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Pastor's pay parity

Your very fine editorial “Pastors, Parity, and $500,000 Salaries” (April 1986) addressed the subtle depreciation of Adventist Church pastors as expressed in our denominational wage scale. This is all too evident, but perhaps the loudest message of all to our ministers with regard to our possible lack of esteem for them is the inequity found in the wage scale of our health-care institutions.

It did seem a bit ironic that your editorial was preceded by three rather defensive-sounding letters from officers of the Adventist Health System, in response to the October 1985 editorial titled “Is Our Church Putting First Things First?”

Is it coincidental that one of the letters to the editor was received from the author of a recent and timely article, “Ministerial Burnout”? I think there is no condition so disconcerting to our church employees in other lines of endeavor as the absence of parity with this “right arm of the message.”

The author of “Ministerial Burnout” commented upon the irrelevance of the salary differential of $5,000 to $10,000 a year (in most cases considerably underexaggerated, of course), which, by his own admission was 20 to 25 percent more than the ministers. Another writer tried to justify the higher wages being paid to those in AHS programs by using the old excuse that these salaries are not coming “from church dollars” and that these higher salaries would bring more tithe into the church coffers. Most church employees would be pleased to pay a higher tithe as the result of higher wages.

With the steady transfer of church-employee professionals into the health-care program it is only a matter of time until serious deteriorations will be suffered in many areas of the church’s operations. At a time when our institutions of higher education are reaching a crisis for the want of competent leadership and floundering on the shoals of economic uncertainty, we are sending a signal that the health ministry is worth considerably more to us.

We cannot justify paying anyone higher wages and benefits for working for one area of the church instead of another. It will be impossible for the auditing service of the church to continue providing a professional program when staff members with training and experience are enticed into the more lucrative health system with the bonus of reduced travel requirements.

- Time is running out. Positive action is required—and soon! Our options are few. Either we discontinue our hospital program as an integral part of the church operations, or we urge them to abide by denominational policies. For a good many years, as church auditors, we have not been welcome to review the operations of our hospitals, primarily because they do not work within the same policy framework as the rest of the church.

- The only other alternative, of course, if we are to save the other professions of the church, is to grant competitive remuneration to church employees who have Ph.D.s, C.P.A.s, or J.D.s. This, then, brings us back to the message to our ministers that they are the least appreciated of all. What will this tell the youth of the church who aspire to be ministers?—David D. Dennis, Director, General Conference Auditing Service, Washington, D.C.

I thoroughly enjoyed your article on the equality of ministerial pay. I would certainly be agreeable to a study that would bring more parity into our salary scale, including the retirement plan. I have been in favor of this for many years. I served on a committee at the General Conference about seven years ago, and some of us had hoped to have the retirement benefits just about the same, but unfortunately we were defeated at that time.

This is a difficult issue to solve. We have to take into consideration educational expenses and areas of responsibility. I have just about equally divided my time in the ministry between pastoral evangelism and administration. The day-by-day program of the pastor is heavier, but the responsibility for the lives of workers and the direction of programs makes the administrator’s life heavy too.

Perhaps it all balances out, and whatever differences we have in salary scale should be greatly diminished from those that we have at this time. At least I am certainly willing to have it be given a more thorough study than it has been given at any time in the past.—Richard D. Fearing, President, North Pacific Union, Portland, Oregon.

Ellen G. White and pork

I found the article by Roger W. Coon, “Ellen G. White and Vegetarianism” (April, 1986) enlightening and well-balanced for the most part, but I have one question. He states, “Ellen White stated emphatically that even the eating of pork 'is not a test question.'” Footnote 46, which is given for the source, lists Ellen G. White manuscript 15, 1889, which most of us do not have access to. It also states, “For a further declaration against making either the raising of swine or the eating of pork ‘in any sense a test of Christian fellowship.’” cf. Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, book 2, p. 338.”

This is not a “further declaration” about the eating of pork, as the page says nothing at all about eating it, only raising swine. This must be an error in the footnote.

I would therefore like to see the context of the manuscript statement, as nothing else is given to prove this point, which seems rather surprising considering the teachings of the church through the years.

Thank you for a clarification.—Mrs. Sylvia M. Ellis, Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin.

Eds. You are correct. The footnote should not have included the phrase “the eating of pork.” As far as the other quotation in manuscript 15, 1889, we have asked the White Estate to release it so you can judge the context for yourself. We will let you know the decision of the board of trustees.

Roger Coon was honest and straightforward. He did not attempt to gloss over the personal struggles of a normal Christian woman. Dr. Coon has answered many charges and questions.

For author Coon to say that vegetarianism is not a principle (which would (Continued on page 24)
This column usually reviews pertinent articles in the magazine. This month I want to draw your attention to our letters. These let us know if we are on target. They help us keep in touch with our readers. Occasionally we receive anonymous letters. These go in the trash can, as there is no way we can respond. If a person does not want his or her name printed, we are happy to oblige. Anonymous writers usually say more about their own problem than what they are complaining about.

This month we have letters commenting on the wage scale, Ellen White and vegetarianism, and other topics. They deal with a similar theme: How do we extract principles from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy? How do we distinguish between these principles and their application? Some were delighted that Roger Coon did not make vegetarianism a principle but showed that it is the application of the principle that we must eat the most healthful foods available. In a concentration camp you have little choice if the food has been cooked in lard. In the Arctic the staples are seal and whale meat.

One writer commenting on the denominational wage scale describes the difficulties our church faces when different parts of the church have different wage scales. The Adventist Review (Apr. 10, 1986, p. 9) reported that physicians in South America are still on the same wage scale as other church employees. However, non-Adventist physicians employed in our hospitals receive higher salaries; and as a result, tensions are increasing. Will South America go the way of North America, becoming pragmatists rather than idealists?

Perhaps they and we need to be reminded of this statement from Ellen White: ‘The Lord will have faithful men who love and fear Him connected with every school, every printing office, health institution, and publishing house. Their wages should not be fashioned after the worldling’s standard. There should be, as far as possible, excellent judgment exercised to keep up, not an aristocracy, but an equality, which is the law of heaven. ‘All ye are brethren.’ A few should not demand large wages, and such wages should not be presented as an inducement to secure ability and talents. This is placing things on a worldly principle” (manuscript 25a, 1891).

It might be well for every policy in the church to have a preamble stating clearly and succinctly the principles upon which that policy (which is really an application) is based. Of all people, Seventh-day Adventists need to be known as ones who place principle above pragmatism.

David Newman
**How to write a Bible**

George E. Rice

Why did Matthew, Mark, and Luke present the beginning of Jesus’ Galilean ministry in different ways? Do variations in their accounts of Jesus’ life provide grounds for doubting their inspiration?

In the previous article, we saw that the Bible presents at least two models of inspiration—the Lucan model and the prophetic model. Luke 1:1-4 provides the basis for understanding the Lucan model as a research model. The Bible writer who composed his book under this model worked as an author, arranging and altering what he was presenting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Now we shall look at some examples of how the authors of the Synoptic Gospels functioned under this model of inspiration, concentrating upon the way the Synoptic writers introduce Jesus’ Galilean ministry.

Each of the three Synoptic Gospels contains a short introductory statement to that segment of Jesus’ work that we call the Galilean ministry. Of these, Matthew’s is the longest. He says: (1) at the time of John’s imprisonment Jesus moved His ministry to Galilee; (2) having visited Nazareth, He settled down at Capernaum, which, being in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, thus fulfilled the Old Testament prediction of Isaiah that this area would see a great light; (3) Jesus proclaimed: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand [eggiken]” (Matt. 4:12-17).

Mark reports that (1) Jesus moved His ministry to Galilee at the time of John’s arrest and (2) He proclaimed: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand [eggiken]” (Mark 1:14, 15).

Upon comparing the introductory statements found in Matthew and Mark, we find they have two things in common. They both note that Jesus entered Galilee at the time of John’s arrest, and both record that He declared that the kingdom of heaven/God was eggiken (present). However, we also see that each writer has added something the other does not record. Matthew includes a statement, with its supporting Old Testament quotation, about the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali. And Mark has added that Jesus also preached that “the time is fulfilled.”

These additions reflect the personal interests of each writer and show them working as individual authors. Matthew, on the one hand, delights in demonstrating to his Jewish readers how Jesus has fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. And Mark’s addition accomplishes for his Gospel what Matthew established in his birth narrative—that the time for the arrival of the Messiah had finally come. Mark achieves the same results by simply adding Jesus’ statement on time to his introduction to the Galilean ministry—thereby saving time and space.

We must spend a moment with the Greek word eggiken, for this word makes a striking difference between Matthew’s and Mark’s introductions, on the one hand, and Luke’s on the other.

Eggiken is the intensive perfect form of the Greek verb eggidzo (to draw near). The perfect tense indicates that something happened in the past and that the results of this event still exist at the time of speaking or writing. The intensive perfect shows even more forcefully than does the present tense that something exists.

As I have suggested, Matthew and Mark support this proclamation in their own unique ways: Matthew by recording...
the events surrounding the birth of Jesus and Mark by adding the statement “The time is fulfilled.”

But how different is Luke’s introduction to the Galilean ministry. Notice what he includes: (1) Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, (2) His reputation spread throughout the surrounding country, and (3) He taught in their synagogues and was glorified by all (Luke 4:14, 15).

Matthew and Mark, while differing, resemble each other. But Luke has virtually nothing in common with the other two Synoptic Gospels. And of particular interest for our study, Luke says nothing about the kingdom and, more specifically, nothing about it being present.

If we believed that the Synoptic writers were working under the prophetic model (God giving information by dreams and visions), we would have to ask some serious questions. One of these would be Why did God not share with Luke what He showed Matthew and Mark—that Jesus entered Galilee proclaiming the arrival of the kingdom? Another would be Did or did not Jesus, as He entered Galilee, preach that the kingdom was present? If we believed that these Gospels originated under the prophetic model, the absence of this part of Jesus’ message would be a serious omission. After all, the arrival of the Messiah and His kingdom is an event that rivals in importance the Exodus from Egypt.

But Luke is silent. His introduction to the Galilean ministry has none of the electricity of Messianic excitement that can be found in the other two Synoptic Gospels. Why is this? Luke intends eventually to assure Theophilus that the kingdom is present (Luke 10:9; 11:20). But first, however, he must lay a foundation that will help Theophilus understand the nature of the kingdom.

Consistently differing accounts

Not only do the Gospel writers differ as to how they introduce Jesus’ Galilean ministry, each records different events as marking its beginning. Matthew includes the call of the disciples, a summary statement about Jesus’ ministry, and the Sermon on the Mount. Mark reports the call and the healing of the demoniac at Capernaum. And Luke says nothing about the disciples, highlighting instead Jesus’ visit to Nazareth and His reading of the Isaiah scroll in the synagogue.

Each writer, by arranging his material in this way, is saying something unique about Jesus. Here is an illustration of E. G. White’s statement “He [the Lord] gave it [His Word] through different writers, each having his own individuality, though going over the same history. Their testimonies are brought together in one Book, and are like the testimonies in a social meeting. They do not represent things in just the same style. Each has an experience of his own, and this diversity broadens and deepens the knowledge that is brought out to meet the necessities of varied minds.”

Now as authors and, I might add, as theologians, what were these men saying about Jesus?

Matthew, by reporting that Jesus entered Galilee proclaiming that the kingdom had already arrived, was both reaffirming what he had labored to establish up to that point and providing a transition to the Sermon on the Mount.

