How Adventism Can Stop Growing
Letters

King James—pro and con

I agree with Charles C. Case (Viewpoint, October, 1982) that it does make a difference what version of the Bible we use from the pulpit. However, I differ with him that the King James Version is the answer. The argument that people have stopped bringing their Bibles to church because the pastor uses a different version is not very substantial. A more likely reason is that the persons without Bibles are lukewarm in their Christian experience or that they have learned that the pastor never has them use the Bible when they do bring it.

The argument that we should continue using the King James Version because we have done so for many years and our people are attached to it is also weak. Throughout history it has been crucial for the spread of the gospel that the Bible be in the language of the people. The King James Version is no longer in that category. It is archaic and often difficult to understand. If we are going to make the Scriptures relevant and alive in society today, they must be in a modern, easy-to-understand language.

I do appreciate the author's emphasis on consistency. Whatever version the pastor uses should be used consistently so the congregation knows what to expect.—Glen Baker, Portland, Oregon.

We are in agreement 100 percent with Charles Case's viewpoint regarding the use of the King James Version. We would add that pastors may also unconsciously discourage people from bringing their Bibles to church by not allowing sufficient time to find a text. New members especially are frustrated when the reading is finished by the time they locate a passage, and they failed to hear the message of the Word because they were searching for it in the Bible while it was being read.

Blessings on the pastor who gives the reference clearly, comments a few seconds in order to give people time to find it, and then repeats the reference before beginning to read. This is time well spent.—Mike and Gladys Rabuka, Osoyoos, British Columbia.

Charles Case believes the principal reason many people no longer bring their Bibles to church is because those in the pulpit often read from versions other than the King James. He gives no evidence that this is true, and I doubt it has anything to do with it at all.

It seems to me that lay members tend to use the newer versions of the Bible much more frequently than do our pastors. Perhaps they consider it chic or a sign of erudition, or perhaps they just prefer another version. In our church, members bring the various versions of the Bible, and no one finds it difficult to follow just because his version is different from the one being read aloud. Sometimes, in fact, it makes the reading more interesting!

I believe the reason many people don't carry their Bible to church is a lack of love for the Word. If so, the remedy would be to encourage Bible reading. How to do that is the question—not which version to read publicly.—Arthur A. Mickel, Chico, California.

Grace in each issue

I have been wondering whether somewhere in MINISTRY—on the front page, the masthead or somewhere else—we couldn't have a quotation of Scripture about God's grace. Perhaps Titus 2:11, “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” Perhaps another text would be better, but I wish some of you good brethren would think about this. We talk about grace, particularly when it comes up in some kind of an issue or when someone accuses us of not believing in grace. Why shouldn't it be where we could always see it in MINISTRY, our magazine that develops preachers? Why should we not have that wonderful word grace occupy some prominent place as a motto or proclamation? Our old sinful hearts need to hear this wonderful word more and more often. I know down in my sinful self that I could never be saved by my works. Naturally, I am not sinless, but sinful, and like the little girl in the Passover story, I need to see for myself the blood over the door.

We ought to do our best to see that God's loving message of grace will shine out like a torch in the darkest night so that a lost sinner can ever know about it. Why not have something in every issue about grace? Every time we see the words, we'll praise God.

MINISTRY is always on the good, solid side scripturally.—H.M.S. Richards, Sr., Glendale, California.

Pastor Richards wrote this letter shortly before suffering a serious stroke. We are giving consideration to his suggestion.—Editors.

Supervisory pastors need screening

I found myself nodding agreement again and again as I read “Interns and Supervisors View Each Other” (December, 1982) and looked back on my own internship experience. In my brief ministry in this church, I have experienced and heard of others experiencing many of the frustrations cited by the young pastors in the survey. I learned much from two fine ministers under which I spent my internship, but I must say that there was much room for improvement.

Our denomination needs to look more closely at this critical period of a minister's training. The conference brethren need to screen carefully the men that will serve as supervisory pastors and train them so that the young men under them will be more likely to receive the help they need for effective ministry. It seems clear to me that some pastors simply are not cut out to be a supervisor of an intern. In one case, a man who indicated he did not want to train interns was nevertheless repeatedly assigned this task by conference leadership! Why not train men who want to help young pastors rather than assigning interns to men who really aren't interested in or equipped for this aspect of ministry? Internship is a very critical period in the beginning pastor's life. Let's give him every advantage by taking seriously this crucial time in our ministerial training program.—Name withheld.
How Adventism Can Stop Growing/4. All we need to do, says Dean M. Kelley, a United Methodist clergyman who has studied the growth patterns of various denominations, is to decide that the church doesn't need all these quaint and peculiar truths—that all one needs is love or faith.

Ritual and Adventist Worship/8. Adventists have historically shunned ritual as detrimental to the spirit of true worship. C. Raymond Holmes argues that not ritual itself, but ritual that fails to express our theology, is detrimental.

Pastor and Evangelist: Closing the Gap/10. John W. Fowler. Since the turn of the century, evangelism has become increasingly identified with public meetings. Thus the tendency has been to assign the doing of evangelism to specialists. But the church has been most healthy when evangelism has been a function of the local pulpit and pew.

Peter: First-Century Revolutionary/14. Kim Johnson. The words of Peter that seem so innocuous today were radical to the people of first century. And if we take them at their full meaning, they will radically change the church today.


Making Youth Baptisms Mean Something/18. Leo S. Ranzolin. Sometimes the attention we give to a young person's baptism indicates that we rank it just below the special music in importance.

The Advent Near/20. Ralph E. Neall. Third in the series The Called Church, this article explores the attitudes of the church toward Christ's promise of a soon return.


How Adventism can stop growing

Around the country stand numerous empty, abandoned old churches. But they aren’t Mormon churches. They aren’t Seventh-day Adventist churches. They aren’t Church of Christ churches or Southern Baptist churches. In describing why certain denominations flourish while others decline, the author also gives Seventh-day Adventists a formula for how to stop growing. □ by Dean M. Kelley

It’s a little ironic, I think, that somebody from one of the declining churches should come to talk about church growth to a body that is growing at very significant, precisely constant rates. Maybe it is growing and continuing to grow precisely because of meetings such as this, but I don’t really think so. I don’t think that even a gathering as excellent and meritorious as this is going to affect the rate of church growth. It may facilitate some of the mechanics of bringing growth about, but I believe denominations basically grow or decline because of something far more profound and basic—whether or not they are good religious institutions. If they are not able to meet people’s religious needs, they’re not going to grow. The mainline ecumenical bodies are declining, by and large, because they are not meeting people’s religious needs. They may be very good as adult education institutions, or entertainment arenas, or baby-sitting enterprises, or any number of other things, but they’re not making the grade as religions. It isn’t a matter of how much energy they have, it’s what they use it for, and what they understand themselves to be doing.

The focus of what I am going to say is not on the local church, but on national religious bodies. Some denominations grow in all parts of the country, and in all sizes of local congregations. Others seem suddenly to stop growing and decline, not just locally or regionally, but nationally, which suggests that there is something about the character or nature of a denomination that causes it to behave like one body, irrespective of what’s happening in specific local congregations. Some local congregations may be growing; some may not. But the denomination as a whole will behave in surprisingly organic ways.

If you look at the membership curves of mainline, national denominations from 1958 to 1974 (these are the curves I used in the paperback 1977 edition of my book Why Conservative Churches Are Growing), you will see traces of one of the most interesting phenomena of the twentieth century. Certain of the so-called mainline, national Protestant religious bodies that had been following the population escalator for nearly two hundred years suddenly stopped going up, peaked, and started down. That isn’t easy to do, but we managed to do it in the mid-sixties!

The United Church of Christ, which wasn’t going up very strongly to begin with, suddenly started dropping off, followed shortly by the United Presbyte-

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The thing that counts in providing a meaning for life is not whether it's logical or rational or consistent or coherent or entertaining. The thing that counts is the cost.
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congregations is not very great. I wouldn't expect any of them to show those traits, which is why the denomination as a whole is declining. The same thing was discovered among the United Presbyterians—differences between one and another of their congregations in these areas were not great, which is only to be expected.

I think one reason the researchers didn't find any really vivid answers in this whole enterprise was because their data was derived entirely from the visible end of the religious spectrum. If you put at one end of the spectrum the most traditional and long-lived denominations, and on the other end the most recent and vigorous and vital ones, you realize that we have virtually no data on this whole vital, growing end of the spectrum. The churches on this end don't hold still long enough to get any statistics on them, and they don't usually report their statistics to anybody. Thus, all the data we have is from the middle over to the stodgy end of the line. The really vital, effervescent area of religious development is not recorded, not studied. The students of sociology of religion aren't really sure it's there, because it isn't in the Yearbook.

The Church of Christ, for example, is one of the large denominations in this country—probably more than 2 million members—but they don't have any national organization. They don't report their statistics to any headquarters. So they really can't be there, from the viewpoint of the researchers. But they are there. They're building big brick churches, while the Methodist churches are sitting there vacant, and others are going for museums and real estate offices and boutiques, and Howard Johnsons.

As you travel across the country, you see all those empty, abandoned old churches. They aren't Church of Christ churches. They aren't Mormon churches. They aren't Seventh-day Adventist churches. They are old Methodists, Presbyterians, and United Church churches. They are the relics of once-flourishing religious bodies that are no longer flourishing because, in my view, they are no longer ministering religion to people who need it. They are largely content with the handful of people left over from the last great awakening or, rather, their children or grandchildren.

Now, if those churches that are best able to meet people's religious needs are the churches that are growing, what are our religious needs? What is the business of religion? The business of religion, in my view, lies not in the area of power, or economics, or entertainment, or art. It's in the area of meaning. It is an effort to respond to the universal question: Why do bad things happen to me? Or to those I love? Or to good people? This is not the only religious question, but it's one of the central ones. Why is the universe the way it is?

If people are unable to find answers to these questions, to bound back from the bad experiences that come to us all, they will tend to fall victim to bitterness, frustration, resentment, listlessness, and aimlessness, and will fall into one or another of the maladies of meaninglessness that are increasingly prevalent today—various escapisms, drug or alcohol addiction, derangements, and even some forms of crime and suicide.

So the function of religion, in my view, is to explain the meaning of life in ultimate terms to its adherents. Not to everybody, but to those who find that explanation meaningful. And it is that enterprise alone that has succeeded in rejuvenating tired empires and worn-out economies.

The great religious movements have the ability to take a handful to unprepossessing little men and women who, because of their total commitment to the explanation of life that a charismatic leader at their center has given them, are lifted up in the scale of human enterprise till the rest of the world spins down from them, and they become the index of what it means to be really human. That happened in Britain in the eighteenth century, in the Wesleyan revival, where it changed people's expectations of one another. People no longer were willing to put up with the corruption and the exploitation and the victimization that was going on in that society. The Wesleyan revival transformed England.

Well now, suppose that is the function of religion. Then why do some groups succeed with it and others do not? Why does one religion appeal to those with religious needs better than another? I don't know the answer to that. What I do know, I think, is the one sine qua non of the meaning business: The thing that counts in providing a meaning for life is not whether it's logical or rational or consistent or coherent or entertaining or ego-stroking. The thing that counts is the cost. How much does it cost you to follow this gospel? The function of religion depends upon its being a religion that answers people's meaning needs. And I would contend that it is effective in doing that to the degree that it costs people to belong to that group.

In the realm of religion, money is cheap. Now it's a lot cheaper for Methodists than it is for Adventists, or maybe the other way around, because the per capita giving rates are very different. The Seventh-day Adventists just about lead the field in the amount of money they are willing to give to their church. Methodists are way down here somewhere, and Episcopalians are down further yet.

The editor of the Yearbook of American Churches, who is an Episcopalian, told me with a great deal of triumph in his voice that though it has been losing members, the Episcopal Church has increased per capita giving each year for the past three or four years. I said, "Great!" But money is cheap. That's just the first level of commitment. After someone cares enough about the promulgation of the gospel that he is willing to tithe to support it, then he's on the first level of discipleship. After that comes the giving of one's own time. And then his own energy. And then his own anguish. And then the discipleship of the whole self. Most of the conventional religious bodies haven't even gotten to the first step. For them, religion is one of the peripheral interests of life, meritorious, no doubt, but not one that should take up too much of one's time or effort.
Now I know it’s true that there is no particular thing you can do to commend yourself to God. But there are a lot of things you can do that will separate yourself from God.

That’s what passes for religion in most churches, including mine.

