reached is in harmony with God's will and that it is the right one for the success of His total work. The following questions, applied to our decision-making, may help us to be that kind of leader:

1. Has God spoken on the subject, and have I searched the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy for information that may affect my decision?

2. Have I sought God in prayer, that my decision may be made in the light of God's will and in fairness to my brethren?

3. If my decision is based upon specific spiritual counsel, do I have the faith to believe God will act, providentially if necessary, to vindicate His Word?

4. Is my decision in any way a compromise of principle?

5. Will my decision be in harmony with the best interests of God's church and His people?

6. Is this decision made in the light of the golden rule?

7. Will my decision be a just one to all concerned?

8. Is my decision in any way affected by personal or selfish interests, desire for popularity, favor, or financial remuneration?

9. Am I making a decision to the benefit of special-interest groups merely to avoid criticism?

10. Is my decision punitive without just cause?

11. Can I maintain self-respect with such a decision?

12. Will this decision bring lasting and permanent results, or will it bring only temporary relief?

13. Has personal bias entered into my decision?

14. Is this decision made to bolster and fortify my hobby horse rather than being based on available evidence?

15. Is my decision based upon adequate research, with all the facts of the issue openly and objectively considered?

16. Is my decision influenced by peer pressure?

17. Have I examined the evidence to see that my assessment of facts is strictly honest?

18. Is my decision influenced by cultural or racial biases?

19. Will this decision stand the acid test of exposure or publicity and still be considered objective?

20. Is my decision made from a soft heart that shrinks from offending people, rather than adhering to strict integrity?

21. Is this decision necessary to the advancement of the project?

22. Would another method or another course of action be equally as good as mine? Could I bring greater unity by an alternate method?

23. Would my decision be unnecessarly divisive?

24. Is this decision made primarily to show my authority?

25. Am I willing to face the possible consequences of my decision?

26. Have I chosen counselors or appointed individuals to a decision-making committee because of their bias in my direction or their willingness to inflate my ego?

One of our greatest dangers is the temptation to rationalize our decisions in harmony with the easiest course, rather than to face, by faith, the course of action dictated by the Spirit of the Lord.
Concerns of 24 pastors

In March, twenty-four pastors met with church officials in Washington, D.C., to express the concerns of the local pastor. Although they came from different types of churches, their ideas were remarkably similar.

In an effort to place emphasis on pastoral ministry, C. E. Bradford, vice-president of the General Conference for North America, recently called together twenty-four pastors: eight from multistaff or institutional churches, eight from large-city churches with no more than one assistant, and eight from multichurch districts. This group met at the Adventist world headquarters March 4-6, 1981.

The purpose of this historic meeting (the first of its kind, as far as I know) was to have these field leaders, as Brother Bradford put it, “resonate to the various problems” field ministerial forces face in their work. The overall purpose, then, was to enhance the ministry of the church. If the pastor is indeed the key figure in the organized work of the church (as we are fond of declaring), then his position and ministry should be enhanced in the ecclesiastical structure. It is axiomatic that the stronger the local church becomes, the stronger will be the entire body. There has been general agreement among all segments of the church that one of the primary reasons for the existence of the church organization—local conferences, unions, divisions, and the General Conference—is to enhance the ministry of the local congregation. However, all too often certain policies seem to say just the opposite, that the local church exists to serve the various units of denominational organization. We must recognize that the local church is basic and foundational in the mission of the church, and that the pastor of the local church thus occupies a crucially important role.

These twenty-four men did not presume to speak on behalf of the entire ministry of the church, but they have said things that should be heard and seriously considered both by their fellow pastors and by administration. All three groups made it clear that they did not consider this to be merely an opportunity to vent their feelings in a “gripe session.” Rather, they wanted to respond genuinely to the request of denominational leadership to voice their ideas and make concrete suggestions for strengthening pastoral forces.

The meeting consisted of both group and plenary sessions. Each group chose a chairman and secretary, and reports were given to the entire body. I want to share here a summary of these reports. It is interesting that several concerns were held in common by all three groups, while others were distinctly related to the peculiar situations faced by the pastors of a particular group.

Finances

Recommendations in this area can be divided into two parts: increased funds for the local church and adjustments in the wage scale.

It was felt that since the funds available for ministry come from the local church and are shared with the conference, union, division, and General Conference, a larger portion should be available for ministry at the grass-roots level. One group suggested that in actual financial practice “the churches exist to perpetuate the organization. We find it incredible that the tithe dollar supports the entire church structure, including plant and equipment and secretary’s salary—conference, union, General Conference—but not (with the exception of the pastor’s salary) the local congregation that gives it. So the local church that is supposed to be the focal point of ministry is poorly funded and crippled while organizational overhead has grown and grown.”

This group recommended “that a percentage of the tithe be retained by each local congregation to enhance that church’s outreach efforts. Careful study should be given as to the exact percentages and procedures, but 10 percent should be a starting point with a gradual increase as overhead structures are eliminated.”

Another group suggested on this particular point that “there should be a redistribution of tithe percentages; a reduction in General Conference percentages; a substantial reduction for the union conference; a larger percentage for the local conference; a percentage for the local church.”

An additional recommendation was that “a minimum of 10 percent of all trusts and annuities, upon maturity, automatically be returned to the local congregation of which the donor was a member at the time of contractual agreement.”

A second emphasis in the financial area dealt with the wage scale. “In view of the fact that the pastor’s role is considered by administration as most important, this concept should be reflected in the pastor’s wage scale in comparison to that of those in administration and departmental positions,” one group declared.

Regarding this point, I have to agree that our present system of pay is more status oriented than service oriented. Several years ago certain leaders in the General Conference attempted to establish wage parity, and brought in a recommendation that was discussed at an Annual Council but failed to survive.

Administration

Closely related to the financial items above was the desire of all three groups to reduce and simplify administration and departmental structure. They pointed out that “at the present time in North America there is almost a one-to-one ratio of administrative workers to field workers. Pastors and laymen are increasingly asking, ‘What are we getting for our money?’” This costly structure—departmental secretaries duplicated in conference, unions, and the General Conference—is not useful.” There was some thought that such a situation may even be counterproductive. “Positions and programs have been developed for which there is little or no market.”

One group felt that a reduction in staff could take place “especially at the union conference level.” Another group recommended that “instead of office-based departmental secretaries duplicated in conference, unions, and the General Conference—is not useful.” There was some thought that such a situation may even be counterproductive. “Positions and programs have been developed for which there is little or no market.”