The first seven chapters of Matthew’s Gospel develop the motifs of Jesus’ Messiahship and the presence of the kingdom in the following ways: 1. The birth narrative (Matt. 1; 2) establishes the fact that the Messiah has arrived. 2. John the Baptist proclaims: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:2). Only Matthew, who was interested in Jesus’ kingship, records these words as a part of John’s message. 3. Matthew also arranges the order of Jesus’ temptations in the wilderness so they climax with the question Who will rule the nations? With his portrayal of Jesus’ victory over Satan, Matthew establishes that the question has been settled forever. Jesus has defeated His greatest rival. He will rule. 4. With Jesus’ proclamation that the kingdom is present, Matthew effects a transition to the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon is laden with kingdom language. In it Jesus explains the nature of His kingdom, His own role as its king, and the ethics of the citizens who will inhabit this kingdom. Ellen G. White says: “In the Sermon on the Mount He sought to undo the work that had been wrought by false education, and to give His hearers a right conception of His kingdom and of His own character.”

As an author Matthew follows this design: he establishes the fact that the Messiah is here and that Jesus is this Messiah, he establishes the presence of the kingdom, and he then explains its nature. We will see shortly that Luke reverses the design: he first explains the nature of the kingdom and then states that the kingdom is present (ägiken).

Mark also records the fact that as Jesus entered Galilee He announced the presence of the kingdom. But whereas Matthew supports Jesus’ proclamation with the details in the birth narrative, the preaching of John, and the order of the temptations in the wilderness, Mark has the crisp, short statement noted previously, “The time is fulfilled” (Mark 1:15).

After the call of the disciples (verses 16-20) Mark takes us to Capernaum, where we see Jesus teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath (verses 21-28). When a screaming demoniac interrupted the service, Jesus freed him. What is Mark communicating by placing this miracle in this position?

For years the rabbis had taught that when the kingdom of God arrived, Satan and his demons would lose their power. Now the people assembled in the synagogue were witnessing a supernatural confrontation before their very eyes. With amazement they asked, “What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him” (verse 27).

What was the new teaching that these people recognized in this exorcism?
We are not to surmise that because Luke moves the call to discipleship into a different chronological position than where it is found in Matthew and Mark, he is therefore declaring this event to be nonhistorical.

Simply this: The kingdom of God was present because the kingdom of Satan was being vanquished. This exorcism substantiates the proclamation of Jesus. So both Matthew and Mark make a statement about the kingdom by the pericopes used at the start of the Galilean ministry—Matthew with the Sermon on the Mount and Mark with the healing of the demoniac.

Luke chose to begin his account of the Galilean ministry with Jesus’ first visit to Nazareth. Although he says nothing in his introduction to the Galilean ministry about Jesus’ proclamation on the presence of the kingdom, he does address the topic of the kingdom. Notice how he does it. Luke says that when Jesus received the scroll from the synagogue attendant, He found Isaiah 61:1, 2; 58:6 and read the Messianic passage “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of the sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and the acceptable year of the Lord (the year of jubilee, a time of release). In the pericopes that follow, Luke’s purpose is to show how Jesus fulfilled this prophecy and brought release. In doing this Luke was showing the nature of God’s kingdom.

It is generally understood that when Jesus read from the Isaiah scroll, He was making a programmatic statement about His ministry.8 What immediately follows in Luke’s Gospel must be understood within the context of this Old Testament passage. Therefore, although Mark’s Gospel and Luke’s Gospel run parallel to each other in content (except for Luke’s relocation of the call to discipleship), they cannot be understood as presenting the same message. For in Luke’s Gospel the prophecy from Isaiah sets the context—release. In Mark’s Gospel the context is set by Jesus’ proclamation as He entered Galilee, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand (ēggkenen).”

As Luke shows how Jesus fulfilled the Isaiahian prophecy, he is also showing the nature of the kingdom, i.e., God’s kingdom brings freedom. He develops the following themes dealing with the nature of the kingdom: release from the power of Satan (Luke 4:31-44), release from the power of sin (Luke 5:31, 32), and release from cultic traditions (Luke 5:33-6:11).

Upon comparing the pericopes contained in these passages with their parallels in Matthew and Mark, one can see how Luke uses them for his theological purposes. Words or phrases are added or omitted to make these pericopes deal more directly with the theme he is developing.7 He moves the story of the call to discipleship and retells it in order to introduce the sin motif.8 Clearly, Luke is at work (with material he had collected) as an author and theologian.

We can see similar phenomena in Matthew. He gathers together a series of pericopes that are scattered hither and yon in Mark and Luke, grouping them after his account of the Sermon on the Mount. What is Matthew saying about Jesus as he gives these miracles a new context in his Gospel? Jesus’ ability to perform miracles by His spoken word provides the common element in these pericopes. Matthew’s Jewish readers saw God’s word as dynamic, creative energy. For example, God created and sustains the heavens and the earth by His word (Ps. 33:6, 9). God’s word goes forth in the earth to accomplish His will, and it does not return to Him void (Isa. 55:11).

Matthew develops Jesus’ Messiahship and the presence of the kingdom throughout the first seven chapters of his Gospel. At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount we find a point of transition: “And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes” (Matt. 7:28, 29). Mark uses this statement about the authority of Jesus’ word in a different context and for a different purpose (Mark 1:21, 22).

With the statement on the authority of Jesus’ word, Matthew moves from Jesus’ kingship to His divinity. The miracles that Matthew collected together and placed after the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 8:1-9:8) demonstrate that Jesus’ spoken word is sheer, dynamic, creative energy. Thus He is God.

Do varying accounts belie inspiration?

Some fear that we are destroying Scripture’s authority and historicity by presenting the Gospel writers as authors and theologians. In the first article, we have shown that Ellen G. White looked upon these men as authors. We are not to surmise that because Luke moves the call to discipleship into a different chronological position than where it is found in Matthew and Mark, he is therefore declaring this event to be nonhistorical. We cannot conclude that because he relates this account in an entirely different way than Matthew and Mark, he created it from his imagination. He is simply working, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as an author, sharing his own testimony as though in a “social meeting.”

As Grant R. Osborne prepares his readers to face the differences that
appear in the Resurrection accounts within the four Gospels, he closes the first part of his book The Resurrection Narratives: A Redactional Study with two observations that can be applied to any observations that can be applied to any portions of the Gospel narratives, including our present investigation. We close our study with his words:

"In fact, the evangelists imposed on themselves two internal controls in using the traditions:

"1. Their interpretation of events had to be based on the original deeds and words of Jesus. John 14:26 says 'all that Jesus said' was brought to the evangelists' remembrance, and 2 Peter 1:16 says the early church had absolute assurance that the kerygma did not include 'cleverly devised myths.'

"2. The early church did not create the stories and logia Jesus ('the sayings of Jesus') recorded in the Gospels but instead faithfully remained true to the traditions. Any so-called 'coloring' of narratives was actually the highlighting of nuances present in the original events rather than re-creation of an existing story. Luke's prologue (Luke 1:1-5) [sic] stressing the historical accuracy of his presentation reminds us that he 'followed all things' accurately. John also stresses that his 'witness' and 'testimony' are 'true.' Both statements affirm the historical truth as well as accuracy of the Gospel accounts of the resurrection."


6 For a development of this subject, see George E. Rice, Luke, a Plagiarist? (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1983), pp. 43-59, 71-82, for examples of these changes.


Basically, what we face is the need for specialization. But specialization has not yet come to Adventist Christian education.

responded positively to what they had attempted to do, and they felt alone.

Most pastors are not involved with the Sabbath school to the same extent that they are with the worship hour. Yet in the Adventist system Sabbath school and the worship hour can no more be separated than the muscle can be taken from the bone and still leave a well-functioning body.

At one point in our history, Sabbath school was the most significant program in the local church. Today that is not necessarily so. From my observations, whether it be on the East Coast or the West, in large city churches or small country congregations, the message is the same: Sabbath school is hurting. Frequently, fewer attend Sabbath school than the worship service. It is hard to find qualified leaders. People do not study the lessons. And I have been told by the adult and children's division leaders in every church I have pastored that the materials prepared for their divisions are not particularly helpful and so are not used. Teachers discard the lesson helps and quarterlies for their own programs, or, unfortunately, for no program at all.

We in the religious professions respond by wringing our hands and lamenting the lack of dedicated people who will work our plan. Or worse, we deny that the problem even exists. After all, don't we have the finest materials available? That may be, but people vote with their feet—and in the churches I am familiar with, Sabbath school attendance has dropped, and the local church has suffered.

But take heart. We can initiate positive change. We do not have to be satisfied with mediocrity, nor need we accept failure as a fact of life. The Sabbath school program can be made excellent, and excellence attracts people. The only seriously limiting factor may be we professional religious leaders. We too often feel threatened by the prospect of changes that will affect our programs.

Sabbath schools must change

Yet, change will come. The question is Will it come by plan or by default? I propose that we plan the changes the Sabbath school needs. In fact, I suggest that we incorporate a provision for change into the program so that new concepts and ideas are continually introduced into the Sabbath school. As religious leaders, we must acknowledge that tradition is not in itself sacred. What attracted our parents and even what we find meaningful may not necessarily answer our children's needs.

Not only do needs change with the times but what is adequate for one congregation may not be adequate for another. After working with many church groups, I have concluded that churches vary as much as do people, and that each group has special needs that can best be met by a customized program.

Personnel and procedures already exist to develop customized programs for each congregation and for each subgroup within that congregation. It would certainly be appropriate to have a common theme around which each congregation could build its program, thus providing unity. But within that theme, churches should be free to develop individual programs.

Some might object: If the church were to allow such congregational individuality, what would become of world unity? What would happen to our oneness?

It comes down to the question of purpose. Do we intend to have a grand design, even if a significant number of the very ones for whom we have created the grand design ignore our effort? Or is it our purpose to attract as many people as possible to the study of God's Word, to make the Christian faith as appealing and practical as we can to the greatest number of people? If these last be our goals, then methodology as standardized programming should not be held sacred; and we ought to find the best program for an individual church and work it. This raises the next question: Who is going to be the finder, and who is going to work it? Basically, what we face is the need for specialization. But specialization has not yet come to Adventist Christian education.

For many of us Christian education still means parochial school. We are not familiar with the world of Christian education and the Christian education learning centers, which offer a viable way to bring new life to Sabbath school.

When a local conference begins looking for a Sabbath school director, it is important that consideration is given to one who is a Christian education specialist. Such a person is familiar with available materials and programs and is trained to develop programs suited to congregational needs. An individual who is skilled in developing innovative curricula for adults and children and is able to provide hands-on guidance to local church leaders is worth a king's ransom. Remember, good programming attracts people. That is a law. And there is another like unto it: Poor programming repulses people.

A church with more than 400 members might well consider adding a Christian education director to its staff. Take a day and talk to the men and women who pastor the most active and growing congregations in your community. I predict that each of them has a Christian education director.

To assume that adding an additional staff person will suddenly solve the problems is simplistic. And a poor situation cannot be improved with program changes alone. However, it is unrealistic to believe that sincerity can substitute adequately for quality and that good intentions will satisfy human need. Sabbath school leaders must accept the challenge of presenting quality programs, of meeting human needs. And the Sabbath school does offer exciting possibilities.

Innovative, up-to-date Sabbath schools

Today we are witnessing a revolution in how people develop relationships. Establishing specialized groups has become big business—people are lonely and find help in sharing with others. In even the smallest city you can find small groups for divorced people, single parents, SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome) parents, gays/lesbians—the list is endless. Each group is made up of people who share a similar interest, experience, or viewpoint. The Sabbath school is a natural for establishing special interest groups who meet together to study the Sabbath school lesson. I believe it would be helpful if one or two people in a
congregation became specialists in establishing such groups.

The communication revolution is another area that has potential for invigorating the Sabbath school. Videos are part of that revolution, but the church has done almost nothing to use this technology. It is now possible for a local church to produce video programs for its own use or to be exchanged regularly with other churches. Present technology would allow hookups between churches across the nation or around the world.