What I have to say next might be pointed up best if I speak about how the Seventh-day Adventist Church can stop growing and begin declining like the Methodists. I’m sure you want to know that! There are several ways in which the Adventists could become like the rest of us, and I would be surprised if there were not, somewhere among its advanced thinkers, some who have unknowingly found them already. I don’t know; I’m not referring to any individuals. But judging from other churches, including my own, I would suggest that there may be those who are offering what they fondly hope will be seen as brave and startling new insights.

If Adventists want to stop growing and begin declining like everybody else, all they have to do is to emphasize that abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine isn’t really essential to salvation. Decide that vegetarianism isn’t actually all that important, and foot-washing is a little tacky—too much like those hill-billy Pentecostals in the Ozarks. Recognize that membership in labor unions sometimes might be not altogether a bad thing, and that tithing, like the requirements already mentioned, can be a form of righteousness by works. And (I am almost unable to mention this) introduce the idea that one can worship as well on Sunday as on Saturday!

You have probably never heard any of those ideas before, but those who are on the advanced edges of religious thought may sometimes come upon them. I don’t want to belittle entirely the necessary role of those whose task it is to go about and test the pilasters and the stanchions and the other pillars that hold up a temple, to make sure they’re not deteriorating. But sometimes they also discover that the church doesn’t need this one, it doesn’t need that one, and that all these quaint and peculiar truths are really just trimming on the cake—all that one needs is love or faith.

If rightly understood, it may be true that love or faith is all one needs. But the trouble with these unstructured simplifications is that they’re too easy. There is almost nothing you cannot justify doing, if you hold yourself only to the criterion of love as you interpret it. It’s too easy. It is too self-indulgent. Rather than being guilt-ridden, most of us are prone to be innocence-ridden, that is, to find justifications and excuses for doing what we want to do anyway. And if we can justify it in the name of love, all the better.

These oversimplifications are inadequate because they deprive faith of its unique and necessary texture and practice and cost.

I would suggest that there need to be a few rather rigorous and specific demands in every religious group to bolster its explanation of life and make it convincing, because convincingness derives from seriousness, which derives from strictness. How can a religion expect anyone to take it seriously if it doesn’t take itself seriously? The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints requires each of its members to put in two years as missionaries. Not at the expense of the church, but at their own expense! And the Mormons are increasing, not in spite of that requirement, but because of it!

What is the point of being a Seventh-day Adventist if an Adventist’s religious duty and activity becomes indistinguishable from that of a lukewarm Methodist or Presbyterian?

The things that I have mentioned about tithing, the seventh-day Sabbath, foot-washing, et cetera, are the things that make the Seventh-day Adventist movement unique, distinctive, and demanding. They give it its bite, its convincingness, its seriousness. Each church needs its own way of insisting that “you’ve got to live up to this to be one of us.” If you strip the requirements all away, you can render the movement feeble, pallid, and ordinary overnight. So there’s the answer to the question: How can the Seventh-day Adventist Church stop growing? Be like the Methodists.

I was asked by my publisher, in preparing my book, to provide a little “how to” at the end of it. I don’t know what will cause those curves to reverse, and declining churches to turn around and start increasing again like an old man growing young. But I suggested what I thought it might take. At the end of the book, I listed several maxims of seriousness:

First, those who are serious about their faith do not confuse it with other beliefs, loyalties, or practices, or mingle them together indiscriminately, or pretend they are alike, of equal merit, or mutually compatible, if they are not.

Second, those who are serious about their faith make high demands of those admitted to the organization that bears the faith. They do not include or allow to continue within it those who are not fully committed to it. For decades there hasn’t been anything you could do that would get you drummed out of the Methodist Church. But John Wesley, in his journal, describes how he came to one of his little societies in Bristol, and found there among the eighteen members a number of triflers and dissemblers. He says, “I made short work of them.” After he left, there were seven members of the society. And it was much stronger!

Third, those who are serious about their faith do not consent to, encourage, or indulge any violations of its standards of belief or behavior by its professed adherents.

Fourth, those who are serious about their faith do not keep silent about it, apologize for it, or let it be treated as though it made no difference or should make no difference in their behavior or relationships with others.

Now I know it’s true that there is no particular thing you can do to commend yourself to God. But there are a lot of things you can do that will separate yourself from God. They are called sins, and we do them all the time. But true, effective religious faith requires that you do something different, that you be something different, than you would otherwise do or be if you didn’t have it. It must make some significant difference in your life, something that will cost you a lot, because that’s what makes religion work. If it doesn’t cost, it can’t be worth much.
Perhaps it is providential the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not have many liturgical roots. We have the opportunity to start with a clean slate and create forms of worship that are distinctively ours and that reflect our unique beliefs. —by C. Raymond Holmes

Seventh-day Adventists have generally viewed the terms liturgy and ritual with deep suspicion, equating them with formalism in worship and a lack of spiritual vitality. However, we need to recognize two vital truths regarding Christian worship in general and Seventh-day Adventist worship in particular:

1. Every worship service, formal or informal, is liturgical in nature. That is to say, it has order. Liturgy and theology should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. When it comes to worship, liturgy ought to harmonize with theology in such a way that the truths confessed are dramatized and illustrated by the actions of a congregation in worship (see Norval Pease, And Worship Him [Nashville: Southern Publishing Assn., 1967], p. 51).

These two facts of worship formed the keynote of the national convention of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Church Musicians Guild held July 6-10, 1982, at Keene, Texas. Delegates from all over the United States, ministers, teachers, and church musicians, met together and by means of lecture, dialogue, and demonstration made a serious attempt to do what the above statement suggests—integrate worship forms with Adventist beliefs. Significant steps were taken, but Adventist liturgy still has some distance to go before catching up with Adventist theology. But we can all rejoice in the positive dialogue that took place at the conven-

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The fact is that Revelation 14 does not call us to be Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Pentecostal, or even Methodist in our worship—but Adventist! It is a call to liturgical distinctiveness.

Therefore we need not spend much time, when it comes to worship, trying to discover roots in contemporary history. They do not exist. We have no extensive worship traditions to reflect upon. What we have been borrowed in bits and pieces from the worship experience of other Christian churches, mostly from church bulletins. The convention at Keene, Texas, dramatically demonstrated that there is a growing interest among us in the liturgical illustration of our distinctive Adventist beliefs. The revision of The Church Hymnal as a worship guide as well as a hymnbook is partly responsible, since it presents the church with the opportunity to do this kind of thinking.

Perhaps we should see it as a providential gift of the Spirit that we do not have many liturgical roots. Perhaps it is a gift, as well as an unprecedented opportunity, to be able to start from scratch. It may turn out to be a blessing in disguise to have nothing to live down liturgically, no distorted traditions. We have only a liturgical vacuum, an empty space. Our concern should be that this empty space be filled with the right kind of Adventist worship traditions which we now have the opportunity to develop. The fact is that Revelation 14 does not call us to be Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, Pentecostal, or even Methodist in our worship—but Adventist! It is a call to liturgical distinctiveness that avoids copycat rituals.

Obviously, then, we must search for Adventist worship roots in the Biblical narrative—specifically in the Old Testament sanctuary services, the heavenly ministry of our Lord as outlined in Hebrews and in Revelation, chapters 4, 5, 13, 14, and the sweeping theme of the great controversy as we understand it. With the Word of God as our source and the writings of Ellen G. White as our guide and safeguard, we have the opportunity to be creative and to respond to Dr. Pease’s counsel that the answer to the search for Adventist worship forms “be found in (1) a thorough knowledge of the Biblical, theological, and historical aspects of Christian worship, and (2) a thoughtful application of this knowledge to Adventist worship today” (ibid., p. 8). It is one thing to renovate; it is something altogether different to create. Our liturgical task is to begin thinking of ways to create worship forms distinctively ours, rather than simply to renovate what has been created by others. For this we need the best thinking and talent of pastors, theologians, and church musicians united in a common concern and cause.

As we face this task, one of the first things we need to realize is that man is both a religious and ritualistic being. Primitive and modern cultures alike demonstrate this truth. It was, and still is, common among primitive peoples to act out beliefs in ritual ceremony. Religion is part of daily life and little distinction is made between the material and the spiritual, the secular and the sacred. For modern man this is not so. Other rituals, such as those connected with work, play, family, and nation, often take the place of the religious. But whether ritual be primitive or modern, pagan or Christian, it serves the same purpose: it not only portrays but actualizes in creative drama the faith and hope of the participants. The Adventist congregation that sings as a benedictory response “We have this hope that burns within our hearts” senses anew the hope it corporately shares. It is an uplifting, reaffirming experience. What is proclaimed and illustrated liturgically actually happens: the people experience hope. Their thoughts, their inner eyes, their consciousness, is fixed on the Lord’s soon return. Belief becomes visible and audible in liturgical action. This is not a magical occurrence. Knowledge of the Advent doctrine and faith in its validity and fulfillment must form the basis of the liturgical drama. It is the belief that gives meaning to the ritual, but at the same time the ritual dramatizes the belief. This is precisely why ritual alone, unrelated to Biblical truth, is meaningless and dangerous. It is also why religious truth, which by its very nature demands ritual expression, must give rise to the right kind of ritual.

Many non-Christian cultures possess a well-established understanding of the relationship between idea (truth, doctrine, belief), and the reenactment of that idea in action (ceremony, ritual, liturgy), or the depicting of that idea artistically (painting, sculpture, music). Human origins, the meaning of life, the crises of life or rites of passage, and important personal, tribal, or national historic events are explained and kept alive by such reenactments or rituals. It seems that man was created with an inherent need to portray his understanding of life and religion in action,

O ur liturgical task is to begin thinking of ways to create worship forms distinctively ours.

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Pastor and evangelist: closing the gap

In North America evangelists and pastors have increasingly been going separate ways. Evangelism is now something the church does one or two months a year, while its major emphasis is nurture of members. Such an attitude needs to change if the church is to grow. □ by John W. Fowler

North America is increasingly becoming the intense focus of serious study in the area of church growth. North America has very highly trained, competent pastoral ministry, sophisticated, willing laity, and the very finest facilities. It probably enjoys the most favorable exposure to the public of any division of the church, and provides three-fourths of all the financial resources of the world Adventist Church. Yet the North American Division's growth rate, 3.07 percent, is one of the lowest in the world field. Its apostasy rate, 41 percent, is one of the highest in nonattending members—on any given Sabbath only 50 percent of the membership is in church.

Why is the division that is the richest in most aspects the poorest in member involvement and evangelistic outreach? Could a distorted definition of evangelism be causing a dysfunction of church growth in North America?

Even a casual study of church growth uncovers a very narrow concept of evangelism and an obvious dichotomy between pastoral and evangelistic ministries. In one conference I am acquainted with, there were 737 baptisms in 1973. Of those, 425 are easily identified as taking place at the time of a public evangelistic meeting. Studies of church growth in the Missouri Conference, done by James Stevens, revealed that during the ten-year period studied, only those churches conducting public meetings experienced growth. Where no public meetings were conducted, churches did not grow. When we consider that 30 percent of all baptisms are children and that many of these are baptized in settings other than public evangelistic meetings, we begin to realize that very little conversion growth of nonmembers takes place apart from public evangelistic meetings. I don't want to discount the vital part that pastors and their churches play in the success of a public evangelistic meeting. However, the evidence seems to indicate that without public meetings very little church growth takes place.

This brief analysis graphically portrays the dichotomy between pastoral and evangelistic work. Seventh-day Adventists have generally defined evangelism as public meetings conducted by a public evangelist, usually in a public auditorium. Roy Allan Anderson defines evangelism as an "evangelistic campaign" conducted in "tents and tabernacles, halls and theaters, churches and open-air parks" (The Shepherd Evangelist, p. 112).

The materials produced for mission '72, '73, '74, et cetera saw evangelism in the same light. Mission '74 defined it as the "holding of public evangelistic meetings either in the local church or at some central spot in every district in the North American Division during 1974." Raymond Woolsey's Evangelism Handbook (Review and Herald, 1972) defined it as an "evangelistic effort" (page 7). The whole concept is seen in the usual ritual of public efforts: Preparing the church and the territory, advertising the meetings, conducting the meetings, getting decisions, and follow-up.

This concept can be seen throughout the history of our church. In our early history pastors served primarily in the role of a public evangelist conducting public meetings. This is graphically illustrated by I. H. Evans in a statement made in 1936 when he was general vice-president of the General Conference: "When I began preaching in 1883, there were no preachers among us acting as pastors. We used to boast that all our
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preachers were evangelists; that we did not have to have pastors, because our lay members were sufficiently informed to maintain themselves from the word of God. They could stand alone, year in and year out, without a sermon each Sabbath.”—The Preacher and His Preaching (Review and Herald), p. 267.

