Spectrum
The Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

The Adventist Family

BETWEEN TWO FAMILIES

REDEEMING FAMILY SYSTEMS

HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH

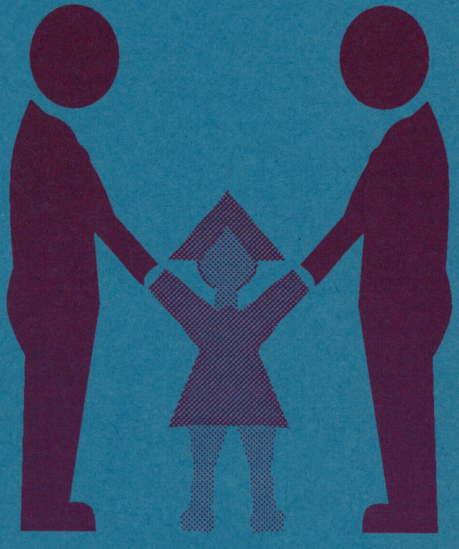
DAD, ME, AND MASCULINITY

LARGE SDA CHURCHES: THE SILENT MAJORITY

MY DISABILITY, MY CHURCH

THE BIG DEAL ABOUT PORK AND JEWELRY

READERS' SYMPOSIUM



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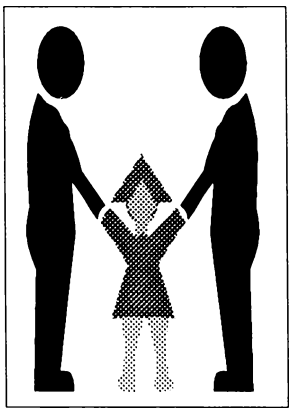
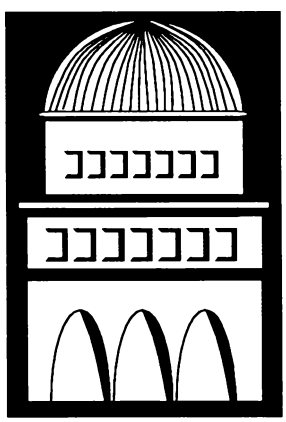
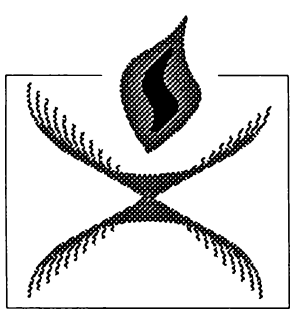






The Adventist Family

THE ADVENTIST FAMILY REFERS, FIRST OF ALL, TO families who are Adventists. Our special section provides glimpses of Adventist families through the eyes of one daughter's poetry and another's short story, a son's reflection on masculinity, a mother's sociological analysis of teenage spirituality, and a spouse's theological/psychological essay on family systems.

The Adventist family can, secondly, mean the family that is the Adventist Church. That family can be heard in other voices within this issue: a person with a disability giving her testimony, two academics debating the Adventist lifestyle, and several readers sharing their opinions. The most startling of these essays is Monte Sahlin's report on the demographics of the North American Adventist family.

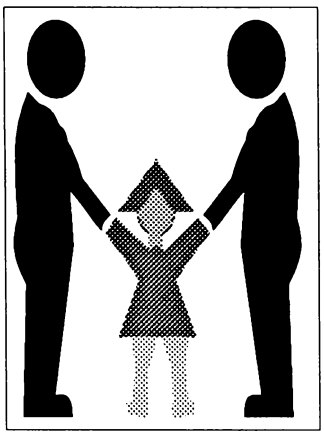
For years, the assumption that most Adventists gather in small, rural churches has dominated the church's thinking. If most Adventist congregations in North America are small and located in the country, we quickly concluded the majority of Adventists must live and worship there. Writers and editors of denominational magazines, Sabbath school quarterlies, and resource materials for all the church's ministries seem to focus on the hopes and dreams of small-town and rural America. Academy and college recruiters emphasize the pastoral qualities of their campuses. Conference officials plan camp-meetings for members who otherwise see only the few Adventists in their small church.

Sahlin's article shows that the reality is different: Most Adventists attend large churches, many in metropolitan areas. The majority of the Adventist family in North America worships in large churches: One quarter of the members belong to congregations of more than 600 members. Thousands worship each Sabbath in churches with more than 1,000 members.

If we genuinely absorbed Sahlin's picture of Adventism in North America, we would realize that Adventism is a multi-racial, multi-cultural family, living in metropolitan America. That would mean that the range of challenges facing urban America would be Adventism's problems—and opportunities. It would mean that tensions in metropolitan America, between white suburbs and black and Hispanic inner-cities, would be our tensions. It would mean that we would feel the conflict between Simi Valley and South Central Los Angeles threatening to tear apart our Adventist family.

If we genuinely absorbed Sahlin's picture of Adventism, we would realize that in North America we are already launched on a great experiment: a diverse church family that is demonstrating how the dissonances of urban existence could ultimately be transmuted into the richness and harmony of the city of God.

Roy Branson



Caught Between Two Families

A 14-year-old daughter, her disfellowshipped father, and her grandparents working at G.C. headquarters, converge at the 1966 General Conference Session.

by Deborah Anfenson-Vance

THE SUMMER AFTER THE SCHOOL YEAR OF my attempt at salvation-by-hemline, our family flew from Los Angeles to Detroit for General Conference. F. D. Nichol had just surprised everyone by dying ("He was doing so *well* last time I saw him," I overheard Grandpa telling Grandma), R. R. Figuhr was retiring, and so was my mother's father, reluctantly, at age 70.

Grandpa was the quintessential Adventist, a vigorous, disciplined man with a résumé that included 20 years as a "China hand" and a 16-year stint at the General Conference. Grandpa traveled the world for the Sabbath school department, introduced the Vacation Bible School concept to the Adventist Church, and even wrote a book, *Our Priceless Primaries.*

It all impressed me, particularly the book. When I was in third grade I memorized a poem from *Our Priceless Primaries* and recited it to my classmates, who must have been bewildered at the meaning of it all. Somewhere in the first stanza, the Sabbath school teacher "donned her hat one day." I did not know exactly what it meant to "don," but it struck me as a gesture of considerable panache, this woman grandly "donning" her hat to go forth and teach the children. Mother's subsequent definition, "to put on," seemed a bland and unwelcome substitute. One may put on a hat, or one may don it, and donning, I decided, was better. That was what I learned from *Our Priceless Primaries.*

Grandpa, who had no idea his book suffered such under-interpretation, and Grandma, an impeccable, reserved woman renowned for her lemon meringue pie, were to meet us at the Detroit airport. It was our first cross-country flight together as a family. Mother, who was already scared stiff to leave the ground, failed to fasten her seat belt and nearly hit the ceiling, by my father's account, when the plane took off. He chuckled when

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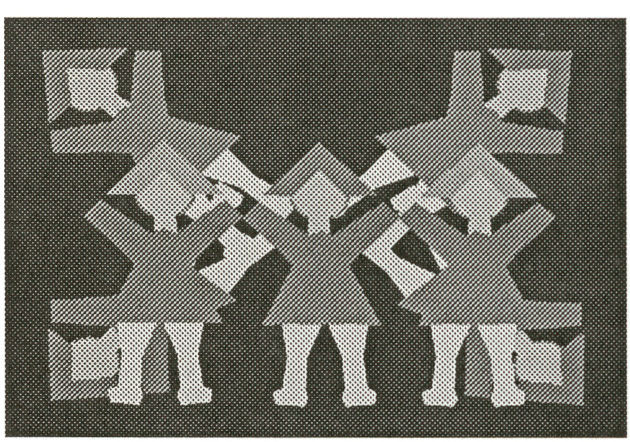
he said it, and I thought maybe he exaggerated the actual event, but was never sure.

This was a strange trip for my father, a former Adventist. Whatever he thought about our family vacation, however, he kept to himself. Over the years he had kept many things to himself. But it is easier to hide facts than feelings, and I grew up aware of his bitterness toward Adventism and his perfectly Adventist in-laws, if not of the events that spawned the feelings. Regarding church trends, my father was a man ahead of his time, and it hurt him.

Few ministers were preaching grace when Daddy's local congregation disfellowshipped him for remarrying after a divorce. No one was making source-critical studies of the Spirit of Prophecy, or questioning its range of authority, when my dad told me he just couldn't buy into all this "Ellen White stuff." It was not yet fashionable to publicly air dirty church business or question the ethics of denominational leaders when my father began disburdening himself on the nepotism, inequity, and unprofessionalism he encountered working for the church organization in the late 1940s. My father had no credible community to support his contentions, so most of the time he kept them to himself. But the bitterness remained, stockpiled and waiting for the next fight with Mother or a smart remark from one of his kids.



My mother and grandparents disapproved of so many of my father's attitudes and practices (once every two or three years, he knocked back a beer or two, and he watched the news on Friday night) that I found it convenient to follow suit, rejecting him as an authority on any matter of behavior or belief. One evening during prime time we argued loudly over whether I would exercise my God-given right to watch "The Monkees," and I lost. In my mind, my father's vendetta against long-haired rock musicians seemed of one piece with his intolerance for tithing and vegetarianism. I was not being disciplined, but persecuted.

But Daddy seemed comparatively docile on our flight to Detroit, unnaturally so, considering that for the next two weeks he would be steeped in institutional Adventism. Whatever he might have been thinking on that flight, it was unlikely that he would tell me, a recent eighth-grade graduate. Anyway, I had firmly attached myself to the headset in order to avoid listening to the plane engines, over which I worried as if I could do something about them. *The Swan of Tuonela*, Ravel's *Bolero*, and a Rimsky-Korsakov composition filled my head, effectively tuning out mechanical sounds and my sister, who had just finished sixth grade and knew everything, but nothing I wanted to hear. Dotsie was secular, like my dad. Much of my education in off-color jokes and four-letter words I owe to her.

After the classical program had cycled and recycled a half a dozen times, I removed the headsets and started bothering the stewardess. "How much longer till we land?" I asked. I thought we were pressing our luck to have stayed aloft as long as we had.

"We'll be landing in about two hours," she said. "Would you like some playing cards?"

I had not the dimmest idea what to do with playing cards, so I declined.

At the airport, Grandpa and Grandma picked us up in their white 1964 Ford. Ford was so much a part of our family I thought it was the Adventist way. Daddy had once strayed to a Pepto-Bismol-pink Rambler, but for the most part he had stuck with Ford-Mercury products. My grandparents, as far as I know, had never wavered. Whatever we thought of one another's religious views, we seemed to believe in the same cars; whatever I thought of my dad's character, I was proud of his stand on Fords. I recall once experiencing sweet fellowship on the playground with a classmate whose father bought a Galaxie 500.

Grandpa delivered us to a hotel somewhere near Cobo Hall in downtown Detroit. With all my heart I had been looking forward to Cobo Hall because our pastor's son would be there. This young man had literally swept me off my feet when we collided in the corridor outside my eighth-grade classroom.

"Are you all right?" he asked, in an unusually deep voice for boys of my age. No one had ever asked me that before, except my mother, and that didn't count. No, I was not all right. I was in sudden love, the way eighth-graders fall in love, which had nothing at all to do with love. This boy had always seemed indifferent to my heart's affection. Or maybe he didn't know. Anyway, I would show up at Cobo Hall, the only other person from our school, except for my sister, who was romantically irrelevant. He would see me isolated from the hoi polloi of our academy, a familiar young face in this crowd of grey, balding, burdened adults, and he would suddenly be struck with the blossoming beauty, intelligence, virtue, and charm I was not sure I possessed. But maybe he would see something I hadn't seen, and I would find at the 1966 General Conference the torrid, true love Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant had found in *Roman Holiday.*

The event around which my suitcase packing had revolved took place sometime around the weekend. I ran into, this time not literally, the long-awaited boy, coming around the corner outside the main auditorium. Given his reputation back home, he couldn't have been very happy to be attending a General Conference. I said "Hi," and he said "Hi," and if he had said more I would not have known what to do. Such economy of vocabulary transformed Cobo Hall into a place holy with sightings and anticipation of more, though in fact there was only this one. I was able to stand with the adults in the main auditorium and sing the new song, "We Have This Hope," with unplanned fervency, feeling for the first time my heart burning, more with coming of age than of the Lord.

Maybe I would find at the 1966 General Conference the torrid, true love Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant had found in Roman Holiday.

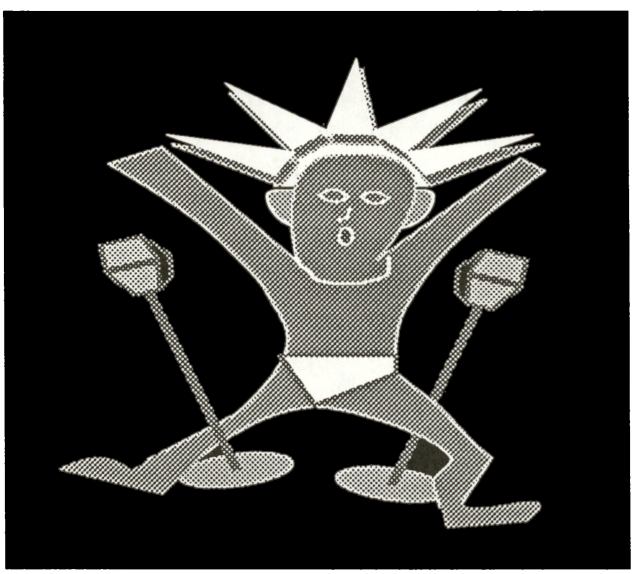
Not that the Lord failed to concern me. My heart had given him the nod too, but with fear, which to date was the most emotion I had been able to muster for God. For all their disavowal of the traditional Protestant hell, the Adventists had found equally effective ways to scare my soul into a desire for righteousness. Who needed "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God" when Grandpa and Company were freely laying upon us times of trouble, lakes of fire, and investigative judgments? I did not understand how my grandfather could have himself photographed hugging koala bears in Australia, exchange silly jokes with Adlai Esteb, or relish one bite of Grandma's lemon meringue pie when all the danger of the cosmos hung over his head and every other human

head. I could only conclude that he, and most other Adventists, were far better people than I.

I was operating from this supposition when, Sabbath morning, I met Aunt Florence, one of Grandpa's Michigan relatives. She was a schoolteacher and, I perceived, a fine, orthodox Adventist. In contrast to this excellent woman stood our family, a people living on the fringe of Adventist life-style. I felt I had much to hide—divorces, meat-eating, restaurant dining on the Sabbath. I had even gone through a tormented period in which I watched *The Flintstones* on Friday night. And, of course, I carried the burden of a non-Adventist father.

Daddy showed himself friendly enough with the gathered saints and relatives—too friendly, I worried. I lived in fear that he would say "Damn," or mention something nonreligious, like Lyndon B. Johnson, or the price of new cars. Or maybe he would tell one of his racist jokes. My dad was not exactly the most politically correct person to be taking to Detroit, not to mention to a gathering of Adventists, in the mid-1960s.

But at 14, I was more socially than politically aware. And what plagued me, after Aunt Florence seated herself in the front seat of Grandpa's Ford, was that in my nervous attempt to make conversation with this person I had never before laid eyes upon, I had mentioned that my father had *shaved* that Sabbath morning. And then I wondered, to myself, "Can Adventists shave on Sabbath?" I had heard, after all, some debate about showering and bathing.



A sinking feeling came over me that whether or not the church at large approved of Sabbath shaving, *these* Adventists, who were of all Adventists most circumspect (one of Grandpa's favorite sayings was "Others may, you cannot"), conducted no questionable activity on the seventh day, particularly not with an *electrical* appliance. It seemed you could do many things on Sabbath as long as they didn't involve something plugged into the wall, slide projectors excepted. You could sit through the whole of Sabbath school and church attempting to finger press a wrinkle out of the middle of your skirt front, but God forbid you should plug in an iron and take care of the problem in 60 seconds. And I knew for a fact, for our Sabbath dinner, we would be eating Heinz Vegetarian Beans cold out of the can in my grandparents' hotel room. But now I had exposed my backslidden father's Sabbath habits in front of an Adventist I hardly knew, with no idea of what the consequences might be.

Aunt Florence did not directly address the issue of shaving, but she did seem uncomfortable and taciturn. I attributed this to her being "the nervous type," and to her possible disapproval of shaving on Sabbath. When she later demonstrated the warmth and generosity of her personality, I had to modify my theories of her behavior. Maybe being with my General Conference grandfather put her on edge. Or maybe it was Detroit.

The irony of gathering all those city-fearing Adventists in the middle of Detroit was not lost on me. Take them to San Francisco, to the Cow Palace, I thought. The Cow Palace was the biggest building I had ever seen. The

Adventists did just fine in San Francisco; it had more nature. And more Chinese restaurants—good for all those returned missionaries. I figured even Washington, D.C., Indianapolis, San Diego, or Chicago would have been more harmonious to Adventists than Detroit. They hardly knew what to do with Detroit.

Even my worldly father explored Detroit in a surprisingly small-townish way. He, my sister, and I set out one afternoon to explore the bustling area around Cobo Hall. For two days and one night I had been living in the middle of this human melee, farther away from Fresno than I had ever been in my life, so far away that I thought I had come to an Eastern city. I was eager to venture into the grey urbanity surrounding Cobo Hall, to discover what rallied such honking traffic jams and hordes of pedestrians. So the three of us went forth. Amid this pulsing grandeur of skyscrapers and automobiles we found a newsstand, a shoe-shine man, and a shop hawking peanuts, popcorn, and candy. Detroit came unto me as a Butterfingers bar, and I ate, ignorant of its greater glories and sins.

But I was not much more successful at figuring out what was going on inside Cobo Hall. After the Heinz beans and Fig Newtons, the sober, plain-faced crowds, and that bad, beautiful boy, one image remains—a New Guinea bushman wearing war paint and hardly any clothes, brandishing a spear and jumping around the auditorium platform like a roaring human spider. It was the General Conference of Paul Piari.

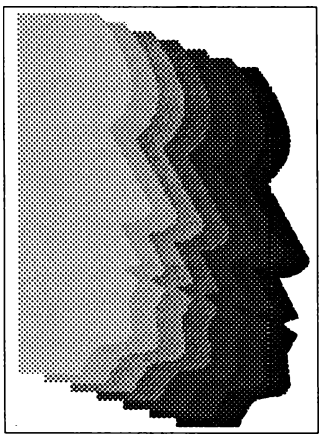
Adventist leaders presented Mr. Piari as an example of the transforming power of the gospel—whatever that was. I should have know without anyone telling me. But it seemed clear that Paul Piari's most colorful aspect had to do with elements predating his transformation. Whoever put him on stage—the spotlight following his feathers, paint, and loincloth as he jumped about in a pre-Christian attack mode—obviously believed in the power of the primitive to gain the attention of the saints and the rest of us.

The show intrigued me. My perfect grandparents sat at the end of the row, next to my imperfect parents and my sister (who worked as hard to demonstrate her vices as I my virtues). This was not one family, but two, stretching me out tight between the pull of their two realities. Right then it did not seem much of an advantage to be growing up Adventist. I didn't know how to put it all together in a way that made sense. If you're a reformed cannibal or head-hunter, they parade you up front when, for the love of Christ, you quit cutting out people's hearts. It's harder when you're 14 and have never done anything more antisocial than sass your mother. For us the church had a whole huge list of imperatives.

It confused me. Being an Adventist looked not like one thing, but twenty, or a hundred—an array of odd, disjointed allegiances encompassing everything from Fords and Fig Newtons to shaving on Sabbath and Christ dying on the cross. I didn't know how to fit all those beliefs together in the one person without pulling that person apart into many pieces. I was already torn between doing what felt natural and doing what was right, to the point that it seemed I must always go against myself if I would go for God.

But the man on the stage appeared to be having none of these problems. Paul Piari playfully hooted and leaped through an odd forest of pulpits and microphone stands, and I could not tell where the hooting left off and the leaping began, so seamless was his joining of song and dance. Of course nobody called it a dance; that's just what it looked like to me. Here was God's new instrument playing out before me in native wholeness and simplicity.

I wanted to dance too. But I knew I shouldn't.



Unto the Third and Fourth Generations

What happens when Adventist family systems pass on generational baggage.

by Madelynn Jones-Haldeman

> Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me (Matthew 10:34-37, NASB).

THE DAMAGE TO CHRISTIAN FAMILIES WROUGHT by misinterpretation of this saying of Jesus in Matthew is incalculable. The sword that Jesus proclaimed he came to bring is a metaphor for death. But to what does the death allude? What does this sentence mean? Did Jesus come to bring death to families? What is it about the family that Jesus' new teaching is against?

The first-century family represented a closed system; the father set the boundaries controlling the lives, words, and actions of all other members of the family. To love one's neighbor meant to have solidarity only with one's extended family. To hate one's enemy meant no solidarity with anyone outside the large, extended family.

In Jesus' time, patterns of behavior were entrenched in families and were passed on generation after generation. The lives of the people were directed by racism, sexism, and classism—generational baggage. It is easy to understand why early Christians who joined the Christian family, with its mixture of races and classes, would be unacceptable to the father of a natural family. Christians who risked breaking away from their natural fathers to belong to the church family sometimes risked death.

The sad fact about baggage is that a behavior can get passed on, its justification forgotten. In time it becomes acceptable family tradition. In contrast, Jesus focused on the differentiation of the self from the closed

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family system, and atonement, oneness, or solidarity with the whole human race. Christians who believe that the word *self* belongs to the group of words designated as "four-letter words" certainly miss one of the most basic teaching of Jesus.

In other words, in matters of atonement and solidarity with others, the Christian cannot be controlled by any other human being. Therefore, the expression "to hate someone" must be understood as a person avoiding solidarity. For followers of Jesus, even solidarity with one's family cannot be enjoyed at the expense of solidarity with all human beings.