Missions have long been part of the Adventist Church, yet statistical evidence suggests that we in North America have lost our interest in missions. It is time to initiate new methods for attracting people's attention. We are not unwilling to give. The astounding response to the Mexican earthquake and to Ethiopian famine relief is evidence.

If there is one thing we might learn from the emergency giving associated with these disasters, it is that people will give when they see the need vividly, know where their money will go, and know what it will do. Our mission stories only partially satisfy that need. Mission Spotlight does better, but other options are available.

We might, for instance, try associating a congregation with a specific project. This approach poses problems, but it offers benefits, too. We would have to establish an accountability among churches that do not now exist. Probably such a program should be limited to special projects and to serving as a supplement to the present mission offerings.

How about international sister churches?

Another successful idea Sabbath schools might adapt is the Sister City concept. If a Sister Church program was established, we could reasonably expect that each congregation would benefit. For example, we who live in cities populated by Asians would be interested to learn how a congregation in an Asian country presents Christ to those who come from non-Christian backgrounds. As part of the Sister Church program, congregations would exchange information and pictures, share common concerns, and even initiate member-to-member visits. Congregations might even share specialized ministry personnel. The possibilities are limited only by our imagination.

Think what effect it would have on a congregation if the Sabbath school regularly presented reports of progress made possible by that church's support. Pictures, videotapes, recordings, letters, and phone hookups can bring the far corners of the world to any congregation.

I do not believe we Adventists have lost our vision or our purpose. Instead, we have directed our vision to areas other than the church. We who are the professional leaders in the church can help our people refocus their vision within the church context, or we can continue standing on the sidelines as they direct their vision elsewhere.

Of all the church's activities, the Sabbath school affords the greatest potential for congregational involvement. When programs are well prepared and well presented, when people are invited to participate in situations that provide real opportunity for decision-making and responsible stewardship, when people's needs are being met, attendance will increase and the spiritual life in a congregation will grow stronger. Such potential calls for sacrifice. Traditions, policies, approaches, mind-sets, and comfortable ways of doing things will be threatened. That is the price we will pay. Quality always costs. But I believe the returns will offset the expense.

Information and materials are available to teach people how to implement these types of programs. People are available who can train others to better reach the goals of the Sabbath school. We can benefit from the revolution that is passing us by. To use a sports metaphor, it is time to get off the bench and start playing the game.

Before you dismiss these ideas as unrealistic or impractical, reflect for a moment on the Sabbath school program in your own church or your own conference. What is exciting about the Sabbath schools you know? How many people are involved? How many really enjoy what they are doing in Sabbath school? And think for a moment of your own attitude. What do you really think about Sabbath school? Would you want to attend if it were not expected of you? Do you arrange things so you are otherwise occupied at Sabbath school time?

If the answers to these questions are less positive than you would like, and if you think your church or conference is the only one where things are not working well, think again. You are not alone. It is time we acknowledge that a problem exists. That is the first step. The next is to seek viable methods to restore Spirit-filled, enjoyable, productive Sabbath schools and to develop the potential that awaits our creative efforts.
Why Adventist youth do(n't) use drugs

How many Seventh-day Adventist youth are using drugs? What drugs are they using? And what influences have been most effective in encouraging them either to use or to abstain from drugs? Believing that the answers to these questions are important to the future of the church, in 1985 Andrews University's Institute of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency collaborated on a major research project with the Institute of Church Ministry located on the same campus.

Among our findings: Few Adventist youth currently use narcotics or street drugs, but 8 percent admit they are using tobacco; 12 percent, alcohol (17 percent of college-age Adventist youth); and two-thirds use caffeine-containing beverages or pills.

Our study surveyed United States and Canadian youth (ages 12 to 24) in 73 randomly selected Adventist churches. We asked the pastor or a designated coordinator to distribute to each youth a questionnaire and a stamped envelope addressed to the Institute of Church Ministry. (The direct mailing protected the anonymity of the youth respondents.)

Eight hundred one youth responded to the survey, representing 57 percent of the questionnaires distributed. Since the questionnaires likely reached a disproportionate number of those who attend church regularly, we think the survey sample probably favors those less likely to use alcohol and drugs—so the survey may underestimate actual usage among Adventist youth. The sample is weighted in favor of the younger ages (40 percent were 14-17 years old; 25 percent, 12-13; and the rest, older), and the majority of respondents were Caucasian. Most of the respondents (81 percent) reported that they were baptized Adventists, and about an equal number were in Adventist schools as were in public schools (41 percent and 42 percent, respectively, with 17 percent not attending school).

Table 1 shows that alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine pose the strongest temptations to Adventist youth. The consistently high usage of caffeine among all subgroups (see Table 2) suggests that most Adventist youth do not consider caffeine a drug of concern.

Table 2 presents a summary profile of past and present use of the most commonly used drugs by several subgroupings. As might be expected, we found that the older groups of respondents reported higher past usage of alcohol (Figure A). Among youth in the college-age group (18-23), 35 percent reported past social or regular alcohol use. But in the group aged 24 or older, total social and regular past usage was 51 percent.
Although considerably fewer report present than past usage, the degree of reliability on present-use data is unknown because of factors favoring underestimation. The respondents may have believed it safer to report past than present usage. Youth of college age reported the greatest present use of alcohol, 17 percent.

We evaluated, as to their protective effect, baptismal status and attendance in Adventist schools. Being a baptized member does not appear to provide any major protection against drug involvement. However, attending an Adventist school played a role in discouraging the use of every drug except caffeine (Figure B). Youth no longer in school admit the greatest past involvement with alcohol (47 percent). The age of this group may explain this statistic.

Is participation in religious experiences protective? A substantial number of youth (71-76 percent) report regular attendance at Sabbath services. And nearly half regularly engage in personal prayer, but other personal religious activities were remarkably low. When we compared the frequency of participation with the level of drug use, by statistical analysis, we found religious experiences to be highly protective (Table 3). Marijuana usage appears to follow a different pattern than that of alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine. Adventist youths' low participation in such experiences as reading the writings of Ellen G. White, reading Adventist magazines, and temperance-related activities may have limited their potential protective value. We cannot, from our data, evaluate these for their protective effect.

For each drug studied, our statistical analyses revealed family worship as the experience most highly predictive for low drug use. When we combined all past drug use, the four religious experiences that appeared to be most protective were family worship, participation in temperance contests, witnessing, and attendance at Sabbath school (Table 4). The findings on present drug usage differed among various drugs. Again, however, for all drugs combined, family worship was the most important variable related to low present use. The second most important predictor was attendance at church-sponsored social events, and personal prayer ranked third.

### Table 1. Present Use of Addictive Chemicals by SDA Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chemical</th>
<th>Not Using</th>
<th>Social Use</th>
<th>Regular Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol (beer, wine, liquor)</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarettes and tobacco</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphetamines (uppers)</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbiturates (downers)</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tranquilizers (Valium, Librium)</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychedelics (LSD, acid, mescaline)</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caffeine (coffee, tea, cola, pills, etc.)</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Social use = 1-3 times per month.  
† Regular use = 1-3 times per week or more often.

Because of rounding, totals may not equal 100 percent.

### Table 2. Summary Profile of Drug Use by Selected Descriptive Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Alcohol Use</th>
<th>Tobacco Use</th>
<th>Marijuana Use</th>
<th>Caffeine Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Using</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Use</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Use</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nonexperimental Use by Age Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Alcohol Use</th>
<th>Tobacco Use</th>
<th>Marijuana Use</th>
<th>Caffeine Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-13, past use</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-13, present use</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-17, past use</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-17, present use</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-23, past use</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-23, present use</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24+, past use</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24+, present use</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Tried out = tried 5 times or less.  
† Regular use = 1-3 times per week or more often.  
Because of rounding, totals may not equal 100 percent.
Table 3. Religious Experiences for Which Participation Is Associated With Drug Abstinence or Minor Present Use

This table shows statistically obtained relationships between taking part in religious experiences and avoidance or low usage of the drugs listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Experience</th>
<th>Alcohol</th>
<th>Tobacco</th>
<th>Marijuana</th>
<th>Caffeine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Worship</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend Sabbath school</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend church services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal prayer</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the Bible</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Mrs. White's writings</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Adventist magazines</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell someone else about your faith</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperance contests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Listen or Winner magazine</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend church-sponsored social events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X = statistically significant relationship (p = .05) by Pearson chi-square between degrees of participation and amount of drug use.

Figure A. Use of Alcohol by Age Groups

Past Use of Alcohol by Age

Present Use of Alcohol by Age

Figure B. School Attendance and Drug Use

School Attendance and Past Use

School Attendance and Present Use
More important than learning about the prevalence of drug use among Adventist youth is discovering the reasons youth cite for using or for abstaining from drugs. Such information can assist us in developing programs that more effectively promote a drug-free lifestyle.

Figures C and D show the reasons Adventist youth gave as having “a great deal of influence” on their choices to use or not to use drugs. They reported most frequently that they used drugs “to enjoy a good time with my friends” and because of curiosity. The reason ranked third was related to peer influence: “to go along with what my friends are doing.” These findings suggest that for many youth, social factors are persuasive. In response to a question as to who introduced them to drugs, 65 percent of drug users identified another teenager as responsible. However, family members are not unimportant; 27 percent said a sibling or other family member started them on drugs.

Three reasons led the way in having “a great deal of influence” on youth for abstaining from or quitting drug use: “I want to be in control of my life” (69 percent), “concern for my health” (68 percent), and “my commitment to Christ” (63 percent). Concern about the future they will have also provides motivation, but legal or parental threats, rules, and expense appear to have less influence. Surprisingly, the influence of abstaining friends appears to be the weakest factor of all. Perhaps abstaining has less visibility among peers than it deserves.

How do these findings compare with statistics on drug use among youth outside the Adventist community of faith? Adventist students have a much lower reported incidence of use than national averages. This encouraging conclusion probably reflects the many influences that socialize Adventist youth to a proabstinence choice, as well as the protective effect of personal religious commitment.

Nevertheless, to a church that stands for a drug-free lifestyle, the prevalence of drug use reported here is sobering and cause for significant concern. Few challenges to the integrity and future of the church can equal those of the health- and soul-destroying effects of drug use among its youth. The church cannot afford to deny that its youth are deciding to experiment with and use various drugs socially, including the “gateway” drug caffeine. Such denial would only allow the present incidence to increase and gain momentum until the abstinent youth would be the exceptional youth—as has happened in many other religious organizations.

Drug use is challenging our entire church. We cannot assign the responsibility for dealing with it to any one institution or program; rather, the whole church must share in the effort. Cf. our findings, e.g., with those of L. D. Johnston, P. M. O'Mallery, and J. G. Bachman, Use of Licit and Illicit Drugs by America's High School Students, 1975-1984 (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1985).
Harvest 90 litany

Want to add the Harvest 90 theme to your worship, or make it part of a special service? Try this litany.

is frustration growing as the hours flew, Ron Wisbey, president of the Columbia Union Conference, searched San Diego's bookstores without success. He needed a reading for the love feast that would conclude the Professional Growth Seminar for departmental directors and administrators from throughout the North American Division. That's why my phone rang just after supper.

Elder Wisbey wondered if I had any reading appropriate for Adventist leaders who had gathered to study the best means of serving our Lord in the context of the new Department of Church Ministries and of Harvest 90. We were agreed that a real worship experience isn't a spectator sport. Everyone present must participate, offering himself to God and His service. Elder Wisbey wanted some act of worship that would involve all those assembled in visual, vocal, and auditory action. He also suggested that it would be especially significant if the four basic Harvest 90 objectives could somehow be included, along with some thoughts from page 9 of The Acts of the Apostles, thoughts that struck the keynote for the seminar. I wasn't at all certain that I had materials readily adaptable to a denominational leadership seminar, but it did sound like an exciting challenge.