We see this dichotomy as well in the distance between pastoral and evangelistic ministries and between pastoral and evangelistic preaching. Evangelistic preaching is usually viewed as preaching the doctrines of the church in such a way that people are persuaded to join the church. Evangelistic preaching, then, carries a heavy emphasis upon doctrinal argumentation with extended and direct calls to unite with the church. Pastoral ministry and preaching, on the other hand, emphasize helping the members understand and cope with ethical and personal problems they face in every day life. When emphasizing in one Sabbath sermon the importance of pastor’s being not only a pastor but also an evangelist, I received quite a reaction. After the service, the pastor made it clear to me that he was a pastor; I was an evangelist. He would do pastoral work, and I would do evangelistic work. This concept has resulted in pastoral ministry going on in the church for nine or ten months of the year and evangelistic work going on one or two months of the year. The church once a year, or less, interrupts its pastoral ministry to gear up for a public meeting, conducts the meeting, gears down, and then returns to its normal pastoral ministry the rest of the year. But no such dichotomy was seen in the church until the turn of the nineteenth century.

When planning for an M.Div. thesis, I had thought to focus on public evangelism. However, a brief study of church history clearly indicated that very little public evangelistic work was done until the nineteenth century. Before that time, most evangelistic work was done by the pastor and his own congregation during the regular worship services of the church. The great revivals and evangelistic thrusts of church history were achieved largely by pastoral evangelism.

The great awakening of the nineteenth century in America had its roots in the works of Jonathan Edwards, pastor, theologian, philosopher, and man of letters. He held both B.A. and M.A. degrees from Yale Divinity School. His great evangelistic work was accomplished largely during a twenty-four year pastorate at the Congregational church in Northampton, Massachusetts. Other pastors contributing to the great awakening were Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), Charles G. Finney (1792-1875), and Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887). These men were pastor-evangelists who brought about revival, reformation, and extensive church growth through pastoral-evangelistic ministries in the confines of their churches and during their regular worship services.

Not until Moody and Sunday did itinerant evangelism become a dominant soul-winning force in North America. Says Samuel Southard: “Dwight L. Moody, Reuben Torrey, and Billy Sunday developed revivalism as a professional organization.”—Pastoral Evangelism, p. 133. These men served primarily as itinerant evangelists rather than pastor-evangelists. The revival that resulted from their work was of a different nature than that of previous revivals growing out of pastoral evangelistic work. Their work also developed a pattern that became the standard approach to evangelistic work for many denominations, but particularly for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. According to Howard Weeks, an Adventist author, “In 1911... there were 650 active, full-time professional evangelists itinerating in the United States, in addition to 1,300 part-time evangelists, many of whom sought to emulate and imitate Billy Sunday... Thus, as Seventh-day Adventists mobilized their resources for evangelism, they were, in part at least, paralleling a nationwide rebirth of conservative revivalism.”—Adventist Evangelism, pp. 59, 60.

Billy Sunday and D. L. Moody developed the idea of evangelism as an organizational entity apart from the local church whose services could be sold to the churches. This was picked up by a number of different religious groups and, says Weeks, by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This was the beginning of the dichotomy between pastoral and evangelistic work. After this concept took root, evangelism quickly became primarily the work of the “public evangelist.” Soul winning was done at the time of the public evangelistic meetings, usually in a public hall. The early history of Seventh-day Adventist evangelism clearly reveals this pattern and the resulting dichotomy between pastoral and evangelistic work. The detrimental results of this dichotomy in both non-Adventist and Adventist churches also became visible.

First of all, competition grew up between the pastor and the evangelist, resulting in tension and friction. The evangelist accused the pastor of not preparing for the meetings; the pastor accused the evangelist of playing the numbers game by baptizing people who were not adequately prepared for church membership. The churches, because of the attitude of their pastors and their distance from the evangelist, developed suspicions toward the evangelist and his converts and consequently failed to care properly for the members gained through public evangelism.

Harold Calkins points out another negative result of the dichotomy between pastoral and evangelistic work. He contrasts the apostasy rate of the converts of Charles Finney, a pastor-evangelist, with that of D. L. Moody, the itinerant evangelist. He points out that in Finney’s revivals 85 percent of the converts remained faithful, whereas in Moody’s work 75 percent later were backsliders. This apostasy rate does not necessarily fault the work of the public evangelist or the converts brought in by the evangelist, but grows out of the overall negative atmosphere resulting from the separation between pastoral and evangelistic work.

Another undesirable result was that the negative reaction toward the itinerant evangelist and public evangelism...
Very little public evangelistic work was done until the nineteenth century. Before that time, most evangelistic work was done during the regular worship service of the church.

developed into a critical attitude toward all evangelism, which in turn encouraged an even greater split between pastoral and evangelistic work. This exaggerated reaction resulted in much loss of interest in evangelism and soul winning. The focus of both the pastor and the church was nurture of members, while evangelist and soul-winning work were largely neglected. Church services, and the preaching done there, were designed for members only. Even the Sabbath school, which originally was planned primarily as an evangelistic agency, became the “church at study.” This developing dichotomy between pastoral and evangelistic work is paralleled by the declining rate of church growth in North America and, interestingly enough, by the rising apostasy rate which, in my opinion, grows out of the lack of involvement in direct soul winning.

Today there is a new emphasis upon evangelistic work. However, the danger is that we will simply attempt to revitalize the one method used almost exclusively throughout the history of the Adventist Church: public evangelism. To do that will bring in a revival of the same dynamics that have resulted in the negative church growth position that we presently see. We must make room for public evangelism, but our primary emphasis must be pastoral evangelism. The dichotomy we have experienced in the past must be erased. “Pastoral evangelism is the greatest need of this hour. Without pastoral evangelism there will be not much of any other kind.”—C. E. Autrey, Pastoral Evangelism, p. 7.

Let’s look at some of the characteristics of pastoral evangelism:

1. The pastor must give attention to both nurture and outreach. He must serve as pastor-evangelist. “It is not permitted for a minister to say, I am not an evangelist…” The minister is ordained for the purpose of bringing men and women to Christ; if he is not doing it, it is questionable whether he ought to be in the ministry at all.”—Steven Neal, quoted in Charles Templeton, Evangelism for Tomorrow, p. 48.

2. The pastor must recognize the administrative, or managerial, role that is his rightful privilege and responsibility. In the Old Testament the three primary functions in the economy of God were categorized under the headings of priest, prophet, and king. In the New Testament all three of these roles were brought together in one person, namely Jesus Christ, who became the model for the Christian pastor. The pastor, then, must serve as prophet, priest, and king. He is not only a mediator, a preacher, but he is also an administrator, or manager, of the resources of the church. He must utilize all the resources of the church to achieve pastoral nurture and evangelistic outreach.

3. Evangelism must become the perennial work of the church, with the church serving as the evangelistic center. The services of the church must provide for both pastoral nurture and evangelistic outreach on a regular basis.

4. There must be wide lay involvement, with members joining the pastor to constitute an ongoing and efficient evangelistic team. All substantive and ongoing programs of church growth are the result of lay involvement and soul winning.

“No church can flourish unless its members are workers. The people must lift where the ministers lift. I saw that nothing lasting can be accomplished for churches in different places unless they are aroused to feel that a responsibility rests upon them. Every member of the body should feel that the salvation of his own soul depends upon his own individual efforts. Souls cannot be saved without exertion. . . . If they [the people] should begin to hunt up those who are worse off than themselves, and should try to help them, they would help themselves into the light sooner than any other way.”—E. G. White, Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 121. This does not mean that there are to be no public evangelistic meetings. However, those meetings must be but a part of the ongoing evangelistic work of the local church.

5. Pastoral evangelism must be built

on a warm, familylike church fellowship. The opportunity for fellowship should be seen in all of our worship services. The idea of keeping silent in church can be counterproductive. Our services should manifest an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness in which opportunity is freely given for fellowship and an exchange of thought and experience. E. G. White directs our thoughts in this important matter: “Everyone should feel that he has a part to act in making the Sabbath meetings interesting. You are not to come together simply as a matter of form, but for the interchange of thought, for the relation of your daily experience.”—Ibid., vol. 6, p. 362.

6. Sabbath school should be the primary evangelistic agency in the church’s evangelistic program. The lack of church growth in North America can be traced in great measure to the wrong emphasis and the lack of evangelistic direction given to our Sabbath schools. Every non-Adventist Protestant church in North America that experiences substantial growth uses the Sunday school as one of its primary evangelistic agencies.

7. There must be evangelistic preaching in the regular worship services of the church. George Swazey says: “The preaching service is at the heart of the church’s life. If a revival is to flame throughout America, it is most likely to be kindled from the pulpits.”—Effective Evangelism, p. 161.

Herein lies one of the greatest weaknesses of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Evangelistic preaching is seldom heard in our regular worship services. The dichotomy between evangelistic and pastoral work is most obvious at this point. The usual sermon is primarily for the edification of the saints and deals with their personal problems almost exclusive of the evangelistic note. What is the result? “If our preaching is always expository and for our edification and teaching, it will produce church members who are hard and cold, and often harsh and self-satisfied.”—Martin Lloyd Jones, Preaching and Preachers, pp. 152, 153.
Church history clearly indicates that this emphasis upon both pastoral and evangelistic preaching in the regular worship services of our churches is the means whereby God brings revival.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), possibly the greatest pastoral evangelist ever, conceived true preaching to be "an act of faith, and is owned by the Holy Spirit as the means of working spiritual miracles." This style of pastoral-evangelist preaching resulted in the conversion of thousands in Spurgeon's famous London Metropolitan Tabernacle, where he preached for thirty-one years.

Certainly we acknowledge Ellen White's authority to speak in this matter as well: "The Christian minister should never enter the desk until he has first sought God in his closet and has come into close connection with Him... With an union of the Holy Spirit upon him, giving him a burden for souls, he will not dismiss the congregation without presenting before them Jesus Christ, the sinner's only refuge, making earnest appeals that will reach their hearts." — Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 315.

True evangelistic preaching must be defined in the context of nurture and outreach. Simply arguing the doctrines and persuading people to join the church is not an adequate definition of evangelistic preaching. Christ must be uplifted in every sermon. The doctrines must be preached, but they must be preached in the context of one's relationship with Jesus Christ. They must show who Christ is and what He is doing and plans to do in the life of the Christian and in the world. Such preaching will involve not only the gospel and the doctrines but clear eschatology as well. If these great aspects of the gospel are set in the context of Christ and His work, certainly it will result in both building up the saints and winning souls.

Church history clearly indicates that this emphasis upon both pastoral and evangelistic preaching in the regular worship services of our churches is the means whereby God brings revival. "The health curve of the Christian church throughout the centuries can pretty well be plotted by the warmth of the evangelistic fervor in the pulpits. In the periods of decline, sermons were intended only for the edifying of the saints. But when a fresh spiritual life has come surging like a springtime through the church, into the preaching has always come the pleading with men to give their hearts to Christ." — Effective Evangelism, p. 159.

Seventh-day Adventists have a rich source of information regarding pastoral-evangelistic work. The literature within our church, and particularly the writings of Ellen White, give us a balance that should keep us on course. Until our churches become evangelistic centers, and nonmembers are regularly invited to the worship services, which in turn provide for nurture and conversion, the work of God will never be finished.

We can ill afford to continue the dichotomy between pastoral and evangelistic work. Public evangelism will always play an important role in the Adventist Church; however, it can never take the place of pastoral-evangelistic work. The churches must be taught to understand their role. They must be inspired and trained to work in harmony with the pastoral ministry to make their churches evangelistic centers and develop ongoing, perennial evangelistic programs that will win nonmembers and non-Christians to Christ and His church every week throughout the year.

Samuel Moffett sums it up: "If the church no longer believes in evangelism, it has no business being a church. For evangelism is the business of the church." 'Evangelize,' said the Lord, 'and make disciples.' Those were His marching orders." — Christianity Today, Sept. 10, 1971, p. 4.

Ritual and Worship

(Continued from page 9)

...and marred though it be. That image expresses itself in mankind's highest achievements in drama, music, graphic arts, and in science and technology.