The Family as a System

Within the past 50 years a new way to look at the family has emerged. Rather than seeing each member of the family as "motivated by his or her own particular psychological mechanisms and conflicts,"[1] family systems theory "emphasizes the function an individual's behavior has in the broader context of the relationship process."[2] This means simply that what motivates a person does not reside solely within the individual alone but rather is found within the entire relationship system. At least, some aspects of the behavior of the individual can be explained "in the context of the function of that behavior in the emotional system."[3]

Family members can carry the unresolved conflicts and patterns of behavior from their parents, indeed from many preceding generations, and pass them down to their children. This generational baggage intrudes into the lives of the entire family, each one carrying parts or all of it into their nuclear family. In this way, individuals continue with their spouses and children the "dances" of their parents and grandparents. Even though the issues vary, each generation manages its anxiety in ways similar to how its parents managed.

To be a self and yet to be part of a group (such as a family or a church), without losing or erasing the self, is the balancing out each person must achieve. Jesus' teaching about expressing the self in association with people not acceptable to the natural family is certainly an example of this balancing act. First-century Christians who connected with not only their natural families but also with others could be regarded by their relatives as disrespectful or selfish. To avoid passing the generational baggage of racism and classism from one generation to the next could entail actions regarded by relatives as violating the traditions and teachings of one's parents.

To act for the self should not be confused with egocentricity. The person who views

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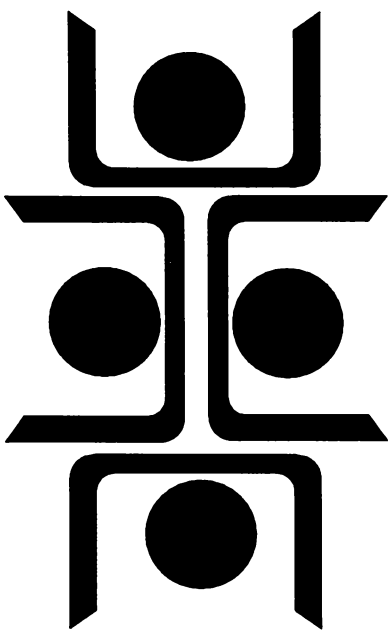
himself or herself as a victim in the family of origin is preoccupied with self in sick and dysfunctional ways. A vengeful attitude pervades some of these victims. Like the Ancient Mariner, they must tell everyone their story over and over again.

To tell people who consider themselves victims to stop thinking of themselves and start thinking of others does not solve their problem. We have been too quick to offer such advice as the biblical answer to all problems. Victims must learn to reclaim their lost "selfs" before they can possibly learn the fine art of "togetherness." To be a self and act for the self is to choose. Such a choice stops behaviors and attitudes that victimize.

Adjusting the balance of individuality and togetherness is usually learned in one's family of origin. Most of one's social, emotional, and physical dysfunctions stem from an imbalance in these two primary factors. One gains a picture of the self from the oral communication, body language, and physical touch of adults and siblings in the home. If family members emphasize acting and speaking according to family rules, such as keeping family matters completely private, individuality may be erased at the expense of the group.



When the conflict between individuality and togetherness within the family remains unresolved, one person sometimes expresses the dysfunctionality of the whole family system. A spouse or child may adopt aberrant behavior or become seriously ill. The family often feels that if the problem person could be fixed up, the family would be all right. This narrow focusing restricts responsibility for a dysfunctional family onto one person. A systems view suggests that all members of a family have played some part in contributing to the family's dysfunction.

When generational baggage is passed down from one generation of parents to the next, it may be expressed in one spouse, open conflict between parents, or the anxious focusing of the parents on one or more of their children. Often one of the parents takes sides with a child against the others in the family. Sometimes the mother joins the children in opposing the father. This is known as a triangle, and often is carried into the next generation. Many homes have triangles formed around an alcohol or drug problem, conflicts over religion, an illness, or some physical dysfunction.

A dysfunctional family can persist from one generation to another. The family, in the name of togetherness, can employ the tactics of cajoling or threatening (in either a religious or secular nature), or creating guilt. The family can keep an individual so stuck in generational patterns that she or he becomes one more link in a family's chain of dysfunctionality.

Adventism and the Family System

Sometimes families mired for generations in dysfunctional patterns join the Adventist Church. In this new family—the church—all the unresolved conflicts within the family of origin are repeated; only the names and the vocabulary differ. The conflict between individuality and togetherness finds a new front within the church.

Whatever problems and conflicts the parishioners fail to resolve in their families of

origin are played out in the church family. Squabbling, distancing, shaming, overfunctioning, triangling, playing the "sick" member, and a host of other dysfunctional behaviors are constantly present in the family of God. As a church, we take no responsibility for these behaviors. We assume that if the person with the problem really practiced his or her Christianity (got changed), the church would be all right. Such an attitudinal posture makes certain that our baggage will become the baggage of our children, and of our church.

If, as family systems theory suggests, most of us repeat our parents' unresolved conflicts with their parents and siblings, what hope is there for us? Many Adventist Christians believe that the answer is having a spiritual life: praying, celebrating worship, observing church ordinances. Other Adventists respond by trying to leave their family. But neither response empowers us to escape our dysfunctional families. To discard the family is to refuse to learn.

To free ourselves of generational baggage, it is vital that we remain connected to our family of origin. Many have not yet learned that the family of origin is both the source and the arena for resolving our conflict and anxiety. If we are not to pass generational baggage on to the next generation we must learn how to pass it back. Our Christian conscience is repulsed by the idea of passing it on, but to pass it back, we must recognize how we remain connected to the family.

An honest look at the Adventist Church suggests that many of us do not know how to have connectedness with our nuclear families of origin and still maintain our individuality. We typically sacrifice our individuality because we believe it is Christian to have peace at any price. But if togetherness is fostered at the expense of individual needs, it causes an imbalance in the family system. The individuals within the family then absorb the physical, mental, and psychological disturbances afflicting the family as a system.

Sadly, in many Adventist homes, parents refuse to take any responsibility for the unacceptable behavior of their children. We lament and pray for our "lost" children, but we never look at our family system to see what problems keep getting passed on from generation to generation. A "genogram" would allow us to recognize patterns of behavior by parents in their treatment of children through the generations: shame, ridicule, humiliation, and downright cruelty.

The family often feels that if the problem person could be fixed up, the family would be all right. A systems view suggests that all members of a family have played some part in contributing to the family's dysfunction.

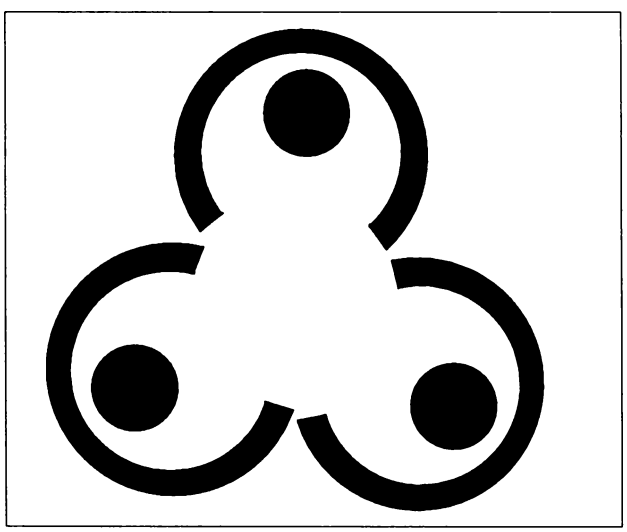
Redeeming the Adventist Family

The Adventist Church will eventually have to wrestle with generational baggage, for the simple reason that we cannot escape it. Our families must be taken seriously. They provide each of us with a fairly accurate resource for knowing ourselves better; to know the patterns that bind the self in a quagmire of guilt and shame, in inappropriate

responses, and in addictions of many kinds. The wonder of it all is that in helping ourselves to see all of these patterns and to take steps to get "unstuck," the entire family is moved to a higher level of functioning. Just as we must take into consideration the context of a given text in the Scriptures to understand its proper meaning, so also we must get our personal "context" in order to understand ourselves.

Though interesting, a collection of data concerning our families will not by itself change us. However, the larger pattern of our generations, with their idiosyncratic ways of reacting to life, provides a different way to think about others than the usual blaming and criticizing. Change is impossible as long as we get stuck blaming others. We will repeat the dance, over and over again. Regardless of how devoted we are to the cause of God, if we focus only on another family member's deficiency, it is impossible for us to see our own part in the system. Becoming a Christian is not to be equated with blocking out our families, our position in our families, our family patterns of behavior, and our family's belief system.

The greatest gift parents can give a child is passing on less generational baggage than was handed down to them. Parents can best empower their children by taking steps to resolve the issues in their own families of origin—resolving problems that they inherited from previous generations.



Of course, reconciliation is not some passive acquiescence to evil. It certainly can mean taking a bold stand in one's relationships, stating what can be tolerated and what cannot. The example, in Matthew, of Jesus refusing to be molded by his mother and brothers (all of whom knew better) into the "correct messianic figure" (Matthew 12:46-50) is a constant reminder that each person must determine her or his destiny in accordance with her or his God-given gifts. This is how a self develops that cannot be bought or sold. For many, to have a self and to act for the self is to be selfish and unaccountably sinful. But when Jesus suggested to the disciples on the mountaintop (Matthew 5:24) that religious ritual does not take priority over resolving relationships, he was most certainly suggesting that the self is to take steps for the self.

Let us be brave enough to look at the family patterns that have been bequeathed to us. Let us learn what to do to change ourselves, not others. Certainly, God is on the side of change.

We can be confident that whenever we ask for wisdom regarding our part in a dysfunctional home or church, our prayers will be answered. We all need to learn how to relate in appropriate and healthy ways to our families of origin, our present nuclear families, and our Adventist Church family.

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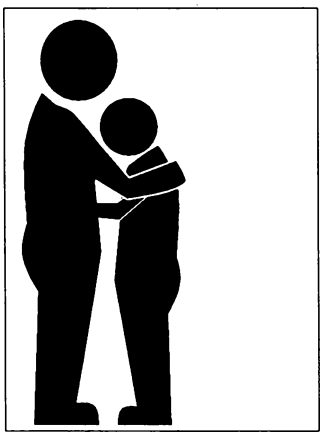
1 Michael Kerr and Murray Bowen. *Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory.* New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988, p. viii.

2 Ibid., p. 49.

3 Ibid., p. 49.



Have You Hugged Your Kids Today?

Love, understanding, and a sense of belonging are the keys to keeping your children in the church.

by Gail Taylor Rice

I WAS EAGER TO MEET ISABEL, MY WALKING partner, one morning last year. The night before had been her son's senior prom. The church they attended, she had told me, was quite concerned about what could happen on prom night to her boy and three other seniors in their congregation who went to the local high school. Their denomination did not frown on dancing, but drinking and premarital sex were unacceptable, and the church members were determined to do what they could to reduce the temptations.

As we rounded the track, Isabel described the special evening a number of their friends in the church—none of them parents of the seniors—had provided. They hired a stretch limousine to drive the kids to one of their homes. There, on a decorated patio overlooking the city, the students enjoyed a nine-course dinner, elegantly served by tuxedo-clad church-member waiters. After dinner, their chauffeur drove them 30 miles to the hotel where the prom was held, waited until the dance was over, and returned them to their homes, safe and sound.

As we completed our customary laps, I marveled at the care shown by Isabel's friends. And I wondered if members of my own church would do as much for our young people. What do we do on prom night for Adventist students who attend local high schools? Do we look for creative ways to help our teenagers avoid temptation? Are we willing to get personally involved in planning and preparing special activities for them? Would we put up the money for a limousine? Do we even know just who our young people are, and where they go to school?

I also wondered if I was asking the right sort of questions. Is it necessary to spend vast amounts of time and effort on inconsequential

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things—nonspiritual activities—in order to keep youth in the church? Is this what young people want from their church? And does it really make a difference? Isabel would say it does. She told me that virtually all the young people in her denomination remain active church members. Lifelong commitment is the norm.

I suspect that many young people lose interest in Adventism because they have not experienced warmth and acceptance from adults in their homes, schools, and churches. They do not feel that they are a significant part of their congregations. They are not convinced that they belong. And they don't feel they would be missed if they left. In the following paragraphs I want to explore this pressing need and look for ways to meet it.

Research clearly shows that a climate of warmth and openness provides powerful encouragement for faith development in young people.[1] A number of studies have evaluated the relationship between warmth young people feel in the institutional environment and the probability that they will develop a commitment to Christian faith and church membership. Charles Shelton,[2] a noted researcher on the development of youth values and morals, insists that acceptance, along with tolerance and patience, is essential if youth-adult relationships are to encourage spiritual development. Showing acceptance toward an adolescent, he states, does not necessarily indicate approval, but it does involve an element of understanding and unconditional love.

According to Merton Strommen, self-hatred is one of the "five cries of American youth."[3] From survey responses of churched and nonchurched young people over a period of 14 years, Strommen discovered that many young people in our society have very low levels of self-esteem, while young people who are active in their churches have a sense of feeling good about themselves Strommen considers warmth and concern to be key factors in overcoming self-hatred, an essential step toward mature Christian faith and practice. To achieve self-esteem and identity, he states, a person needs "the emphatic and warm relationship of a concerned person. . . . The essentials in helping youth to a sense of personal significance are empathy, warmth, and genuineness."

The Adventist Church is also asking about faith development and denominational loyalty. Roger Dudley looks at these issues in greater detail in *Passing the Torch.* In Romania, he notes, where young people comprise a large percentage of Adventist congregations, warmth, belonging and involvement are evident.[4] The church makes plans with younger members in mind and involves the youth in activities that go on most of the day on Sabbath.

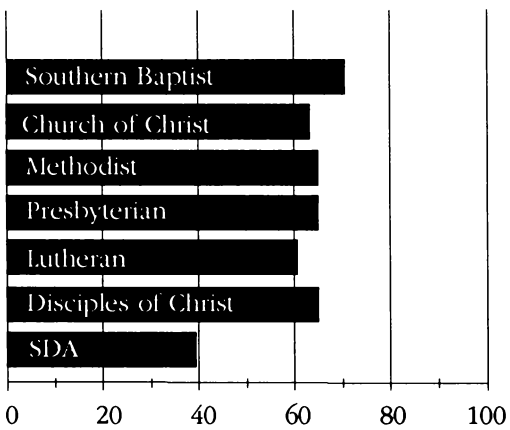
Adventists, in Romania and elsewhere, have come to see that caring churches are not enough. Graduate students at various institutions have studied the relationship between attendance at Adventist schools, for example, and continued commitment to the church.[5] These studies do show positive correlations between Adventist school attendance and church membership as adults. However, they have not examined students' views about which attributes contributed positively to their spiritual development. Recent research suggests that our young people must feel accepted, affirmed, and loved by their families and teachers at home and at school, as well as in the church. Schools, as well as churches, need to commit time and resources to provide youth with a positive caring atmosphere. According to Robert Folkenberg, president of the General Conference, "Our educational approaches should include, 'First, the purposeful creation of caring environments.' . . . You can't teach a student to love if you don't

love that student. Students must experience a warm supportive environment."[6]

Two recent Adventist studies utilizing non-Adventist consultants have taken an in-depth look at issues surrounding the future of the church. Both of them underscore the importance to young people of a caring school environment. The Seltzer-Daley study,[7] commissioned by the General Conference in 1987, concluded that the future of the church was closely tied to the success of Adventist schools. According to this study, the Adventist Church has entered a "window of time" when appropriate decisions for change and improved communication within the church can make the difference between a dying church and a growing one.

The Seltzer-Daley report provided much of the impetus for a major attempt at planned change, Project Affirmation,[8] which, in turn, spawned Valuegenesis—a study of contemporary Adventism "unprecedented in size and scope" in the United States.[9]

Table 1: Warmth of Congregational Climates*



* The graph shows the percentage of young people who gave their congregation a climate score of 4.0 or higher out of a possible 5.0 on a four-item measure of warmth in the congregational climate.

The Valuegenesis study[10] has led concerned parents and youth leaders in the church to seriously consider the issue of warmth and acceptance in Adventist homes, schools, and churches. Researchers collected data from nearly 12,000 Adventist young people attending sixth through 12th grades in Adventist schools throughout the United States and Canada. Approximately 2,600 additional questionnaires were filled out by pastors, school administrators, teachers, and parents. The respondents addressed more than 400 questions regarding support of Adventist doctrinal beliefs and Christian tenets of faith, commitment to the Adventist Church, and life-style preferences, as well as general perceptions regarding their church, school, and family life. V. Bailey Gillespie, principal investigator of the Valuegenesis study, and other researchers, have published generally encouraging news about Adventist youth, their homes, churches, and schools.[11] Researchers, using consultants who have been involved in the study of youth in American churches for many years, discovered, for example, that Adventist youth have higher levels of faith maturity and denominational loyalty than the young people in five of the major Protestant denominations.[12]

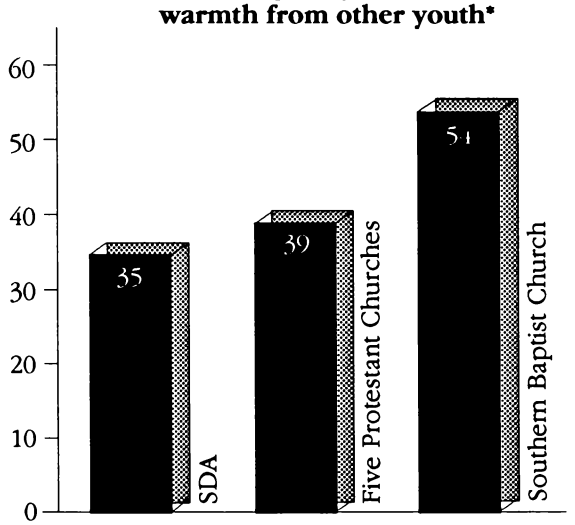
Of particular interest is the attempt to discover what items in the young persons' environments seem to accompany high faith maturity and denominational loyalty. Statistical correlations resulted in the identification of 41 "effectiveness factors" as predictive of mature Christian faith and denominational loyalty.[13] A significant number of these factors are closely associated with belonging, warmth, concern, and support.

Further analysis attempted to identify to what degree these 41 factors were present in the respondents' environments. Valuegenesis researchers isolated six dominant themes in "missing" effectiveness factors. One of the six elements considered to be missing in Adventist young people's lives was the experience of

warmth and support in schools and congregations.[14] A majority of young Adventists said that acceptance, warmth, caring, and belonging were absent in their schools and churches.

Karen's experience illustrates the kind of thing that often happens to Adventist young people. She had her ears pierced one day during a shopping trip with some of her friends. Her parents were disappointed to see what Karen had done, but decided to minimize it. Her dad jokingly asked her if she needed a neck brace to hold up her now heavier head, and her mom informed her that she would never get through the airport security check, now that she was carrying so much metal with her. Her parents' teasing and continued acceptance of her helped reassure her that she was still loved, even if her behavior had been less than desirable. Her family remained supportive of her, but Karen wondered how the people at church would act when they saw her wearing the earrings.

Table 2: Percentage of youth who feel warmth from other youth*



* Percentage of youth who agree with the statement, "I experience the feeling that other youth in my church care about me."

Karen was afraid that they would not approve, but she was not prepared for the reaction she received. The older woman who usually handed out materials in the youth room glanced coldly at Karen when she entered the Sabbath school room. Not one of the adults at church hugged her or spoke to her that day. After the sermon, the pastor's smile quickly changed to a serious look as she shook her hand at the door. When her grandparents came over to her house after church for lunch, they told Karen that they were worried about her spiritual condition now that she was wearing jewelry. For the first time, Karen understood why many of her friends had stopped coming to church. The responses of her older friends that day made her feel that she no longer belonged if she wasn't willing to conform totally to their image of what she should look like.

The lack of warmth in Adventism contrasts with the experience of young people in other denominations. Table 1 shows the percentage of young people from seven different denominational groups who rated highly the congregational warmth at their churches. Agreement to statements such as "My church feels warm," "My church accepts me as I am," "My church is caring," and "My church is friendly," were tabulated to provide a warmth index for the congregation. The graph shows the percentage of young people who gave their congregation a warm climate score—one of 4.0 or higher out of a possible 5.0 on a four-item measure of warmth in the congregational climate.