I enjoy preparing worship services only slightly less than leading people in worship, but my search through my files the next morning yielded little help. One service of dedication, though, sparked an idea. Why not create a litany by juxtaposing the bold objectives of Harvest 90 and the beautiful challenges from The Acts of the Apostles with statements of dedication, consecration, and commitment? Soon ideas for the flow of words and thoughts jelled. Adding transitions and refining the wording completed the process. "Dedication Litany for Harvest 90" was ready.

You too will discover various occasions when this litany will meet the needs of a group you are leading in worship.

1. Families can use the litany to emphasize the importance of each individual and family in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Perhaps making it part of a special worship in your home on Friday evening or Sabbath afternoon would make it particularly meaningful for your family.

2. The litany will challenge churches to prepare to reach out with vigor to their communities in a caring way, both as the ongoing task of the church and at times of special evangelistic endeavor. You might use the litany at the conclusion of a sermon, at the beginning of a planning session, or as part of your preparation for an evangelistic crusade.

3. From time to time pastors and other church leaders assemble for inspiration and education. Using this litany in several settings at these times will provide a unifying act of corporate worship.

I believe that you will sense the thrill of God's blessing as you use this litany, just as I did while preparing it, and as did the Adventist leaders who were the first to use it.
**HARVEST 90 SONG**

Irregular

F. E. B./Nick Tkachuck, 1986

1. Oh, there'll be joy when the work is done. When the re-deemed are
   gathered home. Bring precious souls to Jesus' feet, When in
   heav-en we shall meet. Joy, joy, oh what joy there will be,
   sing in hap-pi-ness, for Har-vest Nine-ty God will bless.

2. I will be with you, Christ did say, For Har-vest Nine-ty
   let us pray, We'll bring the souls to set of sun. Joy-ful
   joy, joy, when from sin they are free. Joy, joy, joy.

3. Sweet are the songs we hope to sing. Prais-ing for-ev -er
   we have brought. For the
   for - ty souls will share.

4. Pure are the joys that a -wait us there. Man- y the gold-en
   Har-vest He hath wrought. Nine-ty souls will share.

   Joy, joy, joy, Joy, joy, joy, Joy, joy, joy,
   Joy, joy, joy.

Adapted to music: Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, No. 430; Christ in Song, No. 863.

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**DEDICATION LITANY FOR HARVEST 90**

Leader: From the quiet beauty of contemplation, from hearing and feasting on the Word of God, we must move out into the world of action. There we anticipate the grand feast of power as the Holy Spirit moves upon the Caring Church.

People: Since the church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of all people, we will organize her for service and fulfill her mission to carry the gospel to the world.

Leader: It is fitting at such a time as this to consecrate and dedicate ourselves to objectives that God through His servants has set before us.

People: It is indeed proper that we do so.

Leader: To renewal and personal growth through Bible study, intercessory prayer, fellowship, and worship—

People: We consecrate ourselves.

Leader: To doubling the number of people won to Christ through the One Thousand Days of Reaping during the Harvest 90 quinquennium—

People: We dedicate our endeavors.

Leader: To training, equipping, and involving a majority of attending church members in soul-winning activities of the Caring Church—

People: We consecrate our energies.

Leader: Having so dedicated ourselves, we affirm that God has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

People: Now we will show forth His glory.

Leader: In the church rests the riches of the grace of Christ.

People: We the members of the church, Christ's body, will do our part in the final and full display of God's love.
Conditionalism: a cornerstone of Adventist doctrine

Some of the most important doctrines in Seventh-day Adventist theology are summarized in what I call the five C's: Christ, the cross, the Second Coming, the commandments, and conditionalism. The first four C's need little explanation; this article focuses on the meaning of the fifth.

Conditional immortality

It is commonly believed among evangelical Christians that man is different from the animals in that he possesses an immortal soul. But in the Creation account, both animals and men are called souls. The Hebrew word for soul, nephesh, used of Adam in Genesis 2:7, is used of animals in Genesis 1:21, 24; 2:19; 9:10, 12, 15, 16, et cetera, where it is translated "living creature." Sea creatures are called souls in Revelation 16:3. Basically, a soul is a living creature—whether man or animal.

Nowhere in Scripture is the soul ever called eternal or immortal. On the contrary, souls are said to die (Eze. 18:4; Lev. 23:29, 30; Matt. 10:28; Rev. 16:3). God alone has immortality (1 Tim. 6:14-16). Immortality is said to be something for which the righteous seek (Rom. 2:7). Why should we seek for that which we already have?

At present the dead are in the dust (Job 7:21; Dan. 12:2), in the graves (John 5:28), in the tomb (Job 21:32). The righteous dead are not in heaven praising God (Ps. 115:17; 6:5; 30:9; Isa. 38:18). Even David is in the grave, and not in heaven (Acts 2:29, 34).

The righteous do not become inherently immortal until the resurrection at the second coming of Christ (1 Cor. 15:53, 54). The wicked are not now and never will be immortal. After they are destroyed at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:7-9), the wicked will cease to exist. They will be destroyed root and branch, and turned into ashes (Mal. 4:1, 3). God will destroy both the body and the soul in hell (Matt. 10:28). Even the devil will be destroyed (Eze. 28:14-19). In fact, death itself will be destroyed (Rev. 20:14). Thus the Bible teaches that immortality is in the future and is bestowed on condition of faithfulness. Note that inherent immortality is not to be confused with eternal life, which the righteous possess by faith now, in Christ, not in themselves (1 John 5:11).

Conditional prophecy

The Scriptures teach that all of the prophecies, covenants, promises, and threats found in the Scriptures are conditional whether or not a condition is stated; their fulfillment is contingent upon man's response to God's commands. Promises of blessing cannot be fulfilled to a disobedient nation or individual, and prophecies of punishment will not be fulfilled against the
repentant. This principle is clearly stated in Jeremiah 18:7-10.

There are a number of examples of conditional prophecy in the Scriptures, as the following list illustrates. First we note instances in which promised doom was averted by repentance, then instances in which promised blessing was averted by wickedness.

- Jonah's prediction that Nineveh would be destroyed was not fulfilled when the people repented (Jonah 3:4, 10), even though his prophecy of doom was not qualified by any stated conditions.
- God's prophecies of Jerusalem's destruction in the days of Hezekiah were not fulfilled when the people repented (Jer. 26:18, 19).
- Isaiah's prophecy that Hezekiah would soon die of his present sickness was not fulfilled (2 Kings 20:1-6).
- God promised through Elijah to punish Ahab, then relented when Ahab repented (1 Kings 21:17-29).
- Because of Eli's disobedience, God retracted His promise that his descendants would serve the Lord forever (1 Sam. 2:30).
- God's promise to bring the Israelites who came out of Egypt into the Promised Land (Ex. 6:8) was not fulfilled (Num. 14:30-34).
- Though God through Moses promised the Israelites they would never see the Egyptians again (Ex. 14:13), He threatened to break that promise if they were disobedient (Deut. 28:58, 68).
- Ezekiel 5 contains God's promise to destroy Jerusalem, which was fulfilled a few years later (586 B.C.). Here God promised never to repeat this terrible punishment (verses 9, 10), but the same sort of destruction happened in A.D. 70.
- God promised Aaron and his sons a perpetual priesthood that would last throughout their generations (Ex. 40:15; Num. 25:13). Yet the Levitical priesthood was replaced with the Melchizedekian (Hebrews 7).

Conditionalism helps us to understand why the prophecies of the Old Testament, such as the description of the new Temple in the last nine chapters of Ezekiel, were never literally fulfilled. Some prophecies will never be literally fulfilled on earth because their fulfillment was conditional upon the Jews' remaining faithful in their covenant relationship with God. The promise that Israel would inherit the land of Canaan was clearly conditional on their obedience (Deut. 4:25-31; 11:13-17, 22-28; 28:1-68; 29:22-30:10; 30:15-20; 31:16-29; Jeremiah 7; 17:24-27). Though they were God's chosen people, God threatened them with destruction for unfaithfulness (Deut. 8:19, 20).

The New Testament teaches that literal Israel, as a nation, has been rejected by God. The nation finally sealed its fate when it crucified its promised King. Because the Jews rejected the Promiser, they lost the promises; because they rejected the King, they lost the kingdom. This is clearly stated in the allegorical parable of Israel's history in Matthew 21:33-43. According to verse 43, the kingdom of God was to be taken from the Jews and given to another "nation"—namely, the Christian church (1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6). Christ also foretold in two other parables the rejection of the Jewish nation as His people (Matt. 8:11, 12; 22:1-14). "Your house," Christ said, "is left unto you desolate" (chap. 23:38), and Paul said that God's wrath had finally come upon them (1 Thess. 2:16). Thus the promises to the Jews were nullified by their own apostasy.

The New Testament teaches that physical descent from Abraham is meaningless (Luke 3:8; John 8:39-44); it is Abraham's spiritual descendants—those who accept Christ as the Messiah—who are now God's special people and who inherit all the Old Testament kingdom promises (Gal. 3:7, 28, 29). There is now no difference between Jew and Gentile in regard to salvation or God's favor (chap. 3:28; Eph. 2:11-15; Rom. 10:12, 13). In fact, the term Jew itself is redefined in the New Testament to mean the true followers of Christ (Rom. 2:28, 29; Phil. 3:3). Not only did the Christian church appropriate the title "Jews"; the members also called themselves "Israel" (Gal. 6:14-16; Rom. 9:6). Therefore James could address his Epistle "to the twelve tribes" (James 1:1), even though he was writing to Christians. Many of the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament are appropriated by the Christian church in the New and will be fulfilled only in the age to come.

**Does God change?**

Properly understood, the concept of conditional prophecy does not imply that God is changeable or wishy-washy in relation to man. God's very unchangeableness in His essential nature and attitude toward sin requires Him to change His tactics when His people change their attitude toward Him. Water's unchanging property of always seeking the lowest level makes it constantly change its position, sometimes sitting placidly, other times raging and cutting. God does not change, but His children's changing relationship to Him sometimes makes it impossible for Him to fulfill His promises to them.

**Conditional salvation**

There are two different sorts of organizations in the world: those that allow their members to leave whenever they wish, and those that compel members to remain against their will. Which of these groups is more like the kingdom of heaven? Many evangelical Christians believe that Christ's kingdom is more like the second group in that once you are in, it is impossible to get out. This viewpoint is popularly labeled "once saved, always saved."

While the Bible asserts that men are saved by faith apart from the works of the law, and that salvation is a free gift of God's grace (Rom. 11:6; Gal. 2:16; Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8), it also clearly asserts that the believer retains his salvation only on condition of obedience: "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father" (Matt. 7:21, RSV). Only those who keep Christ's word (John 8:51), who keep His commandments (chap. 15:10, 14), who persevere in doing good (Rom. 2:7), will be saved. We maintain our salvation only if we abide in Christ's word (John 8:31).

if we suffer with Christ (Rom. 8:17).
if we continue in God's kindness (chap. 11:22).
if we hold firmly to the apostles' word (1 Cor. 15:2).
if we do not grow weary and lose heart (Gal. 6:9).
if we continue in the faith (Col. 1:22, 23).
if we continue in right doctrine (1 Tim. 4:16).
if we endure and do not deny Him (2 Tim. 2:12; Matt. 10:32, 33).
if we hold fast our confidence firmly unto the end (Heb. 3:6, 12-14).
if we have endurance and do not shrink back (chap. 10:35-39),
if what we have heard abides in us (1 John 2:24).