The Bible clearly teaches that Christian truth, as well as non-Christian myth, can be dramatized and depicted in ceremonial ritual. Verbal communication is not the only way to pass on sacred truth. The fact is that rites and ceremonies serve to reinforce either the superstitions or the Christian beliefs of people. They relate the abstract to our human thoughts, feelings, and emotions. They are acts that make beliefs understood by reenacting or depicting them in human action, language, and artistic creativity. In any culture, religious or otherwise, art synthesizes perception. It helps put together in the mind what the senses have imagined. Native art is usually representational, descriptive, and realistic rather than abstract, even though it may appear distorted to a person from another culture. It is meant to be understood by everyone, in contrast to much of so-called modern art that is understood only by artists. It attempts to find meaning in that which exists rather than to create an existence of its own. With that attempt, conservative Christianity should feel comfortable. Religious ritual performs the same function. It helps to portray the truth.

If we can agree that not ritual itself, but only that ritual that does not accurately express our theology, is bad, then we are in a good position to do some creative thinking. We are also in a good position to evaluate and assess that which we do while exercising the corporate judgment of the whole church. It would appear that the very first thing we must do is develop an Adventist theology of worship based on the Old Testament sanctuary services and the ministry of Christ our Lord in heaven. The right kind of liturgy must be undergirded by the right kind of theology. The second thing we must do is to focus that theology on Adventist worship practices in a creative attempt to develop forms which dramatize Adventist beliefs. This second task cannot be accomplished by our clergy alone. For this we need the talents of our most outstanding and dedicated Adventist musicians.
Peter: first-century revolutionary

Are we willing today to be a revolutionary as Peter was? Are we willing to give church members responsibility commensurate with their calling and enable them to become all that God plans for them to be? □ by Kim Johnson

If you had to select the ten most revolutionary texts in the Bible, which ones would you choose?

One that must have been near the top of the list for the early Christian church is 1 Peter 2:9: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

I doubt that many Seventh-day Adventists today would think of Peter’s verse as particularly revolutionary, at least not as revolutionary as he intended it to be. And therein lies one of the saddest stories of modern-day Adventism. Peter risked getting himself killed for referring to the recipients of his letter as “a royal priesthood,” but his words are hardly a matter of life and death today.

To put Peter’s revolution into perspective we need to go back into Biblical times for some background regarding Jewish priests. Before the nation of Israel was formed, the head of each home was considered the family priest. But after God brought Israel out of Egypt and established the Israelites as His own nation, the tribe of Levi, in particular the descendants of Aaron, took over all the functions of the priesthood. By the time of Christ probably some 18,000 priests lived in and around Palestine, about three percent of the population.

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We need to urge our people to understand their Biblical role, put on their priestly robes, and allow themselves to have confidence in God’s choice of them as ministers.

In fact, the priests were so eager to make sure that the common Israelite didn’t interfere or try to perform some religious function that some of the Levites were designated as Temple police to keep the ordinary Israelites outside the priestly court. Jewish writings tell us that if one of these guards was caught sleeping on duty, the penalty (loosely translated) was being beaten with a stick, or he might even have his clothes set on fire (ibid., pp. 209, 211). The only religious functions the common people were expected to perform were: (1) to be present at major religious gatherings and (2) to bring the correct offerings.

But if the priest was miles above the average Israelite, he was light years above the Gentiles. For a priest, even to touch a Gentile made him unclean.

The story is told in Jewish writings of a certain high priest who was supposed to officiate on the Day of Atonement and who was, as usual, being especially careful for seven days prior to the great event to avoid becoming ritually unclean. This, the Day of Atonement, was the high point of his year and the high point of the nation’s religious year as well. Under special guard, he was meticulous in his preparation and watchfulness. But just twelve hours before the big day he had to be disqualified because on an evening walk he accidently stepped on some Gentile spit (ibid., p. 153).

As far as the priests were concerned, Gentiles were crude, spiritual fools, almost animals, far more sinful than the worst Israelite, and good for nothing but fuel for the fires of hell.

It is against all of this background that the apostle Peter dares to write the words of 1 Peter 2.9. After having followed Christ for three years, Peter finds a revolutionary idea intruding into his thoughts. But he was raised a Jew during very conservative times; he tries to put this new concept out of his mind. It’s absurd! But the conclusion is inescapable. Finally he musters enough courage to believe this “heresy,” and actually alters his attitudes and activities dramatically. (Such changes did not come without great inner struggle and occasional relapses, however, as we see at Antioch when Peter betrayed his new vision and incurred the thunderous wrath of Paul.) Later, toward the end of his life, Peter has the audacity and strength of conviction even to put his radical thoughts in writing.

Peter’s first letter was written to be circulated among Jewish converts, to be sure, but its primary target audience was Christian Gentiles. Gentiles! And as his stylus moves across the parchment, Peter overthrows fourteen hundred years of Jewish tradition, fourteen hundred years of priestly exclusiveness, fourteen hundred years of sacred teaching. In a few strokes of the pen, he completely overturns the Jewish system, points a finger at his stunned Gentile readers, and calls them priests. “You are now a chosen generation; you are now a royal priesthood.” Amazing! Any Gentile who has accepted Christ is now totally equal to the greatest priest of Israel in religious status and access to God.

Imagine the implications of Peter’s revolutionary idea. Two men are walking toward each other on a very narrow street in downtown Jerusalem. One was raised at the feet of the great Jewish teacher Gamaliel; the other has barely learned to read. One has his shoulders back, head erect, and the measured step of a very methodical life. The other saunters easily with a slight skip in his step. One looks well-to-do; the other looks like a hand-me-down exhibit. One is astute, refined, and cultured; the other is the opposite of all of that and more. One is a distinguished priest in Israel; the other a simple, smelly, Gentile Christian farmer or fisherman or laborer from Peter’s congregation.

They near each other. The priest recoils in disgust and rails upon the Gentile sinner for intruding his defiling presence upon him. “You fool!” he hisses. But the ragged Gentile grabs the priest’s delicate hand in his rough one,
The Adventist Church has refused to follow Peter's leading and has allowed to develop within its ranks the same kind of gap between pastor and believer that Peter died to overcome.

Christian is a full participant in all the privileges and responsibilities of a priest. The privileges include coming into the very presence of God, sensing His special calling, and participating in the most challenging and fulfilling purpose for living possible—being partners with God. The responsibilities involve all the various demands and necessities of church life.

Dr. John Bright, an Old Testament scholar, once made a statement I'll never forget. The question was asked, "What is the purpose of the seminary?" His reply was, "The primary purpose of the seminary is to unfit men for the ministry as commonly conceived by the church members." The Biblical concept of the role of the pastor and that of the rest of the church members is so different from what most people believe that in many churches if the pastor tried to follow Scripture fully, the people would again start getting out the nails.

And I have to ask myself, as a pastor, if I am willing for my reputation, my power, my independence, and impatience to be crucified so that the revolution can go on. Am I willing to give church members responsibility commensurate with their calling and "hang in there" with them in spite of failures to enable them to become all that God wants them to be? Am I willing to invest myself in them as Christ invested Himself in the disciples and as others have invested themselves in me, that they may indeed become priests of God?

I

In the last part of his revolutionary statement Peter says to his readers that God "hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light," the light of their high calling (1 Peter 2:9). And what an amazing opportunity pastors have to share in God's work by leading their members into a proper understanding of their priestly roles.

It was my first day back in the office after a week-long absence to attend out-of-town meetings. The phone rang, and a lady on the other end berated me severely for not coming to visit during her recent stay in the local hospital. I had just that morning learned the details of her situation from another parishioner, and I decided to go on the offensive. "Sister ————," I replied calmly, "I understand that you were visited by no fewer than ten ministers."

"Oh, I'm very sure you are mistaken," she retorted.

I pressed the point, "You would probably call them ordinary church members, but let me assure you that they are all ministers as much as I am."

"Out of darkness into . . . marvellous light." The apostle Peter's appeal to our members, because of their calling, is to come out of the darkness of humdrum living, the darkness of a spiritual inferiority complex. As pastors, we need to urge our people to come and understand their Biblical role, put on their priestly robes, and allow themselves to have confidence in God's choice of them as ministers. Two years ago our church added a new heading to our weekly bulletin, hoping that the message, repeated often enough in a variety of ways, would get through. It reads, "Ministers: each person; Pastor: Kim Johnson."

I love to have the opportunity periodically of informing people of some new status they have received. As a member of the personnel committee at a certain institution, I was able to tell applicants, "You got the job; you are our new ————."

Recently I officiated at a wedding and had the privilege of announcing, "You are now husband and wife." (There have also been awkward moments, such as the time I was so eager to inform my parents of their new grandparent status that I dialed the wrong number from the delivery room at 4:00 A.M.! "A nine-pound what?" was the incredulous response! But without doubt the greatest joy of all is telling a new Christian, "You are a priest!")

By God's grace I want to stand before my congregation every Sabbath and address them with deep satisfaction and expectancy as "My fellow ministers."
Don't make your people endure Communion

The communion service doesn't have to be a marathon that exhausts not only children but adults as well. Here are some suggestions for making it significant yet enjoyable. □ by Charles Mitchell

Today we celebrated the communion service. Afterward, my children complained on the way home that it had lasted so long that they were starving. They had a right to be tired and hungry. We had walked out of the church at 12:50. Communion had been a two-hour affair, and from noon on they had been restless, seeing the service was only half over. Each hymn sung after twelve o'clock was another aggravation.

Unfortunately, that testimony is not unique or always confined to children.

What can we do to streamline the communion service and, at the same time, enhance, not sacrifice, its meaning? Surely nothing is gained by causing our children to feel that one of the most important of the church's celebrations is also the most irritating and difficult. As a parent, and as one who is concerned to make the communion service a significant occasion for young people and for visitors, I would like to make a few suggestions:

1. Allow no other special events to take place on the same Sabbath with the communion service. The Sabbath that caused my children's complaints was a marathon that included a baptism, ordination service, and five minutes of announcements as well as the communion service. Let Communion have its rightful place; give it sole priority in that day's service.

2. Begin the church service on time. If this necessitates a Friday evening or early Sabbath morning rehearsal, then arrange it. But start on time.

3. Keep announcements to a bare minimum. If necessary, mimeograph an additional sheet for the bulletin in order to say less. Include a word about open Communion to put visitors at ease.

4. Choose short hymns. Avoid those with four or five stanzas. If you feel for some reason that you must select a lengthy hymn, don't feel compelled to sing all the stanzas. Two sung with appreciation are better than all five sung with a restless longing to stop.

5. Instruct the organist to play only a short introduction to each hymn. It is time-consuming and unnecessary to play a hymn completely through before the congregation begins to sing.

6. Choose an appropriate, but brief, Scripture reading, if you usually use such in the service. Select a text that is connected with the morning message to keep the service unified.

7. Keep your sermonette no longer than ten minutes. If well-planned, a ten-minute talk can be most effective. Make one germane point about Jesus, the crucifixion, Communion, et cetera. Remember there will also be a sermon acted out during the celebration of Communion.

8. Specifically explain that the ordinance of humility means footwashing! Don't assume visitors know what it is; tell them. Assure them they are welcome to participate, observe, or remain in the sanctuary. The organist or pianist can play for those who choose to stay.

9. Make provision for the children whose parents are engaged in the footwashing service. A story or dramatized recording of the crucifixion or last supper (such as the "Bible in Living Sound") would be an appropriate interlude for the young ones at this point.

10. One observation regarding the act of Communion itself: Many a young mother has experienced the exasperation of trying to hold a small glass of grape juice for two or three minutes while trying to keep baby's hands off the temptation. As a young person, I belonged to a small Protestant congregation whose practice would alleviate this problem. Each participant drank the juice as soon as he was served. The congregation ate the bread together, signifying the unity of the Christian body. But the juice was drunk separately, indicating the necessity of an individual application of the benefits of Christ's atoning blood. One need only think back to the original Communion to realize that the wine, at least, was drunk separately.

11. Vary the Scripture passages read during the act of Communion. Passages such as Philippians 2:1-11, 1 Peter 1:18-22, or Hebrews 9:24-28 will add a touch of newness for those alert juniors who can repeat from memory 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 and Matthew 26:26-30.

I don't want my children to remember communion Sabbath as the day they go home from church tired and hungry. Let's feed the congregation the Living Bread and send them home at noon—full!

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Making youth baptisms mean something

The decision of a young person for Christ is an important event. Let's not sandwich it between the announcements and the special music. Make it an event to be remembered all life long. □ by Leo S. Ranzolin

Recently I attended a bar mitzvah, a ceremony that initiates 13-year-old boys into the duties and responsibilities of the Jewish religion. The liturgy, anticipation, and preparation for the program thrilled me. Parents and relatives made this experience the most important event in the life of this young man.

As I returned from this impressive ceremony I thought about our own young people. When we baptize them into the church, how much special attention do we give them? Do we make this event the most memorable experience in their life?