Note that only 39 percent of the Adventist youth found their church congregations to meet selected warmth criteria, as compared to 60 to 71 percent of the other church youth groups surveyed. Examples of youth statistics indicating lack of warmth in interacting with adults include the following:

• Only 44 percent of Adventist youth agree, "My church feels warm." Compare that with

63 percent of mainline Protestant youth and 74 percent of Baptist youth.[15]

- Only 59 percent of Adventist youth say they have a good conversation with their parents more than three times a month.[16]
- Only 41 percent of Adventist 10th, 11th, and 12th graders agree that "I can be myself when at church."[17]
- Only 28 percent feel that the Adventist church encourages their questions (in contrast to 45 percent of mainline Protestant youth and 58 percent of youth in the Southern Baptist Church).[18]

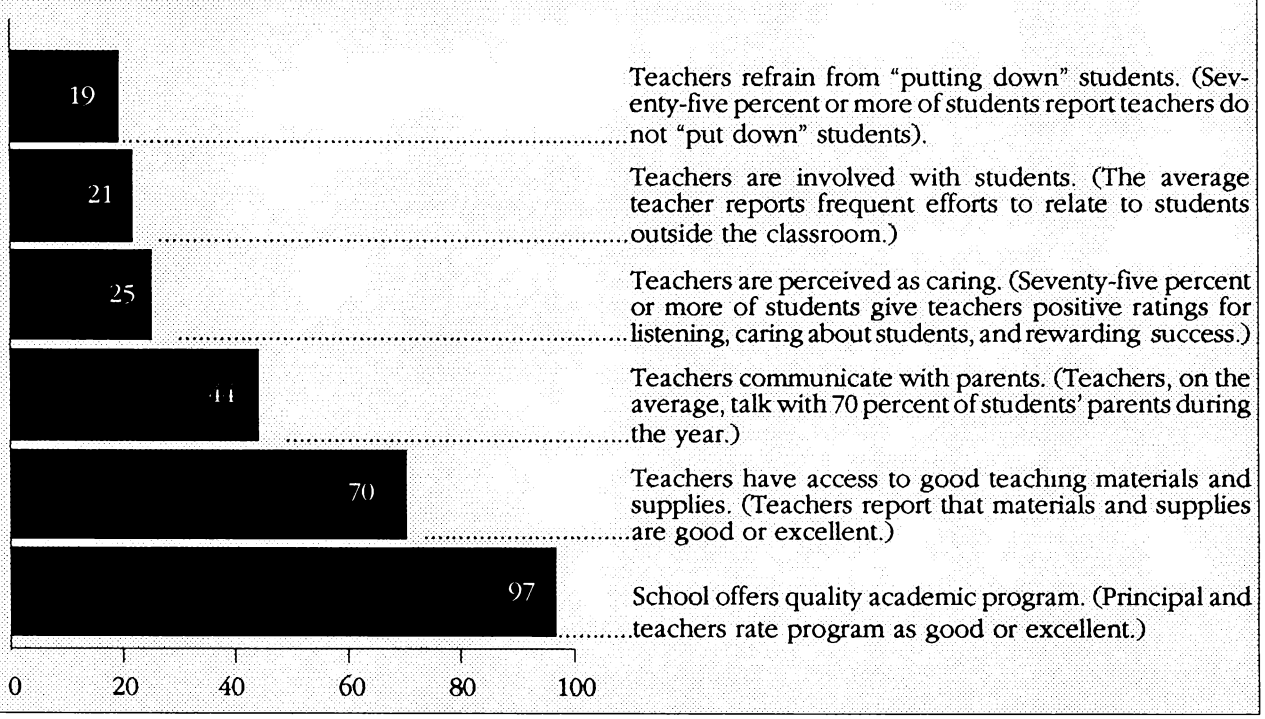
Adventist youth don't feel much warmth from their friends, either. Table 2 shows how Adventist youth compared with youth in other denominations in terms of peer concern.

Table 2 indicates that the perception of a cold church seems to continue beyond the adult or corporate church climate. Adventist youth perceive less care and concern from their peers than do other groups of church young people. Only 35 percent of the Adventist youth agreed that their peers cared. The five mainline Protestant denominations averaged 39 percent agreement. Fifty-four percent of the Baptist youth agreed that "other youth in the church care about me."

Not only do Adventist youth experience little warmth in their church setting, but it also appears that they do not perceive warmth in their schools. Thirty-two school quality indicators were evaluated in the third Valuegenesis research report. Adventist schools fared well in many measures, particularly those related to competence and excellence. However, in contrast, warmth, concern, and belonging rated low.

Table 3 shows the percentage of all Adventist K-12 schools that meet criteria for selected measures of high quality. Note in particular the top three items—measures that related to warmth, concern, and caring. Only 19 percent of the schools, for example, could boast that 75 percent of the students agreed that teachers

Table 3: Percent of SDA Schools with Selected Quality Indicators

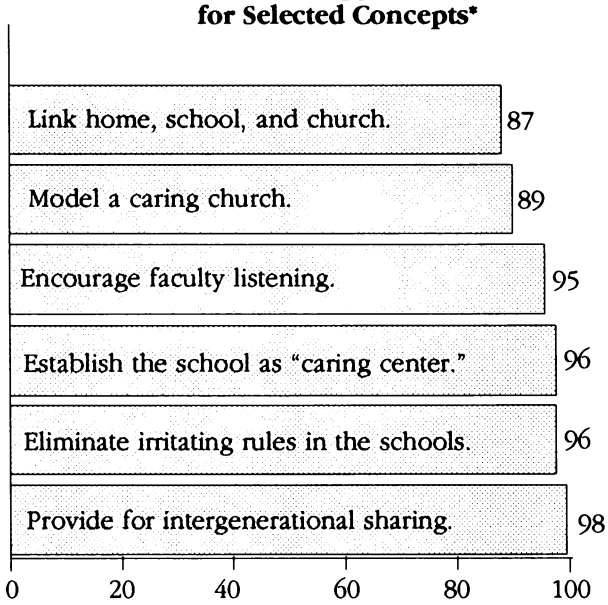


refrain from putting down students.

It is sobering to see that in Table 3 fewer than one-third of the Adventist schools in North America meet suggested criteria for warmth and caring. This means that students see most teachers in Adventist schools as uncaring, uninvolved, and ready to put students down.

Happily, there is a growing recognition that warmth and care are extremely important. Project Affirmation, in addition to sponsoring the Valuegenesis research project, has spearheaded an intensive effort to include church members at all levels in planned progress. "Visioning Sessions," conducted by trained lay leaders throughout the North American Division, have allowed hundreds of church members to look in depth at the realities facing the Adventist church, with a particular focus on the youth and Adventist schools. Recently, some of these participants responded to the question of where our priorities should be placed.[19] Table 4 shows selected items and the level of support for them.

Table 4: Member Support for Selected Concepts*



* Percentage figures indicate those giving a five or six on a scale of one to six, with one indicating strongly opposed and six indicating strongly in favor.

As adults look for strategies to strengthen the ties of our youth to the church, it is imperative that they recognize the need to increase communication between generations, improve the sense of belonging among all members, and raise the level of Christian concern within our institutions.

We have seen that a caring, supportive environment is essential to Christian nurture. Adventist youth with high faith maturity and denominational loyalty are those who perceive they are surrounded with several caring environments—home, church, and school. Valuegenesis research also shows that one of these is not enough. The chances for high maturity and loyalty increase dramatically as the number of positive environments increase.

- If sixth through eighth grade students experience no environments that are effective (combining support, warmth, and high-quality religious instruction), their probability of demonstrating high faith and church loyalty is only seven out of 100.
- If those same students experience all three environments as effective (home, church, and school), the chances increase to 56 out of 100—an eight-fold change.
- With secondary students, the faith-loyalty chances have a 10-fold increase—rising from five out of 100 to 53 out of 100.[20]

These statistics greatly increase our commitment to place our youth in not one, or even two, but three effective environments. If parents want their children to have a strong commitment to Christianity and Adventism, they have a responsibility to provide them with care and love in their homes. They must do what they can to help Adventist young people see their homes, schools, and churches as caring.

How can we improve? As a result of their findings, Valuegenesis researchers recommend that families, congregations, and schools strive to create a greater spirit of warmth and openness. They suggest providing more opportunities for youth to discuss differing ideas openly, with the knowledge that they will not be judged or disapproved. Researchers further encourage us to create a climate of openness in our homes, schools, and churches that welcomes people who are different from us. Congregations should involve children and youth on a regular basis in planning, preparing, and presenting church programs.

One reason people fail to express concern is that they have not thought about good ways to do it. It isn't "phony" to plan strategies to communicate caring and concern. Adventist youth need to hear that they are loved. They need to be overwhelmed with positive messages from their homes, schools, and churches. A number of books contain helpful suggestions, such as *52 Simple Ways to Tell Your Child, "I Love You."*[21] This little book, in its 52 short chapters, talks to parents about sharing love in very tangible ways. It suggests telling your children you love them, praying for the child and with the child, using sign language and nicknames to communicate that they are special, and sending cards to convey messages of love, appreciation, and concern. Many of these ideas can be used by groups of caring adults in church congregations, youth leaders in the Sabbath school, and teachers and administrators in the schools.[22]

The following suggestions for adults come from Adventist youth. In private interviews and focus groups, the youth answered questions such as, "When did you feel cared about in your churches and schools? What did others do to communicate that to you? What would you suggest to teachers and church members who want to help young people feel that they are accepted and that they are an important part of the congregation? Is it important?" Here is what they said:

- Take time to be with us. Teachers should hang out in the halls between classes. Don't rush us away all of the time. Look us in the eyes when you talk to us.
- Ask us questions about our homes, jobs, and lives. The adults who know something about us are the ones who give us a chance to talk. Parents should try to be around as much as they can when we're at home.
- Involve us. Invite us to take positions of responsibility in our homes and at the church and the school. If we feel that we are needed, we feel that we belong. If we feel that we would be missed, we are inclined to value our participation.
- Don't be quick to look disapprovingly at our choice of clothes, hairstyles, or jewelry. We are struggling to work out these issues for ourselves. We are very sensitive to your approval. When you give us sideways glances, we feel as if you're judging us and we're not meeting your approval.
- Look for the good in us. Don't worry about embarrassing us when you mention something positive about us to a group of people. We need it desperately. Brag about us all you want. Find ways to tell us we are important and that you love us as often as you can.
- Keep on hugging us and patting us on the back. When we look embarrassed, it's because we are expected to look that way, because we like to think of ourselves as having outgrown all that stuff. That doesn't mean we don't like it. Keep it up. We still need it.
- Come watch us perform. Come to our athletic games at school, come hear our musical groups, come to our practices. We love it when lots of people are there. Organize ways for parents and adult friends to be more involved with our classes at school, our social

events, our Sabbath schools, and our church youth activities. As hard as it is to admit, we really like to be with the adults in our lives.

My husband[23] had a memorable conversation with a Jewish rabbi in Jerusalem one summer several years ago, which highlights the importance that his religion places on warmth and concern in the church. The rabbi described three elements in religious commitment—believing, behaving and belonging. In the Jewish tradition, he said, belonging is the most important of these. As Jewish children grow up, they receive constant reminders that they are valued, loved, and cared about. Very little separation occurs between young and old in worship services. They are hugged and encouraged whenever they are together. Like most religions, Judaism involves some pretty specific behavioral considerations and a number of doctrinal beliefs. But when belonging receives primary emphasis, proper understanding and correct actions usually follow.

This fact is illustrated by Brian, an Adventist teenager in the Midwest. Brian grew up in a large family. At the age of 17, he got caught shoplifting golf balls in a local sporting goods store. The police were called, and Brian found out that he had made a very big mistake. In no time, everyone found out about the incident. However, his parents, teachers, church members, and pastor did not lecture Brian about the evils of stealing. They simply let him talk when he wanted to about what he had learned through the situation. They continued to hug and affirm him. When it was time for Brian to appear in court, 15 of his parents' friends and church members went with him. With that kind of support, the judge was quick to give Brian a light sentence. His final comment to Brian was, "No teenager who has this many supportive adults in his life will make the same mistake twice."

To summarize, recent research shows that Adventist youth hear much more about their behavior and their beliefs than they do about the fact that they are loved and needed in the fellowship of the church. If we are to thrive as a church, we must pay attention to this missing element in the Adventist young person's world.

So hug your kids today.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] Peter L. Benson and Carolyn H. Elkin, *Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Protestant Congregations* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Search Institute, 1990).

[2] Charles M. Shelton, *Adolescent Spirituality* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1983), p. 18.

[3] Merton Strommen, *Five Cries of Youth* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 38.

[4] Dudley, Roger, *Passing On the Torch* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1986), p. 133.

[5] For example, see Warren Earl Minder, "A Study of the Relationship Between Church Sponsored K-12 Education and Church Membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," 1985; Robert Rice, "A Study of the Relationship Between Attending Seventh-day Adventist Academies 9-12 and Subsequent Commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist Church," 1990; and Kenneth Epperson "The Relationship of Seventh-day Adventist School attendance to Seventh-day Adventist Church Membership in the Southern Union Conference," 1985.

[6] Robert S. Folkenberg, "Nurturing Our Next Generation Through the School," *Adventist Review*, (January 3, 1991), p. 17.

[7] Eliot Daley and Mitchell Seltzer, *Seventh-day Adventist Planning Research: A Survey of Church Members and Special Constituencies* (Princeton: Seltzer Daley Companies, 1987).

[8] Project Affirmation encompasses taskforces, vision-to-action planning, and the involvement of hundreds of church employees, professionals, and trained lay persons in its on-going assessment and change process to bring about revitalization of the church. Headed by Dr. Charles T. Smith, it is considered to be an ambitious and creative attempt to bring together major resources and personnel for church revitalization.

[9] Peter L. Benson and Michael Donahue,

Valuegenesis: Report 3: A Study of School Quality, (Minneapolis, Minn.: Search Institute Publications, July 1991), p. 4.

[10] An unabridged copy of the Valuegenesis report and all four Project Affirmation task force reports can be obtained for $5, including postage, from the Office of Education, North American Division, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600.

[11] The Valuegenesis project committee included C. Thomas Smith, Steve Case, Stuart Tyner, Peter L. Benson, Michael Donahue, Melvin Davis, Roger Dudley, Edwin Hernandez, Jan Kuzma, Marvin Nygaard, Gail Rice, and Won Kil Yoon.

[12] See table 1 for the five denominations that were studied. (Whenever the five are grouped together, they do not include the Southern Baptist Church, which is cited freestanding).

[13] See the Valuegenesis reports for a complete list of all 41 effectiveness factors, divided into church, home, and school categories.

[14] Peter L. Benson, and Michael J. Donahue, *Valuegenesis: Report 1*,(Minneapolis, Minn.: Search Institute Publication, 1990), p. 32.

[15] *Risk and Promise: A Report of the Project Affirmation Taskforces* (North American Division, 1990), p. 13.

[16] Summary of responses of 11,954 youth to item 286 on youth questionnaire.

[17] *Risk and Promise*, p. 13.

[18] Ibid.

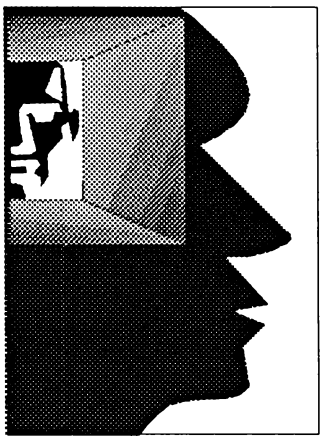
[19] "Project Affirmation Survey Results: Values, Faith, and Commitment," Unpublished document, January 23, 1990.

[20] Benson and Donahue, *Valuegenesis: Report 1*, p. 24.

[21] Jan Dargatz, *52 Simple Ways to Tell Your Child "I Love You."* Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tenn., 1991.

[22] Valuegenesis researchers are in the process of developing a series of three books designed to provide concrete suggestions to improve the home, church, and school environments. The "Making a Difference" series will incorporate suggestions received from young people and adults as they study the research findings. For more information, contact Dr. V. Bailey Gillespie from the John Hancock Youth Center at the La Sierra University Press.

[23] Richard Rice, "Believing, Behaving, Belonging—Exploring a Larger View of Faith," *Spectrum*, 20:3, (April 1990).



Where's Papa? What's Masculinity?

A short primer on the men's movement from a man who grew up in an Adventist family with a father who used to be strict and controlling.

by Steve Daily

RECENTLY, PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, two of the top 10 books on the *New York Times* best-seller list focused on the subject of masculinity (*Iron John* and *Fire in the Belly*).[1] These best-sellers are just two of the numerous works that have already been published in the 1990s dealing with male identity or manhood.[2] Most of these books are experiential works that have grown out of the authors' anger, frustration, or struggle to redefine masculine identity in an age of gender role revolution.

A few years ago I heard Hans Kung declare in a lecture at Claremont that "the change in sexual roles which has occurred in the western world during the last two decades has created the most profound social revolution in all of civilized history."[3] Initially, such a statement seemed almost shocking to me. But the more I reflected on it, the more credible his claim became. The sexual role revolution of the '60s, '70s, and '80s has dramatically affected all of our lives and to a great degree has contributed to the reshaping of Western culture.

The problem with this "sexual role revolution" for many men, however, is that they have felt defined by the movement, rather than feeling that they've had any defining influence on the movement. To be more accurate, they have felt mislabeled, confused, or even attacked by the new definitions of sexual roles. In the words of Sam Keen,

> Ask most any man "How does it feel to be a man these days? Do you feel manhood is honored, respected, celebrated?" Those who pause long enough to consider their gut feelings will likely tell you they feel blamed, demeaned and attacked. But their reactions may be pretty vague. Many men feel as if they are involved in

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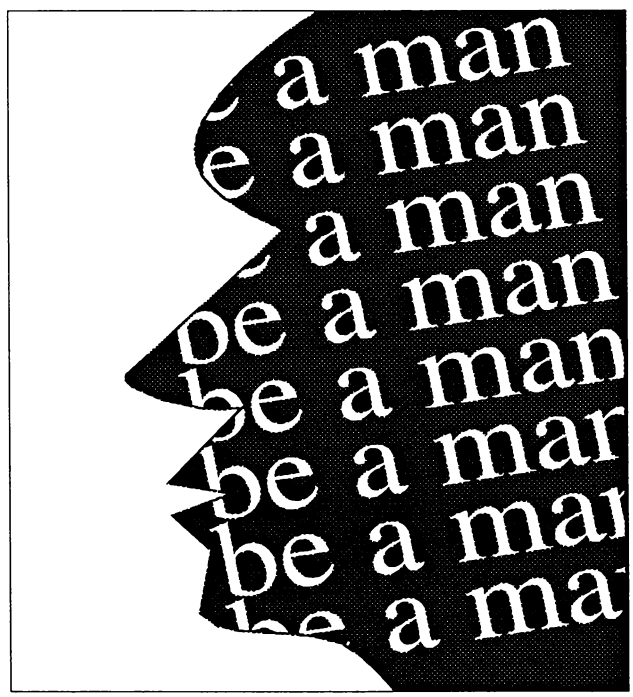
> a night battle in a jungle against an unseen foe. Voices from the surrounding darkness shout hostile challenges: "Men are too aggressive, too soft, too insensitive, too macho, too obsessed with sex, too detached to care, too busy, too rational, too lost to lead, too dead to feel." Exactly what we are supposed to become is not clear. . . . At no time in recent history have there been so many restless, questioning men.[4]

As I reflect from my own experience on this statement, and what it has meant to try to define a healthy, masculine identity growing up during the last three decades, I can concur with Keen's observation. These are confusing times for those who want to know what society expects of a man. I grew up in an Adventist home that modeled very traditional male and female sex roles. My parents were only 20 when I was born as the first of three boys. All three of us were into our teens before my mother started working full time outside the home, and there was no question about who was in charge or who called the shots in the family. My father was clearly the dominant figure. He was viewed with fear and respect and seemed to personify adjectives such as *strong, strict, controlling, forceful, disciplined,* and *authoritarian.*

My father taught me to be a man. He taught me that boys were tough, that they didn't cry. We all learned how to control and suppress our emotions. Above all I learned how to sublimate my competitive drive and aggression into a passion for sports. In fact, competitive sports, more than any other factor in my childhood and early adolescence, helped to shape a rather macho mentality toward masculinity and women.

In this regard, I will never forget the first year I played tackle football as a teenager. The coaching staff constantly attempted to motivate us through an extravagant use of profanity coupled with insults that denigrated and demeaned the opposite sex. Their outbursts could be heard at every practice: "Daily, you tackle like a G__d___ woman! What's wrong with you? Are you some kind of a f_____ sissy? Now get your a__ in gear and hit 'em like you mean it and not like some d___ little girl!" Thankfully, as I grew out of sports and acquired a real intellectual curiosity and desire for education, such expressions of macho manhood were seen as laughable examples of sexism and immaturity.

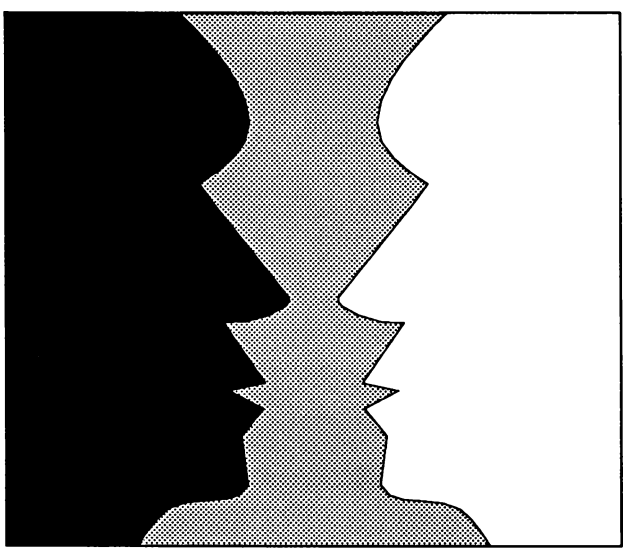
I became a firm believer in the equality of the sexes, but as a young Adventist I still wasn't prepared for what I would encounter in a Claremont doctoral program at the height of the feminist movement. This experience introduced me to a world view that presupposed an aversion for traditional sex roles. My coursework included generous assignments from readings and books by authors such as Mary Daly, Rosemary Ruether, Naomi Goldenberg, and Anne Wilson Schaef. These radical feminists argued that Christendom has "raped, twisted, tortured and dismembered" the "female spirit"[5]; that sexism is the "root sin" and "original sin"[6]; that the truth of feminism



must bring an end to the lie of God and traditional religion[7]; and that our society is on an addictive self-destructive course created by a "white male system," which must be replaced by an "emerging female system."[8]

In the late '70s and early '80s the discipline of theology was inundated with these kinds of feminist works. If you were a white male it was a "hazardous" time[9] to be attending most seminaries or graduate schools. The '80s proved to be a decade where "male bashing" became the rage in a number of best-selling pop psychology books. Best-sellers such as *Men Who Hate Women and the Women Who Love Them*, *Smart Women/Foolish Choices*, and *Women Who Love Too Much* are just a few examples of popular works that presented men as "villains" who were generally "immature, self-centered and impossible" when it came to building healthy relationships.[10]

However, in the '90s men seem to be breaking out of their reactive and defensive tendencies to either ignore the sexual role revolution or to be defined by it. Many works are calling men to redefine their present by rediscovering their past. Robert Bly has become a present day "Iron John," or modern mentor, for disoriented males of the '90s. He explores the ancient stories and visions of manhood, ranging from Grimm's Fairy Tales to Homer's *Odyssey*, in an effort to provide a new vision of manhood that can be created out of such works of antiquity. Bly argues that women are not to blame for the chaos that characterizes manhood today. We cannot pull a Freudian cop-out and blame Mother for the boy's problems. Rather, the responsibility lies with men, and particularly the older generation of men, to pass on a vision of male identity to those who would be more than boys.