Perseverance and salvation; in the foregoing statements, all are conditions to our salvation. Thus it is correct to say that our salvation is conditional upon our perseverance (Mark 13:13; Rom. 2:7; James 1:12; 2 Peter 1:5-11; Rev. 2:10, 11, 26). This is really only a special case of the general rule of conditional prophecy discussed earlier that states that promises of good are fulfilled only on condition of obedience.

Salvation is represented by the wedding garment (Isa. 61:10; Matt. 22:1-14). The garment signifies primarily the imparted righteousness of Christ (cf. Col. 3:9-14; Rev. 3:18; 19:8) and is a free gift. But it must be worn to obtain admission to the feast. It must not be taken off (Rev. 16:15). If soiled (chap. 3:4), it must be washed (chaps. 7:14; 22:14). Otherwise, salvation is lost (chaps. 3:11; 22:19).

According to Ezekiel 33:13 (cf. chap. 18:24), when a righteous man turns wicked he will die and all his righteousness will be forgotten.

The ungrateful debtor had his sins forgiven, and then had that forgiveness revoked when he acted unmercifully toward his own servant (Matt. 18:21-35).

The faithful steward of Luke 12:42 is in a state of salvation (verse 44), but if he becomes disobedient (verse 45), he is assigned a place with the unbelievers (verse 46).

According to 2 Peter 2:20-22, those who have "escaped the defilements of the world" (RSV; cf. chap. 1:4) through the knowledge (Greek epignōsis, used only of saved individuals; cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; Heb. 10:26-29) of Christ and who then turn back to the world are worse off than if they had never been saved.

Names once written in the book of life can be blotted out again (Rev. 3:5; 22:19).

Every unfruitful branch in Christ is cut off and burned (John 15:1-6). The expression in Christ can refer only to a once-saved person. The same symbolism is used in Romans 11:17-24, which pictures God's people as a tree, with individual Gentile Christians represented by grafted-in branches that will be cut off again if they are unfaithful (verse 22).

Individuals who have once been saved but who fall away cannot be restored while they continue to crucify the Son of God afresh (Heb. 6:4-8).

A person who has been sanctified by the blood of the covenant but continues in willful sin will have no atonement for his sins and will be consumed with fire when the Lord judges His people (chap. 10:26-30).

This does not mean that every sinful mistake causes us to lose our salvation. There are degrees of sin; note how Psalm 19:12, 13 discriminates between hidden faults and presumptuous sins. It is continued, willful sin (Heb. 10:26), not a momentary lapse, that causes the loss of salvation.

The possibility of falling from grace does not deprive the faithful Christian of assurance of salvation any more than the legal possibility of divorce deprives one of assurance of the loyalty of one's spouse. John, who is so insistent that a man's salvation is shown by his actions (1 John 1:6, 7; 2:3-6; 3:6-10, 24), is also insistent that we may have certainty about our salvation (chaps. 4:13, 17, 18; 5:13). Our confidence is in Christ, "who is able to keep you from falling and to present you without blemish before the presence of his glory" (Jude 24, RSV). We can be sure that as long as we practice these things, we will never stumble (2 Peter 1:10).

Conclusions

What, then, does Bible conditionalism tell us about the God we serve? It tells us that He is responsive to us and is even willing to temporarily set aside His own plan in order to let us have our way, so that in the end all of creation may see that God's way is best. It tells us that we are not puppets in a play, but that God has at infinite cost to Himself purchased our freedom. We are truly and terribly free to determine our own destiny. Only total love can bestow such total freedom upon the beloved. Such love commands our total allegiance and trust.
Lenard D. Jaecks serves the Washington Conference as both executive secretary and ministerial secretary. He is a cofounder of the Northwest Ministries Training Center.

Learning by doing

t is in the water, not on the land, that we learn to swim," said the servant of the Lord in reference to training ministers (Gospel Workers, p. 495). While classroom instruction is necessary, in most professions practical on-the-job training is essential.

The church provides several means through which young ministers may receive practical training for productive pastoring. Among them are field schools of evangelism, the training center in Chicago, and pastoral formation programs. Now there is also the Northwest Ministries Training Center. Located on the campus of Washington Conference's Auburn Academy, with a converted dormitory providing housing, the center is home to North Pacific Union Masters of Divinity students during their ninth and tenth quarters. Since the maximum enrollment is twelve, each student can receive highly individualized training.

The students do their two quarters of work in four months, and receive thirty credit hours for the 120 class hours and 180 in-service hours they put in. This allows them to conduct the Bible studies that prepare the way for the six-week evangelistic series the program includes. In one recent session more than half of the students baptized candidates with whom they had studied.

Since its inception in 1982, Elder Jay Gallimore has directed the center. His job description also calls for him to pastor the Kent, Washington, Seventh-day Adventist Church, and this direct involvement with a church adds a great deal of practicality to the training program. (The church had seventy members in 1982. Attendance now regularly exceeds three hundred.)

Gallimore receives some assistance with administering the church, but basically the students at the center learn by working alongside him as he ministers. The evangelistic series they participate in resembles those they will hold when they have churches of their own—it is conducted by a pastor who must also carry on regular pastoral duties. In addition, the students participate in lay training classes and work with the local ministers in house-to-house visitation and Bible studies.

Gallimore says that training ministers in a church setting is very realistic. The students see that things do not always work as the lectures and books say; they also can experience functioning in the pastor-evangelist mode. One young minister recently told Gallimore that he believed his time at the center had saved him several years of learning by trial and error at the expense of others.

The students have a high degree of interest in their work at the center because they know that within a few weeks they will themselves be responsible for their own churches. Instruction about the anointing service becomes more than just a page in a notebook on practices because it involves a member of the very congregation in which they are working. And here they can see programs working in a typical, if somewhat larger than average, church. Each student must build his own interest file through door-to-door visitation and other entry programs. Gallimore says this teaches students that they need not enter a pastoral assignment and "wait and hope" for weeks to see interests coming their way.

The ultimate practical benefit, however, is that students and teachers are driven to their knees. Student after student has said that he never felt a greater need of prayer and trust in the Holy Spirit than while actually participating in the winning and shepherding of souls.

Roscoe Howard, who attended the first class Gallimore taught, now pastors his own district. He says that Gallimore demonstrated in the evening what he taught in the morning. Howard believes that he was better equipped to assume a pastoral-evangelistic assignment because of the four months of intensive, practical training he received at the center.

Joseph Kidder's experience there reveals the appetite the North Pacific Union hopes all its ministers acquire. A student from the Upper Columbia Conference, Kidder is of Syrian background. He tells of calling on Mrs. DeGeren, a Jewish lady, who was a bit defensive at first. But Kidder testified to what Christ had done for him and that now instead of being enemies because of their backgrounds, they could be one in Christ. This visit deeply moved the DeGerens. They attended the evangelistic series Gallimore conducted, and Kidder had the privilege of baptizing them. (The DeGerens now lead in the Personal Ministries Department of the Kent church.) He says that this experience made him feel like the successful fisherman who said, "Catching one makes you want to catch another."

Through knees and knuckles, a pastoral/evangelistic program becomes not only possible but exciting.
Snakeing its way down the long driveway, the fire hose looked like a gigantic python ready to strike. The squish of the firemen’s boots on the soggy entryway carpet was proof enough that something had indeed struck. The water, heat, and smoke damage from the early-morning chimney fire would take weeks to clean up. The shell of the house was intact, but much of its contents would need replacing.

I sat shivering with Susan on her lawn as our husbands talked to the firemen preparing to leave. The misty dawn fog, mixed with the lingering low-hanging smoke, made me feel that it had all been a bad dream.

"I just can’t believe it. I just can’t." Susan’s smudged face had clean little trails where tears had washed a clear path.

My own words choked in my throat. I could make them understood only by strengthening my grip around her shoulders. She understood my silent words.

A few days later I stopped by Ann’s to return a pattern I had borrowed. It wasn’t long before the conversation turned to our children and the challenges of character-building. Mothers have such high ideals for their children. But Ann’s frustration with her only son, the same age as mine, made her ready to turn in her Mother badge. We talked of accomplishments and failures, comparing notes about what worked here and what didn’t work there. By the time I left, her tears were dry—sealed with the promise that we would pray more for each other.

I had been home from Ann’s only 15 minutes when the phone rang. As I answered it I recognized the sob at the other end of the line. I had heard it enough times to know to whom it belonged. Sharon was having marital problems, and I had been applying emotional band-aids. Either they were not doing any good or she liked my brand.

Ten minutes later I laid the phone in its cradle and stared blankly ahead. My emotions rose and fell like a yo-yo. On each upward swing another distressing situation would come to mind. There seemed to be an ever-flowing river of tears out there. Jeremiah’s statement “Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water” (Lam. 3:48) applied to so many. I sighed, wishing that I could do more to ease the hurts of others.

The box on the table

I stared at the bookcase in front of me without seeing it. A dog barked outside, drawing my gaze to the window, then to the lamp table. There my eyes fell on a flowered box of soft tissues. Tissues. I had given away so many lately that I almost felt I had stock in the company. My ministry was full of tears. Happy tears, sad tears, tears of joy, sorrow, frustration, and devastation.

But tissues—tissues! No, surely not. Yes, maybe it could be. There are many ministries: singing, radio, TV, tape, and more. My husband’s is a pastoral ministry. Could mine be a tissue ministry? I sat amused at the thought. The more I reflected on it, the more it fit. Maybe that was a ministry—handing out tissues, catching tears.

No, I argued with myself, anyone is capable of getting his own tissue from a box. I doubted that there was even any merit in the idea of such a ministry. Yet

Tears are a natural, healthy part of life. Does it make any difference whether the tissue that catches them comes from a box or from a friend’s hand?

Marybeth Gessele, a tissue minister and wife of a pastor, lives and listens in Gaston, Oregon.
something down underneath nudged, “But isn’t it better to have a caring hand than a stiff cardboard box on the other side of the tissue?”

Weeks went by, and every time I saw a tissue box, the idea of my tissue ministry surfaced. I tried to forget it, but somehow the thought wouldn’t leave. Finally one evening I sat down, determined to study, to see if there were any proper grounds for those persistent urgings within me.

Not knowing exactly where to begin (since neither the Bible concordance nor the E. G. White Index lists tissue!), I decided to look up the words compassion and sympathy. They proved to be the key I needed.

The first statement I found jumped right out at me. “The tender sympathies of our Saviour were aroused for fallen and suffering humanity. If you would be His followers, you must cultivate compassion and sympathy. Indifference to human woes must give place to lively interest in the sufferings of others. . . . If you are looking to Jesus, and drawing from Him knowledge and strength and grace, you can impart His consolation to others, because the Comforter is with you.”

The hours of study that followed confirmed in my mind that there is truly a need for a tissue ministry.

Tears punctuate the Bible from cover to cover. Eve shed tears at the death of Abel, David wept over Absalom, and Jesus cried over Jerusalem. Tears of mourning, of joy, of fear, and of helplessness are sprinkled throughout Scripture. Every tribe, every culture, has tears. Through the ages tears have been acknowledged as the universal language of the soul. Tears seem so simple—yet they are controlled by one of the most intricate mechanisms of the body. Obviously our Creator designed us with the ability to cry. God in His wisdom knew that people would need a means of release from the emotional traumas of life. Tears are a natural safety valve.

How to be a tissue minister

As I thought about the tissue ministry idea, I decided that a tissue minister is an individual who can communicate loving concern to someone undergoing emotional stress. The ministry involves caring enough to listen. It involves not only the ears but the heart. A person who can share encouragement and concern without intimidating or interfering with the tear-shedding process can be a real help. Tears have amazing healing power.

The objective of a tissue ministry is to help the walking wounded. People all around us long to share their hurts, to be helped, to be loved in spite of their circumstances. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor who was executed just before the end of World War II, said it nicely in his book Life Together: “The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists of listening to them. Just as love to God begins with listening to the Word, so the beginning of love for the brethren is learning to listen to them.”