These two items, finance and administration, were the two major concerns common to all groups. Underlying these concerns, it seems, is a feeling on the part of pastors that in spite of lip service being given to the importance of their role, the
policies and operation of the church give them cause to feel that they are not really so considered. Unless present perceptions of success in ministry change, pastors will naturally tend to see themselves as something less than successful should they remain a pastor for life. I fully agree with these dedicated men that actions need to be taken that will declare to the field that their work as shepherds of the flock is at least as important as is that of the individual who is on a higher wage scale and who has a special title for his position. This church cannot afford to minimize the work of those individuals who have the direct spiritual care of those who finance the superstructure.

Other recommendations to enhance the pastor’s position included: a regular sabbatical program for pastors; a pastor or counselor outside the administrative level to minister to the pastor and his family; funding a team ministry approach using both husband and wife; more frequent opportunities for open dialogue with administration on issues, and more opportunities for professional growth through specialized continuing education.

One group felt that the Sabbath school should be restructured and used as a “golden opportunity for church outreach” and “for small group dynamics.” In connection with this, it was suggested that “the present one-quarterly concept is not having the unifying impact that we might wish worldwide.” Thus this group recommended that liberty and approval be given for the use of alternate formats “providing there is a regular mission emphasis and a focus on outreach within each group.” A desire was expressed that “curriculum materials be made available for a wide variety of classes, and that “these materials should be permeated with the security of salvation that is possible for a Christian to enjoy who has accepted Christ as Saviour.”

One group felt that “the Seminary needs to consider the fact that the large majority of its graduates will minister at least initially in the multichurch district.” Therefore it was recommended that “education for ministry must incorporate in its curriculum and engender in its teaching the concept of the legitimacy of the multichurch district, thus preparing young men both in training and in attitude for the multichurch ministry.”

Pastor as a husband and father

The multichurch pastor group expressed several concerns regarding this area of their role. The quality and/or availability of education for their children is usually not commensurate with that available to the children of those who pastor larger churches, although younger men, who are more likely to have school-age children, normally fill these positions. The particular challenges they face in multichurch districts—traveling, absenteeism from home, etc.—tend to create more family problems. Attention should be given to solving these.

I can only list in this brief report some of the other concerns and recommendations that emerged from this group of twenty-four pastors. They voiced suggestions regarding such items as our present Ingathering program, tenure of pastors, church discipline, volunteer pastoral forces, the importance of a renewed emphasis upon attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word in the context of the worship service and personal ministry, a serious look at our Seminary ministerial-training program, training church members for soul winning, church standards, and the overlapping of conference programs with too many plans that don’t work.

These loyal men expressed appreciation for the fact that they were being listened to. They were not interested in merely criticizing and finding fault. They were concerned that the church face certain situations and renew its vision and focus regarding those features that make us a peculiar people.

I will conclude this editorial with a statement of ministry prepared by one group. It would be well for leadership to consider seriously not only this concluding statement but the entire report of these men who represent the pastoral force of this church not only in North America but the entire world field.

“We appreciate the fact that we as pastors were called here not primarily to produce a statement to our fellow pastors; nor to make a statement that would be credible because we are pastors. Rather, we have been given an honest hearing by General Conference administrators. But there are some concerns which we feel must be expressed regarding the ministry. Pastors today are experiencing severe problems in their personal lives, the nurturing of their congregations, and outreach.

“We affirm a balanced ministry which has as its priorities a commitment to the Lord and a personal devotional life, and a commitment to the body of Christ that recognizes a pastor’s concerns to be first his family, then the local congregation, and outreach to the world. We affirm the importance of preaching. We need a renewed emphasis upon ‘our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word’ in the context of the worship service and personal ministry.”—J.R.S.

In Memoriam

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n Sabbath, June 6, 1981, Andrew Coatsworth Fearing IV passed to his rest, minutes after preaching two sermons—one in Dade City and one in Zephyrhills, Florida. Elder Fearing had experienced a longstanding heart condition, and he finally succumbed to it. His funeral was held on June 8 and was conducted by Elders N. R. Dower and J. R. Spangler.

The last seventeen years of his official ministry were spent as an associate leader in the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. During this time he also carried duties as an associate editor of Ministry, bringing to its pages the benefit of his dedication to preaching and evangelism.

Elder Fearing was born in Columbus, Ohio, on February 5, 1907. He attended academy in Oshawa, Canada, and college at Emmanuel Missionary College and Washington Missionary College. He began his church career as a teacher in the mountains of western Virginia in 1932. During his long career in church work he served as evangelist, church pastor, departmental leader, and church administrator in Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, California, Nevada, Utah, Georgia, and Tennessee. He formally retired at the General Conference session in the summer of 1975, but he never retired from preaching—it was foremost in his life down to the last few hours of his earthly existence.

He leaves to carry on his work for the Master his companion of nearly fifty years, Bertha; his brother, Richard, president of the North Pacific Union Conference; and two nephews and three nieces. He was greatly loved by the thousands of young ministers whose lives he touched in their formative years; they too mourn his passing. And a host of friends, fellow workers, converts, and hundreds of congregations around the world will remember his ministry and mark his passing with respect and hope for a short rest in Jesus Christ, his Leader and Saviour.

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Health and Religion/ by Fred Osbourn

Health-giving doctrine

Personal faith, when put into practice, should produce a life that is characterized in psychological terms as "healthy" and "whole-making." Religious principles and sound mental health go hand in hand.

Seventh-day Adventists teach that good mental-health principles and sound religious principles go hand in hand. In Titus 1:9 the man of God appeals for a ministry that will teach "sound doctrine." The original text is correctly translated "wholesome" or "health-giving" doctrine; that is, teaching that is whole-making and health-producing. Consequently, it seems both reasonable and profitable to explore an assessment of doctrine from the viewpoint of mental health. It is the purpose of this article to encourage the reader to attempt an evaluation of his personal beliefs, his private interpretation of doctrine from the pragmatic perspective of personal experience, and to ask the question: "Does my personal faith, when put into practice, produce a life that is characterized as 'healthy' and 'whole-making'?

William Glasser has emphasized man's two basic personality needs to be self-worth and love.1 Every person, he insists, must possess a strong sense of self-worth and experience an adequate amount of love to be a healthy person. Howard Clinebell reduces these two basic human needs to one when he suggests the primary factor to be responsible love in at least one dependable relationship.2 All other personal needs, he claims, are a derivative of this one basic need for responsible, loving interaction.