Unfortunately, baptisms often don't seem to be too important to us. The baptism is casually listed in the bulletin, and the ceremony itself is squeezed in between the announcements and the beginning of the worship service. One minute the congregation is listening to an announcement about the church campout; the next, the curtains open and the minister and a youth are standing there, ready to begin without wasting any time. The pastor mentions the person's name, says some kind words, and immerses the individual. Then the curtains close and the worship service continues as usual.

Several years ago, Pastor Ademar Quint began holding a special spring baptism for the young people in his church. Soon the entire South American Division joined in holding an annual spring baptism. The idea spread—and today all divisions are invited to participate in an annual Spiritual Commitment Celebration—April in the Northern Hemisphere and September in the Southern Hemisphere.

A Spiritual Commitment Celebration can take many forms. Some churches devote an entire weekend to this special event; others only the Sabbath morning worship service. Some use the worship service linked to an afternoon service. Sometimes the baptism is held outdoors at a river or lake; other times it is held in a church. A Spiritual Commitment Celebration can also be part of a youth congress, a campout, or a Pathfinder camporee.

Recently I attended a baptism in Europe where the young people were baptized in a large water tank at one of our camps. The tank was decorated with flowers, giving it the appearance of a beautiful garden. Before the baptism all the campers attending the service lined up on two long lines facing each other. As the campers sang, the white-robed baptismal candidates marched through the lines with the ministers to the place of baptism.

A band played several religious songs, and then the whole group sang a beautiful hymn together. Those who were being baptized formed a circle, and one boy and one girl prayed. A pastor, relative, or friend read short biographies, alternating with music and testimonies. It was inspiring to hear the youth give their reasons for being baptized. The pastor then gave a ten- or fifteen-minute sermonette. The young people sang a cappella between the baptisms.

A weekend of celebration

Involving your whole church family in a weekend of celebration will make baptism a never-to-be forgotten experience for your young people. A meaningful way to begin this special weekend is with a family communion service. A unique setting can add much to the total impact of the service. If an auditorium or fellowship hall is available, tables can be set up in the shape of a cross in the center of the room. Use white tablecloths, arrange the bread and grape juice in a pleasing way, and accent the table setting with candles.

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When we baptize young people into the church, how much special attention do we give them? Do we make this event the most memorable experience in their lives?

Sabbath school is an ideal time for a special program presented by the Pathfinders and/or youth division. Be sure to allow the youth adequate time to prepare their program.

The church service should involve youth in as many ways as possible, and the sermon should relate to the weekend’s special emphasis. A suggested outline for a Commitment Celebration sermon is: (1) Celebration of Joy, (2) Celebration of Remembrance, (3) Celebration of Anticipation, (4) Celebration of Commitment.

The fellowship and unity of this special weekend will be enhanced by a church potluck. Encourage all members and visitors to attend. Arrange for extra food and table service so that there will be plenty for everyone and no one need stay away because he is unprepared.

The baptism and commitment celebration is best held on Sabbath afternoon. Youth and many adults prefer an outdoor baptism, despite the water temperature. Wherever possible, consideration should be given to holding this service in a quiet lake or river.

To build the intergenerational bond, some of the older “saints” can briefly tell their testimony of what the church means to them today. These presentations, interspersed with music by members of all ages, will make the baptism an event long to be remembered by the entire church family.

An all-church family social is a good way to end this special weekend of celebration. Your conference youth director has ideas on new fun games for all ages. One meaningful way to conclude is to have all members—young and old—join hands and form a circle around the room. Close by singing together a song such as “I’m So Glad I’m a Part of the Family of God.”

Celebration Ideas

If the baptism is held during a special service in the church, the sanctuary can be decorated by each family represented in the baptism. Flowers can be used on the platform and pews. During the recessional the youth can walk to the foyer and receive special greetings from the church members after the service.

A baptism held outdoors can be especially memorable. There’s something about the natural environment that reminds us of the baptism of Jesus Christ Himself. Here is the counsel of the Lord: “Whenever possible, let baptism be administered in a clear lake or running stream. And give to the occasion all the importance and solemnity that can be brought into it. At such a service angels of God are always present.”—Evangelism, pp. 313, 314.

When using an outside location, all arrangements should be made in advance. The site can be decorated with flowers, palm trees, or easily movable plants. If the baptism is to be held in a lake, a heart made of flowers can surround the youth during the baptism.

As soon as the youth are baptized, give each one a bouquet of flowers. If it is a cold day, they should get dressed first, but if not they can remain by the water and receive the flowers and congratulations from those in attendance. A certificate and book should be given or sent to each one as a memento of his decision for the Lord.

One word of caution. Be sure the young people are properly dressed with clothes underneath their baptismal robes (especially if the robes are white), or that they are covered with a blanket or large towel as soon as they leave the water. Neglecting this precaution can result in embarrassment to the young people and an effect on the audience that will ruin the sacredness of the occasion.

If the young people being baptized are members of the Pathfinder Club, conduct a special ceremony, using candles. Welcome them to the circle of lights by saying: “Your light is now part of our light. Welcome to the circle of love and fellowship in Jesus Christ.” Assign each a prayer partner.

Preparing for baptism

During the bar mitzvah I was impressed with the amount of time the parents had spent studying the Torah with their son. As they thanked God during the service they mentioned how worthwhile it was to have spent those long hours studying together.

The General Conference Youth Department has a new baptismal manual that can be used by parents in studying the doctrines of the church with their children. It is based on the twenty-seven fundamental beliefs and will be a blessing not only for the youth but for the whole family. Family worship hours can be used to strengthen faith in Jesus.

We assume many times that because young people are born into the church they know everything the church teaches. Nothing could be further from the truth. Dress, modesty, hygiene, food, diet, recreation, social life, movies, marriage, dating, music, etcetera, are topics that need to be brought before the youth. And it is very important to put Ellen White into a proper light—not as one who is always negative.

A baptismal class is a must in preparing young people for baptism. It is common to hold the class in the church or at the church school. This can be started right after the Week of Prayer or even at the beginning of the school year.

In preparing young people for this special service of celebration, don’t neglect the willing cooperation of the church schoolteachers, the Sabbath school leaders, and the Pathfinder leaders. Very often it is at a school Week of Prayer or a Pathfinder camporee that young people make their initial decision for baptism.

As you visit your young people in their homes you will be able to ascertain their readiness for baptism. You will also have the opportunity to begin to build anticipation for the spring Spiritual Commitment Celebration.

Holding this annual event will take a little more planning than just squeezing a baptism in between Sabbath school and church. But for the young people you baptize this will become the most memorable experience of their lives, as well it should.
The Advent near

Our church rose in a context of expectancy regarding the coming of Christ. What began as a sprint may have taken on characteristics of a marathon, says the author. Nevertheless, the spiritual attitudes of the sprint must be ours throughout the race, no matter how long it may be. Always we must keep the coming of Christ near and let it influence every decision of our lives.

The Called Church □ 3

Ralph E. Neall

The heart of the plan of salvation and the turning point of history was the cross and resurrection of Christ. The blessed hope of Old Testament saints, it was the joyous reality of New Testament Christians. Without the mighty acts of Christ at His first advent there could be no Second Advent. Without the divine seed sowing there could be no harvest.

So convinced was the early church of the infinite value of the cross and the resurrection that they believed the last days had begun at Calvary and that it could be only a short time until Christ would return. They believed that God had spoken to them through His Son “in these last days” (Heb. 1:2). Peter quoted Joel’s last-day prophecy and said it was being fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17ff). He also said Jesus was manifested “in these last times” (1 Peter 1:20). Paul listed nineteen sins as signs of the last days, but warned his readers against them in his own day as well (2 Tim. 3:1-6). He said that the night was far gone and the day was at hand (Rom. 13:12). John described the times in which he was living as “the last hour” (1 John 2:18, R.S.V.). Christ promised him that He would come quickly (Rev. 22:7, 12, 20; see also 1:1-3).

When we read the words “near” and “soon” in the New Testament and then glance at the 1983 calendar, we naturally wonder what it means. Can “soon” be stretched over nearly two thousand years? In the past century this has become one of the major problems of theology.

During the past century Biblical scholars have given a great deal of thought to the supposed delay of Christ’s
The Bible and the writings of Ellen White are more interested in preparing men for the final day than in telling when it will be. We are to watch and pray always, because we know not the hour.

advent. Albert Schweitzer concluded that Jesus believed the kingdom of heaven would come by harvest time in the same year He spoke. He saw Jesus predicting His own glorious coming in Matthew 10:23 (R.S.V.)—"You will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes." But Christ was wrong, Schweitzer said.1

About thirty years later, C. H. Dodd defended Christ by blaming the church. Statements describing a literal Second Advent were not spoken by Christ, Dodd said, but were put in His mouth by the early church. He decided from his studies of the Gospel of John and the parables that the Second Coming was Christ's coming to each individual at conversion.2

Rudolf Bultmann interpreted the coming of Christ in existential terms; he said that the predictions of the kingdom tell us simply that Christ confronts every man in each moment of decision. Christ is continually calling us to better things.3 His idea seems to be a development of Dodd's.

Oscar Cullmann described the Second Coming in more traditional terms. With an illustration taken from World War II, he wrote that the cross was D-Day and the second coming will be V-Day. In other words, at the cross the decisive battle was fought. The Lord is now engaged in mopping-up operations, and the final victory will occur momentarily. The issues have been settled, so the outcome is not in doubt.4 The only problem with Cullmann's illustration is that it fails to explain why the mopping up should take so long.

How do Seventh-day Adventists understand the texts indicating that the last days began with the first advent of Christ and that the Second Advent would be very soon? It must be admitted at the outset that we have not given them the attention they deserve. It is likely that Schweitzer was one of the first to bring them to our attention. Can we take them seriously and still believe that Christ's coming is nearer now than it was in the days of John the Revelator? I believe we can.

Seventh-day Adventists agree that the kingdom of heaven came with the first advent of Christ, but that it was the kingdom of grace; the kingdom of glory is still to come (The Desire of Ages, p. 234). The last days did indeed begin at that time, but Matthew 24:14 shows that the end was yet in the future. Paul explained in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4 that the Lord would not come until after the supremacy of the man of sin, and Daniel 7:25 shows that that supremacy must endure until 1798. Daniel spoke of the "time of the end" dating from the end of the time prophecies (see Dan. 8:17; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 6, 7, 13). Adventists therefore do not see a problem in the eighteen centuries since Christ, for that time was all foreseen in the time periods of Daniel and Revelation, which are based on the year-day principle. Adventists can believe that the last days began in the time of Christ, and they also hold that in a unique sense they are living in the "time of the end." The time of the end seems to be the final portion of the "last days." When Adventists speak of a delayed advent, they are concerned only with the 139 years since 1844.

Our faith in the nearness of Christ's coming is founded on the time prophecies that have already been fulfilled. Because the 2300-year prophecy of Daniel 8:14 announced the beginning of Christ's final work in heaven and because there is no other time prophecy that extends beyond that time, the end is truly near. We are living on borrowed time.

Even the signs of the times are closely tied to the time prophecies. Wars, famines, pestilences, increasing wickedness, natural disasters, and disobedience to parents are ordinary events which have marked the entire history of sin on earth, but they take on the quality of signs when they occur in the time of the end.5 Predicted in Mark 13:24, the dark day of May 19, 1780, was a sign, not because it was a dark day, but because it came at the right time—"in those days, after that tribulation."

The great outline prophecies of Daniel and Revelation picture human history marching inexorably to its climax. They underline the sovereignty of God; He is in control, and His will will not be thwarted. Commenting on Daniel 9:24-27 in connection with the first advent of Christ, Ellen G. White wrote, "Like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay."—The Desire of Ages, p. 32. In recording her first vision, she said she heard the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and while she later explained that she had no memory of the date after coming out of the vision, it is clear that in her mind God certainly knows when it will be, and the time prophecies already fulfilled show it will be soon (see Early Writings, pp. 15, 34; Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 75, 76).

We cannot set a date for the Second Advent, however, for Jesus warned the disciples that the times and seasons remain in the Father's hands (Acts 1:6-8). The Bible gives us no information about a date, beyond insisting that it is always near. This means that we have an open-ended expectation, which need not be disturbed by the passage of 139 years since 1844. One hundred years, after all, is very short when compared with the millenniums that have elapsed since Adam and Eve.