Again as I reflect on my own experience as a male church member, Adventism has not traditionally provided a strong masculine identity for its men, and it has been even more unsuccessful at attracting male worshipers into its congregations than Christian denominations in general. As Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart have observed, Adventism is the largest Christian denomination to have been founded by a woman. Its ratio of two female members for every male reflects a growing disassociation of men from the church.

In contrast to other 19th-century movements such as Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses, Adventists have chosen to avoid a confrontational relationship with the state or culture at large, opting instead for the "traditionally feminine" role of social subordination. Adventists have made their mark on society primarily as healers and nurturers and have always valued music over sports or athletics.[11] Yet those men who do occupy the exclusively male-dominated positions of leadership in the church have ironically imposed a hierarchical, domineering, and authoritarian style of decision-making on church members—a form of decision-making that empowers the few (who claim to be servant-leaders), while disenfranchising the many (males and females alike).[12]

I have been amazed to see that even the most soft-spoken Adventist liberals are not immune to such "power transformations." Unlike Bly, this older generation of Adventist

men has not provided a vision that inspires their younger brothers to develop a dynamic redefinition of manhood. These so-called leaders have been too preoccupied with preserving their own positions of power to worry about providing healthy models of male or egalitarian leadership.

Other authors who have contributed to the process of redefining masculinity in the '90s include Robert Weiss. His *Staying the Course*[13] carefully researched the lives of 80 men who have achieved unusual success in both their careers and families. His goal is to provide a model of what "successful manhood" looks like by the standards currently applied in our society. The problem with such a study is that it defines male success in the context of our present culture. Success, as defined by Weiss, involved working very hard and long hours, often getting little sleep, bearing the traditional stresses of provider, handling the intense pressures of being excellent at work and still adequate as a husband and father, and ultimately finding male identity and self-validation through one's occupational or professional acceptance.[14]

Weiss's book particularly made me think, for I have bought into the male success syndrome in the context of Adventism. I entered the ministry with a burning desire to change the church, to make it more "user friendly" for the younger generation. I worked and studied hard, earning two master's and two doctoral degrees. I learned how to get by on four to five hours of sleep a night for months at a time in an attempt to balance the responsibilities of a university chaplain, teacher, student, husband, and father of young children. But I have learned that the system does not really welcome people who try to change it, regardless of their qualifications, and that to base one's male identity or self-validation on the professional goal of changing the church is ultimately to lose one's identity.

My father was viewed with fear and respect. My father taught me to be a man. He taught me that boys were tough, that they didn't cry. . . .

My hope and prayer is that the church can transform itself as thoroughly and effectively as my own strict, controlling, and authoritarian dad has changed.

I have also been influenced by Aaron Kipnis's *Knights Without Armor*,[15] which calls for a new male psychology and "radical masculinity" that is not primarily defined by the "heroic masculinity" of the past or the "feminized masculinity" of the present. Rather, he proposes a new and future "authentic masculinity" which will integrate the best definitions of masculinity from both of these traditions. This new masculinity would retain such physical characteristics as "generative, vigilant, flexible, and strong," but reject such physical traits as "domineering, coercive, pliant, or submissive." It would retain qualities such as "assertiveness, nurturing, humor, and deep feeling," but reject "dependence, passivity, repression, and aggression."

Such a vision of authentic manhood is attractive, but it is not being modeled or generated in Adventism. As usual, we are about 10 years behind the mainline culture. We have not yet embraced an egalitarian

ethic; we are still trying to figure out how to ordain women. So the denomination is probably a decade away from facing up to the fact that our churches do not generally attract what Kipnis calls "authentic, fulfilled men."

In *The Grown Up Man*, John Friel also makes some important contributions to a redefinition of manhood in the context of family systems, addiction, and recovery.[16] He identifies the "betrayed male syndrome" as a family system that is over-mothered and under-fathered and calls both men and women together to bring healing and recovery to the dysfunctional system that has created both male and female brokenness. Here again, there is relevance for the Adventist male, for many of us, like myself, were partially raised by Mother Ellen (and her red books). We can identify with being over-mothered for our male identity and Christian identity was infallibly defined by a "perfect" woman. As any early teen, I can still remember the horrendous fears I struggled with when I first read "Sister White's" warnings about masturbation in *Messages to Young People*. Her words on competition and sports were also quoted to me by teachers on more than one occasion. Yet even though I intuitively knew that her authority was being overstated, there was never any father figure in the church who could "hold a candle" to her power.

Finally, from a Christian and/or theological/spiritual perspective, there are four more new books on manhood which I have also found helpful in contributing to a redefinition of masculinity in the 1990s: From the conservative side of the Christian spectrum, Edwin Cole's *On Becoming a Real Man*[17] provides a powerful picture of the manhood of Jesus as a model for Christian men today. Cole has been giving seminars to men for more than a decade now.[18] He is one of the true pioneers in the modern men's movement, and his insights have literally transformed the lives of thousands of men to which he has ministered. In a world where children are shaped and nurtured almost exclusively by female authority figures such as nurses, mothers, child-care professionals, Sunday/Sabbath school teachers, and elementary teachers (of which more than 90 percent are female), Cole calls men to rediscover their roles as fathers and priests of the home.

Christ models a masculinity that never intimidates and is never intimidated: masculinity that is not afraid to weep with the hurting and oppressed, and is willing to confront every bastion of injustice. Jesus' is the ultimate man whose faith is so real that he doesn't fight back in the face of the greatest personal unfairness.

He calls the church in all its denominational diversity to quit being a "narcissistic bride" and to focus on the Bridegroom. Christ models a masculinity that never intimidates and is never intimidated: masculinity that is not afraid to weep with the hurting and oppressed, is socially proactive and willing to confront every bastion of injustice. It is also a masculinity that takes prayer seriously. Jesus is the ultimate man who lives what he believes, whose faith is so real that he doesn't fight back in the face of the greatest personal unfairness. In short, he is the personification of manhood.

One reason that males may not strongly identify with Adventism is that the church has failed to elevate Christ above all else. In practice, we have subordinated Jesus Christ to both Ellen White and the institutional church (as "God's Remnant"). This was recently illustrated at a Pacific Union Academy Leadership Conference, where student leaders from our various schools were asked to stand on an imaginary line to indicate how they viewed their relationship to God. The line stretched across the room and was numbered from one to 10, with one representing no commitment to God and 10 representing total commitment to him. The majority of the students stood in the five to seven area.

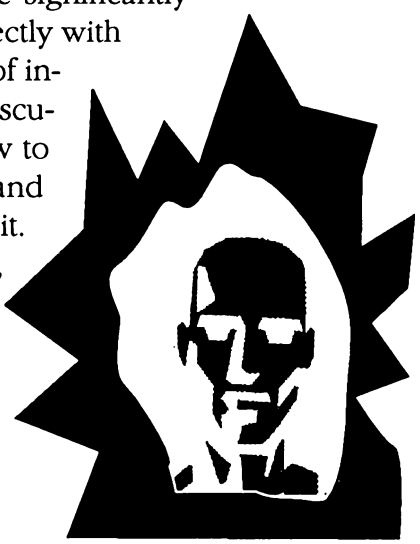
The surprise came with the question that followed. When the students were asked to stand on the same imaginary line with reference to their commitment to the Adventist Church, the overall scores for the group became significantly higher. In other words, these young people were more committed and loyal to the Adventist Church than they were to God. This finding is disturbing, but not surprising for those of us who have analyzed the Valuegenesis data in detail. This research clearly reveals that we are more successful at creating denominational loyalty in our young people than a Christ-centered understanding of gospel and grace.[19]

In my own Adventist experience, I was influenced most during my college and seminary years by a man who exalted and glorified Christ more than any other teacher. I've read at least 10 of his books and still sometimes listen to his class tapes. He was a man who constantly pointed people to Jesus not only as the perfect male, but also as the perfect human being. Yet this kind of Christ-centered teaching was ultimately rejected by the church at Glacier View. Even more important than male and female identity is identity in Christ.[20] Cole argues that "manhood and Christlikeness are synonymous."[21] If the church wants more men to darken its doors, it must call men to follow the radical Christ.

The church must also make some very practical efforts if it is to become more "male-friendly." Gordon Dalbey's *Healing the Masculine Soul* provides the most thoughtful insights from a Christian perspective. It is experiential and modern in its approach.[22] Dalbey calls for a redefinition of masculinity that is church-based. He identifies reasons why many men do not attend church and offers practical suggestions about how the church can become more user friendly to men.

When you really stop to think about it, how many Adventist churches have ongoing ministries specifically designed to attract and involve men in the life of the church? The "feminization of American religion" is a process that began more than a century ago and continues to build momentum today.[23] Many times priorities in our congregations reinforce the "masculine myth" that religion is for women, children, wimpy men and old folks, but not for "real men." Our churches often have women's study groups, but not too many church-sponsored gym nights or recreational leagues.

Two other books on manhood that have influenced me significantly both deal directly with the problem of internalized masculine rage, how to identify it, and how to heal it. The first book, which has resonated deeply with my own experience, is Arterburn and Stoop's



The Angry Man.[24] It uncovers the anger and denial that is repressed inside so many men today. It reveals that Christian men are not immune to such anger and may actually be more vulnerable to it in some ways.[25] It links the increasing number of men who are angry in society today to the absenteeism of male models that has resulted largely from the sociological shift from rural to urban society over the past century. This cultural revolution has led to dual career marriages, and other sociological changes that have effected marital intimacy. As a result, men and women alike find themselves living with greater rage than ever before. And the male tendency to deny and repress such emotions compounds the internalization of such rage. The authors reveal that more males than ever before are giving up on marital intimacy in favor of addictive sexual outlets that are increasingly available in society today.[26]

As a campus chaplain who has wedded, and later counseled, many couples over the past 12 years, I can attest to the fact that Adventist men are not immune to such problems. It seems that more and more Adventist males are struggling with the temptations of pornography and other forms of addictive sex. More than almost any group, we have been affected in the past few generations by a radical shift from rural to urban/professional living. Because we now educate a higher percentage of our young people, we are also more affected by dual-career marriages than the general population. Finally, our traditional views about sex have often served to heighten the tensions over what is sexually appropriate in marriage for couples who can find the time for intimacy.[27]

Finally, Sam Keen's *Fire in the Belly* is the most controversial and confrontational of the spiritual works that offer a redefinition of masculinity. He argues that in contrast to the cliches and common wisdom which tell us that it is a "man's world," the truth is that women hold a much greater psychic bondage over men than vice versa, and that indeed it is a "woman's world." Men can only survive and thrive in such a world when they learn to find peace, joy, and solitude apart from women. "We can't be comfortable in intimacy with women because we have never been comfortable in being distant from them."[28]

According to Keen, to become a man one must first become a prodigal. We must separate from the world of women. Secondly, men must disown the rites of manhood, such as war, workaholism, and sexual addiction, which "impoverish and alienate" him. Thirdly, men must rediscover the truth that authentic manhood has always been defined by a dynamic vision of how men fit into the universe. Fourthly, in this process men must rediscover their spiritual souls and selves. Finally, after the first four steps are taken, men and women can together create a common vision for humanity.

Keen's book is fascinating and filled with power, but seems to assume that only men can truly redefine the nature of masculinity. The truth is that some of the best books I've read on masculine identity have been written by women.[29] All truth is God's truth. When we understand that God transcends human sexuality and that God's spirit transcends human sexuality in the transmission of truth, we will better understand the nature of gender. We will better understand that in Christ prejudices based on sex roles must be eliminated (Galatians 3:28) both inside and outside the Adventist Church. Yet even here, I recognize that my impatience with the church is not unrelated to anger I internalized as a child.

It is never clear to me what degree my extreme discomfort with autocratic and authoritarian methods in the church are justified, or are simply carry-over baggage from my

early struggle to establish an identity distinct from a domineering father. But this much I know: The church is in need of major changes if it is to meet both the male and female needs of its younger generation. The men's movement, from this Adventist's perspective, is not a "backlash against feminism," but an overdue attempt to redefine manhood in the wake of the sexual role revolution.[30] If we can actively participate in it we may see the Adventist Church become both more "user friendly" and more authentically Christlike for young adult males. My hope and prayer is that the church can transform itself as thoroughly and effectively as my own strict, controlling, and authoritarian dad has changed.

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[14] Weiss, p. xvi.

[15] Kipnis, p. 99.

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Bedtime

a
t seven, it was time to put me to bed.
My father? Stepfather? Whoever you were,
you played our nightly game, questioned what you read
with calm baritone phrases, a teasing blur
of ideas and facts I grabbed at as you spoke.
Then you kissed me firmly, left me in darkness—
a brief quiet disturbed by the distant croak
of the TV, sounds rising like the Loch Ness
monster, frightening and shapeless and unknown.

It was there, curled in the soft grayness of dreams,
the words first found me—the startling, angry tones
clawing at the dark; the shapeless, ragged screams.

My older sister, made savage by her hate,
stamped fiercely on the carpet outside my door.
The clock beside the bed ticked on past eight;
her words vibrated through the wall and the floor.
You were not her father; she would not let you
stand on her memories, erase her name
with a marriage, new brothers, more chores to do.
She spat at my mother, hissing like a flame.

I huddled tightly at the foot of the bed,
stuffed my ears with sheets, shuddered with tearful fear.
My mother answered, loudly shaking her head;
she sputtered like a car shifted out of gear.

It was late; I slid crying into sleep.

I woke to quiet darkness; I was trembling
from fright-filled dreams. I wondered if I could keep
you for me, or if they would end up sending
you away. I wanted you here. But you slept,
so I waited to ask you until morning.

Morning was quiet; no one spoke, so I kept
my questions to myself. But inside, turning
from their silence, I watched you put me to bed.

Worship

fridays, after supper, after sunset,
I gathered up the Bibles, walked around
the waiting circle of family, and paused
as each one chose a volume from the pile.

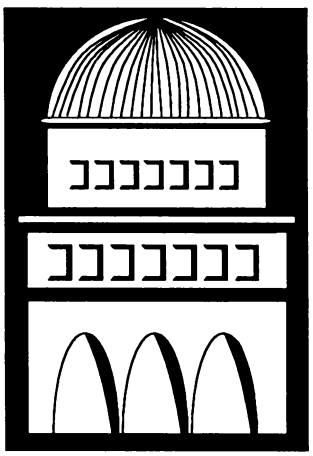
We chose our Bibles cautiously,
as if translation proved the point.
Then Daddy chose a chapter from the Book,
and we began to read. I read first,
and then we worked the circle back around.
Our voices stumbled over ancient names,
the mysteries of angels and God's Word—
it was a harsh, bright world we looked into.

My sister read with cool, poetic grace,
tasting words that slipped from tongue to ear.
She touched each phrase as if it were the first
or last word spoken to a breathless crowd.
My brother's voice changed pitch and cracked to end
a solemn verse, but he was deep and flat
reciting Jonah, thrown into the sea
and thrown up by a whale. He didn't like
to read, but Daddy leaned back on the couch,
pushed his stomach out over the book,
adjusted his glasses to fit his nose,
and read to comfort, quiet, interest.

We knelt, held hands and offered Sabbath prayer.
Again, we took our turns around the room,
stuttering, fidgeting as hands perspired.
My father spoke, and thanked the Lord for us.
He asked for guidance. Then my mother's voice,
a tremble of fatigue, entered with love.
Around the circle, squeezing fingers, tense,
we waited turns and stumbled through requests.
My brother used my hand to scratch his neck;
I caught a sneeze between my neck and shoulder.
And at the end, we spoke the Lord's Prayer.
The words clung together without space,
but I remembered sounds of mystery
and comfort rolling slowly off our tongues.

My parents kissed, and we released our hands
and went to bed. The Sabbath always came
this way, encircled, freed with His own words.

Gina Foster is pursuing a graduate degree in theology and literature at Vanderbilt University, after last year editing the Loma Linda University Church newsletter, Dialogue. *Foster received her B.A. in 20th-century religion and literature from Pomona College. At Pomona College and at Oxford University, where she spent a year of study abroad, Foster gave readings of her own poetry, including recitations of these poems about growing up in an Adventist family.*



Large SDA Churches: Adventism's Silent Majority

If you think most North American Adventists worship in small, rural churches, think again.

by Monte Sahlin

WHEN WE THINK OF THE STANDARD LOCAL church experience for North American Adventists, most of us have a picture of a few dozen people gathered for worship. The congregation in our mind has one or two adult Sabbath school classes, meager basement rooms for children, "not enough" teenagers to have a real youth group, no office for the pastor and no organized outreach ministries: a congregation dominated by a small circle of poorly educated, out-of-touch people who are more interested in maintenance than mission.

Actually, more than half of the 775,000 Adventists in North America gather on Sabbath morning in a church with a membership of more than 300. One quarter of North American Adventists meet in churches with 600 or more members. It is a little known fact that the majority of the 775,000 Seventh-day Adventists in North America are members of the 600 largest churches. Less than half of the membership is found in the other congregations—the nearly 4,000 small churches that have tended to set the norms for church life in North America.

In reality, a typical Sabbath experience for North American Adventists features a congregation of hundreds, professional musicians and pastoral staff, sparkling programs for children and youth, a wide range of adult classes and small group ministries. These large congregations have the resources to address all kinds of needs, organize many meetings throughout the week, and undertake innovative forms of outreach. Most Adventists in the United States and Canada attend these large churches because they enjoy being a part of congregations with the resources to fund and staff significant and even ground-breaking programs of nurture, evangelism, and service.

Monte Sahlin, associate director for adult ministries in the Church Ministries department of the North American Division, has recently written a book entitled Sharing Our Faith With Friends Without Losing Either *(Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1990). Gail R. Hunt, president of Orchard Hill Market Research Group, and a manager of the Adventist Family Opinion Poll, assisted in analyzing research data for this essay.*

Institutional Cathedrals

The largest congregations in North America can be called institutional cathedrals. Some qualify as what evangelical church growth experts call "megachurches." Certainly the two largest Adventist churches in North America, the 5,500-member University church in Loma Linda, and the 3,200-member Sligo church on the Columbia Union College campus within the Washington, D.C., Beltway, are megachurches. Some other megachurches, like the 2,900-member Shiloh church in the inner city of Chicago, are not affiliated with institutions, but more than 60 of the 75 to 80 largest congregations in North America are institutional cathedrals.

Sixteen of these are located on the campuses of the Adventist colleges and universities in the North American Division. Many of the campus churches enjoy memberships of 2,000 or more, and all have at least 1,000 members. Another 20 or 30 are "hospital churches," located near a major Adventist hospital. They often serve a number of the management personnel and some employees, although the days are gone when a significant number of the staff at any hospital join a single congregation. Most of the other large churches are located on academy campuses, and two are near publishing houses. In most cases, the "hospital" and "academy" churches have memberships of 400 to 1,000.

These institutional churches all have multiple pastors, with associates who specialize in ministries such as youth, music, visitation, family counseling, and outreach. Many have one or more women among the associate pastors. These churches sponsor a variety of small groups such as Bible study, singles ministries, women's ministries, and marriage retreats. They offer a long list of Sabbath school classes and divisions. Any Sabbath you can walk into one of these institutional churches and find a group of a score or more adults preparing for baptism.

Worship services in these churches emphasize order and dignity, with traditional hymns and music in the classical idiom. Although it is widely believed that these church are "not very evangelistic," many of them use radio and television to share their Sabbath services with large audiences of nonmembers. A number have even recently shown renewed interest in public crusades. For example, about five years ago Sligo Church pitched a tent on the next-door lawn of Columbia Union College. More recently, Walla Walla College Church invited Roland Hegstad from the General Conference to conduct a series of meetings.

Because these churches have always shown a willingness to experiment, they have been the source of much innovation within the denomination: i.e., the student missionary program, marriage-preparation seminars, stop-smoking clinics, and educational radio and cable television. Although often underfunded compared to churches of similar size in other denominations, they are rich in human services.

Black Basilicas

The largest segment of the churches over 600 members in the North American Division are the black churches in large cities. There are nearly 150 of these congregations, most with memberships around 1,000. Many are located in what would be called "inner-city" neighborhoods, but more and more are moving to the suburbs as African-American Adventists become increasingly middle class.