The psychology of Jesus stands in bold summation when He gathers the whole of God's law into this one word love. When responding to the query concerning the "greatest commandment," He sums up the dimensions of mental health by pointing out the need for love directed toward God supremely and toward the world of people in which one lives (Matt. 22:35-40). Man, by nature, needs to love and to be loved in order to experience health and wholeness. Ellen White endorses this when she appeals for "mutual love" and "mutual forbearance."

Isaiah emphasizes this relationship between doing good and obtaining health, or wholeness (chap. 58:6-8). And Christ continually emphasizes the inseparable relationship between commandment keeping and love (John 14:15; 15:10, 17).

The term mental health has two dimensions, both of which in the Christian sense are encapsulated in the concept of a tight relationship with God, or righteousness by faith. Mental health indicates a person's ability to relate realistically and responsibly to oneself and to one's world. The "responsible" person is responsible; he is able to respond to life's demands in ways that tend toward wholeness, toward integration; he tends to be a person of integrity and to have the characteristic of self-acceptance. When Glasser indicates self-esteem to be a basic personality need, he is emphasizing the need for a healthy self-acceptance as prerequisite for dropping one's defenses and giving oneself in love.

The antithesis of mental health inclines to be characterized by a reality-denying and destructive reaction to one's world, tending toward fragmentation and irresponsibility. The alienation is experienced in every dimension of experience. Because the irresponsible person has behaved contrary to his God-given nature by responding without love, he experiences a splitness within and is at war with himself; he feels threatened, anxious, against himself; he suffers from a sagging sense of self-esteem. Attempting to compensate for the deficit in his self-image, he is inclined toward increased selfishness, using persons as things and manipulating his world in order to gain the advantage he demands regardless of cost or consequence. So the vicious spiral of alienation continues. The alienation is both within himself and between himself and his world.

Someone has quipped, "We are all a little neurotic." We are all a mixture of the creative and the destructive elements; the reconciling and the alienating; and the degree in which one is inclined toward the latter is the degree in which he is neurotic. Said the apostle Paul, "We are sinners!" There is the war within.

Erich Fromm, in his discussion of psychoanalysis and religion, poses as the goal for psychotherapy that of enabling the person to "live love and think truth." "Living love and thinking truth go hand in hand, for the former depends upon the latter inasmuch as love that is not mere sentimentality involves a realistic appreciation of life. This suggests, then, that the primary mission of the church is to provide the model, the climate, the matrix, for expressing responsible love and pursuing truth.

Is it inevitable that the teachings of the church, as experienced in the "nitty-gritty" of daily living, result in a life that may be characterized as creative, whole-
making, reconciling—"the abundant life" of Jesus? In searching for an answer to this question, I would like to suggest that you ask yourself four interdependent questions that have been found useful in separating healthy from unhealthy religion.

**Question 1.** Does my understanding and practice of religious doctrine tend to build bridges or barriers between myself and others?

Wayne Oates writes: "In essence... healthy religion binds people together." He goes on to emphasize, however, that it accomplishes this "in such a way that their individuality is enabled both to be realized and to be consecrated to the total community... to which they belong. This is a religion of mature and responsible relatedness."

If one's sense of religious identity, when lived out in the community, tends to express an exclusivism that denies the universality of God's concern, then the very spirit of Christian love described in 1 Corinthians 13 is denied.

**Question 2.** Does my understanding and practice of religious doctrine tend to stimulate or hamper the growth of inner freedom and personal responsibility?

Closely related questions are these: Does it encourage unhealthy or healthy dependency relationships? Mature or immature relationships with authority? The growth of mature or immature consciences?

Clinebell notes that "one of the most common errors found in the churches is an unhealthy authoritarianism." This kind of dependence is a block to growth and can be seen at times in virtually every religious organization. Unhealthy dependence patterns emerge when clergy, by virtue of their own insecurities and compensating drive for power, gain neurotic satisfaction by keeping their congregations dependent. In both extremes, persons "escape from freedom," to use Erich Fromm's apt term, into the security of an authority-centered religious group.

All of us are dependent to some degree. A key difference between healthy and unhealthy dependence is that the former is best described as interdependence and the latter as a symbiotic relationship in which the believer gains a neurotic sense of power by identifying with the leader. The leader, on the other hand, finds his sense of power in the fact that others are dependent upon him.

In regard to this abuse of power, Seventh-day Adventists have been counseled that "there is an individuality in Christian experience that must be preserved in every human agent." So that the man who is "responsible" will be that man who recognizes the "right to himself... to the control of his own mind, to the stewardship of his talents." 

**Question 3.** Does my understanding and practice of religious doctrine provide effective or faulty means of helping persons to move from a sense of guilt to forgiveness? In other words, does it provide well-defined, significant, ethical guidelines, or does it emphasize ethical triviality? Is its primary concern for surface behavior or for the underlying health of the personality?

Erik Erikson has shown that ethical guidelines and ideals are vital elements in ego strength. It is crucial, according to this famous psychoanalyst, that people feel and respond to guilt about significant things, that is, those misuses of freedom that hurt others. The capacity to experience appropriate guilt is one of the signs of mental health.

How guilt is handled depends upon whether it is normal or neurotic. Actually most of us probably experience a mixture of both. The neurotic elements can be recognized by the following elements: a failure to respond to forgiveness, a failure to motivate to make amends (restoration), a tendency to focus on surface behavior (ethical trivia), and a tendency to be linked with perfectionism.

On the other hand, normal or healthy guilt is reduced by following the Biblical prescription outlined by Jesus when confronted by the superficial moralists. He once stated, in essence, "Why are you so concerned with only surface behavior while ignoring the underlying causes in this man's inner life?" (See Matt. 12:34ff.)

Moralism's attempt to control surface behavior is comparable to changing each distorted copy rather than correcting the stencil. Morality, on the other hand, is concerned with the stencil, the inner life in which the person is alienated from himself and others.

**Question 4.** Does my understanding and practice of religious doctrine tend to increase or lessen the enjoyment of life?

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**Question 4.** Does my understanding and practice of religious doctrine tend to increase or lessen the enjoyment of life?

Let it suffice to say that the various forms of the word joy are used 192 times in the Bible. And Jesus seems to be pro-life, deeply appreciating and enjoying fellowship and communion with others and with God. In fact He points to "joy" as one of the primary reasons for the gospel: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11). Unhealthy religion contradicts the spirit of Jesus' life by fleeing from real religious enjoyment into exclusivism or asceticism.