As I analyzed closely the business of passing out tissues in my role as a pastor’s wife, I realized there were some things that would be required of me. Even though my husband and I are united in a team ministry, there are certain areas of service that I can best perform alone.

The first step in the tissue ministry is the first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists of listening to them. The ladies of the church sometimes prefer to share their hurts with me, woman to woman, before seeking more-professional help from my husband. I don’t always have him at my side filling in, picking up the conversation when my words become sparse. It is my responsibility to learn how to be most effective in helping those who come to me.

To even listen to others, one needs to be sensitive to those who are hurting. The first step in administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation is to ask a person in apparent need, “Are you OK?” The first step in the tissue ministry is the same. It is sometimes necessary to let sharers know you notice their pained expression. This opening question allows them to choose whether or not they care to share. Some seeking comfort will not need to be asked the question, but others may need to be drawn out a bit.

At times, just your presence or some gracious act to show your love is all a person needs to lift his head again. Some situations call for few words, just an “I Care” sign.

Helping people share

The tissue ministry is built on trust. Like a tiny glowing ember, trust must be carefully nurtured to ignite the fire that will bring warmth and light.

Coupled with trust is confidence. Our very being should declare confidence. Tissuing is a closed-mouth ministry, to be shared with no one except your husband, so that together you may work toward healing. Proverbs 11:13 says: “A talebearer revealeth secrets: but the that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.” After you lend an ear, a reassuring promise of silence is appropriate.

People are often afraid of sharing their hurts. They are afraid of rejection, or of having judgment passed upon them, or of being given a solution that they may not appreciate or be ready for. Being aware of these fears can help you exercise tact and proceed cautiously. Often, just letting people talk, letting them flush out their cisterns, so to speak, helps them discover a solution on their own.

It takes time to be a tissue minister, time to be patient, time to wait for the sobs to stop so the hurting one can talk. We live in a time-conscious society. But some things cannot be rushed, and if you give the impression that you are in a hurry, the desire of the sharer to share will be greatly reduced.

Accepting interruptions

As a pastor’s wife I have to discipline myself to stop and listen, whether in the Friday dash to the grocery store or in my hurry to meet an appointment. If I don’t help when help is needed, what good am I? Any ministry costs time and energy. I cannot minister only when it fits my schedule. I need to be available while the tears are still warm.

To be willing to be inconvenienced, to have some of your own plans inter-
ruptured, is another requirement for carrying on an effective tissue ministry. Interruptions should be looked at not as irritations but as opportunities. A determination not to be annoyed at a prolonged phone call when your hands are gooey with bread dough will take discipline and help from heaven. To be willing to lay down your dustcloth on preparation day and go visit the mother who is ready to send her kids to Siberia and put the dog in the food processor is to give real-life service. Bonhoeffer put it so aptly: “We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God. God will be constantly crossing our path and cancelling our plans by sending us people.” 3 True service places the needs of others before our own. “Anyone who wishes to be a follower of mine must leave self behind” (Mark 8:34, NEB).

As a tissuer you will need to become comfortable with your own and others' tears. Tears are the lowest common denominator of humanity. Helmuth Pleser says, “More forcefully than any other expression pattern or emotion, the crying of our fellow men grips and makes us partners of his moment, often without even knowing why.” 4 More than once I have attempted to pray with someone after a dilemma has been shared, only to have my own tears choke out my words. In response I've heard the words “It only lets me know how much you must care.” People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. God reads our hearts and understands the language of tears.

The risks
There are risks involved in a tissue ministry. You may encounter rejection and misunderstanding. Some will question your motives. If your efforts are rejected, remember it is not you as a person that was not accepted, only your offer to listen. The walking wounded are often so frustrated and crushed inside that they shout “Get lost” or “Mind your own business” without realizing how it may affect others.

In our desire to encourage others, it is also important to remember that Jesus did not tell us to change people, but to love them. We are not in the business of making people over in our own image. Remaking people is God’s responsibility.

Many of us have what psychologists call the “rescue fantasy.” We try to rearrange people’s lives and provide them with a happy ending. But that is not our job. The best help a tissue minister can give, beyond listening to and weeping with those who weep, is to point the one in need to the One who can help.

When faced with suffering and tragedy, people have two choices: to withdraw, become embittered, and die inwardly, or to reach out to God in whatever way they are comfortable with and grow inwardly. Our purpose is to direct them to the Specialist, assuring them that “there hath not failed one word of all his good promise” (1 Kings 8:56).

The rewards
We cannot be true servants of Jesus Christ without sacrificing our time and energies on behalf of others. However, “there is a priceless reward for those who devote their life to His service.” 5

“Every kind and sympathizing word spoken to the sorrowful, every act to relieve the oppressed, ... given or done with an eye to God’s glory, will result in blessings to the giver.” 6

Some of the “blessings to the giver,” to the tissue minister, are tangible even in this present life. We may know the meaning of true happiness by helping others. True joy comes from knowing we are appreciated for just being available to care and listen. While we are not to concern ourselves with rewards here on this earth, it is encouraging to know that others have benefited from our efforts.

“The pleasure of doing good to others imparts a glow to the feelings which flashes through the nerves, quickens the circulation of the blood, and induces mental and physical strength.” 7

There comes a warm satisfaction, an inward peace that is in itself reward enough for any effort we put forth in service. However, our Father promises an even greater reward: “He [the true Christian] may lose his life in service; but when Christ comes to gather His jewels to Himself, he will find it again.” 8

3 Ibid., p. 99.
6 Ibid., p. 56.
7 Ibid., vol. 9, p. 56.
In the middle of his sermon the preacher noticed a gentleman snoring away on the front row. He motioned to a small boy sitting in the same pew to awaken him.

"Do it yourself," retorted theurchin. "You put him to sleep—you awake him."

While this story may be apocryphal, the truth it illustrates haunts every pastor. Does sermon time in your church provide an opportunity for the kids to read the papers they got in Sabbath school and the adults to catch up on the sleep they missed last week? Is it even realistic to expect everyone to stay awake during your sermon?

As you approach the pulpit you already know who are the alert ones and who are the somnolent ones. "They probably had an extra-busy week." "The baby kept them up all last night." "You can't reach all levels in one sermon."

"As long as I present the message, I have done my best."

No! No! No! That will not do. Don't make excuses. You can keep everyone awake, unless some of the congregation have been bitten by tsetse flies.

I had never been more frightened in my life. The patient behind me in the ambulance I was driving was in imminent danger of an untimely death. I and my attendant were transporting this man, who was on oxygen, from a hospital just outside Riverside, California, to a hospital in Los Angeles.

On the way I came across some freeway construction and became lost. As we rode the night streets I frantically scanned my map. We had started with full oxygen tanks, but now this diversion was rapidly depleting the supply. As they emptied, my attendant switched to a portable tank that had less than 30 minute's supply. What was I to do? I still had a considerable distance to travel. What would be the repercussions if that patient died? Beads of sweat danced upon my brow.

Suppose you were to tell that story during a sermon—how many people would be sleeping? With human interest stories such as this, everyone—even the kids—wants to know what happened.

If you tell a story that illustrates a consuming human need, people cannot stay asleep—especially if the story comes from your own experience. This does not mean that a sermon should be filled with stories and illustrations. Though they entertain for a while, they soon develop their own brand of boredom, for they have nothing of substance. They are like the whipped cream on top of pie. The whipped cream adds to the whole dessert but becomes distasteful if it stands alone.

Relevant illustrations hold the attention, especially when they touch a felt need. The importance of speaking to felt needs was vividly etched on my memory one Sabbath. I sat in a youth Sabbath school class and listened to the teacher drone on and on. The kids were either talking or seemed to be barely conscious. Suddenly conversations ceased, heads snapped up, and drooping eyelids widened. The teacher had asked why kids don't like certain other kids. One teenager responded by saying why he thought Geoff, who was not present, was weird. Everyone started pitching in, adding their reasons to those of the first speaker. This lasted for three minutes, when the teacher, fearing he was losing control, decided to quit this relevant stuff. When he resumed his monologue on agape love, the private conversations picked up where they had left off, and heads nodded and eyelids once again lowered.

I notice that whenever the preacher tells about something that has happened to him or to his family, something seems to happen to his congregation. Enthusiasm begins to ripple across the audience as their curiosity is aroused and their interest piqued. If the preacher carefully ties the story into his sermon, he maintains his audience's interest; if he doesn't, the ripple soon passes, and a somnolent calm again descends on the congregation.

Illustrations are the windows that let in the light. Just as no one likes a house without windows, so all sermons constantly need light. This need not eliminate good biblical exposition; we hear too little of that already. But if the people are mostly asleep, the preacher's great story has benefited them nothing. Just as a building is incomplete without the windows, so a sermon is incomplete without a number of relevant illustrations, including some good personal ones.

If you use illustrations and place them at regular intervals, you will guarantee that people will also hear the rest of what you are saying. Without the illustrations they will soon forget the sermon; with the illustrations the sermon will live forever. Scripture says of Jesus that "he did not say anything to them without using a parable" (Matt. 13:34, NIV). And Ellen White says of His effective use of life illustrations: "By using a variety of illustrations, He not only presented truth in its different phases, but appealed to the different hearers. Their interest was aroused by figures drawn from the surroundings of their daily life" (Christ's Object Lessons, p. 21).

I can always sense when an audience is going to sleep on me. When that happens I try to slip in a story or personal experience, and the transformation is almost miraculous.

Oh, yes, what happened to that patient? I breathed a silent prayer to my Lord for help. We were not supposed to
Let Matthew's fish remain a fish!

The Christian leaders of the first few centuries A.D. considered practicality an important criterion for the use of Scripture. They believed every part of the Bible should speak to the needs of people in their day. Some of them turned to allegorizing interpretation as helpful to that end.

Origen, an influential Christian teacher in Alexandria, Egypt, around the beginning of the third century A.D., believed that just as people comprise body, soul, and spirit, the meaning of Scripture has three corresponding divisions. He considered the spiritual of greatest significance, and the "corporeal" or "material" of least.

Origen’s approach allowed him to make just about any part of Scripture speak to his audience. He was able, for example, to find spiritual lessons even in the details of Matthew’s story of the Temple tax (Matt. 17:24-27). He said that the fish with the silver coin in its mouth represents the “lover of money, who has nothing in his mouth but things about silver” (Commentary on Matthew 13:12). Peter, the fisher of men, catches such individuals in a “rational net” (apparently representing their conversion), rescuing them from the sea of the bitter affairs of life, from the waves of the cares and anxieties of avarice. When he takes the silver from the fish’s mouth, this represents the removal of avarice not only from the individual’s mouth and words, but from his whole character.

Those who interpret Scripture with such freedom can make every portion of it speak to the needs of their people. But such an approach poses a number of dangers. In the first place, it is extremely subjective. The message that the hearers receive depends more on the interpreter than on the Bible. It is limited by the preacher’s creativity and spirituality. Not only does this mean the hearers are being fed on man’s ideas; it also means they are being led away from the real message God intended that portion of Scripture to convey.

That this subjective method of interpretation reached its full flowering in the medieval church may, to a large degree, explain why that church looked to tradition rather than to Scripture as its authority. A method of interpretation that allowed Scripture to say anything anyone wanted it to opened the door for a thousand varieties of belief and practice. Accepting only what had been believed and done in the past provided stability.

Second, such interpretation tends to devalue the historicity of Scripture. The Exodus account, for example, becomes important not as a record of the character of the God who acts in history, but because of what it symbolizes in the life of the believer.