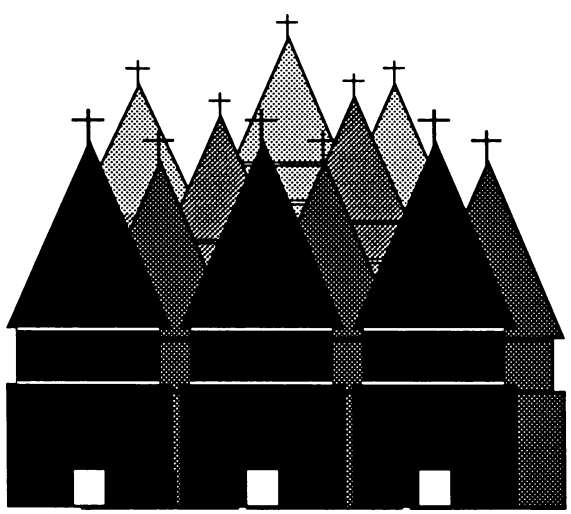
There are 30 of these churches in New York City alone, many of them tied by history to the 2,000-member Ephesus church on 123rd Street in Harlem. A growing number of these "Big Apple" congregations are made up of immi-

grants from Caribbean nations. For example, the 1,421-member Hebron church in Brooklyn is made up largely of members with a Haitian background. It may be the largest congregation in the North American Division that operates in a language other than English—in this case, French.

The big-city, black basilicas all have strong music programs with multiple choirs. It is more and more common for the volunteer music directors to have graduate degrees from some of America's most renowned conservatories. The experience of participating is rich enough to have recently catapulted the second- and third-generation African-American Adventists in *Take Six* to the top of the charts.

These churches are all very evangelistic. They sponsor public crusades once or twice a year. They expect their pastors to "open the doors of the church" at the close of each Sabbath sermon, making an appeal for nonmembers to publicly indicate a decision to prepare for baptism. They are equally committed to social concerns.

Craig Dossman, recently appointed pastor of the 1,000-member Brooklyn Temple, is typical of the black Adventist clergy who see no dichotomy between organizing soup kitchens and home Bible study groups. "The church has to be seen as a place that really cares for the poor and homeless, and is interested in social justice," he says. "Where else can young people find hope, if not in the remnant church?" In previous pastorates he has sponsored rehabilitation programs for drug users and initiated services for the homeless. In his new assignment he is getting acquainted with community leaders in Bedford-Stuyvesant, one of the most crime- and poverty-plagued neighborhoods in North America.



Suburban Shrines

A cluster of 140 largely white, Anglo churches have relatively new and attractive physical plants in the suburbs of the large metropolitan areas. Most are 400 to 800 in membership. The 1,400-member Carmichael church near Sacramento is probably the largest. The 605-member Markham Woods church near Orlando, the 400-member O'Malley church in Anchorage, and the 304-member Pineridge church in Calgary are more typical.

Significant growth is happening in some of these congregations, such as the Arlington church halfway between Dallas and Fort Worth. Others admit they are somewhat stagnant. Some are very involved in outreach, with a regular cycle of health education, family life, and Bible seminars. Others do not do much more than sponsor a quality church school and provide a high-quality worship service on Sabbath mornings.

A large portion of the 30-something and 40-something Baby Boomers, with their children, worship in these churches. They expect a wide range of high-level programming. They bring to pastors a large caseload of family crises. Privately, pastors of these churches say they are understaffed. Since parents are busy professionals, more and more congregations are resorting to hiring a coordinator for the children's Sabbath school. Significant funding

is being set aside for Pathfinder Clubs and Adventurer Clubs in order to keep them up to par.

Some of these churches are positioning themselves to reap the largest evangelistic potential of the 1990s—the 30 to 40 million babies that will be born to Baby Boomers in this decade. Church growth research shows that most Boomers are unchurched, and many will return to church when they have children of their own. But this can be controversial. Some church members oppose opening daycare at the church school, using more contemporary music in worship, and instituting family communion.

Small-City Temples

Eighty to 90 congregations can be labeled *small-city temples* because they are located in medium-sized and smaller metropolitan areas. Some are located in "big cities," but not on the scale of Los Angeles, Toronto, Atlanta, and New York. The largest Adventist churches in these cities run from 300 to 600 members each, and a number of them are named "First Seventh-day Adventist church" or "Central SDA church." Examples include the 600-member First SDA of Tampa, Florida, the 593-member Edmonton Central church in Canada, the 460-member First SDA of Louisville, Kentucky, and the 342-member Albuquerque Central church in New Mexico.

Some 20 or so of these large churches are located in low population centers, many on the West Coast. A good example is Lodi, in northern California, with a population of just 35,000, but with two Adventist churches of nearly 1,000 members each—the English Oaks church and the Fairmont church. Perhaps the greatest contrast is the 875-member Adventist church in 14,000-population Grants Pass, Oregon. These congregations are sometimes the largest church of any denomination in town and represent the highest ratio of penetration of Adventist membership in the population across the North American Division.

These small-city congregations usually have a wide demographic range of members, but are often more "blue-collar" in self-identity and dynamics than are the institutional and suburban churches. All have a full-time senior pastor, and some have an associate. Almost all of them sponsor a church school and a Pathfinder Club, and many sponsor a community services center. They use seminar evangelism a lot. A major reason is that 40-person Revelation Seminars held three or four times a year have much the same church growth results as one larger crusade, but are much less expensive to conduct in an urban setting.

Urban Parishes

Some 50 highly urbanized, large congregations in large cities have traditionally been "white" churches, but are becoming increasingly multicultural. Examples include 1,700-member Takoma Park church on the state line between Maryland and the District of Columbia, the 961-member Honolulu Central church, the 821-member Miami Temple, and the 355-member Jackson Heights church in New York City.

Among these large urban parishes are 10 or 15 Hispanic congregations, most of them in southern California: for example, the Latin American church in Los Angeles and the La Sierra Spanish church in Riverside. Large Hispanic urban parishes outside California include Central Spanish in Miami, Spanish South church in McAllen, Texas, and Dyckman Spanish church in New York City.

Urban ministry is a high priority for these urban parishes, taking such forms as Miami Temple's street ministry, which feeds hun-

dreds of homeless each week. Last year, this congregation engaged in a highly publicized confrontation with city fathers.

Black Tabernacles

About 25 large black congregations are in small or medium-sized cities in the South and Midwest. These black tabernacles include congregations like the 496-member Bethel church in Saginaw, Michigan, and the 386-member Berean church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. They are often described as having a "Baptist" flavor and a more rural, blue-collar orientation than the big-city black churches.

Pastor-Centered Churches

A third of the total membership in North America is in the 28 percent of local churches with 100 to 299 members. This "middle third" of the churches have 50 to 150 in attendance on an average Sabbath, and researchers call them "pastor-centered" churches.

This is the kind of smaller church that is the focus of conventional seminary education and much professional ecclesiastical writing. The dynamics of these small churches are dependent on the key role of the pastor. The congregation is too large for everyone to engage in direct, one-on-one informal communication with everyone else as happens in the smaller church. The members expect the pastor to be the "switchboard operator." The pastor is expected to know who is ill, who is in the hospital, who has particular problems and needs, and to provide direct supervision for any volunteer workers. His primary task, in the eyes of the congregation, is to visit all of the members each week and report interesting news to the church on Sabbath, leading them in intercessory prayer and caring for those in need.

The traditional North American dream includes a single-family home with a lawn, a relatively new automobile, and a full-time pastor with no more than 100 families to care for. The pastor-centered congregation is designed to facilitate this goal. But its nurture-centered agenda is at odds with the mission emphasis of Adventism, and very few Adventist churches of this size have a full-time pastor. The result is considerable conflict, which often makes pastors feel that they are overloaded and caught between the expectations of their members and those of their conference administration.

Single-Cell Congregations

At the other end of the spectrum from the largest 600 congregations with the majority of North American members, are the 2,685 (of 4,552) local churches in the North American Division with less than 100 members. Since average worship attendance equals about 55 percent of the book membership, these congregations have about 50 or fewer people each Sabbath. They are what researchers call *single-cell congregations.* Even though only 19 percent of North American members attend these single-cell congregations, they constitute 60 percent of the churches in the division, and dominate the thinking of many denominational leaders.

Single-cell churches are really overgrown small groups. They operate on a very informal level. Many young pastors learn this the hard way in their first year or two. A typical example is a pastor who presides over a regular meeting of the church board where there is a unanimous vote to paint the Primary Sabbath school room pink. Two or three weeks later, the pastor sticks his head into the

room to find the head deacon and his son painting it green. When he asks why they are doing something different than what was voted, he is informed that "we discussed it on the phone with Sister Jones," who is not a board member, "and she said that we should use up the green paint left over from when we repainted the rest rooms last year."

The pastor can lecture them about the church manual and actions voted in minutes or he can avoid high blood pressure and accept the fact that single-cell congregations make decisions through informal discussion and the influence of two or three local "patriarchs" and "matriarchs." In most cases he is always going to be an outsider of sorts, never holding the recognized authority wielded by members who have been informal leaders for many years.

Single-cell churches almost always stop growing after the first 10 years of their life. It is very difficult for new people to feel at home in the group, since they will never share the long history that undergirds the established relationships. The members like the predictable patterns they have established, and are usually not willing to make the changes necessary to see significant growth.

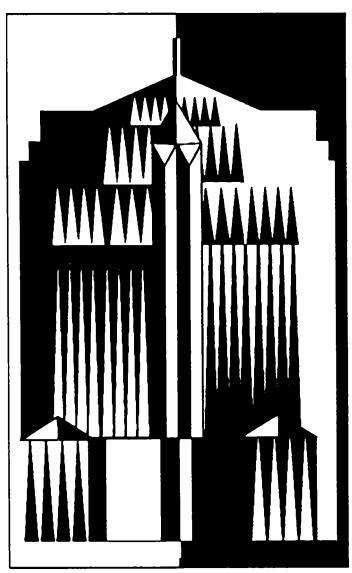
Underrepresentation of Large Churches

Typically, the small churches in the conference have a much lower ratio of members per pastor and their tithe does not cover the cost of their pastoral staffing. The large churches have fewer pastors per capita, and the financial savings are used to subsidize pastoral staffing for small churches, as well as the conference's educational institutions. In other words, the largest congregations are the "cash cows" of most local conferences.

Yet, at conference constituency meetings, a disproportionate number of the delegates represent smaller congregations. Because most conference bylaws prescribe one, two, or even three delegates per church in addition to the delegates apportioned by church membership, there are usually more delegates representing small churches than large churches. This is exacerbated by the fact that large churches typically do not bring to constituency meetings as many delegates as they are entitled to.

This disproportion in representation has been partly compensated by a tradition of placing the pastors of the largest churches on conference committees. But as local conferences sharply decrease the number of pastors on conference committees and increase the number of laypersons, pastors of the large churches are increasingly being left off the conference committee.

Many pastoral staff and lay leaders in large churches feel that resource materials and programs produced by denominational agencies are not designed with them in mind. Ironically, small churches feel the same way! Who are the resources designed for? This dilemma is the reason that the new North American Division Church Ministries Department has pushed for a major reorganization of departmental work over the past five years in order to contextualize resource materials and provide support for local planning. Last year a special *Pastor's Hotline* newsletter was begun. It goes only to the largest congregations and



includes information and lists of resource materials designed especially for their needs.

At a deeper level it is possible that many Adventists are simply prejudiced against large churches. "They are unfriendly," is a common attitude. I have often been told that "people go there who want to hide out and not do anything." "Worldly," is another often-heard description. Yet, recent surveys indicate that members of small churches are as likely to be uninvolved in witnessing or ministry as are members of large churches.* It appears that the common impressions about large churches are simply myths.

Church Growth Depends on Large Churches

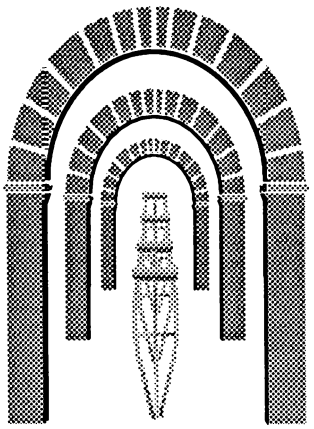
Large churches are often looked upon as costly and nonproductive by the denomination's evangelism strategists. The facts are the reverse. Analyses conducted in two local conferences demonstrate that in those fields, the net growth in those conferences came entirely from a handful of the largest congregations. Significant growth rates in some of the small churches were equalled by larger losses in other small churches, with no net effect on growth in membership of these two conferences.

Large churches have more resources for outreach and more contacts in the community. They are better able to absorb prospective members. There is strong evidence that as the Baby Boom generation begins to return to church, they prefer large churches with a menu of quality programs. Large Adventist churches tend to be located where there is the greatest degree of favorable public awareness of the Adventist message. All of this means that large churches are key to the North American Division leadership's emphasis on a revitalization of evangelism.

The significant church growth in largely black regional conferences has often been contrasted with the slower growth rate in "white" conferences. The average size of local churches in regional conferences is much larger than the average across the division. These larger churches are a key to the higher growth rate in Regional Conferences.

The more than 50 percent of North American Seventh-day Adventists who are members of these large churches are not the ones who are most likely to write scorching letters to conference presidents, cancel subscriptions to denominational periodicals, or send their tithe to private organizations that have a reactionary agenda. They are less likely to stand up and make emotional speeches at constituency meetings or buttonhole speakers at camp meetings. But these large churches provide most of the human and fiscal resources that are so necessary to the Adventist global mission. Even though they are the majority, they are not heard from by denominational leaders as often as are other voices. They are the vital "silent majority" of the North American Adventist Church.

* See *Church Members' Involvement, Witnessing, and Devotions*, NAD Church Information System Report Five, 1991, NAD Church Ministries Department.



My Disability, My Church

A personal testament on Adventism's unique potential in ministering to those with disabilities.

by Kathy Roy

In my professional life, I work on public policy issues that enable persons with disabilities and their families to live independent and productive lives. I am also a practicing Seventh-day Adventist, a convert who was lucky enough to find a community I could call my own. I also happen to have cerebral palsy. Thus I live in two worlds: developing policy on the one hand, and on the other hand recognizing that all the federal legislation in the world cannot replace a higher law to which I am accountable. In this article I will reflect upon my personal experience within the Christian community. Further, I will make some observations concerning what I believe to be a unique role the Adventist Church can play in the lives of persons with disabilities.

The Bible—especially the Gospels—is replete with examples of healing persons with disabilities. It is clear to me that Christ had a great deal of concern for persons with disabilities. But somehow, the concern for persons with physical and mental disabilities is not always evident within the church—the living Body of Christ. I think there are a number of reasons for this. Moreover, I am convinced that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a unique role to play within the Christian community in helping persons with disabilities and their families.

My Congregation and People with Disabilities

The church—any church—is often uncomfortable with persons who have disabilities. Perhaps it is because we are hesitant to worship (and maybe even love) where there are persons with differences—differences that can't be healed. Maybe we feel some type of guilt that we are somehow responsible for

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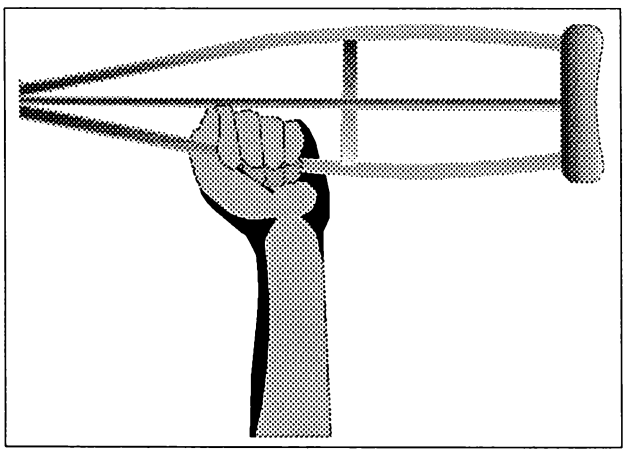
these "tragic losses." Or perhaps we are merely indifferent because, after all, we have so much to think about.

Whatever the reason, it is always interesting to go to church, especially a new church, when you have a disability. I have come to expect one of two typical reactions from those I meet: some smile as they quickly walk past; others are convinced that I can be healed to the glory of God.

Please understand that, as a Seventh-day Adventist and a practicing Christian, I believe in the healing power of Christ. I believe the myriad healings that are recorded in the Gospels. But I also believe that perhaps healing in the 20th century may mean something different. Perhaps it is not as important to walk like others as it is for the Spirit of God to enable you to live a productive life with whatever talents you may possess. Perhaps it is not as important to have well-articulated speech as it is to be able to listen to that still small voice within.

When one has a disability—or merely lives a crazy modern life—it is critical to have a sense of humor. I'm convinced that a good laugh (and some good music) can get you through just about anything. And yes, this even comes in handy when in church. Once, in my Methodist years, a dear lady of my church ran up to me one day and told (please note: *told*) me that she was taking me to Ohio to "be healed so that the faith of our church can be strengthened." How do you explain that going to a healing service when you know you have permanent brain damage is a bit difficult? Moreover, how do you explain that your personal healing and your commitment to Jesus Christ are, and will always remain, two separate issues? I took the bold approach: I was very sorry, but (lucky for me) I had to return to college to continue my studies.



While I can laugh at this and other incidences, there is something very important to know: this type of attitude has kept many of my friends with disabilities away from the church. Many people with disabilities simply don't attend services because of a paternalistic attitude that makes many feel "different" and unwelcome. I find it somewhat sad that the one place where people—all people—should feel accepted and welcome is the very place where people with disabilities feel the most uncomfortable.

I must say that my own church has, in a sense, been converted over the years. In my early days of attendance at Sligo church, I think many in my congregation didn't quite know how to take me. But gradually, I think that members at my church have come to understand that my disability is not an impediment to being a full part of the fellowship. Now, I feel a part of the family. Now I can be teased and hugged on Sabbath morning and pulled onto committees just like everyone else. And this acceptance—acceptance by the church—is critical. This enables me, like other members, to live out my faith in the context of a community.

All too often, people with disabilities are greeted with pity and not empathy. But pity and empathy are two entirely different things. Pity says that you are inferior and need "taking care of," whereas empathy looks at the individual as a human being—a child of God—

and seeks to understand that individual as a person. It's funny, but as someone with a lifelong disability, you can smell pity a mile away. And don't get me wrong, these folks mean well, to be sure. For example, I have a speech impairment and when I meet someone for the first time, I'm usually tense, which only makes things worse. (Besides, it's Sabbath, and by the end of the week we're all tired, right?) So I slur a "Hello" introduction, and I quickly pick up that the individual assumes that all my cookies aren't in the jar. (A word of honesty here: All of my cookies *aren't* in the jar, but this has nothing to do with my disability!) I've developed a method of very quickly letting that individual know that yes, I work, I pay bills, and I'm happily married, thanks very much. I give this illustration to make the point that many people have preconceived ideas about people with disabilities. Often, people believe that having a disability means that the individual is, by necessity, dependent on others. But all of us are dependent in one way or another. And isn't this what the church is about?

An SDA "Theology of Disability"

When I was young I was taught and believed for many years that "God has given you cerebral palsy for a reason." I grew up thinking that my own disability was a part of God's grand scheme. It was not until I had attended Sligo for many years that then-senior pastor James Londis and I had a long and rather heated debate about God, cerebral palsy, and the universe. I remember that Jim had just finished a sermon entitled, "Why Bad Things Happen to Good People." His conclusion, not surprisingly, was that God does not do terrible things to "teach us a lesson." Further, God wants only good things for his children. To those of you who have had the blessing of growing up in our church, this is no great revelation. I was flabbergasted. I vividly remember speaking to Jim after the service in a rather animated discussion. I even recall stating that this could not possibly be correct, that this flew in the face of how I'd been raised. But this fundamental Adventist understanding of God's grace has gradually helped me, not only with my personal understanding of my disability, but in other personal tragedies I have experienced. And it is this fundamental belief which perhaps makes our church uniquely qualified to welcome persons with disabilities into our fellowship.

Toward an Adventist Ministry To People With Disabilities

Today, many churches of other denominations are reaching out to persons with disabilities. Many have one or more services interpreted for persons who are deaf. Many churches are also being made physically accessible to persons who use wheelchairs or other assistive devices. And I understand that some churches are working on study curriculums that can be used by the cognitively impaired. I am pleased with all of this progress. In fact, I think these types of reforms are well overdue and *must* be embraced by our church, and many congregations are doing just that. But I also believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church may have a unique role to play in enabling persons with disabilities to reach their full God-given potential.

Knowing that we, as Seventh-day Adventists, believe that God wants only good for his children, and that he reached out to people with disabilities, I think our church has an obligation to reach out to persons with disabilities in a variety of ways. First and foremost, we must openly accept and encourage

persons with disabilities into our fellowship. If we, as individuals and as a community, can make a commitment to look at the person, not at the disability, then we can build an authentic fellowship with these individuals, many of whom experience devastating loneliness.

We may also think about a role for our college-aged members. Many persons with disabilities require assistance for a few hours a day (or even less) to do personal care, cleaning, et cetera. (I am certain my home would come to a screeching halt without a young woman, who happens to be a member of our church, who helps me once a week.) If we are encouraging our young people to go into health-care professions, what better experience can we give them than the knowledge that comes with this type of work? I might also point out that the trend is for the personal-care assistants to earn a wage, and not merely be volunteers.

Finally, if people with disabilities need to have an open fellowship with the church, the parents of persons with disabilities need it all the more. I could (and perhaps will) devote another article to the needs of parents of children with disabilities. Even parents whose children with disabilities are "doing just fine" carry a burden. They feel guilt, social isolation, and worry. For parents of mentally disabled persons there is the ultimate question: "What happens when I die?" Parents of children with disabilities face these and many other issues every day. I'm not suggesting that the church find all of the answers to these questions. In fact, this would not be realistic. But I think we need to be keenly aware that these parents need the church in a very real way. They—and their children—need the support and love of the community of faith which I think the Seventh-day Adventist Church is uniquely qualified to render.

The Big Deal About Pork and Jewelry

Does it *really* matter what we eat and wear? Yes, says Ernest Bursey, it's a matter of "boundary-marking." No, says Greg Schneider, convictions should override standards.