Healthy religion involves the whole person in the religious quest. It not only brings the intellect fully into play in the quest for truth but also recognizes the importance of feelings and emotions in a healthy personality, consequently avoiding both intellectualism on the one hand, and emotionalism on the other. Positive Biblical faith respects man's deepest freedom—the freedom to think, imagine, fantasize, feel, and choose on the basis of the weight of evidence provided through these God-given mediums for arriving at truth.

This approach of asking positive health questions in evaluation of personal understanding and practice of the faith tends to encourage a continual refining of one's theology. Doing so has helped me personally in guarding against moralism, legalism, pharisaical judgment, and the authoritarianism of both perfectionism and liberalism, those corruptions of loving behavior that tend to dog my steps. Further, this experiential approach has helped me transform doctrine from mere legal demands to an experience that brings wholeness. Finally, this experiential approach to truth has strengthened my faith in both the Bible and Ellen G. White, as I have discovered that principles suggested in these inspired sources, when correctly understood and applied, produce creative, health-building results. To sum it up, a healthy, positive faith in God provides the milieu for a healthy, positive life.

4. Ellen G. White manuscript 63, 1900.
7. The source for these questions is Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Mental Health Through Christian Community (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), pp. 31ff.
9. Clinebell, Mental Health Through Christian Community, p. 32.
10. Ellen G. White manuscript 6, 1889.
Was Artaxerxes' decree to rebuild Jerusalem given in the year 457 B.C.? Some old papyri, stored in the bottom of a trunk until 1947, provide helpful information regarding the beginning of the 2300 days/years.

Charles E. Wilbour, an American businessman and collector of Egyptian antiquities, bought nine entire rolls of papyrus and some inscribed papyrus fragments from three native women on the Nile island of Elephantine in Upper Egypt early in 1893. Eight of the rolls were still folded and sealed with strings and clay seals. Soon thereafter, he showed some of the scroll fragments to Professor A. H. Sayce and learned from him that they were inscribed in Aramaic. However, he did nothing to publicize his purchase or to have the scrolls deciphered, but put them away in biscuit boxes in the bottom of one of his trunks, where they remained until his death four years later in Paris on his way home.

Afterward, this trunk was shipped to America and stored in a New York warehouse, apparently without ever being opened until Wilbour's daughter Theodora died in 1947. At that time it came into the possession of the Brooklyn Museum along with the remainder of Wilbour's property. When these papyri were finally unrolled, they provided valuable information about a community of Jews in Egypt in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. This community was already known to archeologists, but Wilbour's papyri gave new details, and for the first time furnished a clue as to the nature of the calendar used by the postexilic Jews. This information was of special interest to Biblical chronologists because it provided precise information for the establishment of 457 B.C. as the beginning of the 2300 days/years of Daniel 8, as well as the seventy-weeks prophecy of Daniel 9.

But before discussing the problems of ancient Jewish calendation and chronology, we must find out how it happened that an ancient Jewish community existed at Elephantine, 600 miles south of Cairo, and how scholars learned about it through some remarkable manuscript discoveries.

This island lies in the midst of the Nile, just north of the first cataract that forms the ethnic and geographical border between Egypt and Nubia, the Biblical Kush (see Esther 1:1; Isa. 11:11). On the eastern bank of the Nile lies Aswan, which has gained fame in recent years through its gigantic river dam, which has created the huge, more than three-hundred-mile-long Lake Nasser for irrigation and generation of hydroelectric power. The island, called Yeb by the ancient Egyptians and Elephantine by the Greeks, served in the first place as ancient Egypt's southernmost fortress, but it was also a trading station through which were imported such African products as ivory, lion skins, and exotic animals.

It was on this island that Wilbour obtained the nine papyrus scrolls in 1893, although unfortunately he took this knowledge with him to the grave. However, as time went on, the local people found additional papyri and placed them on the antiquities market. But they refrained from revealing the discovery site to protect this welcome source of income. An agent of the Strasbourg Library purchased the first of these papyri, consisting of three fragments, from an antiquities dealer in Luxor in 1898. Another roll was obtained on the island itself by Professor Sayce in 1900, and in 1904 Lady William Cecil purchased three scrolls in Aswan, and Sir Robert Mond secured five more. When these were published in 1906, the scholarly world was surprised to learn that they all came from a Jewish community of military mercenaries who had guarded the fortress island of Elephantine during the Persian period.

The excitement created by the discovery of these documents brought a German archeological team to the island to carry out excavations under the direction of Otto Rubensohn of the Berlin Museum from 1906 to 1908. Rubensohn had gained the confidence of the local people and learned the discovery site for the papyri appearing on the antiquities market between 1898 and 1904. Surprisingly Rubensohn's expedition succeeded in uncovering sixty-two additional Aramaic papyrus scrolls, and many fragments as well as numerous inscribed potsherds! This wealth of inscriptive material, published in exemplary fashion in 1911, opened before the scholarly world almost a new discipline and made it acquainted with a phase of Jewish history of which little or nothing had been known up to that time.

The Elephantine Jewish community

Among these Aramaic papyrus scrolls are official documents—dealing with marriages, sale of property, business contracts, governmental decrees, and freeing of slaves—as well as private and official letters and even some literary pieces. These documents were of the utmost importance for a better understanding of Aramaic, the official language of the empire during the Persian period, since they formed the largest number of Aramaic documents known to have survived from pre-Christian times. In light of the fact that several chapters of the postexilic Biblical books of Daniel and Ezra are written in Aramaic, any sizable amount of Aramaic literature originating from approximately the same period was also of significance for Biblical linguistic studies. Furthermore, these papyri provided information about the history, culture, and religion of the Jewish community, which produced this valuable archive.

According to these Aramaic papyri, Egyptian soldiers stationed at Aswan crossed the river and destroyed the Jewish temple in 410 B.C. at a time when Arsames, the Persian ruler of Egypt, was away on a visit to the Persian king.
who had emigrated from Palestine had been forced to settle on the island of Elephantine as mercenaries to defend Egypt's southern border. These Jewish soldiers had built a temple, which they dedicated to Yahweh, although they also served other gods just as did their preexilic compatriots in Judah. When the Persian king Cambyses conquered Egypt in 525 B.C., he destroyed the Egyptian Khnum temple of Elephantine but did not touch the Jewish Yahweh temple on the same island, probably because as a Zoroastrian monotheist he was favorably disposed toward the Jews, who were also generally known to be monotheists. This favoritism shown by the Persian king toward the Jews must have created ugly tensions between the Egyptians of that area and the Jews, or increased the tensions that already existed.