Both the Bible and the writings of Ellen White are much more interested in preparing men for the final day than in telling when it will be. We are to watch and pray always, because we know not the hour. The near coming of Christ exerts a continual pressure toward holy living and diligent witnessing. Because He is coming soon, we must exhibit the goodness of God and call the world to prepare to meet Him. Even our institutions—sanitariums, schools, publishing houses, and food factories—are motivated by our belief in the soon coming of Christ. These institutions help give standing to the message as they give men an example of what God has in mind for men (see Ellen G. White, "Let the Trumpet Give a Certain Sound," Review
The near coming of Christ exerts a continual pressure toward holy living and diligent witnessing. We must exhibit the goodness of God and call the world to prepare to meet Him.

and Herald, Dec. 6, 1892, p. 754).

Since we must believe that the coming of Christ is always near, the Bible warns against saying it is delayed, for those who do this begin to beat their fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunken (Matt. 24:48-51; Luke 12:45). In her comments on these verses, Ellen White observed that because Christ had not come as soon as they expected, some were turning after riches and love of the world (Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 306; vol. 5, pp. 9, 99). A worker's wife was warned that her sins showed she did not make the coming of Christ near enough: "I saw that for some time past, Sister J has had a rebellious spirit, has been self-willed.... I saw that she did not bring the coming of the Lord as near as she should, and that her mind, instead of being at Rochester, should be all swallowed in the work of God, and she should be seeking opportunities to help her husband, to hold up his hands, and to labor wherever there was an opportunity." By their actions such people were saying the Lord was delayed. Those who kept His coming near were those who lived dedicated lives.

On the other hand, there is some evidence that the time of Christ's coming actually has been delayed and that such a delay was foretold. In the parable of the ten virgins the bridegroom was delayed (Matt. 25:5). In the parable of the talents the master came back after a long time (verse 19). Peter indicated that the Lord was not slow, but patient, not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). Revelation 7:1-4 teaches that God is restraining the winds of the final trouble until God's servants are sealed in their foreheads. Probably the strongest reason for a possible delay is suggested by Matthew 24:14 and Revelation 14:6-12. The gospel must be preached before the Lord can come. It appears that the same gospel that must be preached because the Lord is coming soon must also be preached so that the Lord can come soon.

Ellen White agreed with this concept in a statement first written in 1883, and often repeated afterward. Answering a critic from Marion, Iowa, who condemned her for speaking of the soon coming of Christ as early as 1849, she replied that the coming of Christ had been delayed by the failure of early Adventists to accept the third angel's message and by the sins of Seventh-day Adventists in her own time who had not carried out the commission of the three angels of Revelation 14. She compared the delay to that of Israel in the wilderness; the necessary conditions were holy living and diligent witnessing.

So seriously did Ellen White regard the church's failure to fulfill the gospel commission that when Adventists were persecuted for Sunday work in the 1880s and 1890s and the time of tribulation predicted by the third angel seemed to be starting, she said she did not believe the time had yet come when liberties were to be restricted. She asked the church to pray for a respite so Adventists would have time to take the message to the world. When the persecution faded a few years later, she wrote that the respite had been granted; now it was time to build institutions and send missionaries to all the world.

This does not mean, however, that we can use Matthew 24:14 to date Jesus' coming. The "world" that must hear the message includes not only the nations, but also every kindred, tongue, and people (Rev. 14:6). There are still some two thousand tongues in which the message of Christ's coming has never been spoken, and there are probably some sixteen thousand "kindreds" (cultural groups, tribes, and subgroups) that have never heard the call of the three angels. Somehow the message must reach the thousands of villages and scores of language groups in India, as well as the great communities of Russia, China, and Vietnam.

Another reason we cannot use Matthew 24:14 to date the end is that the "world" is a dynamic organism that exists in time as well as space. It is not standing still for us to preach to it. The population keeps dying and being replaced. Even if we could reach every living person this year, we could not reach the dead who died last year. What then does it mean to preach the gospel to all the world, and then shall the end come? It means that the church's assignment is without boundaries and that it must obey the commission until the Lord says, "It is done." Only He can say when the task is finished.

Thus in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy we find evidence for both the fixed nature and a delay of Christ's coming. In fact, we can find both in the single book of Revelation. In chapter 22 the Lord said He would come quickly (verses 7, 12, 20), but also the time prophecies outline a course of history extending over many centuries. In Ellen White also we find statements speaking of the nearness of Christ's coming and others speaking of delay. How can we harmonize the opposing ideas?

Two answers seem possible. One is that we are dealing with Biblical modes of thought, and the Bible is not overly concerned about apparent contradictions. Isaiah wrote that God dwells in the high and holy place, and also with him who "is of a contrite and humble spirit" (Isa. 57:15). Both God and Satan were said to tempt David to number Israel (2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chron. 21:1). Jesus promised that He and the Father would make their home with the obedient (John 14:23), yet He also said He would come and take them to the place He had prepared for them (verses 1-3). Bible writers sometimes lay contradictory statements alongside each other, letting one balance the other. We find this to be true of the Second Coming passages as well. Perhaps there is no need for us to harmonize the two streams of thought, for the Bible itself does not.

Another possible answer is that there is no delay when we see it from God's standpoint. Ellen White wrote in 1888, "The apparent tarry is not so in reality, for at the appointed time our Lord will come, and we will if faithful exclaim, 'Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.'"
The end is near—more than this we are not authorized to say. But that nearness must influence every decision of our lives.

On the other hand, we need both sides. Either one without the other leads to dangerous positions. If we look only at the sovereignty of God, it can lead to passivity on our part. But to speak only of the sovereignty of God to give us assurance to cooperate with God; we need the witnessing that was required, what hope of final triumph.

Among them are multitudes of God's true servants who are shepherding His flock where they are, and who will doubtless accept the entire message of the three angels in God's own time.

Today out attitude toward the return of Christ should be more like that of a marathon runner whose race may be cut short at any time than that of someone who uses up all his resources in a few seconds of time. Our spiritual forefathers in the Millerite movement may be compared to a sprinter running the hundred-yard dash. They put all they had into the work of preparing for Christ's coming in 1844. They had no time for building institutions, for getting college educations, or even for marriage. Everything was aimed toward the immediate goal.

But now we have had to make the necessary adjustments for running the marathon race. Institutions have been built, young people have gone to college and gotten married; and a large organization has been built up to spread the message around the world. Nevertheless, the spiritual attitudes of the sprint should be ours throughout the marathon race, no matter how long it may be. Always we must keep the coming of Christ near and let it influence every decision of our lives. With William Miller, we must say, "It is Today, and Today, and Today, until He comes."


The inspiration and authority of the Ellen G. White writings

A statement of present understanding.

In response to requests, a statement on the relationship of the writings of Ellen G. White to the Bible was prepared initially by an ad hoc committee of the General Conference. The statement was published in the July 15 Adventist Review and August issue of MINISTRY with an invitation to readers to respond to it. Suggestions from readers and from several groups have led to a refinement of the statement to its present form. Although it is not a voted statement, Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, we believe that the worldwide participation in its development makes it a reflection of the views of the church on the topic it addresses.—Biblical Research Institute.

In the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs voted by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at Dallas in April, 1980, the Preamble states: “Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures.” Paragraph one reflects the church’s understanding of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, while paragraph seventeen reflects the church’s understanding of the inspiration and authority of the writings of Ellen White in relation to the Scriptures. These paragraphs read as follows:

**1. The Holy Scriptures**
“The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God’s acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12.)”

**17. The Gift of Prophecy**
“One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord’s messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10.)”

The following affirmations and denials speak to the issues which have been raised about the inspiration and authority of the Ellen White writings and their relation to the Bible. These clarifications should be taken as a whole. They are an attempt to express the present understanding of Seventh-day Adventists. They are not to be construed as a substitute for, or a part of, the two doctrinal statements quoted above.

**Affirmations**
1. We believe that Scripture is the divinely revealed Word of God and is inspired by the Holy Spirit.
2. We believe that the canon of Scripture is composed only of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments.
3. We believe that Scripture is the foundation of faith and the final authority in all matters of doctrine and practice.
4. We believe that Scripture is the Word of God in human language.
5. We believe that Scripture teaches that the gift of prophecy will be manifest in the Christian church after New Testament times.
6. We believe that the ministry and writings of Ellen White were a manifestation of the gift of prophecy.
7. We believe that Ellen White was inspired by the Holy Spirit and that her writings, the product of that inspiration, are applicable and authoritative, especially to Seventh-day Adventists.
8. We believe that the purposes of the Ellen White writings include guidance in understanding the teaching of Scripture and application of these teachings, with prophetic urgency, to the spiritual and moral life.
9. We believe that the acceptance of the prophetic gift of Ellen White is important to the nurture and unity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
10. We believe that Ellen White’s use of literary sources and assistants finds parallels in some of the writings of the Bible.

**Denials**
1. We do not believe that the quality or degree of inspiration in the writings of Ellen White is different from that of Scripture.
2. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are an addition to the canon of Sacred Scripture.
3. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White function as the foundation and final authority of Christian faith as does Scripture.
4. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White exhaust the meaning of Scripture.
5. We do not believe that the study of the writings of Ellen White may be used as the basis of doctrine.
6. We do not believe that Scripture can be understood only through the writings of Ellen White.
7. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are the product of mere Christian piety.
8. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are essential for the proclamation of the truths of Scripture to society at large.
9. We do not believe that the writings of Ellen White are the product of Ellen White’s use of literary sources and assistants negates the inspiration of her writings.

We conclude, therefore, that a correct understanding of the inspiration and authority of the writings of Ellen White will avoid two extremes: (1) regarding these writings as functioning on a canonical level identical with Scripture, or (2) considering them as ordinary Christian literature.
Worship leaves a warm feeling

Who would come out to prayer meeting on the coldest night of the winter and with more snow forecast? And if they did, burst water pipes ought to chill their enthusiasm! But something happened to dispel the cold.

It was the coldest night of the winter. The roads were threatening to freeze over and more snow was forecast. “Who will come out on a night like this?” my husband muttered as he peered through the darkness looking for the church. “At least two people,” he concluded as the church suddenly loomed up on the left, two cars parked by the door. “Looks like this structure is brand-new—the sign out front is still being finished.”

As we stomped the snow from our shoes before entering we both wondered what kind of a congregation met in this brand-new church. Was it one divided in opinion about the architect’s design, or the color of the carpet? Were the members so tired from raising funds that few would remember it was prayer meeting night? We didn’t have to wonder for long.

“Mind the water!” a cheery voice boomed. We checked our steps before walking into a puddle. Whatever had happened? A smiling elder was busily wielding a wet-vac machine trying to stem the flood. “The builders said we needn’t insulate the water pipes—they’d never freeze in a Washington winter,” he explained good-naturedly. “And here we get the coldest spell in years! After we get this dried out, we’ll have the job of crawling up there and insulating those pipes after all.” He glanced helplessly at the ceiling to emphasize his feelings.

At this point the pastor arrived and after surveying the length of the aborted river showed us around the shining new sanctuary. It is going to be a little cold in here on a night like this, I thought to myself. But I need not have worried. “Come on around and see the youth room,” the pastor invited. We were hardly prepared for what met our eyes. An enormous log fire blazed in a massive stone fireplace. The flames seemed to dominate the whole room, brightening every corner. Instinctively, I felt drawn to this room, anticipating a warm blessing.

Above the fireplace was a stone mantel with two large orange candles that matched the muted shades of the stonework. Between the candles stood eighteen copies of the New International Version of the Bible. Immediately, I realized that these were the most valuable assets in the room. Teen-agers, embarrassed to carry their own Bibles to Sabbath school, could use ones from the shelf. It turned out however, that I was the only person at prayer meeting who needed to borrow one! Each of the thirty or so people present had remembered to bring his or her own.

The talk that evening was based in the Bible. Members took turns reading a text each as we worked through an overview of the book of Hebrews and searched to find the pattern of exposition and exhortation that characterizes the sermon. At times we paused to compare (Continued on page 27)

Prayers from the parsonage

Civil war rages in the northern part of an African country to which the media pays scant attention. If troops swoop south toward the capital, there may be a couple of minutes’ TV coverage or a paragraph in Time.

“And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass” (Matt. 24:6).

But I am troubled, Lord. My sister and her husband are missionaries in that underdeveloped land. Her letters have described growing unrest and recent conflicts. Though work at the project continues, there is talk of possible evacuation.

What will become of the agricultural station her husband helps direct? When the irrigation ditches were finished and water could be taken from a nearby river, the people dared hope for a better life. Tears ran down the weathered cheeks of the chief as he thanked Allah for this miracle in the arid bushland.

What of Lauri’s “front-door” clinic? To whom will the sick and injured go? What of the children who sat outdoors listening to Bible stories illustrated with bright felts?