Standards Hold a Symbolic Function in a Community

by Ernest J. Bursey

"WHY CAN'T THE ADVENTIST CHURCH BE CONSISTENT? Eating lots of sugar and not getting exercise is worse than a ham sandwich now and then!" What Adventist pastor or teacher has not heard these words? This essay[1] attempts to suggest that consistency is not the only consideration in church standards. In fact, apparent inconsistency ought to be defended on both sociological and theological grounds.

For the sake of illustration, let's begin with the matter of pork. Typically, an Adventist Christian doesn't eat pork. Both inside and outside the community, this singular behavior has become an identifying mark of Adventists. Evangelists in North America have not considered candidates ready for baptism if they continued to eat pork and lard products. Not surprisingly, many non-Adventists identify Adventists as those Christians who don't eat pork.

Adventists aren't the only ones who engage in behavior that identifies them. Americans salute a distinctive flag; theology teachers traditionally wear sport coats and ties to class; high school sophomores adopt a particular hair style that is "in." Universally, subgroups select and/or maintain certain behaviors to signify allegiance to their group and to serve as indicators of the boundary that distinguishes those inside from those outside the subgroup.[2]

As a church we have not been immune to this process. To deal adequately with specific church standards we must recognize their symbolic function.

Looking at church standards from the view-

Ernest Bursey, an associate professor of biblical studies at Walla Walla College, is currently completing a Ph.D. in New Testament at Yale University. This article came as an outgrowth of a course on the Gospels he taught at Walla Walla College.

point of their symbolic value can help us understand their apparent inconsistencies. For instance, is it consistent to make abstinence from pork a prerequisite for baptism when we know excess sugar consumption, overeating, and lack of proper exercise can be even more unhealthful? Yes, it is, if church members understand the matter pragmatically and sociologically.

Not only abstinence from pork, but also a whole series of specific behaviors required of one joining the Adventist Church function symbolically. Perhaps we can speak of them as "entry-level" symbols. To practice these behaviors has the effect of moving a person across the boundary that marks off the Adventist from the larger population.[3] Other behaviors that appear to have greater consequences are not requirements for membership. However, we can understand and support the importance of these practices as "entry-level" behaviors.

These "entry-level" or "boundary-marking" behaviors are important because they symbolize the commitment(s) of an emerging Christian to a series of corresponding principles or values that lead far beyond the simple, obvious behavior. To illustrate, let us look again at abstinence from pork products.

The "entry-level" commitment to avoid pork as an unclean food should be seen as an implicit commitment to the view that our bodies are the temples of God. Diet is understood by Adventists as a matter of profound spiritual importance because of this understanding of the interplay between healthful living and Christian experience. It is not enough to point to the prohibitions in Leviticus and Deuteronomy as the reason for the church standard on pork products. Our position on this subject is directly related to an obligation to show, by what we eat, due respect for "the temple of God."

As Adventists continue in their "Christian growth" they are confronted with a host of suggestions, even directives, about diet and healthful living. For instance, Adventism has traditionally stressed vegetarianism. But as strongly as some (including Ellen G. White) feel about vegetarianism as God's ideal and the goal to be reached, it has never been a litmus test of fellowship.[4] That is, one may become—and remain—an Adventist while still a "pork-abstaining carnivore." But the original commitment should provide an impetus to move that individual "carnivore" toward a life-style that increasingly respects and protects the "temple of God."[5] One might say that the work of the pastor is to remind us of the implications of our "entry-level behaviors," and the direction of our symbolized commitments.

Diet is understood by Adventists as a matter of profound spiritual importance because of this understanding of the interplay between healthful living and Christian experience.

Such an approach appears to meet the objection of inconsistency that is often raised over "church standards." We should not be surprised that an organization singles out certain behaviors to serve as "entry-level" requisites.

But not all behaviors are equally useful as "entry-level" or boundary-maintenance symbols. For instance, abstinence from pork is superior to adequate exercise as an "entry-

level" behavior on at least two counts. First, the elimination of a specific item of food is easier to practice or witness than would be the incorporation of a general behavior, such as getting exercise. Second, a definition of "adequate" in "adequate exercise" is difficult to standardize. Total abstinence of a single item is much easier to adhere to for every person regardless of individual differences.

Such simplicity is necessary in the case of entry-level behaviors that are designed as symbols that can be readily observed. It is important to note that only certain behaviors are demanded from every member as an expression of personal commitment to the Adventist diet. Other desirable behaviors based on the same commitment to the care of the body as the temple of God ought to follow. But the church does not police in these matters. The individual is encouraged to extend the commitments to include additional behaviors, including daily exercise and adequate rest. But adjustments are made for personal preference and needs even fairly close to the requisite minimum.[6]

Much of the apparent inconsistency in Adventist standards grows out of this strong bias toward preserving the believer's freedom. Given the comprehensive view of Christian living taught among Adventists and developed in the voluminous writings of Ellen White, one might say that the Adventist Church maintains quite minimal standards. Only a relatively few "entry-level" behaviors are required to be maintained.

We can illustrate this process in virtually every area of Adventist behavior. Commitment to tithe as a principle is basic to the vows of baptism. Yet a failure to pay a full tithe, or to pay one's tithe to the local conference that pays the pastor, or to give regular offerings to the budget of the local church in which one worships, does not directly bring one's membership into jeopardy.[7]

Likewise, true Sabbathkeeping includes more than not working on the Sabbath. Many Adventists can tell moving personal stories of the loss of employment for refusing to work on the Sabbath.[8] If one insists or persists in working on the Sabbath, then one's membership is indeed in jeopardy.[9] But a member will not be disfellowshipped for failing to regularly attend church or for sleeping every Sabbath afternoon or by engaging in touch football at Rooks Park.

The removal of jewelry has traditionally been an "entry-level" standard in American Adventism. If we listen to the reasons for not wearing jewelry, we hear arguments about commitments to Christian modesty, simplicity, and stewardship. On a strictly dollars-and-cents basis, the purchase of a luxury vehicle or even sporty hubcaps can far outweigh the actual cost of an inexpensive set of earrings. Yet who has been denied membership for a set of hubcaps or censured for the purchase of an expensive car with a high depreciation schedule? Does this mean that our focus on personal adornment is misguided?

Not necessarily. The practice of removing the wedding ring before baptism has functioned in American Adventism as a powerful symbol of commitment to the church. I make this assertion even though I am aware that the usual explanations by evangelists and pastors for the ring's removal have not recognized the symbolic function of this act. This is yet another instance where our rationale has failed to deal with the real function of a required behavior. Perhaps for the wrong reasons, the symbolic meaning of removing the wedding ring prior to the baptismal service has, in at least some instances of which I am aware, paralleled or even surpassed the symbolic meaning of putting the ring on at the wedding service.[10]

Simply eliminating the practice of removing jewelry prior to baptism is hardly the way

to deal with apparent inconsistencies in Christian adornment and fashion. Even though a Christian can make a mockery of that visible, entry-level behavior by refusing to carry out its implications in the purchase of watches, entertainment centers, cars, homes, et cetera,[11] it is inconceivable for the church to lay down "standards" for baptism that limit how much can be spent for the necessities of transportation and shelter. Instead, the responsible pastor or teacher will encourage Christians to carry out basic commitments to simplicity and stewardship when buying a car or house.

The approach I have suggested views church standards and expected behaviors from both a sociological and a theological vantage point. The minimal Christian standards required for baptism, whatever form they take, should be seen as symbolic entry level gestures that serve to publicly express spiritual commitments. These behaviors should be specific, concrete, and simple to observe. In these ways, church standards balance an emphasis on personal freedom with a strong sense of commitment to God's will.

Notes and References

1. Professor Robert Gardner of Walla Walla College read an earlier draft and made a number of helpful suggestions.

2. The selection of certain behaviors as a symbol of identity is rarely the result of legislation. Furthermore, the parties involved in the selection of specific behaviors may include those outside as well as inside the group.

3. As Robert Gardner points out, sectarian membership has typically required a dramatic symbol of commitment to show that the individual has turned from the "world" and joined the sect. This may include leaving spouse, parents, children, and breaking other significant social bonds. Note the words of Jesus in Luke 12:51-53 and Matthew 10:34-38. As noted later in this paper, the removal of the wedding ring in earlier Adventism appeared to function as a powerful symbol of commitment to the church.

4. Ellen White firmly rejected vegetarianism as a test of fellowship. For a survey of Ellen White's own use of meat, see Roger W. Coon, "Ellen G. White and Vegetarianism," *Ministry,* 59:4 (April 1986), pp. 4-7, 29.

5. Again Gardner observes that this raises the issue of individual choice. He believes that a Seventh-day Adventist should choose the life-style because, based on data, it is in fact more healthy. For even the entry-level behavior, a health rationale must be given.

6. So Ellen White writes to a domineering husband that "even a small amount of the least hurtful meat would do less injury than to suffer strong cravings for it" (*Testimonies for the Church,* Vol. 2, p. 384).

7 A failure to pay tithe may disqualify one to accept leadership as an "elder" or a church employee. Again, this is not a matter of inconsistency but a recognition that those in positions of leadership ought to exemplify Christian behavior beyond that of the novice.

8. This appears to us to be another instance of the importance of a dramatic symbol of personal commitment that shows the individual has turned from the "world." These experiences often mark the place in time where one really becomes an Adventist.

9. Unless, of course, the work is required as a specialist in meeting human need/suffering. I suspect that current Adventist struggles over work on the Sabbath are an outgrowth of the growing complexity and dependency of modern life: roads need to be kept clean, weekends are times of business and travel, municipal services are expected by all persons, including Adventists, seven days a week. So the "no work" standard seems less clear than in previous times, though not less important.

10. Certainly, there seems to be a gender bias when the entry-level behaviors in the area of personal adornment have been largely directed toward jewelry worn by women.

11. It is tragic when church leaders encourage the removal of jewelry as a symbol of stewardship while celebrating the acquisition of wealthy professionals. This writer still smarts over the memory of a supervising pastor of the largest church in a Midwest conference who showed no response to the request for Bible studies from a couple from a circus background who regularly attended the church. The same pastor made much of the physician he had recently baptized after a series of evangelistic meetings.

If Pork and Rings *Are* a Big Deal, We Have To Give Fundamental Reasons

by Greg Schneider

I AGREE WITH ERNEST BURSEY'S OBSERVATION THAT standards are symbolic of group belonging and identity. I further agree with his implied recommendation that we treat them as such: that we tell new members, young people, and, thereby, ourselves that our standards symbolize who we are and who is a part of us.

However, Bursey's views, as they stand, are vulnerable to a summarizing caricature that might read, "Well, we have to stand for *something*." Some behavioral standards—e.g., no pork—are attempts to act out our convictions in particular times and circumstances. There are also *defining* convictions—e.g., Christ is Lord—that are essential to our identity. One can imagine a group dispensing with prohibitions on pork and still being the Adventist Church; it is impossible to imagine them dispensing with the confession of Christ's Lordship and still being the church.

Greg Schneider is professor of behavioral sciences at Pacific Union College. He holds a Ph.D. in the psychology of religion from the University of Chicago Divinity School.

We must legitimate our symbolic hedge markers in both functional *and* substantive terms. Abstaining from pork is a convenient, functional way to signal membership; but what, in the light of all that Paul said about Christ and the law, has it to do with the Lordship of Christ?

Another way to make my point is to make use of Kenneth Burke's dictum that symbols are strategies for encompassing situations. As such, they have three elements: A charting or mapping element that describes the situation; a persuading or praying element designed to move persons to feel and act toward the situation in particular ways; and a dreaming or wishing element that expresses the personal needs and imaginings of the person(s) who confront the situations and make use of the symbols.

A symbol that charts a situation inaccurately may lose its usefulness and legitimacy in people's minds when its deficiencies are revealed. Thus the relativizing of the health claims for abstaining from pork may make this standard less legitimate in people's minds and thus a less-effective symbol. Paul's theological chartings, which undermine the law and elevate Christ as symbol of God's acceptance and promises, may also lessen the symbolic effectiveness of law.

The persuasive element of symbols is the

Good Reading on the Social Importance of Symbols

Two lucid theoretical treatises on the social importance of symbols are by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann: *The Social Construction of Reality*, and *The Sacred Canopy*. They are available from Doubleday in inexpensive paperback editions. A seminal, anthropological treatise on certain kinds of boundary symbols is *Purity and Danger*, by Mary Douglas, a study of the abominations of Leviticus. A very interesting historical investigation of the meaning of early evangelical proscriptions of dancing, gambling, etc., is found in the work of Rhys Isaac. His *magnum opus* is *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*. An article that gives the flavor of what he's about is "Evangelical Revolt: The Nature of the Baptists' Challenge to the Traditional Order in Virginia, 1765 to 1775," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. series, 31 (July 1974), pp. 345-368

functional/sociological element par excellence. Persuasion among humans typically proceeds by a process of identifications; we are moved by symbols that identify us in relation to others. These symbols imply particular sorts of feelings/actions as a "natural" consequence. Again, the letters of Paul are excellent examples. Paul says, in effect, "You are sons of God, heirs to His promises because of Christ. Therefore act like it, and don't act like you belong to the world."

Here it is important to ask again what identifications our symbols make. I suspect that today's Adventists are especially asking what sorts of *dis*-identifications our symbols are requiring of us. Once upon a time, it might be argued, taking off the wedding ring served to establish a meaningful separation between us and some other groups who rejected the Lordship of Christ. At that time, taking off the wedding ring might very well have symbolized an emphatic rejection of the rejectors and a deep loyalty to Christ above all other loyalties. However, in this day and age, when loyalties such as marriage are treated so casually by "the world," a wedding ring might be the most appropriate symbol of loyalty to Christ and his church.

The expensive car with the high depreciation schedule is not simply an expression of personal greed or pride. It is also a symbol of identification with a particular socio-economic and occupational status, a symbol of loyalty to some of the dominant principalities and powers of our age.

While we are considering issues of identification and loyalty, we ought to look at our criteria of convenience and concreteness for appropriate "entry-level" symbols. Observing these criteria will not absolve us of a dilemma, however. The expensive car with the high depreciation schedule is not simply an expression of personal greed or pride (the dream element). It is also a symbol of identification with a particular socio-economic and occupational status, a symbol of loyalty to some of the dominant principalities and powers of our age. If we strive to maintain entry-level symbols that lead us deeper into the living truth of the kingdom, it seems that doffing the wedding ring as a symbol of stewardship, while celebrating our status as wealthy professionals, strains a gnat while swallowing a camel.

What Burke calls the element of symbols suggests that our communal symbolizing must recognize the multiplicity of human needs. Because such needs *are* multiform, any symbolizing is better done on a rather general level that is susceptible to many different personal interpretations. Sabbath observance is a good example. Specifying at high levels of church administration (church board or conference committee) or at high levels of community influence (church papers) precisely *how* the day must be observed is a bad policy. To the extent that we can determine what personal needs are generally experienced by large numbers of people, our symbolizing should be open to such needs.

Religious people who follow the musing of developmental psychologists to note the way the seven sacraments of the medieval church seemed tuned to the needs of the life cycle in that time and culture. We have the burden of constructing in our day rituals and symbols that will engage the widest range of

what we understand to be universal human needs.

The reference to the medieval church points to another issue implicit in the struggle over standards. The medieval church engaged the emerging needs of the human life cycle because it was a church-type rather than a sect-type of institution. It understood that its parishioners were part of a "family" moving through natural stages from birth to death. The medieval church elaborated rituals and symbols that seemed less chosen than simply given in nature.

Adventists are heirs of a sectarian vision that understands the church to be a voluntary association. The form of belonging here is not really family; it is more a contract. "In return for being counted a member of this club and for receiving the various privileges of membership, I pledge to keep the club rules and thus symbolize my belonging." When one disregards or disdains the symbols, by implication he or she has chosen to no longer be a member. The problem is that Adventists have been around long enough to be more of a church-type of association. However, we still struggle to conceive of our life together on the sect-type model. This often results in the worst of the two models: a corporate-bureaucratic model that affirms the permanence and power of the institution while treating the members as recalcitrant employees, constantly reminding them of their "contract" with God and with his church. No wonder the members wanting to be a part of the family of God disengage from the rest of the church and identify with a local congregation.

Another way to express the reservations I feel about Bursey's paper is to suggest a thought experiment I might conduct in my classes. I tell young ladies that I want them to take off their jewelry because doffing such stuff serves the sociological function of identifying them with the community. They are always polite, but I imagine them thinking, "Ha! We thought so. It's just a rule for the sake of keeping up the family appearances. So who needs to belong to such a screwed-up outfit, anyway?"

This sort of response is motivated by a variety of factors, all of which rise from our deep need for being and belonging, for finding reasons for the fundamental patterns of our common life together. In a way, our medieval forebears were more fortunate. For them rituals and symbols were hallowed habits that seemed like the eternal will of God and the pattern of Nature. We know that our reasons for our common life are human constructs. We are condemned to freedom.

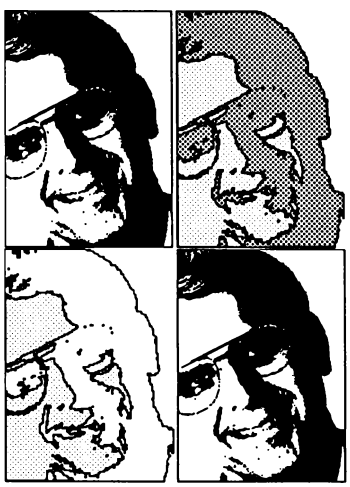
Telling our young people and ourselves about the social and functional importance of boundary and entry-level symbols is an important step in taking up the responsibilities of our freedom. It is, however, only one step in a very complex minuet. We are used to limiting ourselves to a determined marching step. Before we recognize our dull, disciplined folly, many more may fall out of our columns. Hopefully, Adventists are recognizing that, in the dance of life, they must learn some new steps.

Readers' Symposium: Abortion to Tithing

The following symposium is an Adventist town meeting. Members speak out on some of the pressing issues facing the church. Many of these letters and short essays are not only responses to views expressed in *Spectrum*; they are cries from the heart. We are proud to be a part of the vivid conversation that is Adventism. (We have retained the right to shorten and edit letters.)

—The Editors

Not All Profiles Proved Pleasing



I found myself quite pleased to be associated on your pages with the "Adventist Celebrities" profiled in Ron Graybill's article. However, for so short a piece, the profile of me contained an astonishing number of errors (some implied), and I beg leave to correct the record.

I was never, as was implied, a passive "benchmark for the Merikay case," a mere male counterpart of value to the outcome only because I did comparable work. Although I am not now and have never been a feminist, I have always believed in justice. And I was intimately involved in the exhausting 10-year struggle. Over the first months I worked hard—researching, studying, writing, debating—trying to convince the brethren to come out in favor of obeying the law requiring equal pay for equal work. When that enterprise failed, I turned to fact gathering in the ongoing, massive effort to help the EEOC and the U.S. Department of Labor prepare and prevail.

My divorce occurred nearly 15 years later than the point where Graybill's piece places it. And—contrary to what his sketch implies—the divorce had nothing whatever to do with the litigation, my beliefs, my former wife's beliefs, the Adventist Church, or my dismissal from Pacific Press.

Graybill is egregiously incorrect in writing, "Phillips says he left the Adventist Church." I have never said anything remotely like that to Graybill or anyone else. It is against my ecumenical principles to "leave" any Christian fellowship. I was disfellowshiped from the Mountain View SDA congregation quietly, without the church trial I had requested. My pastor's clearly stated basis for the action was the revelation of my personal religious odyssey discreetly shared with my friends in the Sabbath school discussion group I attended and at times moderated. That had to stop, my pastor told me over the phone one sunny day. "A line has to be drawn," he said, because "they can't" defend the church leadership's pronouncements. (They had never indicated any desire to do so.) In response to his ultimatum, I wrote a letter requesting an *ecumenical transfer of*

membership from Mountain View SDA to Sunnyvale Presbyterian, where I was attending Sunday services. With no other information beyond rumor, I can only speculate that my "request for *transfer* of membership" was interpreted by my pastor and by the Central California Conference leadership at that time as a "request for *cessation* of membership" and was granted as such for the record.

Allow me herewith to combat misinformation about me so ubiquitously assumed, it seems, within Adventism. Here in Walla Walla no one is more regular than I in attending a Walla Walla College church Sabbath school discussion group, where I share my convictions openly and where, after more than a year, I still feel welcome.

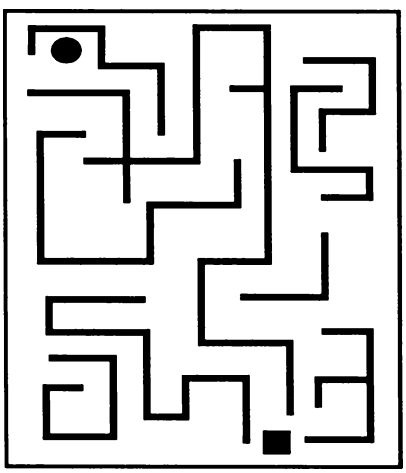
The publication which I now edit is not *Health Science*, but *Health Scene*. Certainly more than a few *Spectrum* readers have seen it.

I do not work for Cecil Coffey Communications, but for Coffey Communications, Inc.

Thank you for allowing me to correct the record.

Max Phillips
Walla Walla, Washington

"Anonymous Donors" or "Secret Arrangements"?



Spectrum should be commended for publishing the article, "The Presidents and Anonymous Donors," (Vol. 21, No. 4), which raises a number of interesting questions of church polity and policy that merit further discussion.

Because individuals accepted this supplemental income as a result of their elected church offices, like other elected officials they can hardly expect it to be kept a secret from those who elected them. That their own employing entity declined to handle the matter should have been sufficient warning that what was proposed was inappropriate. If he did not do so, the General Conference treasurer should have strongly advised against such an action, and that the Columbia Union was out of line getting involved in employee matters that were not its affair.