And third, this approach to Scripture tends to disparage the literal significance of the text. Origen, for instance, taught that believers could have a daily experience of the second advent of the Word in the “prophetic clouds”: the writings of the prophets and apostles that reveal Christ. Such an approach dilutes faith in the literal Second Advent, and could eventually overshadow it entirely.

Although the Reformers turned decisively against allegorizing interpretation, this method is not yet dead. Adventist laypeople often depend on an unsystematic “neo-allegorical” interpretation to apply Scripture to their lives. And I’ve even heard this sort of approach from Adventist pulpiteers.

What makes for good, relatively objective interpretation? Adventists have built on the Reformers’ foundation, that of a grammatical-historical approach. I believe every good method of interpretation should contain certain basic elements. First, when we interpret the Bible, we must have the Holy Spirit’s guidance. Second, we must, through studying the grammar and the literary and historical contexts of the passage, determine what it meant to those who originally received it. Third, from this we must determine the underlying spiritual principle. And fourth, we must apply that principle to our circumstances.

The matter of the underlying principle is vital. In a dispute over how to interpret and apply an apparently straightforward directive Ellen G. White had penned some 30 years earlier, W. C. White said, with his mother’s acquiescence, “Now, in my study of the Bible and in my study of your writings, I have come to believe that there is a principle underlying every precept, and that we cannot understand properly the precept without grasping the principle.”

Granted, this method won’t eliminate all subjectivity. (What constitutes a biblical principle? And how shall we apply it today?) And those interpreting may apply these elements with varying degrees of sophistication. And, certainly, the Spirit helps our weaknesses. But if we wish to be good stewards of God’s Word, our method of interpretation should contain these elements in some form.

Let’s allow Matthew’s fish to remain a fish! And disavowing all forms of allegorizing interpretation, let’s teach our members and exemplify in our ministries the best methods of studying and applying God’s Word.—D.C.J.

Letters

From page 2

mean vegetarianism is for all times, places, and peoples) is a milestone for this church. Vegetarianism is the application of a principle, which is the proper care of the bodily temple. This principle applies to all peoples, but the application may vary with cultures and according to what foods are available. I commend Dr. Coon and MINISTRY. May your tribe increase.—Harold K. West, Ministerial/Evangelism Coordinator, Central California Conference of SDA, Clovis, California.
I am grateful for the added insights into Ellen White’s evolving understanding on the question of meat-eating, and for the candor of the White Estate, which will doubtless spare some in the ministry the embarrassment of being confronted with questions they are ill-prepared to answer. Perhaps the article will also serve to lessen the degree of pharisaism that the question of vegetarianism has occasionally evoked.

I hope, however, that the article will not occasion excuses by church leaders and institutions who might wish to begin, continue, or expand their use of flesh foods. This could be especially tragic in view of strong and consistent counsel from Ellen White, such as “Among those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord, meat eating will eventually be done away; flesh will cease to form a part of their diet. . . If we move from principle in these things, if we as Christian reformers educate our own taste, and bring our diet to God’s plan, then we may exert an influence upon others in this matter, which will be pleasing to God” (Counsels on Diet and Foods, pp. 380, 381). Let us not forget that light is progressive and that we are living in the time of the end.—Pastor Ken Blake, Durham, New Hampshire.

As Seventh-day Adventists we have dug a trap for ourselves. In endeavoring to make Ellen G. White so unique, we have developed legends and “hagiographies” about her life. With this artificially elevated view we find it difficult for the prophet to have clay feet. It’s time to become mature about Ellen White and recognize that she, like others before her, was “subject to like passions as we are” (James 5:17). Her humanity does not distract from her role as God’s servant.—Forrest L. Howe, Director of Trust Services, Southern New England Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

More on inspiration and originality

The article by Tim Crosby entitled “Does Inspired Mean Original?” (February 1986) gave me some concern. It is a classic example of a little knowledge being dangerous.

First of all, he works with the simplistic methodology that finding a parallel is evidence of borrowing. Second, he virtually ignores the idea that the Old Testament could be the source of apocryphal ideas, both in the Apocrypha and the New Testament.

The question that arises here is that if we are going to follow this simplistic approach to borrowing in the Scriptures, why stop here? Why not proceed with all supposed parallels in extrabiblical material as evidence of borrowing? This would include the Babylonian Creation Epic, the Flood story, and Hammurabi’s laws. The legal and covenantal structure of the Old Testament may be seen as borrowed from the Hittites. The architectural, structural, and functional aspects of the tabernacle could be traced back to Egyptian and Canaanite origins, and so on.

We have held in the past that the Genesis account and extrabiblical parallels can be traced to a common source [see SDA Bible Dictionary (1960), p. 357; The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 116]. With this new approach, all this would change. The problem with Crosby’s approach is Where do we draw the line and why?

I believe in the authority and inspiration of Ellen White, but I am also convinced that this is not the way to defend her writings. The question of parallels and borrowing is a complex issue. To oversimplify it is to falsify it. A number of questions need to be asked about borrowing, whether biblical or other. Some of these are:

1. Is there a common source for the parallels—does one necessarily come from the other?
2. If borrowing has occurred, what was the form of the original when it occurred? Was it oral or written?
3. Is the borrowed material verbatim? If not, how and why was it changed?
4. Since the Bible writers were selective in what they borrowed, what principle guides the selection? This is an extremely important question, because selection is interpretation. We are all well aware how sections of an audiotape can be selected to make the speaker say the opposite of what was originally intended.
5. Has the writer borrowed the statement from the original in its original context, or has he borrowed from something that is already secondhand or thirdhand, in which the statement is in an entirely different context already?
6. Since the Bible writers sometimes appear to borrow from idiosyncratic and foreign cultures and not merely from apocryphal sources, what principle of selection operated here? What principle(s) determined what they would not borrow or assimilate to their own religion and culture?—Ron Springett, Southern College, Colledale, Tennessee.

Crosby replies

It is common practice among scholars, when they disagree with something, to say that the issue is more “complex” (which is always true) without showing how this nullifies the original conclusions. Calculus is much more complex than $2 + 2 = 4$, but that basic datum, though perhaps “simplistic” as an expression of calculus, remains true.

Springett’s general ideological parallels to the Bible are not quite the same as the extensive verbal similarities from a single book (namely, 1 Enoch) that was unquestionably read by Christians in New Testament times, which several Apostolic Fathers mention as inspired Scripture, and which contains parallels to almost every book in the New Testament (the article listed only those in Revelation). This is more like the type of borrowing we find in Ellen White. And so, far from ignoring the possibility of Old Testament origin, I wrote, “Much of Revelation’s imagery may originate in the Old Testament,” although most of the examples cited did not.

Springett cites The SDA Bible Commentary to the effect that the Genesis account of Creation and its extrabiblical parallels can be traced to a common source, and then states that my approach would change this. It would not. Whether the author of Genesis borrowed from, say, Enuma elish, or from the same source that Enuma elish used, or from that source’s source, he was still using extracanonical sources. Whether the borrowing is direct or indirect, whether the transmission is oral or written, is irrelevant.

Let me restate the thesis in a form that might prove acceptable to Springett: evidence of extensive parallels between allegedly inspired writings and earlier uninspired literature does not discredit the claim to inspiration. This is the $2 + 2$. Beyond this basic point the six questions Springett enumerates are excellent topics for further research, which someone skilled in the calculus of source analysis should pursue.

A little knowledge—which is all that I can claim—is even more dangerous than Springett supposes: it can sometimes discredit comfortable theories, forcing us to the difficult task of reconstruction.
Caffeine: is it so harmless?

You find it everywhere. Almost every culture uses it. But it's a drug. And recent research shows that it's not as harmless as most people think.

Caffeine consumption is a worldwide habit. Coffee, cola drinks, tea, and maté contain caffeine. It is a naturally occurring substance belonging to the family of xanthine stimulants, and is found in at least 60 different plant species.

Although coffee and tea are the most common sources of caffeine in North America and Europe, residents of other parts of the world use different plants to make stimulating drinks. In South America the native maté plant contains caffeine, and, especially in Argentina, a tea made from it is very popular. Inhabitants of India, tropical Africa, and the West Indies chew kola nuts for their stimulating effect. From there the nuts are exported around the world for the manufacture of cola drinks.

Recent studies in Canada and Australia show that only a small portion of the population in those countries do not consume coffee or tea. In Canada 7.6 percent of the population do not drink these beverages on a daily basis, while in Australia the figure is only 3 percent.

In the United States, average caffeine consumption is estimated to be 200 milligrams per day. This is roughly equivalent to two cups of coffee per person, but this estimate includes every man, woman, and child, and is therefore an inaccurate picture of adult consumption. Other studies in the United States, Australia, and Canada found that 30 percent of the respondents were consuming 500 to 600 milligrams of caffeine a day. In Sweden a 17-year study showed that only 3 percent of men over 50 abstained from drinking coffee, and that the consumption per person for those aged 57 in 1980 averaged 4.2 cups per day. Researchers have found similar consumption levels in middle-aged men and women in the United States recently. In addition, they found the amount of caffeine intake from all sources to be approximately 25 percent higher than that calculated from drinking coffee and tea, and only 3 percent of the study group had no caffeine intake from any source.

Caffeine probably ranks as the most frequently used drug in the world. Even taking into consideration the use of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana, it may still rank as the most abused drug. And tea and coffee are not the only sources of caffeine. Various drugs, prescription and nonprescription painkillers, and cold medications also contain it. One common but little recognized source of caffeine, both in developed and developing countries, is the apparently innocent soft drink so frequently consumed by children and youth. Table 1 lists the caffeine content of a number of soft drinks.

Risks from caffeine

In recent years worldwide concern has been expressed about the dangers of high caffeine consumption. The concern is related to many areas of disease. The health risks include heart attack, psychological disorders, and cancer of various organs including the bladder, pancreas, ovary, and breast. A possible link to birth defects prompted the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to issue a strong warning against consumption of caffeine by pregnant women.

The FDA initiated a large-scale animal study in which researchers fed rats...
varying levels of caffeine equivalent to 12 to 24 cups of strong coffee per day. At these high levels rats gave birth to babies with toes or parts of toes missing. In addition they found that when the mother received caffeine in amounts equivalent to only two cups of coffee per day, the fetuses showed retarded bone growth.4,5

Belgian research has uncovered evidence linking coffee to birth defects in humans.6 The researchers surveyed 202 mothers of infants with birth defects for various environmental and dietary factors. They found a significant relationship between coffee consumption and birth defects.

Finnish researchers have shown that as little as two cups of coffee can decrease placental blood flow by 25 percent.7 Recent findings relating maternal smoking to a decrease in mental acuity in newborns, possibly caused by low oxygen delivery, may signal trouble for mothers using caffeinated beverages, since lower blood flow may also cause lower oxygen delivery.8

Experiments investigating the effects of caffeine's interaction with other chemicals have shown that caffeine can cause a wide variety of apparently unrelated compounds to become toxic, producing physical defects in the developing embryo and fetus.9 Interestingly, high levels of caffeine alone in embryo cell cultures were shown to have little effect. But caffeine combined with a carcinogen resulted in both genetic changes and embryo toxic effects.10 Genetic effects appear to be intensified in the presence of caffeine because caffeine prevents the repair of DNA in the genes after chemical damage.11

Research has shown that the typical infant born in America has a blood caffeine level equivalent to that produced by drinking one or two cups of coffee.12 The drug action of the caffeine takes several days to wear off because the infant's liver is unable to metabolize caffeine.

Some researchers are concerned that this may also pose problems to the fetus. During the second and third trimester of pregnancy, from the fourth to the ninth month, caffeine remains in the system two or three times longer than normal. This is thought to be caused by changing hormonal levels in the mother. Similar findings have been observed in women taking oral contraceptives. Table 2 shows how age and contraceptive use change the time needed for elimination of caffeine from the blood.