Does my niece, Heather (not yet 3), wonder why her parents speak so seriously or why the packed suitcases have room for only one toy? Baby Chad may even sense the tension. How can they flee with little ones to look after?

I have no political power, no economic clout. But I ask You to thwart evil and to restore good. To You I commit the innocent—not just my family but each peaceable person in that place. May they not be afraid, for You are with them. Neither let them be dismayed, for You are their God. Strengthen them, O Lord. Help them. Uphold them.

Cherry B. Habenicht

For some in the church today, the idea of a divine examination of one’s life is negative, the antiquated legacy of an earlier age. In this view, judgment is nothing more than a welcome vindication of the saints.

Not so many years ago most people accepted what the mayor said or the explanations of their boss. They believed nearly everything they read in the newspaper, and they certainly didn’t question the positions put forth by their pastor.

Those days have vanished forever, along with Studebakers and the five-cent candy bar.

Conventional wisdom today expects little that is worthwhile from any human institution. Corporations are corrupt; politicians self-serving; the media biased. Even the church is suspect. And this cynicism is feeding (and, in turn, being fed by) a growing tide of individualism. One of modern society’s most hallowed axioms at present is the personal freedom of the individual. Its rallying cry: “No one, no matter who he is, has the right to impose his standards or life style on another.” Abortion? “Every woman should be able to do as she pleases with her own body!” Homosexuality? “Personal preferences are not immoral just because they are different.”

There’s no doubt about it—society today has little use for authority of almost any kind. We don’t want anyone telling us what to do or calling our lives into question.

Somebody ought to study what connection there might be between the prevailing attitudes of society at any particular time and the doctrinal, theological issues occupying the church’s attention. Without any research at all to support me, I’m willing to offer my opinion that such a relationship exists. A case in point: the judgment.

I don’t believe it is coincidental that we see a growing antipathy to the whole idea of judgment on the part of some within the church today. One symptom: we prefer the neutral term “pre-Advent judgment”; an “investigative” one sounds too much like divine scrutiny, and we don’t want anyone scrutinizing our lives. The attitudes of society being what they are, I suppose we could hardly expect anything else. A comment in a recent Sabbath school class caused me to begin thinking about this parallel between the world’s insistence that no one interfere with its freedom and the church’s uneasiness with the idea of judgment. But it was a panel discussion on the topic of the judgment in an area Seventh-day Adventist church that really began to solidify the concept in my mind. When the panel members completed their presentations and the floor was opened up for questions and discussion, I witnessed a continued attempt to eliminate the idea of judgment or at least to remove any negative connotations.

“God will never judge me,” insisted one. “I judge myself by my response to the gospel.”

“The people of God should welcome judgment,” another observed. “Judgment means vindication, not condemnation.”

“How can we fit the idea of a judgment prior to the second coming of Christ into the picture of salvation through faith in the atonement at the cross?”

With one exception (an argument on the basis of 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 that the wicked will be reincarnated into sinless worlds for a second chance at salvation), I had to admit that I could partially agree with the positions being stated. There is a sense in which God merely ratifies the judgment I pass upon myself. There is a sense in which salvation is not jeopardized by a later judgment. But the interesting thing to me was that no one on the floor seemed willing to recognize another side to the coin. There is a sense in which God definitely sits in judgment upon each individual’s life. There is an awful solemnity and searching of soul in fear and trembling connected with the judgment. There is a real possibility of salvation accepted becoming salvation neglected and rejected until the once-saved individual is condemned in the judgment. Although panel members kept bringing in this corrective from time to time, the audience wasn’t buying it. Judgment was either a joyful, welcome event or almost nonexistent.

Perhaps the attitude of judgment as only vindication is an overreaction to the idea of judgment as only condemnation. Perhaps denying that God is judge reflects a repudiation of too many years of seeing God as nothing but judge. Perhaps emphasizing a present, assured salvation is an attempt to correct a past emphasis on a salvation that was uncertain and future. That’s the way it is with us humans. We usually replace one extreme with another. And that’s why we need to stay close to Scripture. No matter what attitudes society is embracing; no matter what gyrations the doctrinal pendulum has traced within the church, the message of Scripture remains the same.
God who loves us too much to let us live as we please; who loves us too much not to discipline us for our sins and call us to account. The Bible presents a God who judges in love and mercy, whose purpose is ever to save rather than destroy, but who nonetheless judges accurately and with justice, and who will, with a breaking heart, condemn those who refuse to be drawn by His love and live in it. The apostle Peter puts it this way: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, . . . and spared not the old world, but saved Noah, . . . and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes . . . delivered just Lot, . . . the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Peter 2:4-9).

If we will listen to its message—all its message—Scripture, like a divine compass, will draw us back to the undeviating track of truth when we veer off in one direction or another. "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isa. 30:21).—B.R.H.

**Daniel and Revelation Committee: an interim report**

The Daniel and Revelation Committee, authorized by the General Conference in January, 1981, completed its fourth session in a three-and-a-half-day meeting in Washington, D.C., October 24-27, 1982. Personnel for the group is drawn from Andrews and Loma Linda universities, three North American colleges, the offices of the Adventist Review, the Biblical Research Institute, the E. G. White Estate, and General Conference administration, and includes one representative from outside North America.

At the initial meeting (May, 1981) approximately thirty topics on a variety of issues in the books of Daniel, Revelation, Leviticus, and Hebrews were selected for immediate study, and competent authors were assigned. Research continues on these issues, although preliminary drafts on nearly every subject have been presented to the committee at this time.

The second session of the committee (September 28 and 29, 1981) was given to a review of materials in these areas produced by Adventist research during the past twenty years. The committee wanted to determine whether adequate study had already been done on some matters. If so, it could more wisely use its time examining other pressing concerns.

A nine-member "Committee on Problems in the Book of Daniel" functioned for a few years in the 1960s and generated about fifty manuscripts. Because it rendered no report, mystery seems to surround the work of this earlier committee in the minds of some. Therefore, the present group has reviewed the most substantive of its papers. The committee appreciated these older papers for their historical significance, but were also impressed by the large amount of material that has been researched and published in the past decade through Andrews University Seminary Studies, Ministry, and the 750-page volume The Sanctuary and the Atonement, prepared by the Biblical Research Institute. These more recently published materials have gone beyond the range and scope of the earlier endeavor.

The third and fourth sessions (April 21-25 and October 24-27, 1982) involved the committee in the presentation and discussion of the assigned topics. At the conclusion of the fourth meeting in Washington, D.C., agreement was expressed by those present on the following points:

1. The year-day principle may be established through reasonable interpretations of the Scriptures.
2. The Biblical evidence rules out Antiochus IV as the fulfillment of the little horn of Daniel 8.
3. The Biblical evidence supports the view that the judgment/sanctuary scene in Daniel 7 and 8 involves (among other things) an examination of the professed people of God.
4. The Biblical evidence supports the view that the 2300 evenings-mornings represent 2300 symbolic days rather than 1150 literal days.

It was agreed to begin publishing on the above and other topics in a series of volumes for pastors and members. The volumes will appear under the general heading: Daniel and Revelation Committee Series. Volume 1, Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation, is expected to be available through Adventist Book Centers and the Biblical Research Institute in the early months of 1983.

Research continues on points pertaining to the book of Daniel, but the committee will turn more of its attention in its next sessions to issues relating to the books of Hebrews and Revelation.—Frank B. Holbrook, secretary, Daniel and Revelation Committee.

**Worship**

(From page 25)

versions in an effort to discover for ourselves what the apostle was trying to say. Excitement grew as we found Jesus was better than angels, better than Moses, a better sacrifice, a better high priest. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (chap. 2:3) we were reminded. One new Christian among us shared his conviction that the message—"To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (chap. 3:7, 8)—was especially for him. After a prayer season in small groups we were loath to leave. Eyes sparkled with the joy of opening the mind, and the certainty that the Word of God is understandable and meaningful today.

A good percentage of those present were young people; some were not Adventists; but all radiated vitality and warmth. What was it that made this group so refreshingly alive, so innocent of the popular doubts in the church? Could it be that the Bible is valued and cherished there? Or did the setting—the fire, the candles, the row of Bibles—promote an atmosphere that reminded us where our priorities should be? I left, pondering those questions, but one thing I knew for certain—worship that is centered around the reading of the Word leaves a warm feeling.
Biblical Archeology □ Larry G. Herr

What archeology can and cannot do

Archeology can never be a substitute for faith, nor can it "prove" the Bible to be true and trustworthy. It can, when correctly interpreted, illuminate the Scripture record and aid our understanding of it.

The term archeology has a romantic ring to it. Not only are we intrigued with the life and people of today in the exotic lands of the Bible, where shades of Lawrence of Arabia and flashing Bedouins on camels still color our thinking, but our imaginations are captured also by the possibility of exciting finds related to Biblical and other historical events.

Actually, very few archeological finds can be linked clearly and with certainty to events recorded in the Bible. Most often, no clear connection can be established between the archeological remains and Biblical passages, persons, or events. Only after long, painstaking study can tentative connections be made.

Archeology is a science that includes observation (the finding and recording process), description (the reporting process), and interpretation (attributing meaning or relationship to the find). Problems and mistakes can creep into the procedure on each of these three levels. The field worker may have simply observed his find wrongly, or he may have excavated it poorly. Perhaps he did not see it in the correct relationship with its archeological context, or he sloppily entered the data into his record book. The later description of the find may be incomplete or one-sided, leading in turn to a wrong interpretation, which could affect larger, more general conclusions.

Yet, in spite of the strong possibility for error in this archeological process, archeologists are able, in the end, to reach a consensus on a large amount of material primarily because of the exacting methods employed by most of those who are digging today. It is the end result of this long process—the interpretation of the archeological find—that finds its way into these pages of MINISTRY.

Obviously, with so much room for error, archeologists cannot answer with certainty every question put to them. Even when answers can be given, they must often be phrased with a shade of tentativeness, using such terms as possible, probable, apparent, and seems likely. In fact, very few questions asked of archeology can be answered with absolute certainty. This is one reason most Biblical archeologists would deny that archeology proves the Bible; rather, they would say that archeological finds can illuminate the Bible at times. For instance, to know that the city of Jericho was only about 100 meters (328 feet) long by about 50 meters (164 feet) wide solves the perplexing childhood problem of how the Israelites could have walked around the city seven times in one day. Ancient "cities" were much smaller than many villages today!

When we see the huge size of the stones that went into the construction of Herod's temple platform in Jerusalem during the time of Christ, which have been recently uncovered, we understand better the disciples' unwillingness to believe that even these stones were to be destroyed. If we were to excavate the mammoth fortifications used by the Canaanites before and during the Israelite conquest, we could very easily understand the fear of the Israelite spies. Indeed, as Greek legend puts it, only giants could have built fortifications using such stones.

But archeology also illuminates the Bible by giving us insights into the way Biblical people lived. Although only the foundations of houses are usually found, many indications remain of the people's wealth (or lack of it). We can excavate a typical street of Jeremiah's time and thus be able to understand the attention necessary to negotiate the street without spraining an ankle (many streets were very uneven). The remains of a garbage pile in the street just outside a door indicate that sanitation and the environment were not particular concerns of the people of his day. Countless insights and glimpses such as these into the unheralded aspects of life in Biblical times could be given.

Archeological finds give a certain dimension of reality and completeness to the Biblical stories. One's intuitive understanding of Biblical stories is enhanced as he feels a measured sense of identity with the people involved. Jeremiah becomes more than a powerful, weeping, angry prophet. He is put into a context the Bible never hints at because those aspects of life perhaps were too ordinary to be mentioned in Scripture. Yet understanding this context can, in turn, indirectly aid our understanding of the broader Biblical truths emanating from these stories.

Although this broader knowledge can be a confirming comfort to our faith, archeology can never be a substitute for faith or a proof of faith. Unfortunately, the Biblical passages that can be best illustrated and illuminated by archeology tend to be those that have little to do with great theological themes or doctrines. One such example is 1 Kings 9:15, which describes the building activities of Solomon (see MINISTRY, September, 1978, pp. 26, 27). The historicity of this text has been virtually proved, but it does nothing to aid the theological endeavor. Likewise, those texts that are significant theologically or upon which doctrines are based are almost always impossible to test archeologically.

Archeological confirmation of Biblical truths occurs indirectly when related passages are illuminated, on the principle that if part of the Bible is shown to be correct, the probability increases that other parts are correct as well. Such
reasoning can never be proved absolutely true, yet our intuition tells us it is true, and our faith is reconfirmed and comforted. Thus archeology can play a positive role in the pastoral concerns of the minister.