That Folkenberg and McClure proceeded to locate a church entity willing to cooperate illustrates a too-common attitude of some in church management, "management by expediency," i.e., finding a way around a policy and dealing only with a specific situation rather than dealing with the underlying problem. I also find this to be another disquieting example of the lack of accountability of union conferences reminiscent of the Davenport fiasco.

As indicated by both Turner and Wisby, there are more "private financial deals" presently going on than most church members and employees realize. Compensation in too many cases appears to be dependent on how good a bargainer (possibly even schemer) a person is at time of employment. Ways of increasing and/or supplementing employee compensation appear to be limited largely by imagination and finding someone who is willing to go along.

It is interesting that Wisby admitted that there are other "courtesy payroll" employees. Where is that sanctioned in the working policies, and which constituencies approved them? In public life the free press, largely unknown in the church, helps balance a bureaucratic tendency to be self-dealing and secretive. Without *Spectrum*, this incident would likely have gone unreported, and even *Spectrum*'s report was after the fact.

This recent incident may illustrate a difference in corporate culture between some church clergy/administrators and the treasurers/auditors, with some perhaps more likely to make "quiet deals" while others stick "by the book." In general, the corporate culture of the church appears to encourage seeking discounts and private "special deals." For example, some seminarians (and some other Adventists) are well known in Berrien Springs for asking for the "Adventist/clergy discount," and some also appear to spend an inordinate amount of energy finding ways to pay as little tax as possible.

One of the fundamental issues presented here is the Adventist pay scale and how it relates to the life-style of church employees. Church-sponsored educational and health systems have created a white collar, professional, upper-middle class among many members, with life-styles to match. These values are shared to a great degree by most church employees, who for example are no longer willing

to live in the tiny bungalows of former years. The neighborhoods of such housing near some church institutions are now seen as an embarrassment and are torn down as much as possible.

This difference is perhaps illustrated by comparing the modest housing of the White family in Battle Creek, Michigan, with their substantial home at Elmshaven in California. However, church remuneration is more adequate for purchasing bungalows than Elmshavens, especially on a single salary. However, there now appears to be an assumption of two incomes in the families of church employees. The church pay system (at least the voted policies) has also traditionally been egalitarian, with a high emphasis on equality and "fairness." There is comparatively little salary difference made based on seniority, level of responsibility or effectiveness, and merit pay is virtually unheard of.

Paying different salaries in different parts of the country based almost entirely on real estate costs has had several, possibly unintended, consequences. Among them are the following: difficulty of people from lower-cost areas being able to move into high-cost areas (demonstrated in the present case as well as others), having the church indirectly pay much more toward the net financial worth of some (those in higher-cost areas) than others, which can then be cashed out at retirement or left to heirs.

It is ironic, and not good for employee morale, when a relatively inexperienced employee moves into a lower-cost area from a higher-cost area and purchases a house that is twice as expensive as that of the faithful long-time employee in the lower-cost area. Sometimes these individuals even have difficulty locating housing that costs enough to use all their equity! The opposite problem, of course, happened in the case at hand. This system also affects retirement income, which is based on the income of the final years of employment.

Annual cost-of-living allowances historically have approximated (on the low side) the annual rise in the consumer price index. Recent church actions threaten even these modest increases. The decision last fall to pay an annual increase based on tithe increase or consumer price index, whichever is lower (excluding of course employees of the Adventist Health System, but including other church employees whose income is not dependent on tithe) is a desperate move that will gradually impoverish church employees even further. Needless to say, there is widespread anger and frustration over this in the Adventist work force.

At current mortgage rates, the interest-free real-estate loan received by McClure is worth more than $11,000 annually. Unlike the wives' pay, the article did not indicate that this very generous "deal" has been rescinded. I also wonder when it has become church policy for a church entity to purchase the home of an employee who moves. (Of course McClure was not even an employee, but the board chair.) There are many examples of church employees having difficulty selling homes when they move to new locations, and having double payments for some time.

There are significant problems with the current remuneration system. Rather than spending time finding loopholes in the system (and there are many), church leaders need to expend considerable effort in addressing the systemic problems, which likely involve reducing the bureaucratic overhead much more than has yet been contemplated.

The concept of anonymous donors giving personal favors to church officials is disquieting for other reasons. To begin with, to whom is the person's name unknown? To the recipient as well as the larger church? It raises the possibility of purchasing church political influence, much as PACs do now in the political arena, and like PACs they might divert the employee's attention to soliciting such favors. This practice would also almost certainly lead to inequities of outcome, as it did in this case. There is quite a substantial financial difference between a no-interest loan and even a church-sponsored loan (and to whom are the latter available, or is it simply another "perk" for the elite?).

Like Caesar's wife, the personal financial dealings of church leaders need to be above reproach. There are significant problems with the current remuneration system. Rather than spending time finding loopholes in the system (and there are many), church leaders need to expend considerable effort in addressing the systemic problems, which likely involve reducing the bureaucratic overhead much more than has yet been contemplated.

Harvey Brenneise
Berrien Springs, Michigan

Haven't we framed the discussion about income supplements with the wrong words from the beginning? The issue is not "anonymous donors," but "secret arrangements"—secret information withheld from the supposedly informed electorate that puts folks in top slots, that reviews and votes on policy.

My dictionary says that anonymous means that the recipient does not know from whence the largess came. Since the Adventist Church has no more folks capable of providing such succor than can be counted on the fingers of one hand, there can be little doubt that the recipients knew exactly where their wives' "salaries" were coming from.

It is indeed troubling to read that conferences have/had similar arrangements. For years we continued the fiction that everyone from the lowliest one-room teacher to the conference president got equal pay. We now know that there are many levels of "equal," with some far more "equal" than others.

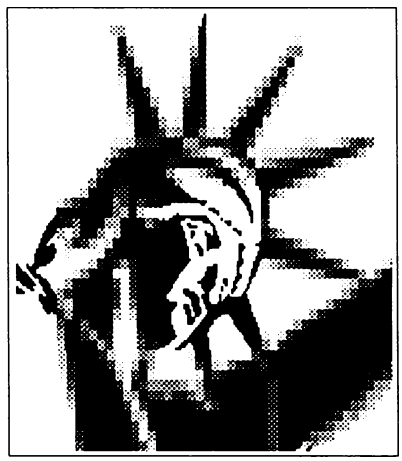
Of course there are solutions. They should come from the appropriate committees, and not from so-called anonymous donors. But it is hard to locate an appropriate committee in the hierarchy. It should be made up primarily of laypeople who experience the problem in the outside world, not the usual ingrown rubber stamp operation that is all too typical. Every worldwide company, every nationwide company, has the same problem of executives moving between the low and high cost-of-living areas. There are plenty of places to look for solutions, and plenty of solutions that do not compromise the company or the executive.

I am reminded of a study done in the Southern California Conference detailing the demographics of the loss of confidence in Adventist leaders. It pointed out that there is an inverse relationship between income and education on one hand, and confidence in leadership on the other.

The leadership should ponder one thought. You don't "get" respect, no matter what one TV comedian thinks: you earn it. This episode at the top, evidently copying other incidents in the local conferences, has done little to enhance the respect and confidence in their judgment and capability.

Bob Patchin
Villa Park, California

Talk About Threats to Religious Liberty!



Your August, 1991 issue (Vol. 21, No. 4) just arrived. It contains two articles on last year's case of *Oregon Employment Division v. Smith.* Both opposed the Supreme Court's decision in terms that can be fairly called hyperbolic.

While I would be more comfortable with a decision that said that even laws, religiously neutral on their face, could not be enforced against those acting for religious motives, I don't feel that the threat is all that serious. For that matter I have seen predictions of disaster come to nothing. This will probably do the same.

To begin with, do we really believe that when a Sunday bill of the sort that would inspire the angel of mercy to fold her wings in preparation for taking her flight, never to return (*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 451), those promoting it would be discouraged by a legal opinion that, under that most recent decisions of the Supreme Court, such a law would be unconstitutional?

Next, the decision in the *Smith* case applies only to laws that are religiously neutral. I recall that when the Sunday Law decisions (*McGowan v. Maryland*, 366 US 420) were handed down in 1961, the one thing the laws involved were not is religiously neutral. Yet they were upheld. By contrast the law involved in the *Smith* case is very moderate. It forbade the use of peyote and said nothing about religion.

I wrote an article about the decision that appeared in the *Baylor Law Review* issue of the summer of 1961. At the time I made a study of all the Sunday laws in the country and found a number of them using such terms as "Lord's Day," and "desecration." My favorite was a law in Virginia that, forbidding hunting on Sunday, declared it to be a day of rest for wild birds and wild animals.

Let me give one theory about the real threat to liberty. It will come in Satan's effort to make evil seem good and good seem evil. We have seen some considerable success in that effort. There is certain sexual conduct, adultery,

fornication, and homosexuality, that is most vigorously condemned in the Bible, now argued to be a most basic human right. Laws are already in existence protecting those who engage in such conduct from discrimination by those who do not agree with them. We can expect such law to trample on our right to hire church school teachers who uphold Bible teachings on the subject.

Nor is that all. We who believe in a divine creation, if we do not pay to send our children to church schools, must allow them to be indoctrinated in a theory that denies our beliefs. A few states have passed laws that require that if one side of the question is presented, the other must be as well. All they say is, "Let's give both sides of the question and let kids decide for themselves." This has been held to be an establishment of religion!

If we wish to be upset by a decision of the Supreme Court, try this one on for size.

Kenneth Harvey Hopp
Yucaipa, California

The Ethics of Reproductive Technologies

It seems to be a natural desire to divide humanity into "us" and "them." "Us" represents those to whom we have a list of ethical obligations, and "them" are those to whom we owe less, or nothing at all. Historians and anthropologists can give us many examples, and the practical results of such divisions are instructive—and scary.

Jack Provonsha's tempting call for the "principle of personhood" appears to represent another such division of the human family. We must require a very high burden of proof before we go along. Specifically, the principle of personhood must be derived directly from Scripture. It needs to be unequivocally *shown* that God can approve of using one ethic for "us" and another for "them."

We owe exactly the same basic ethical obligations to every human being: of whatever gender, race, color, age or developmental stage; of whatever ability or disability. To deny this principle leaves us at the mercy of whomever has the power to define "personhood," and flies in the face of the plain reading of Scripture.

Earl M. J. Aagaard
Angwin, California

Being a reproductive endocrinologist and infertility specialist, I was excited to see issues involved with assisted reproductive technologies addressed in *Spectrum* ("The Odyssey and the Ecstasy," "Inside the Human Life Committee," "Whose Baby Is This, Anyway?" and "God and the Adoption of Sperm and Ova," Vol. 21, No. 4).

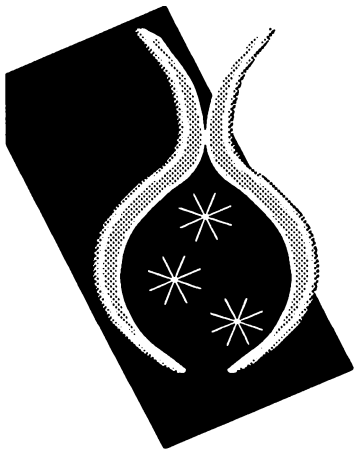
On a daily basis, I work with couples who have had significant difficulty achieving pregnancy for one reason or another, and Bonnie Dwyer's experience, with some variation in details, is shared by many of my patients, and by millions of couples in this country. The unfortunate irony of this situation is that most of these couples are loving and sincere people who would make absolutely wonderful parents, but have difficulty achieving pregnancy for reasons over which they have no control.

To those who would deny them the opportunity to have children through assisted reproductive technology of one form or another because they consider it "sinful," "adulterous," or "immoral," I suggest that judgment be reserved. "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1, NKJV). If one is not in the proverbial shoes of an "infertile" couple, one cannot truly appreciate the pain, grief, shame, and feelings of being "less than whole" that an "infertile" couple experiences. Only couples who are faced with this unfortunate situation have the right to decide for themselves what is right for them. It has to be a decision made after much prayerful consideration. It is a decision that the couple has to live with for the rest of their lives, and it is unfair for anyone outside of this relationship to impose their standards, based on personal bias, onto the couple. The God that I serve is a God of love and compassion, and I'm certain that s/he would judge each person according to the motives of his or her heart.

Thank you very much for deciding to publish this series of articles. I cheer your attempts to deal with an issue that affects more couples than most people realize.

Samuel C. Pang
Center for Fertility and IVF
Loma Linda University

Sorry, But Life Doesn't Start at Conception



I am disturbed by the draft document entitled, "General Guidelines for a Christian Approach to Abortion" that appeared in *Spectrum* (Vol. 21, No. 4). Section One of the document suggests tacit acceptance of the idea that life starts at conception, or soon afterward.

By biological criteria this assertion is inaccurate. What occurs at conception is the joining of two cells that are already fully alive. This is one unique step in a series of steps, all critical, that lead to the formation of a new person. The new person does not suddenly come alive at any stage but rather continues life that was present in his or her parents and in their germ cells. While it may not please aesthetic sensibilities, loss of life is the normal and common mode of operation for the reproductive mechanism. Ova lost during normal menstruation and sperm lost during intercourse with contraception are just as alive prior to the event and just as dead afterward as an aborted fetus, and many times more common. While Scripture and Christian traditions demand respect and protection for human life, they are also consistent with the biological evidence that human life originated once and is passed in an unbroken (if inefficient) chain from generation to generation. Biologically, life isn't created at conception.

My thinking has been informed as I observed and struggled with the difficulty of two Seventh-day Adventist friends who I will call Ann and Betty. Both were students when they became pregnant. Both believed that sex outside marriage was wrong, had not intended to have sex, and had not, for the same reason, planned contraception. Both had a parent, or parents, whom they believed could not forgive them if they learned of the pregnancy.

Ann opted for abortion. She was deeply disturbed and expressed her feelings of guilt repeatedly. Ann did not, however, say that she believed that she had made the wrong decision.

Betty carried her pregnancy to term and had the satisfaction and deep pain of giving her daughter to another woman in an adopted family. She commented bitterly, during her pregnancy, about how pervasively the pregnancy interfered with her education and her social life. Betty never told me that she regretted her decision to carry the pregnancy to term, although she rued the glib manner in which she had decided that her moral principles allowed her no other option. To my knowledge both women remain active members of the church. Prior to Ann's experience I cherished a belief that abortion for reasons other than a threat to the mother's life was wrong. Today I believe that both of my friends made the right decision.

By the criteria of the draft document, Ann, who chose an abortion, would be culpable (under Item Four) of having chosen abortion for reasons of convenience or birth control. The word *convenience* demeans her difficult choice and the word *inconvenience* is a gross understatement of the obstacles that she faced in carrying the pregnancy to term. Unlike Betty, attending a non-Adventist school and able to continue in classes, Ann was enrolled in an Adventist institution which would not, as a matter of policy, allow unmarried pregnant women to attend classes or remain full-time students. She lacked a social network outside of the school and was terrified of the prospect that her parents or her intolerant home church would learn of her pregnancy. In addition, she lacked a source of financial support outside of student loans and her parents' contribution to tuition.

Religious convictions about sexual restraint frequently are not matched by restrained behavior during adolescence and early adulthood. A pregnancy costs the student mother at least a lost school term and temporary separation from her social milieu.

If emotions preclude giving up a baby for adoption, pregnancy can permanently disrupt education and dictate poverty-level existence for the single mother supporting a family at the minimum wage. Adolescent pregnancy often stigmatizes a young woman, making it unlikely that she will find a husband.

The word *convenience* applies nicely to the married couple who find that the baby they wanted in two years is on the way now. It underrates the obstacles of the pregnant student. Loss of educational opportunity and loss of social opportunities are substantial losses and not issues only of convenience. While they are not obvious victors when weighted against the potential of a new person, they are not

obvious losers either. Genetically, the developing embryo or fetus is unique, but a young woman's life—a life that will be to a great degree shaped by her opportunities in school—is also unique. Seventh-day Adventists are interested in the life of the young woman; their interest is not restricted to the fetus developing within her.

I know that there are committed Seventh-day Adventists who believe that in some circumstances, social and economic obstacles to a pregnant woman should be given substantial weight when considering the alternatives. Counselors at Seventh-day Adventist institutions, who have the trust of young women, have indicated it in private conversation and I cannot believe that no one on the committee holds this view. If this can't be incorporated into a consensus statement, then it may be well to include an appendix of a significant minority view.

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Genesis and Darwin Without Tears

Between the lines of James Hayward's review of problems associated with the Creation story (*Spectrum*, Vol. 21, No. 2), it was difficult to escape the sense of dismay and consternation that permeated the report. Adventist scientists have not gone overboard toward either evolutionary thinking or the so-called creationism that is making headlines. However, it is frustrating to find nature so uncooperative with our understanding of God's Word. Maybe it's time to take a look at both God's Word and the natural world from a different perspective. There is an answer, a very simple answer, but it involves re-examining one of our most cherished traditions.

We are learning that some of what has passed for doctrine in theology is nothing more than tradition; it doesn't come from Scripture at all. The church is full of traditions, good traditions. But periodically it is wise to review these traditions in the light of new knowledge and discovery to see if they need updating. Adventists are used to doing this. We have rejected the traditional understanding of the day of worship, the mode of baptism, the nature of the human soul and spirit, the location and nature of heaven and hell, and similar traditions. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to look for other doctrines that have been built on tradition rather than on Scripture.

Part of the problem in our understanding of Creation and, for that matter, the entire Old Testament, is the retention of our beliefs regarding the nature of God.

The Nature of God. Traditionally, God is presented to us as a Being who is omniscient (knows everything), omnipotent (all powerful), and omnipresent (everywhere). Some go even farther and claim that God knows things that have not yet happened. All these concepts are based on a few isolated texts that have other, more realistic interpretations.

Consider first the concept of omnipresence. Throughout the Scriptures God is presented as a finite, localized being:

- Genesis 3:8: "the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden." [All texts are taken from the New International Version unless otherwise specified.]
- Genesis 18:1, 2: "the Lord appeared to Abraham. . . ."
- Genesis 32:24: "Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him" (see verse 30, "'because I saw God face to face'").
- Joshua 5:13-15: "he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him" (see verse 15: "'the place where you are standing is holy'").
- Daniel 10:16: "Then one who looked like a man touched my lips."
- Hebrews 1:3: "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven"

In some cases, God is seen in conjunction with or riding or flying in a vehicle (often described by its appearance as a cloud):

- Exodus 19:18: "the Lord de-

scended on it [the mountain] in fire."

• Exodus 33:9: "As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses."

• Exodus 34:5: "the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him."

• Deuteronomy 31:15: "the Lord appeared at the Tent in a pillar of cloud; and the cloud stood over the entrance to the Tent."

• 2 Samuel 22:11: "'He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind'" (see also Psalms 18:10).

• Ezekiel 1:4-28 (description of a "helicopter" in which the Lord was riding).

• Ezekiel 10 (more description of God's vehicle).

• Acts 1:9: "he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight."

These descriptions do not fit the image of an omnipresent being. There is no Scripture that remotely suggests that God is omnipresent. Since God is assumed to be omniscient and omnipotent, it is presumed that he is also omnipresent. But that is tradition, not scripture.

But why do we assume that God is omnipotent? There is probably more scriptural justification for this view than what supports either of the other attributes. However, if God is good and all-powerful, one must conclude with our Christian Scientist friends that there is no power that is not good; i.e., evil cannot exist. But the Scriptures make it plain that evil does exist. The devil is real. And death is an enemy that Jesus came to conquer.

God is good; of that there can be no argument or the whole of Christian philosophy is invalid. So God cannot be omnipotent in the usual sense of the word. Nowhere does God claim to be all-powerful. He has, of course, all the power it takes to handle any situation that may arise in this world:

• Jeremiah 32:27: "'I am the Lord. . . . Is anything too hard for Me?'"

• Matthew 28:18: "'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.'"

In this sense, he can rightly be titled "omnipotent" (Revelation 19:6, KJV). However, to ascribe an infinity of power to him takes us away from Bible doctrine into the realm of tradition.

Finally, consider omniscience; how much does God really know? If traditional philosophy is examined carefully, nothing is found but a giant computer—completely deterministic, preprogrammed, immutable, unchangeable. Love, mercy, grace, and justice all disappear in a morass of meaningless phrases. But if we examine what God says about himself, we find a God who has a sense of humor, uses tools, gets upset, keeps records, changes his mind, seeks advice, and much more. These are just the opposite of what we have been taught about God.

God says that he changes his mind:

• Genesis 6:7: "'I will wipe mankind . . . from the face of the earth . . . for I am grieved that I have made them.'"

• 1 Samuel 16:1: "'How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king . . . ?'"

• 2 Kings 20:1: "'You will die; you will not recover . . .'" Verse 5: "'I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you.'"

• Ezekiel 4:12: "'Bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel.'" Verse 15 (after Ezekiel's protest): "'Very well, . . . I will let you bake your bread over cow manure instead of human excrement.'"

• Amos 7:3: "So the Lord relented."

• Jonah 3:10: "When God saw what they did . . . he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened."

God can be influenced:

• Exodus 33:3: "'I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people.'" Verses 14, 17 (after Moses's entreaty): "'My presence will go with you . . . I will do the very thing you have asked.'"

• Numbers 14:20: "'I have forgiven them, as you asked.'"

• Deuteronomy 9:13-20: "'Let me alone, so that I may destroy them.'" Verse 19: "But again the Lord listened to me."

• Psalm 106:23: "he would destroy them—had not Moses . . . stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them."

• Jeremiah 18:8: "'if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent. . . .'" Verse 10: "'I will reconsider.'"