Furthermore, we learn from these documents that the Jews were in control of their own civil and business affairs. However, they occupied only the lowest rungs on the military ladder, for they were merely common soldiers while their officers were invariably Babylonians or Persians. The commanding general was a Persian.

According to these Aramaic papyri, Egyptian soldiers stationed at Aswan crossed the river and destroyed the Jewish temple in 410 B.C. at a time when Arsames, the Persian ruler of the country, was away on a visit to the Persian king. Apparently they had the tacit approval of

This example of a papyrus from Elephantine mentions the high priest Johanan of Jerusalem and Sanballat, governor of Samaria (see boxes at top and bottom). The dual dating use on such documents sheds light on postexilic Jewish calendars.
Widrang, the local commanding general. When Arsames returned, the Jews of Elephantine complained to him about this attack, and he punished Widrang for his complicity in the violence, but to the dismay of the Jews, he did not grant them permission to rebuild their temple. Instead, he demanded that they obtain permission from the Jerusalem authorities before he would allow the temple to be built. Possibly Arsames was acquainted with such conservative Jews as Ezra and Nehemiah and knew that they were opposed to the existence of any Yahweh sanctuaries rivaling the central Temple in Jerusalem. Therefore, he may have deemed it the wiser course of action to let the Jerusalem authorities bear the blame for a refusal to permit the rebuilding of the temple. Furthermore, the satrap may also have wanted to postpone the rebuilding of this foreign sanctuary as long as possible since its existence had been such a stumbling block to the Egyptians ever since their own temple had been destroyed by Cambyses.

The Jews, having no other choice, sent a letter to the two highest officials in Judah, the Persian governor Bigvai and the high priest Johanan (mentioned in Neh. 12:22, 23), requesting permission to rebuild their temple. This letter was evidently ignored by the Jerusalem authorities, since the Elephantine Jews never received a reply. After waiting two years, they dispatched another letter, this time addressed only to Bigvai, repeating their request. They also offered to pay a bribe for the desired permission and mentioned that they had placed this matter also before the sons of Sanballat, governor of Samaria, the old archenemy of Nehemiah (see chap. 6:1ff.). Without explicitly saying so, they thus intimated that if the Jerusalem authorities were unwilling to grant their request, the rival nation of the Samaritans might be willing to allow them to build on Elephantine a branch sanctuary of their temple.

This second letter had the desired results. Bigvai held a meeting with Sanballat's son Delaiah, so that he would not be double-crossed by the Elephantine Jews, and after this consultation granted them permission to rebuild their temple but with the proviso that it could serve only for bloodless offerings. Unfortunately, the preserved documents do not inform us whether, after receipt of this permission from Jerusalem, Arsames granted a permit to rebuild the temple on Elephantine or whether the temple was actually rebuilt. Neither has the actual site of the Jewish temple on Elephantine been discovered yet. From other historical sources we know, however, that the Egyptians rebelled against their Persian rulers a few years later and drove all foreigners out of the country. The fate of the Jews of Elephantine after this rebellion is unknown. Whether they were massacred or allowed to leave the country is uncertain.

**Calendar of the Elephantine Jews**

The Aramaic Elephantine papyri have also significantly contributed to a better understanding of the postexilic Jewish calendar and chronology during the Persian period. From the chronological data presented in the books of Kings and Chronicles we know that the people of the southern kingdom of Judah possessed two calendars before the Babylonian exile. First, they had a religious calendar that began in the spring. In this calendar the months were numbered from one to twelve. Second, they also had a civil calendar, which began in the autumn. New Year's Day of the civil calendar was the first day of the seventh month of the religious year. Thus the months of the civil year were counted first from seven to twelve, and then from one to six. The twelfth month, being the last month of the religious year, thus fell in the middle of the civil year.

We also know that the preexilic Jews counted the regnal years of foreign kings, including rulers of the neighboring kingdom of Israel, according to their own Jewish civil calendar, even if this meant that their reckoning would differ from the numbering used by the foreign king's own people. An example is provided by the records dealing with the capture of Jerusalem under King Jehoachin in 597 B.C. The Babylonians dated this event in their own annals in the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. But the Hebrew compiler of the book of Kings put the same event into Nebuchadnezzar's eighth year (see 2 Kings 24:12). This is by no means a discrepancy between the Babylonian and Hebrew records, but merely reflects the usage of two different calendars and methods of reckoning. In fact, full harmony of all chronological data in the preexilic Biblical records can be obtained only by recognizing and applying this rule. The Hebrews had both names and numbers for their months. Before the Babylonian exile these names seem to have been identical with the Cannaite month names. Three of the four month names mentioned in preexilic books of the Bible—Zif, the second month, Ethanim the seventh month, and Bel the eighth month—are also attested in ancient Cannaite texts. But during the Exile, the Jews adopted the month names of the Babylonian calendar as is clearly seen from the fact that in all postexilic books of the Bible—Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Esther—the month names are Hebrew variants of the Babylonian ones: Nisan for Nisanu, Sivan for Simatu, Eth for Ulul, Chislev for Kislimu, Tebeth for Ziv, Shait for Shabatu, and Adar for Addaru. Thus it is certain that the Jews adopted the month names of the Babylonian calendar during their stay in Babylon, but scholars have been divided over whether the Jews also switched their civil New Year's Day from the autumn to the spring.

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an autumn-to-autumn Jewish calendar.

An example may show what is meant. The document, Sayce-Cowley J., contains the renunciation of a claim and comes from the year 416 B.C., as ascertained from the first line, which contains the date formula. The line reads: “On the third of Chislev, year eight, that is the twelfth day of Thoth, year nine of Darius the king.” The first of the two dates is expressed according to the Jewish calendar, as shown by the Chislev month name. The second date uses the Egyptian calendar with the Egyptian month name, Thoth. Evidently, the Elephantine Jews were required to use the official dating system of Egypt (in which they lived) in order to give legal force to their documents. However, they apparently felt a need also to add in many of the Elephantine papyri a date computed according to their own calendar and reckoning. Notice that in this example even the number of the king’s regnal year varies by one year according to the two computations.