It takes five to six hours for an average adult to eliminate half a dose of caffeine. During the next five to six hours, half the remaining caffeine (or 25 percent of the original dose) is removed. And during the third six-hour period half of the remaining 25 percent (or 12.5 percent) is removed. Notice that during the first trimester clearance is only slightly increased, to a full six hours, but in the second and third trimesters, the time required for half elimination of caffeine doubles or triples.

Caffeine and calcium

Yet another effect of caffeine on the human system has to do with the body's ability to maintain its supply of calcium.13 This important mineral helps in the formation of bones. Calcium excretion in the urine increases proportionally with the amount of caffeine a person consumes. In addition, excretion of magnesium and sodium also increases. Unlike some experiments in which large amounts of caffeine were involved, the above findings came from experiments performed among healthy college girls, using amounts of caffeine similar to those commonly consumed by regular coffee drinkers.14

Figure 1 compares the total calcium loss when no caffeine is ingested with the losses resulting from ingestion of an amount equal to that of from one and one-half cups of coffee to the equivalent of two to three cups.

Furthermore, when a person regularly

Researchers have shown that as little as two cups of coffee can decrease placental blood flow by 25 percent.

Caffeine and Urinary Minerals

100 MG 150 MG 300 MG

One hour Two hours Three hours

Source: (Mauers 1984)

Calcium secretion one to three hours after ingesting liquid with and without caffeine

Figure 1.

Caffeine and urinary minerals

Caffeine also appears to have a greater effect upon the mental processes than once thought. The American Psychiatric Association now recognizes caffeinism as a disorder affecting as many as one in ten people whose consumption of caffeine is more than 500 milligrams per day. This condition can be brought about by as few as four cups of coffee per day (depending on the type of coffee consumed), seven to nine cups of tea per day, or nine colas per day.

Caffeinism is indistinguishable from anxiety neurosis, and until recently was not recognized as being in any way different. It has been observed that psychiatric patients consuming large amounts of caffeine show more acute symptoms, have generally poorer health,
Caffeinism is indistinguishable from anxiety neurosis.

and resort more frequently to behavior-modifying drugs. Similar findings appear to be true for hospital patients generally. Initially caffeine causes a low-level stress response, excites the nervous system, and increases gastric-acid secretion and heart rate and rhythm. Furthermore, it constricts blood vessels, thereby increasing blood pressure, and causes the bronchial muscles to relax, thus opening the way for greater air intake.

Caffeine consumption by children has recently been shown to have the same effect as upon adults, although the description of the symptoms is different. In adults high caffeine consumption appears to cause nervousness, irritability, anxiety, restlessness, agitation, muscle tremors, sleeplessness, and headaches. When children exhibit these symptoms, they are said to be nervous and jittery, easily frustrated, easily upset, and impatient when their demands are not met immediately. These symptoms have been strongly linked to hyperactive behavior in children, and one study showed that one third of the children with high levels of caffeine consumption could be diagnosed as hyperactive. In addition, chronic or regular consumption of caffeine appears to cause a drop in classroom participation, although this particular result needs further study.

In a recent review of the relationship between caffeine use and cancer of the bladder, one researcher concluded that coffee is at least a weak bladder carcinogen, and that if further evidence was needed to clear up that question, then researchers would need to study for a decade a population of more than 10,000 people with low coffee intake, such as Mormons or Seventh-day Adventists.

Within two months a study of 24,000 Seventh-day Adventists was published. Investigators studying the Seventh-day Adventists were able to show that those individuals consuming two or more cups of coffee per day had double the risk of developing fatal bladder cancer. The study also showed an increase in fatal colon cancer with the same levels of consumption. Inhibition of iron absorption is another health risk lying in wait for the tea and coffee drinker. Coffee can cause a 40 percent decrease in iron absorption. Tea can cause absorption to decrease by two thirds.

Table 1: Caffeine Content of Soft Drinks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Milligrams Caffeine (12-oz. serving)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar-free Mr. PIBB</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Dew</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mello Yello</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAB</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coca-Cola</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet Coke</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shasta Cola</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shasta Cherry Cola</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shasta Diet Cola</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. PIBB</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Pepper</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar-Free Dr. Pepper</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Red</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar-Free Big Red</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepsi-Cola</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspen</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet Pepsi</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepsi-Light</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC Cola</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet Rite</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kick</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Dry Jamaica Cola</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Lecos 1974).

Table 2: Elimination of Caffeine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition or age</th>
<th>Half-life in Plasma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>5-6 hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult using oral contraceptives</td>
<td>11-12 hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant adult (second and third trimester)</td>
<td>10-18 hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premature and Newborn</td>
<td>98 hr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: (Miller and Harris 1983; Von Bonzel 1983).

coffee, or tea has any commercial interest involved, there will be a controversy over whether to support health or profits. The problem arises when those supporting profit present themselves as health supporters looking for honest answers.

15 Collins, Welsh, et al.
19 J. Hopkins, "Coffee Drinking and Bladder Cancer," *Food and Chemical Toxicology* 22, No. 6 (1984): 481-495.
IS THE YEAR-DAY PRINCIPLE VALID?

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The Messianic Hope: How to Share It With Your Jewish Friends

"It's as easy to convert the Jews," wrote Martin Luther, "as the devil himself." Many Christians might agree with him.

Yet it doesn't have to be so difficult. Jews can be, and are, won to Christ. It takes much work, prayer, and love to win anybody to Jesus. With Jews it just takes a little more—along with a specialized approach.

Wellington's training manual is an easily read and valuable tool for anyone interested in working to graft Jews back into spiritual Israel.

Wellington shares many practical pointers. He gives appropriate substitutes for words such as cross, conversion, and baptism that are offensive to Jews. He also lists Jewish misconceptions about Christianity and suggests how to tactfully correct them. From the other angle, he deals with Gentile misconceptions of Jews.

The manual uses biblical examples of how Jesus worked to win souls and applies them to the modern context. "You must be willing to ask your friend for a cup of water before you can lead him/her to the Water of Life." This approach is effective, for Christians too often approach Jews with an air of superiority. Instead we should go to the Jew and humbly ask questions. Trust awakens trust, and opens doors.

13 Fatal Errors Managers Make And How You can Avoid Them

W. Stephen Brown is the president of the Fortune Group, an international managerial training company, and he didn't write this book with pastors in mind, but the principles involved and their relationship to churches and church organizations are too obvious to pass over.

According to Brown, companies fail because managers fail. "And when managers fail it is not because they cannot master numbers, but because they try to master people, or manipulate them, or ignore them." Churches are in the business of working with people and wouldn't knowingly do any of the above, but the methods of the world have an uncanny way of subtly injecting themselves into the church.

The Fortune Group has worked with hundreds of companies and has cataloged the most common managerial errors in soured businesses. There are not many—just 13, and Brown devotes a chapter to each. Here is his list: (1) refuse to accept personal accountability, (2) fail to develop people, (3) try to control results instead of influencing thinking, (4) join the wrong crowd (take sides), (5) manage (treat) everyone the same way, (6) forget the importance of profit (or stewardship), (7) concentrate on problems rather than objectives, (8) become a buddy, not a boss (this chapter discusses allowing people more responsibility for themselves), (9) fail to set standards, (10) fail to train people, (11) condone incompetence (or sin), (12) recognize only top performers (or church leaders), and (13) try to manipulate people. The exact wording may not always be appropriate to the church, but the principles speak for themselves.

One would hope that churches would naturally have the first four prerequisites for success noted in the book—a quality or unique product (the gospel), proper timing (the last days), adequate capital (faith), people resources (members)—but they can still fail in their potential without the fifth: effective management (leadership). The book is written for profit-making businesses with materialistic aims, and we cannot apply all of the author's specific instruction to the pastor or church leadership, but the ideas involved supply much food for productive thought about the people management aspects of church organization.

Is the Papacy Predicted by St. Paul?
Christopher Wordsworth, The Harrison Trust, Box 47, Ramsgate, Kent, England, 1880, 36 pages, 75 pence. Reviewed by Patrick Boyle, stewardship and Sabbath school director, South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

This pamphlet was written in 1880 by the nephew of the poet William Wordsworth. Christopher Wordsworth was one of the finest scholars of his day. He wrote a commentary on the whole Bible and produced his own edition of the Greek New Testament. The pamphlet is an exposition of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-13.

Written during the pontificate of Pius IX, who promulgated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, produced the Syllabus of Errors, and proclaimed the doctrine of papal infallibility, its language is direct. It is, however, courteous and Christian.

In a day when the papacy is again making a profound impact upon the world, this essay remains timely.

Middle Sized Church—Problems and Prescriptions

Schaller's reasons for writing this book is that middle-sized churches (100 to 200 worshipers) are traditionally viewed as difficult to pastor. No two of these churches are alike, he says, and they have grown past the "one big family" atmosphere of smaller churches.

Mid-sized churches are larger than six out of seven Protestant churches in America, but they typically have difficulty growing. The author makes good suggestions for broadening both the financial base of the church and the congregation's outlook on itself and its mission. There are specific suggestions for helping the congregation move to a two-service worship service.

This book is for the pastor who wants to see his church grow past middle size to large.

New certificates for baptism and profession of faith
The General Conference Ministerial Association has completed preparation of new baptism and profession of faith certificates in English and Spanish. The new certificates are different from any published before because recent Annual Council actions required that all 27 fundamental beliefs be included on the certificates.

Direct-mail advertising help
The Christmas season is one of two times during the year when spiritually inactive people are most likely to respond to an invitation to visit your church. A direct-mail outreach can help reach those who are just waiting to be invited.

Mike Jones, former editor of Insight, has used direct mail effectively in the pastoral ministry, and is now working in the marketing field. He can give you good help in developing a direct-mail marketing plan targeted to meet specific groups of people in your area.

For a sample letter and further information, contact Mike at PSW, 517 SW Fourth Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204 (503) 228-4000. Since lead time is important, contact him soon to plan for Christmas season advertising.

Adventist Computer Association sponsors BBS
A new organization specifically for Seventh-day Adventist computer users is planning to offer several services tailored especially to church members. The Adventist Computer Association (ACA) has already established a modem-accessible Bulletin Board System. The bulletin board is currently available from 4:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m. Pacific time on Tuesdays and Thursdays at (503) 253-2289. In the future it will be open only to members of the association.

Additional services planned by the association include a software library, bimonthly newsletter, and establishment of local chapters. The organization is still in its formative stages, but more information is available on the BBS via modem, or from Marc D. Thornsbury, 9705 SE Grant Court, Portland, Oregon 97216. Marc can also be reached at the phone number listed above during non-BBS hours.

Helpful papers for free
The Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference has available papers dealing with various doctrines, dissidents, and denominations. Doctrinal studies are available on: doctrine of the Trinity, existentialism, historical criticism, nature of Christ (reprint of MINISTRY 1985 articles), perfectionism, and Sabbath observance. Information about dissidents and offshoots is available on: the Brinsmead movement; Vance Ferrell; Desmond Ford (apostlesmatic principle; Hebrews report); German Reform movement; critique of Hauser's Give Glory to Him; Jubilee 1987—Chet Wolfe, etc.; Shepherd's Rod; Spiritual Warfare; and Charles Wheeling. Papers on other denominations are about: Armstrong's Radio Church of God, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, and the Sacred Name movement.

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The Words of Christ
Southerby Productions has recently released a set of audiotapes excerpting the words Jesus spoke from the New Testament. The set also includes a large-print red-letter King James Version New Testament and a 30-minute videocassette featuring the life of Christ in famous paintings.

Churches interested in using the set for fund-raising should contact Southerby Productions, Inc., 5000 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, California 90804 for details.

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