There are things that never entered his mind:

• Jeremiah 7:31: "'"something I did not command nor did it enter my mind"'" (see also Jeremiah 19:5; 32:35).

If we examine what God says about himself, we find a God who has a sense of humor, uses tools, gets upset, keeps records, changes his mind, seeks advice, and much more. These are just the opposite of what we have been taught about God.

He can forget:

- Isaiah 43:25: "'I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions . . . and remembers your sins no more.'"
- Jeremiah 31:34: "'I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.'" (See also Hebrews 8:12.)
- Hebrews 10:17: "'Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.'"

He can think and reason (impossible if he knows everything):

- Isaiah 1:18: "'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord."
- Isaiah 55:8, 9: "'my thoughts are not your thoughts.'"
- Micah 4:12: "'they do not know the thoughts of the Lord; they do not understand his plan.'"

He lays plans:

- Isaiah 37:26: "'In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass.'"
- Jeremiah 18:11: "'Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you.'"
- Jeremiah 29:11: "'I know the plans I have for you.'"

The Creation Problem. In terms of the current question, once we recognize that God made us in his image and that he may do things as we would do them, we are free to compare his activities with our approaches to similar problems. For instance, when we set out to build a flying machine, we did not start by designing a jumbo jet complete with provisions for food trays and oxygen masks. Instead, the first airship was a simple machine made of bicycle parts powered with a small available engine. It was taken to a quiet beach at Kitty Hawk and tried out on a calm morning. Since then, designs have improved and capabilities increased—until now we build huge passenger planes, fighter planes, helicopters, and space shuttles. All around us we see evidences that God went through a similar process when he designed and built the earth. Our friends in science have been telling us this for years, but since we thought we knew more than they did, we haven't been listening.

Only as we read more into Scripture than is actually there or as we accept more from Darwin than is actually found in nature do we find conflict.

All through Scripture we see God trying to figure out how to handle us. He tries one thing, and when it fails he modifies his approach and tries another. With Abram, for instance, he tried to begin the New Earth. When Jacob's children turned out surly, he retrenched, starting again with Moses and Joshua. It seems that he almost succeeded with David and Solomon, but then sinful human nature took over again.

Later through Ezekiel, Ezra, and Nehemiah he tried again. The last chapters of Ezekiel present a fascinating picture of God's intentions. This time the Jews went overboard with oppressive laws and regulations, so that Ezekiel's prophecies never came to pass, either. When God himself in the person of Jesus came here for one last attempt to set up the kingdom, and Jesus was slain, God gave up that tactic. Now we are told of a 1,000-year retraining program, a final judgment, and a fire to cleanse the earth. Clearly God is learning and adapting as he tries to deal with his people.

Another concept should be addressed as well. As earth becomes more populated, humans are considering how to make Mars or Venus habitable. We are trying to figure out how to modify the atmosphere so we can breathe it, how to modify the soil so it will support the kind of vegetation we need to live on, et cetera. Perhaps we should introduce certain bacteria to modify some chemical. At another time we might introduce some plant to do another task. Or we might introduce animals for other jobs. Meanwhile we might choose to modify the atmosphere to accommodate the requirements of each life form. The eventual goal, of course, is to prepare everything so we can be comfortable living there.

Between what we find in nature and what God tells us in his Word, it seems that he used these same concepts in building earth. He is capable of doing a lot more than we can, of course, and he has better tools to work with, but the methods seem to be similar. We can see this, for instance, in his work with primates. The records of *A. afarensis* (Lucy), *H. habilis*, and *H. erectus* in the fossil strata show evidence of a number of experiments between the apes and humans. Apparently God worked on designing us for several million years until he perfected his masterpiece, us. (There are those who believe he tried it at least once before, but that the inhabitants of Atlantis and Lamuria wiped themselves out, so he had made some adjustments and started again. More likely, those myths refer to antediluvian people. On the other hand, maybe the Flood story should reexamined, too.)

About 6,000 years ago, in a seven-day visit to this planet, God planted a garden (see Genesis 2), made some final adjustments (see Genesis 1), formed his masterpiece (us), gave us some guidelines, and started our present era. From time to time, he returned to see how we

were doing, encourage us, answer questions, and just be a friend. Then one time he found that we had blown it. Our Bible records the rest of the story.

As for the items that bothered Dr. Hayward, there is no hint in Scripture that the lives of animals are any more sacred than the lives of plants. Only humans were offered the tree of life. The very mention of that tree implies that other animals had normal life cycles even in Eden. He bases his dismay on tradition that is not supported by Scripture.

Because of the perceived threat to the sanctity of the Sabbath posed by Darwinian theory, Adventists have a special fascination with the Creation story. But once we understand the nature of God as outlined above and the way God probably works, there is no conflict. Something special happened 6,000 years ago. It is legitimate to ask what that was. However, it wasn't the creation of the entire universe as taught by some, nor the creation of the earth from nothing as taught by others. Nor was it something that conflicts with what we find in the fossil record.

Another threat posed by Darwin is the undermining of faith in God's Word in general. Here again, however, there is no real conflict. Only as we read more into Scripture than is actually there or as we accept more from Darwin than is actually found in nature do we find conflict. By staying with the facts in both nature and Scripture, perfect agreement is found between God's two books.

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What Inequality at Lake Titicaca?

Regarding Harold Weiss's response (Vol. 21, No. 2) to "The Radical Roots of Peruvian Adventism," by Charles Teel (Vol. 21, No. 1), it is a bit puzzling that the inequality or "caste system" in the Peruvian Adventist Mission that Weiss refers to should not have surfaced until recently. During the five years that we worked in an administrative capacity in the Lake Titicaca Mission (1948-1953) where we were intimately associated with Andres Achata, native Peruvian educational secretary of the mission, and especially concerned with those 109 schools, we never heard one word of lament over the inequality among workers and their assigned positions on the "totem pole."

We do distinctly remember that the mission committee gave study as to how the work on the mission stations could be made more efficient. A superintendent was appointed for the stations to the north of Lake Titicaca, and another for those to the south, to counsel with the station directors about problems related to their work. The post for the northern section was filled by a worker from the States, while Mariano Huallara, father-in-law of Dr. Ruben Chambi (mentioned in Teel's article), was assigned to the southern part.

Early during our presidency of the mission, some of the native station directors urged that we investigate the handling of tithes and offerings on one of the mission stations. When it was discovered that funds were being appropriated by the director for personal use, why did not the other mission station directors call attention to a supposed inequality in salaries, etc.?

Upon our leaving the Lake Titicaca Mission in 1953, at a little farewell gathering, Dr. Ruben Chambi, as Teel says, elected to the National Legislature, made an unforgettable speech: More than four centuries ago came the invasion from Spain, when the conquistadores brought the descendants of the Incas to the level of virtual slaves. Nearly three centuries later came the invasion from the South, as San Martin led the armies of liberation. But independence from Spain did not bring freedom to the people of the highlands. Finally, near the beginning of the present century, came the invasion from the North. Only with the coming of the Adventist missionaries did the dream of true freedom become a reality.

But Weiss asks, "Why do you think that Ruben Chambi did not teach at the Adventist College (Inca Union College] in Nãna?" During the seven years that we were closely connected with Inca Union College (1962-1969), we do not recall a mention of the subject. It seems he was not available. We did overlap with him for a year or two at Chile Adventist College, where beyond-the-call-of-duty efforts were expended to make sure that his daughter received the maximum student help in her nursing course. As foreign missionaries from

Peru to Chile, the Chambis were well received and did good work.

Weiss mentions a "real revolution" that took place in Peru in the '70s. If he has in mind an episode that began several years before 1970, we can affirm that it did not revolve around Ruben Chambi, nor was it an effort to put forward those that had supposedly suffered under a caste system. Weiss's opinion is that "this revolution . . . is worthy of its historian." Others might opine that the pages of *Spectrum* need not be cluttered therewith.

As for Pedro Kalbermatter, mentioned by Harold Weiss in his letter, it may be that the tendency of North American Adventists to idolize certain missionaries like Fernando Stahl and Leo Halliwell have left others back in the shadows, but it did not keep Pedro Kalbermatter's daughter and son-in-law, Noel Mangold, from accepting a call to the Juliaca Clinic where we found them upon our arrival in 1948.

In 1975, the Pacific Press published Barbara Westphall's *A Man Called Peter*[Kalbermatter]. A very recent Junior Sabbath School *Mission* has a vivid story of Pedro's army experience, long since recognized by South American Adventists as having opened the door for considerate treatment of Adventist conscripts throughout the continent.

Since 1987, Pacific Press has been producing several books a year to add to its new *Hall of Faith* series, paying special attention to the role played by less well-known missionary pioneers, each book accompanied by an audio-visual program from Mission Spotlight.

We may forget, but he who gave them their commission will not forget.

Bruno W. Steinweg
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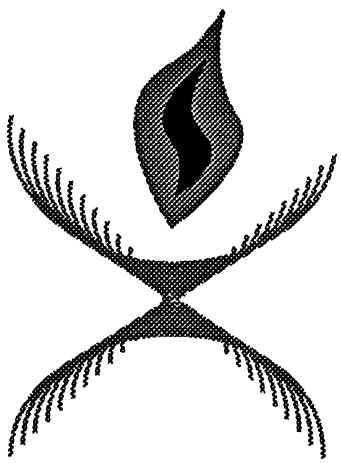
Hammurabi and the Ordination of Women



Hammurabi, one of Babylon's greatest kings, ruled between 1850 and 1750 B.C. His reign ushered in the Golden Age of Babylon. He expanded his kingdom by conquest and diplomacy. He proposed to his cabinet that the government should collect taxes fairly, that military service was for all and limited by law, that just rules would control business, wages, trade, loans, and debts, that basically the strong would not take advantage of the weak.

What if his cabinet had replied, "The world field is not ready for this; unity is more important than justice!"

The Normans and the French conquered England in 1066 A.D. For 100 years able and fair kings ruled the isle. They respected feudal customs and tried to govern fairly. In 1199 John took the throne. He demanded excessive military service, sold royal positions, and increased taxes without the consent of the barons. The court was driven by the king's wishes, with crushing penalties for minor infractions.

In 1213 barons and church leaders met at St. Albans. They called for a halt to the king's injustices. There were 63 articles mainly affecting the middle class. From the charter developed the concepts of trial by jury and freedom from unjust imprisonment. Many of its ideas were later incorporated into the Constitution of the United States.

What if, after hearing the ideas, the barons had agreed, "The world field is not ready for this. Unity is more important than justice!"

The British gained dominance over the French in the New World in 1763. They then turned their attention to the colonists. Taxes were increased, duties imposed on imports, and troops quartered in private homes. The colonists dumped tea in Boston Harbor and the Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence.

What if the representatives had said, "The world field is not ready for this; unity is more important than justice!"

The United States was torn by a variety of issues: economic, financial, philosophical, and political. The question of slavery underlay many of them. President Lincoln articulated the prevailing, though not always dominant view, that it was simply not right for one person to toil endlessly so that another could live in leisure and luxury.

What if, when Lincoln proposed the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves south of the Mason/Dixon line, Congress had said, "The world field is not ready for this; unity is more important than justice!"

President Lyndon Baines Johnson was elected to the U.S.

presidency in 1964. He stated, "We have the opportunity to move not only toward the Rich Society, but upward to the Great Society." Johnson led the Congress to enact legislation to fight poverty, improve education, and care for the aged. His dreams culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1968, designed to end discrimination in housing, education, and transportation.

What if Congress had said, "The world field is not ready for this; unity is more important than justice!"

The 1990 General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists', meeting in Indianapolis, considered the question of the ordination of women. Some said it was a theological question, some argued sociologically, some saw it as an issue of basic justice. When the count was taken, the ordination of women was voted down.

What if the North American Delegation had said, "The world field may not be ready for the ordination of women, but we are. Justice is more important than unity because without justice, there can be no real unity!"

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Jewelry, Semiology, and Freud . . .

It is not uncommon these days to see a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church wearing jewelry. He or she, however, does not go unfrowned at by fellow church members. If these members are courageous enough to confront him or her, or still, if they are earnest enough to persuade him or her that wearing jewelry is unacceptable in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, their arguments usually fall under two categories: one, that jewelry is expensive; two, that jewelry is superfluous decoration.

While these arguments may once have been valid, today they do not hold water. First, gold wrist watches and posh cars by Cadillac, BMW, and Mercedes-Benz, all symbols of conspicuous consumption, are acceptable for Adventists to have. Besides, the market today is full of cheap jewelry, making cost not so valid an argument. Second, some superfluous shiny buttons and hair ribbons seem to have no purpose other than that of decoration, yet they are acceptable for Adventists to wear.

That cost and decoration are no longer valid arguments, however, does not legitimate for Adventists the wearing of jewelry for reasons that can be derived from semiology and psychology.

Semiology, or "a science that studies the life of signs within society," as Ferdinand de Saussure defines it, is a fairly young science that is particularly dominated by French structuralists such as Roland Barthes and Pierre Guiraud. It has also gained much ground in the academic circles in the United States through the writings of Jonathan Culler in particular.

Semiological theory is mainly informed by Saussure's theory of language. "Language, better than anything else, offers a basis for understanding the semiological problem," Saussure argued long before semiology developed into a full-fledged science.

Saussure defines language as a system of conventional, arbitrary signs. These three concepts—convention, arbitrarity, and sign—are also the basis of semiological theory. Let's briefly examine the concepts in the order: convention, sign, arbitrarity.

According to Saussure, a series of sounds does not constitute a word until there has been an informal agreement or convention of the arrangement pattern of those individual sounds. Take the English word *book*, which consists, in sequential order, of the sounds [bu:] and [k]. If these sounds were rearranged so that [k] came before [bu:], the linguistic convention of sound arrangement would be violated, producing a series of sounds that do not constitute a word in English.

Saussure also conceives any word to consist of two components: the sign (or signifier) and the concept (or signified). The sign is vocal (the sounds that are uttered) while the concept is the mental image of the object that the sign (word) designates. (Note that the morpheme "sign" is contained in such words as "*designate*" and "*signify*.")

Finally, the relationship between signifier and signified, Saussure argues, is arbitrary. In other words, there is no inherent quality in a signified, say the mental image of object "leaf," that requires it to be known by the sound sequence [li:f] in any language.

It is these linguistic concepts—convention, sign, and arbitrarity—that constitute the basis of semiological theory. In other words, semiology is language minus the element of sound. The field is vast. It encompasses the traffic code, forms of greeting, formulas of politeness, and modes of dress—including the wearing of jewelry.

Besides the obvious purpose of covering our nudity and keeping us warm, our mode of dress expresses our social identity, a concept that is illuminated by Sigmund Freud's theory of the human psyche.

Freud divides the human psyche into three compartments: the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. In the Id, which is unconscious, are stored images of things that we have sense but that we have long forgotten. At the level of the Ego, we are conscious, but only conscious in relation to our individual selves. At the level of the Superego, our individual selves interact with society, and here our fashion of interaction is governed by conventional norms. It is at this social level that individual selves assume social identities. Here we are members of a certain nationality, class, church, club, profession... the list goes on.

When the individual self is about to interact with society, it wears a "mask" (what Carl Gustav Jung, Freud's disciple, calls a persona) to identify its social identity at that particular time. Take the example of a child at the time of birth. He or she is born naked and is immediately dressed upon entering society. In many societies, if the baby is a girl, she is dressed differently from her brother: she wears a dress and her brother wears shorts or pants. In those societies, there is a convention that a dress designates the female gender and shorts or pants designate the male gender. In other words, the mode of dress is the signifier and the gender is the signified.

Examples of modes of dress as signifiers of social identities abound. A police officer or a nurse on duty wear a uniform, quite an explicit signifier. Other signifiers are not so explicit: a company executive wears a suit; a blue collar worker wears jeans.

Modes of dress that express one's social identity are, like linguistic signs, conventional and arbitrary. If the signifiers were not conventional and arbitrary, it would be unnatural for women in some Western countries to wear pants and men in Scotland to wear skirts.

What does all this have to do with the wearing of jewelry? Before the mass production of jewelry and its resulting affordability, the wearing of jewelry was a sign of belonging to the rich class; it expressed a social identity. Today, however, jewelry is so cheaply available that the wearing of it no longer expressed a social identity; rather, it is the nonwearing of it that expresses a social identity—the Adventist identity.

Unlike other social identities that are assumed at certain times (for example a police officer only wears his or her uniform in public when at work), Adventism is a way of life—an identity that should be present in all social contexts and whose semiological expression, the mode of dress, should also be present in all social contexts. Of all Adventist modes of dress, the nonwearing of jewelry is the most explicit.

Is then a member of the Adventist Church who wears jewelry less of an Adventist? Like all signs, the relationship between the presence or absence of jewelry (signifier) and one's Adventism (signified) is arbitrary. The nonwearing of jewelry, however, is a long-standing convention—a dress code for the Adventist identity. In other words, wearing jewelry for an Adventist constitutes a violation of the convention—a significant act of not wishing to be identified as an Adventist.

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SDAs Have Only Part of the Tithing Story

In a 1987 *Spectrum* article, "Adventist Tithepaying—The Untold Story," Brian E. Strayer made a thorough historical survey of the arduous and controversial development of the tithing system in the Adventist church. Interesting is the fact that James White and other church pioneers were actually, at first, opponents to adopting a biblical tithe system.

I wonder, given the present controversies of our tithe system, whether it be competition between administrative divisions or subordinate claims of factional groups, if anything other than sweeping change can re-establish virility in the financial structure of our church. The failures and weaknesses of the present tithe doctrine is, in my

view, approaching the impotency of the "Sister Betsy" system back in the 1870s. We can only overcome imminent doom by reviving biblical truths which are presently lacking.

According to Strayer's survey, not since the initial emphasis on Malachi 3:8-10 by Dudley M. Canwright in 1876 has there been any further biblical input into our tithe doctrine. Many—perhaps most—Adventists are not aware that Adventist doctrine is biblically incomplete. Deuteronomy is categorically avoided in the present doctrine, which is ironic since Deuteronomy is the most concentrated and interpretive resource of tithing principles in the Bible.

The interpretations of Deuteronomic tithing according to *The SDA Bible Commentary* are bad for two reasons—firstly, that they are simply wrong concluding that tithing in Deuteronomy is different from tithing as we know it, and secondly, because this "second tithe" does not exist in any form in church doctrine, or practice. The church cannot defend an interpretation that is void in practice. Therefore, mere logic demands that revision is necessary.

Solutions to the ineffectiveness and vulnerability of tithe cannot be achieved by debates on a policy level. The issue must be debated on the highest plane—biblical truth. Behind this truth is an economic system designed by God with a potential more powerful than most have yet imagined.

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Adventist History?

Reviewed by Douglas Morgan

The Seventh-day Adventists: A History. Anne Devereaux Jordan. (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1988). 188 pages. $14.95.

In their recent study of Seventh-day Adventism, Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart observe that public perception of Seventh-day Adventists tends to be shaped by one of two disparate influences: the apocalyptic, near-sinister fanaticism associated with William Miller, or the health-minded humanitarianism of John Harvey Kellogg and Loma Linda University. Perhaps the chief value of Anne Devereaux Jordan's brief survey of Adventist history is in providing the uninitiated reader with a sketch of the Adventism centered around the influence of Ellen White; an Ellen White that remains more hidden from public view than either William Miller or Loma Linda University.

The photo of Ellen White that dominates the dust jacket suggests the tone and approach of the text. We are shown the middle-aged Ellen White—dignified and purposeful, yet not too severe—rather than an idealized, youthful Ellen Harmon or the less flattering rotund profile seen in photos during the later years. Similarly, the book offers an outsider's sympathetic portrayal of Adventism which eschews both triumphalism and muckraking. The author is a Connecticut-based writer and lecturer who specializes in children's literature and is a Roman Catholic. She tells the story of Adventism with competence, simplicity, and an enlivening dose of human interest.

However, *Spectrum* readers are unlikely to learn anything new from this work.The second in a series entitled *Great Religions of the World*, it would serve well in a high school or public library, but is not a serious scholarly study.

The bibliography reflects the book's limitations. The author has relied primarily on denominationally-published secondary sources, particularly Arthur Spalding's *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists.* She has failed to utilize the recent historiography of Adventism from such scholars as Butler, Graybill, Knight, Land, Numbers, and Schwarz. Thus, while providing an essentially accurate overview, the book fails to penetrate the surface and address the critical issues of the historical forces shaping Adventism and the conflicts and tensions in its development.

For example, Jordan describes Ellen White's visionary experiences and leadership role but does not grapple with the nature of her authority in the community, the relationship of her writings to the Bible, or her reliance on other authors. Jordan tells about evangelism among southern blacks and the creation of a "Regional Department," but doesn't discuss the problems surrounding race relations. The reader is told of Loma Linda University's advances in medicine, including the baby heart transplant program, but not about Baby Fae. Theological flashpoints like 1888 and 1980 receive no mention at all. John Harvey Kellogg's separation from the church is mentioned, but again with minimal analysis and without the benefit of Richard Schwarz's work on the topic.

The book's best features are illustrated by Jordan's simple yet insightful summation of Adventism's relationship to the world. Although there is a separation between Seventh-day Adventists and the world, that separation is not complete; to be so would be to violate the interpretation of the three angels' messages that it is necessary to spread the word of Adventist belief throughout the world (p. 149).

In this instance the author has disclosed the heart of a tension central to the Adventist experience, and one wishes she had done so more frequently.

A reader uninformed about Seventh-day Adventism will find in this work the outline of a revealing picture. For color and dimension, one would need to consult other works, such as *Seeking a Sanctuary*, by Bull and Lockhart, or *Adventism in America*, edited by Gary Land.

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