In the interpretive process archeologists often try to identify their finds with historical events recorded in literary sources, especially the Bible. Doing so provides a historical context and thus an added dimension to their find. Financial support for excavations is also much easier to secure if a connection with Biblical events can be shown.

However, this is one point where archeology is weakest. Archeology is object oriented. The archeologist cannot often tell us with certainty who was involved with the ancient objects discovered or with the events they imply. At the same time the Biblical record is highly personality-oriented and is not primarily concerned with objects. To connect a Biblical passage or event with archeological remains necessitates identifying the people involved with the objects they left behind. Without explicit written records, this is simply not possible to do with certainty.

For example, we may be correct in our observation that a massive destruction laid our site in ruins. We may also be correct in dating that destruction to the early fourteenth century B.C., the Biblical date of the conquest of Canaan. But we may not be correct in identifying the destroyer as the invading Israelites. There were simply too many other possible causes for that city's destruction, including other warring groups operating at that time, as well as various natural causes. What we do know is that a destruction occurred; other indications might suggest who the destroyers were, but these are seldom clear-cut.

Great care is thus needed in the interpretive process. When John Garstang excavated Jericho in the 1930s, he found the remains of a thick wall that appeared to have been violently destroyed. With little to go on beyond the fact of the destruction and the identification of the site with Jericho, he ascribed the wall to the Canaanite city destroyed by Joshua and the invading Israelites. Because everyone was anticipating the discovery of Joshua's wall, his interpretation was immediately accepted by many.

However, when Kathleen Kenyon began work at the site in the 1950s with greatly improved techniques for excavating and recording, the wall turned out to have been destroyed several hundred years before the time of Joshua and the Israelites. The old interpretation that was thought to support the Bible had to be discarded.

Moreover, the Biblical archeologist is not without problems even where archeologically testable passages are concerned. We are sometimes forced to suspend judgment on some interpretations of archeological remains because they seem to conflict with Biblical data. Some archeologists resort to textual, philological, or archeological gymnastics to fit the archeological evidence to the Biblical passage. Others simply say that not enough evidence is available and hold their conclusions in check. Not every problem can be easily solved.

For example, the Bible indicates that early man tended to live many times longer than man today. So far, the anthropological evidence on excavated skeletons from early periods does not confirm these old ages. In fact, the age at death as estimated by the anthropologists tends to be lower than today's average. We can explain these problematic findings in a number of ways: (1) People aged more slowly, and different processes are reflected in the skeletal remains. (2) Archeologists may be wrong in assigning early dates to these skeletons; they may not have been contemporaries with the long-lived men of Genesis. (3) Skeletons of adults who lived to a ripe old age may not yet have been found. (4) If an anthropologist found a skeleton of an individual who lived considerably longer than we do today, would he be able to recognize that fact, since his guide to estimating age is comparatively modern data?

Although the problem is not solved by these explanations, neither perhaps is it such a compelling problem as it seemed at first, even though some of the suggested explanations are a bit forced. Certainly our faith is not shattered, and we are able to realize that in the end everything will harmonize.

Archeological results often confirm cherished interpretations of Biblical texts. Sometimes, however, they do not, and we realize that our former ideas have been wrong. In such cases, it is not the Bible that is mistaken; the problem is with our faulty understanding. The archeological remains have given us new light, although we need to be extremely careful that our interpretation of the archeological remains and their relation to the Bible material is correct. If the weight of evidence shows that it is, then we can move forward in our convictions.

This process, however, is not completed in a moment. Much careful thought must be given to the data presented by the finds. Hypotheses must be tested and confirmed.

I cannot think of a single instance where archeological finds have leveled a broadside against any central Biblical truths as we interpret them. However, archeology has altered, or should alter, our understanding of numerous details, tangential to the central message of the Bible. Such details do not change our overall approach to faith, and we generally look upon these data as valuable insights. The small size of Jericho is one indisputable piece of evidence that has altered our understanding.

More important, however, is the gradual accumulation of hundreds of data points on a variety of subjects that, when considered together, encourage a different overall picture, or model, than the one we may have previously believed concerning a Biblical event or topic. Anyone who has studied medieval art knows how differently those people perceived Biblical phenomena than we do today.

Most paintings of the Tower of Babel today are patterned after a medieval minaret in the town of Samarra in Iraq. We really do not know what the Tower of Babel looked like, although it may have had the appearance of a ziggurat (a stepped temple tower in ancient Mesopotamia). If archeology should ever indicate to us what the Tower of Babel looked like, we might have to change both these ideas.

To alter our previous interpretations of Biblical ideas does not mean that the Bible was wrong. It means that with humility we are simply confirming that our previous understanding was imperfect. There is no problem with the Bible, only with us. But when we consider the data with diligent questioning and draw certain conclusions, archeology has provided added insight to God's Word. It not only illuminates what we already know, but gives us access to new information as well.
New member studies
Pacific Press has developed an excellent four-part series of study manuals authored by Daniel E. Caslow and designed to help integrate newly baptized individuals into the fellowship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Called the Profile Nurture Series, the materials provide one year of Bible guidelines to aid the spiritual development of new members. The four manuals are: Profiles of New Life (how to study the Bible to meet personal needs), Profiles of Christian Discipleship (how to live a life that glorifies God), Profiles of Personal Ministry (spiritual gifts and how to become involved in reaching out to others), and Profiles of Church Fellowship (the heritage of the church and how it functions). A leadership manual is also available, giving information about how to use this material in the most effective way. Order through your local Adventist Book Center.

Satellites and Blue Jeans
When their sailboat, Blue Jeans, ran aground on a shoal one hundred miles north of the Dominican Republic, the five occupants took to their dinghy, hoping for rescue by a barely discernible ship nearby. It turned out to be the abandoned hulk of a ship that had grounded nine months earlier! Disappointed, they despaired of help.

When they had abandoned Blue Jeans, they had taken with them their emergency radio beacon. Actually, they had little confidence in it. Its signal strength was weak. They surveyed their circumstances and realized their chances of rescue were slim. The Coast Guard would no doubt have agreed with them. But they didn’t know that help was coming—from above!

Their emergency signal was being picked up—by a Soviet satellite launched in June, 1982. Called Cospas, it is part of a four-nation (Canada, U.S.S.R., France, and U.S.A.) experiment to search out planes and ships in distress and to aid in rescue operations. Cospas faithfully relayed Blue Jeans’ distress signals to Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, which in turn contacted the U.S. Coast Guard in the Bahamas, giving location coordinates. A helicopter crew found the five stranded sailors within hours, less than twenty miles from the calculated position!

During two months the satellite system has located five accident sites and aided in the rescue of dozens of
persons. This search-and-rescue plan, utilizing satellites, was conceived to meet an urgent, worldwide need. Its successful track record in locating and assisting those in trouble is reassuring.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has another search-and-rescue system that also utilizes scientific technology and that is also proving successful. It is called Adventist World Radio. Its purpose? To provide help "from the air and outer space" to persons in spiritual distress located all over the earth, large numbers of them in areas difficult or impossible to reach otherwise. There are places Adventists and other Christians cannot go with personal outreach ministries or even with media programs or publications. But the church can go to these places by shortwave radio. This it does, always making sure program content is nonpolitical, always seeking for those in distress, ever bringing them heaven's life-saving instructions and encouraging them to have faith in man's great Rescuer, Jesus Christ.

AWR programs, prepared in thirty languages, are broadcast into special target areas of Planet Earth. The church's master plan includes the construction and operation of powerful SDA stations in the Far East and Europe and perhaps Africa. These stations would enable a greater and more regular flow of spiritual help, and at a lesser cost per hour than on leased time. Beginning early this year, AWR will release a new daily one-hour French program from the 250-kilowatt shortwave station in Gabon, West Africa.

The need for solid, regular support for AWR prompted an Annual Council change in the yearly schedule of General Conference offerings, replacing the Spring Mission Offering with an annual Adventist World Radio Offering. The offering this year will be received on March 26. The 1982 Annual Council also voted $300,000 for AWR, to assist its continuing and expanding ministry.

We ask our pastors and all church leaders to pray earnestly for an unusually strong vote of confidence by our people in the ministry of AWR. We know its work. We know its effectiveness. And we know there are multiplied millions of people yet in the darkness, cast-aways without hope—except from above.—James E. Chase, director, General Conference Communication Department.

Is the year-day principle really valid?

This basic interpretive rule for an Adventist understanding of Biblical time prophecies has come under some criticism in recent years. Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation, by William H. Shea, can help you form your own conclusions on this matter, as well as on such questions as: Is Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) the antichrist power of Daniel 8? Are the professed people of God subject to a pre-Advent investigative judgment? These important subjects, along with others, are treated in depth by Shea, a well-known Old Testament scholar in this just-released volume.

After you've read this initial work, you'll want to watch for others in the series—studies on Leviticus, Daniel, Hebrews, Revelation, and the pioneers' understanding of the sanctuary, judgment, and atonement. These are all projected subjects in a multivolume series to be edited and published by the Biblical Research Institute as part of the continuing work of the Daniel and Revelation Committee.

Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation is only US$3.95 per copy. Purchase from your Adventist Book Center. Where not available, order postpaid from Biblical Research Institute, 6840 Eastern Ave., NW., Washington, D.C. 20012. Payment must accompany order.
Recommended reading

**The Kingdoms of the Lord**

The Kingdoms of the Lord surveys Biblical history from the rise of the monarchy in the time of Samuel to its demise at the destruction of Jerusalem. Its twenty-seven chapters are divided into four main parts: Part I recounts the political history of that period; Part II takes a more detailed look at the environment in terms of Israel's enemies—both external and internal; Part III emphasizes by century the contribution of the prophets to Israel's history; and Part IV surveys Israel's faith as it developed during this important period. Because of this fourfold approach to the story of Israel, some repetition is inevitable; yet the book is a well-written, well-informed, and up-to-date survey that will be appreciated by the readers of this periodical. The history is based largely on the Biblical text, though relevant information from archeology and ancient Near Eastern documents is also often used to good advantage.

**Marital Counseling: A Biblical Behavioral Cognitive Approach**

Don't put this book on your library shelf! Buy it and put it on your desk. Then read it once without stopping or marking. Read it the second time in short bites—marking, analyzing, and adapting the ideas. Then read it a third time a few months later to nail down the ideas.

Norm Wright knows, understands, and is a friend of Adventists. He has met with groups of Seventh-day Adventist ministers across North America and is a popular guest at the Andrews University Family Life Workshops. There is a reason for his warm acceptance among Adventists. He is thoroughly and soundly Biblical. He rigorously avoids the mushy humanism so prevalent in family life literature and spells out his thinking in crisp, clear English.

Unlike many writers on marriage and family life themes, the author does not wander about in lengthy descriptions, but gets down to basic how-to-handle suggestions that make this volume one of the most practical books on counseling this reviewer has seen in years. Wright's discussion of tests and inventories for use by counselors is well worth the price of the book. The chapter on pitfalls in counseling is adequate, but most readers will probably wish he had been more specific with more actual cases to illustrate his points.

Probably the most attractive aspect of Norm Wright's work is the realistic approach he uses. He does not let any commitment to some school of thought in counseling get in his way and he recognizes that a short-term, structured approach to counseling is the wisest way for the busy pastor. Home and Family Service of the General Conference lauds and recommends this dependable and probably classic text for Bible-based counseling.

**Archaeology, the Rabbis, and Early Christianity**

The authors bring together the findings of archeology and historical literature and set forth their implications for an understanding of the development of early Christianity and Judaism in Palestine. Their studies show that there was diversity in both of these related religions, greater contacts between them, and a similar attachment to the land of Palestine. This is done by treating a variety of topics such as geography, languages, burial practices, early Christian churches, synagogues and their art, and attachment to the land. Perhaps greater clarity, coherence, and integration would have been achieved if they had correlated their materials along the lines of their theses.

**Church Advertising**
Steve Dunkin, Abingdon, 1982, 126 pages, $4.95, paper. Reviewed by Owen Troy, communication director, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

According to Dunkin, advertising can: (1) stimulate impulses that are either dormant or repressed; (2) rechannel, redirect, and modify existing attitudes toward a product or service; (3) persuade a person to try or sample a product or service for the first time. He agrees with Robert Schuller, who recommends that 5 percent of the church budget should be used for advertising. But he makes it clear that it takes more than just spending money to do the job. The author suggests a strategy that can be used by nearly every pastor. It is concerned mainly with the use of broadcasting, newspaper ads, and direct mail, but gives additional suggestions on ways to use other media.