Unfortunately, the documents extant prior to 1947 carried double dates from that part of the year in which there was no divergence between the Babylonian spring-to-spring calendar and the Jewish autumn-to-autumn calendar. Thus it was not possible to ascertain whether the Elephantine Jews used a calendar that was different from the Babylonian.

However, the picture changed in 1953 when Emil G. Kraeling published the documents that had remained hidden from 1893 to 1947 in the bottom of Wilbour’s trunk.10 Among this latest treasure were additional double-dated documents. In one of them (Kraeling 6), the Egyptian and Jewish dates can be made to harmonize only if we assume that the ancient scribe made a mistake11 or that he used a calendar that began in the autumn and that he counted the regnal years of the Persian kings according to this autumn-to-autumn calendar.12 We have here a similar situation as found in the two Nehemiah passages already discussed, where one of two views is possible—either Nehemiah made a mistake or he was using an autumn-to-autumn calendar.

When Did Ezra Return?

These divergent views have their bearing on the date of Ezra’s return from Babylonia in the seventh regnal year of Artaxerxes I (Ezra 7:1-9). From ancient records, primarily dated cuneiform documents, it is established that Artaxerxes’ first regnal year began in the spring of 464 B.C. and ended in the spring of 463 B.C. according to the reckoning of the Persians. Consequently, his seventh year was the year 458-457 B.C., spring to spring. If Ezra counted the king’s regnal years in this way, he would have returned in the spring of 458 B.C., for it is said that he left Babylonia during the month of Nisan in the seventh year of Artaxerxes and arrived in Jerusalem four months later (see verse 9). Following this reasoning, many commentators date the events described in Ezra 7 to the year 458 B.C.13

On the other hand, if Ezra used the Jewish autumn-to-autumn calendar, as was apparently the case with his contemporary Nehemiah and also with the Elephantine Jews, the first year of Artaxerxes would have been computed by the Jews as having begun in the autumn of 464 B.C. and ended in the autumn of 463 B.C. Thus his seventh year would have begun in the autumn of 458 B.C. and ended in the autumn of 457 B.C. The month of Nisan, a spring month in which Ezra and his group departed from Babylonia, would accordingly have fallen in the spring of 457 B.C., and their arrival in Jerusalem would have occurred in the summer of 457 B.C. Hence, the Elephantine papyri give strong support to our conclusion that the decree of Artaxerxes was issued and carried out in the year 457 B.C.

Seventh-day Adventists have consistently taken the date of Ezra’s return from Babylonia as the starting point for the longest prophetic period of history—the 2300 day/year prophecy of Daniel 9:14. At the time of William Miller and the early Adventist pioneers, chronological dates of ancient history were based entirely on Ptolemy’s canon of the second century A.D. Its reliability had been verified by several astronomical data given by Ptolemy in connection with his chronological data. One difficulty is that regnal years of various kings listed in that canon (beginning with the Babylonian kings of the eighth century B.C. and continuing with the succeeding Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman rulers) were expressed in terms of the Egyptian solar calendar, which differed from the calendars of other ancient nations. Subsequent discoveries, especially the numerous dated cuneiform tablets of the Mesopotamian valley, have corroborated Ptolemy’s data in general, and at the same time have provided us with more precise dates regarding some details. In some cases, these more recent discoveries have shown that the dates in the B.C./A.D. scheme that were formerly adopted for some ancient rulers on the basis of Ptolemy’s canon needed some corrections. Certain of these corrections have been also applied to Artaxerxes I.

However, the evidence that both the Jewish records of Elephantine and the book of Nehemiah used a fall-to-fall calendar and counted the regnal years of the Persian kings according to their own calendar provides ample support for designating 457 B.C. (and not 458 B.C.) as the year in which Ezra returned from Babylonia.14

4. A detailed discussion of the history, religion, and life of the Jewish colony at Elephantine can be found in Emil G. Kraeling, The Brooklyn Aramaic Papyri (New Haven, Conn.: 1933), pp. 1-119.
5. In order not to complicate the discussion of the lunisolar year of the Babylonians or Jews who inserted a thirteenth month into some years at regular intervals in order to bring the year into harmony with the seasons, the thirteenth intercalary month is not taken into consideration. For a brief study of a discussion of this calendrical problem and others, see the articles “Month” and “Year” in the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary, revised edition (Washington, D.C.: 1979).
9. The Persians adopted the Babylonian calendar. This is attested by numerous dated cuneiform texts of the Persian period.
10. On Kraeling’s publication, see note 4.

Ezra and his group would have arrived in Jerusalem in the summer of 457 B.C. Hence, the Elephantine papyri give strong support to our conclusion that the decree of Artaxerxes was issued and carried out in the year 457 B.C.
To be a friend

Wives of elders, as well as pastors’ wives, need encouragement and strength. The unique relationship between them provides a wonderful opportunity for the two to be of mutual blessing and benefit.

Be a friend to your minister's wife."

This touching bit of loving advice came from a local church elder's wife speaking to a group of women who were, like herself, the wives of church elders. "It can be very lonely at times for your pastor’s wife," she continued, "because she often feels that she should relate to all church members in the same way, not forming special friendships with any particular family. And because of the relationship of the pastor with the elders of his church, you, as the elder's wife, can be a great benefit and blessing to the pastor's wife—both in a spiritual way and also in a social sense as well."

A number of women who had been elders' wives for many years had been called together to express their ideas on their role in an effort to help encourage the women who were new at being elders' wives, especially the younger women.

Each wife, without exception, stressed that a personal relationship with Christ was the first requirement if one was to fulfill the role of an elder's wife successfully. The elder's family is looked to as spiritual leaders in the church, and this can become reality only if time is spent in prayer and study on an individual basis as well as a family basis. Our churches are in good hands when elders' wives realize their need and seek for daily spiritual strength from the Lord to help them fulfill a sacred responsibility placed upon them. How thankful we should be for our dedicated elders and their families! Our churches would be hard pressed to progress without them.

The lovely desire to be a friend to her pastor's wife, expressed by this particular elder's wife, caused me to wonder whether we, as pastors' wives, are allowing, and indeed encouraging, such a relationship to exist. Elders’ wives as well as pastors’ wives need encouragement and strength, and doesn’t the unique relationship of pastor’s wife/elder’s wife provide wonderful opportunity for the two to be of mutual blessing and benefit? I wondered further whether perhaps some elders' wives are floundering in their roles, not understanding what is expected of them, not realizing the tremendous opportunity as well as responsibility resting upon their shoulders. And what about the young women whose husbands have just become elders? How and where do they begin? You, the pastor's wife, can be their source of guidance and encouragement.

The role of the elder's wife, as described in the following observations made by elders' wives themselves, may be of help to you in befriending and being befriended by the elders' wives in your church.

1. Maintain a close, personal relationship with the Lord. Nothing can take the place of this experience.

2. Love every church member, every visitor, everyone in your community. This is possible when each individual is seen through the compassionate eyes of Christ.

3. Keep a positive attitude toward every phase of the church program. This is vital since leadership by attitude and example is the most effective.

4. Be supportive of the pastor and his wife. If something needs correction, go to them privately.

5. Actively participate (this does not necessarily mean leading out) in such general activities of the church as prayer meeting, Community Services work, showers for newlyweds and new babies, Ingathering, and other types of witnessing programs.

6. Visit, visit, visit! This includes church members in general, members who are having problems, members negligent in regular attendance, members who are sick and confined to homes, newly baptized members, and newcomers to the area.

7. Greet visitors to the church in the friendliest manner possible; seek them out and make them so welcome that they will be "compelled" to return.

8. Open your home for mealtime guests: the "stranger in your midst," the church family who may be needing special encouragement, the visiting guest speaker.

9. Clip sermon ideas, poems, stories, et cetera, for your husband if he takes speaking appointments (a large number of elders do), and be his gentle and loving critic only if needed.

10. Be a Christian witness and example of refinement in manners and dress (this includes the entire family).

In summary, be alert and willing to do what needs to be done, whether cleaning the church, presenting the mission appeal, or praying for the sick. Action can only follow willingness, and willingness follows a complete surrender to Christ in whatever way He directs.

Be a friend to your church elders’ wives! They will be a friend to you!
Prayers from the parsonage

I never realized that our two children would draw so many others into family activities. Neighborhood youngsters pound on the door while we're eating breakfast. They would sit and watch us finish if I didn't suggest they stay outside until Lisa and Hans are ready.

Gradually the back yard comes alive as friends arrive to play in the sandbox or on the swings. Trikes and bikes clutter the driveway, and toys are scattered on the porch. A quick lunch, and the children are back, wondering whether I'll fill the wading pool. Then they ask for drinks and want to use the bathroom. As I work in the garden toward evening, they follow me around asking a dozen questions.

Lisa would gladly invite the whole gang for supper, but I point them homeward, knowing a few will struggle back at dusk to borrow jars for catching lightning bugs. Children coming and going, copying and pretending, shouting and laughing. Sometimes squabbling, sometimes hurting, but mostly having fun.

"And Jesus... took a child, and set him by him, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me" (Luke 9:47, 48). Yes, Lisa would gladly invite the whole gang for dinner today, but I think it's time to call it quits. I believe that if our church is going to fill the position chosen for it by God in the world, willing share our yard and home as places to have safe, happy times. Give me good ideas, so a suggestion or simple prop will inspire the children to create their own games. Let my voice be pleasant and my smile warm when I answer their demands or must enforce a rule.

Please grant that sixth sense that alerts me to brewing mischief or potential danger. I can't watch them every minute, but I feel responsible.

Most important, though, show me how to introduce these youngsters to You. They can list every Star Wars character but don't know even common Bible names. To most, You're just another superstar, only as exciting as their TV heroes.

Oh, I could give each child a shell from my collection or take time to play a game of catch. I could hand out watermelon slices or organize a round-the-block parade, but nothing I could share would be as wonderful as a glimpse of Your love and interest. Help them to discover You, their dearest friend.

By Cherry B. Habenicht

Letters

prophets of long ago predicted concerning Him, His sufferings, and His glory.

I know, and am glad it's true, that the experience of this one faithful listener to the Voice of Prophecy is not the experience of all or of a large number. I believe that the majority of our preachers are faithful in giving the whole message to the best of their ability. We want to do the best we can to give the good people who hear the Voice of Prophecy at least a taste of all the wonderful truths and blessed prophetic warnings and promises that they can expect to find if they attend a Seventh-day Adventist church—the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, salvation by faith alone, the fruitage of which is obedience to God's commandments, and the great prophetic themes that affect our day.

But how shall I answer this letter and others like it? In any case, please pray for this letter writer and for all of us as preachers, that we may be more and more like the greatest Preacher the world ever knew. It seems to me that we should learn all that we can and, above all, ask God for holy wisdom and the holy fire in our hearts.—H. M. S. Richards, Sr., Los Angeles, California.

Leaning on man

In reference to "Attitudes—Behavior," by Jerry W. Lee (June, 1981), we must not forget an excellent statement found in The Ministry of Healing, pages 251-253: "It is a law of nature that our thoughts and feelings are encouraged and strengthened as we give them utterance. While words express thoughts, it is also true that thoughts follow words. If we would give more expression to our faith, rejoice more in the blessings that we know we have—the great mercy and love of God—we should have more faith and greater joy."

This quotation was written in 1905. I wonder whether our pastors and counselors have leaned too heavily on modern theories of psychology and behavior modification when the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy would, by themselves, have been more than sufficient!—H. Maxwell Peak, Yountville, California.

The April, 1981, issue of MINISTRY just arrived here in Hong Kong the last of May, but it contains, I think, one of the most powerful statements I have ever read on the use of inspiration. I'm referring to the article by Eric Livingston, "Inquire of the Lord." It appears to me that in many phases of our denominational work we inquire of almost anyone and anywhere before we inquire of the Lord, in preference to Him. The latest educational theory; the most recent educational bill before Congress or some statehouse; the dictates of third-party payers for medical care; various accrediting bodies—all seem to come before the Lord's counsel in importance to us. Too often when confronted by counsel from God we respond by "studying it," rather than by seeing how easily and quickly we can implement it. The study is simply a delay.

This article, then, was quite an experience for me. Perhaps it gave me hope again. I believe that if our church is going to fill the position chosen for it by God in regard to finishing His work, we are going to have to turn our backs on much of the good advice we get from outside and start inquiring. "What is the Word from the Lord?" Then we must act on that Word. To do so will possibly involve a greater amount of faith than has ever been expressed by our church since it began. Make no mistake. We are going to have to do more than merely inquire of the Lord. To inquire without the total commitment to follow and act on His Word will only leave us farther behind His purpose for us.—Stanley Murphy, Hong Kong.

Part of the body

Your article "Part of the Body" (June, 1981) gives an excellent statement on the many parts of ministry. Naturally, I was especially interested in the section dealing with chaplaincy. We appreciate your help in disseminating knowledge regarding this phase of pastoral activity.—M. J. Davis, Loma Linda, California.

New hymnal needed

I agree with the writers of "Is It Time for a New Hymnal?" (April, 1981) that we need to begin work on such a project. As a church music director for twenty years, I have often felt the lack of hymns in our hymnal suitable for the opening of worship. There is a noticeable dearth of "praise" hymns that can be used to help create a dynamic worship service. The SDA hymnal has many Sabbath school songs and contains many hymns of meditation or contemplation, but it is woefully lacking in the type of hymn that gives worshipers the opportunity to express praise to their Creator.—M. Keith Roybal, Washington, D.C.

Continued
This all-new series of life-changing evangelistic sermons and materials, developed by one of the church's successful evangelists, Mark Finley, is now available for your use. This series includes sermons in magazine format especially featuring the book of Revelation, along with 30 accompanying inspirational lessons and up-to-date advertising materials.

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- Camera-ready copy for: reserved-seat invitation, prayer-covenant card, interest-information card, twelve separate decision cards, offering envelope, Prophecy Lectures letterhead, newspaper ads.
- Samples of: ticket book, Prophecy Lectures handbill, Prophecy Lectures flyers.

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Designed as a supplement to the lectures, each of the 30 lessons provides a comprehensive review of the material covered, thus solidifying the information presented in the public lectures. Additional subjects are also covered.
- Sample set of 30 lessons, $1.95 (56650-5).
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A special issue of These Times is now available—designed to familiarize non-Adventists with the doctrines, purpose, and activities of our church. Special prices make it suitable for wide distribution.

**Prices change**

Prices for yearly subscriptions to the Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index as given in the April, 1981, MINISTRY article “Information When You Need It” unfortunately are in error. Between the time the article was written and its publication, prices increased from $7 to $10 for individual subscriptions (individual, churches, church schools, and junior academies) and from $25 to $30 for institutional subscriptions (academies, colleges, conferences, hospitals, etc.). However, readers can still obtain new subscriptions at the lower price through August, 1981, by mentioning MINISTRY. Address orders to: SDA Periodical Index, Loma Linda University Libraries, Indexing Services Dept., P.O. Box 8308, Riverside, California 92515.

**Special Issue These Times**

The May, 1981, special issue of These Times (“Does God Have a Church on Earth Today?”) can help you by providing an attractive package of Biblically based answers to the questions that many are currently asking about religious concerns. The 32-page, full-color magazine gives a friendly overview of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, its doctrines, its purpose, and its specific activities to accomplish that purpose.

Designed to familiarize non-Adventists with the church, this special magazine is ideal for use in: community visitation programs; evangelistic meetings; business Ingathering; or any situation in which you want to present a fresh, appealing, professional introduction to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Bulk prices as special as its contents make this issue suitable for wide distribution. One hundred copies or more: 45¢ each; 25-99 copies: 50¢ each; 1-25 copies: 60¢ each. Within the United States, all prices include shipping. Order from your local Adventist Book Center.

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Two recent volumes by church scholars deserve attention—Gerhard Hasel leads readers through the sometimes perplexing maze of Biblical hermeneutics, while William Johnsson explores Christian baptism.

**Understanding the Living Word of God**

Ministers who take seriously the task of Biblical interpretation and preaching continually face the challenge of charting a course through the complexities of the Biblical text itself, as well as the sometimes bewildering work of commentators thereon. The advances in Biblical scholarship over the past century have been nothing short of phenomenal, and the wise minister desires to make use of them. But how? Gerhard Hasel, professor of Old Testament at Andrews University, has provided a convenient orientation both to the method and theory of scriptural exegesis. Up-to-date and informative, Hasel discusses most of the contemporary exegetical theories, critiques them from a conservative theological perspective, and provides actual textual examples of proper exegesis.

Beginning with the current crisis in Biblical authority, Hasel then reviews certain barriers interposing themselves between the modern reader and Scripture: language, customs, chronology. His exegetical method, set forth in the next several chapters, commences with a commitment to an inspired, authentic Bible, and consists of three major steps: (1) determination of the meaning of the writer for his own original hearers/readers; (2) comprehension and exposition of the deeper meaning intended or implicit in the words of the writer; and (3) translation of the content and form of the Bible to people today.

These steps are carried out by concentrating on the Biblical text (textual criticism), small units within the passage (words and phrases), larger units (literary sections), and finally, whole books.

While guiding his reader surefootedly through the maze of the present discussion of Biblical hermeneutics, Hasel incorporates numerous insights of an archaeological, theological, and practical nature, enhancing the volume as a working tool for the pastor.—Jerry A. Gladson.

**Clean! The Meaning of Christian Baptism**

Every Christian should take time to examine the symbols and ceremonies that have become a part of the expression of his faith. If he fails to do so, the symbols his forebears found rich in meaning will be reduced to mere ritual and thus emptied of their significance.

In Clean! The Meaning of Christian Baptism, Johnson explores this primary Christian symbol and attempts to show what it can mean for both the religious and nonreligious person today. Johnson sets baptism in the context of God's offer of cleansing—His answer to a basic emotional and spiritual need felt by people of all times and all religions. While baptism is not magical, the author insists that it is more than "just a symbol." It is an eloquent expression of God's action and our response. And "only by the doing can we enter into the full reality of the truths this symbol conveys."

Clean! The Meaning of Christian Baptism is a fresh, readable study that will take many pastors beyond their current understanding of baptism. Johnson is presently associate editor of the Adventist Review.—Bradford Brookins.

**Home Grown Kids**

This is a book for parents who are frustrated by the demand to raise secure, self-reliant children, but are never shown how to do it.

Many ministers don't relate the home and school to evangelism, but it just may be the most important of all, states the authors, for a child's early years determine how he values himself as a person and a child of God. This in turn determines his ability to relate well with others and to accept God's love.

Called by Dr. James Dobson "a key book for families that care," it gives practical suggestions on most problems that parents will face.

This book takes the child from before birth through "the reasoning sevens, eights, and nines." For most families the child's best early school is his own home with his parents as the teachers. Parenting should be a joy, not a daily battle for obedience, the authors assert, and share a lifetime of hints gained from their experience first as parents, then as teachers, researchers, and counselors to help parents enjoy their children even as they guide them into a well-rounded Christian life.—Penny Wheeler.