

Our Firm Foundation

The Seventh-day Sabbath

Christ Our Righteousness

The Immutable Law of God

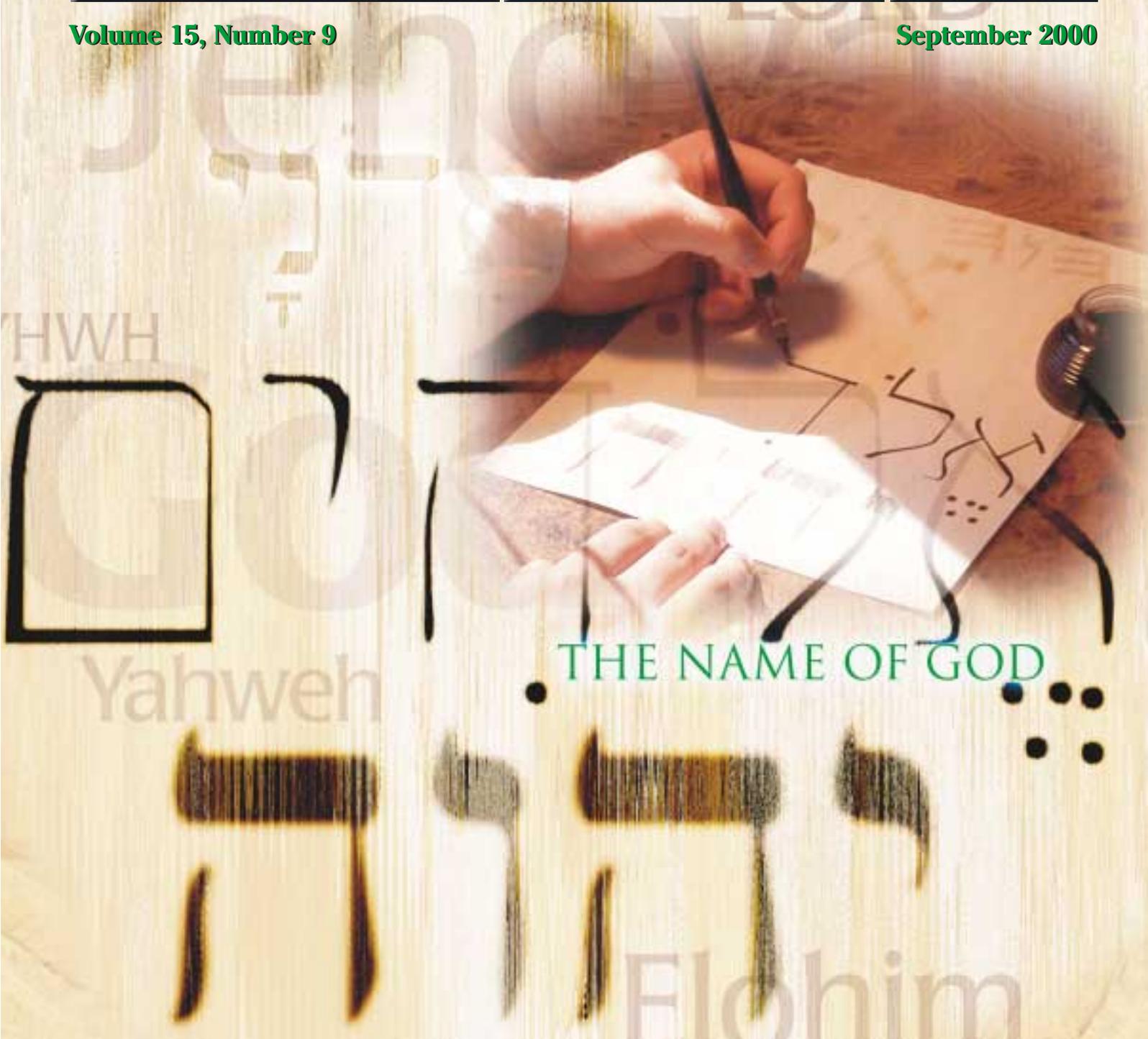
The Non-Immortality of the Soul

The Three Angels' Messages

The Sanctuary

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THE NAME OF GOD

Elohim

Our *Firm Foundation* has been a monthly magazine for nearly sixteen years now. This last year we have adopted a four-color format. Many of our subscribers have told us they appreciate the new look that our editorial staff has designed. Our chairman of the Editorial Committee—Harry Hansen—and the editorial staff aim to continue the straight testimony that must be given now in order that God’s people may see sin as it exists in their own lives: “According to the light that God has given me in vision, wickedness and deception are increasing among God’s people who profess to keep His commandments. Spiritual discernment to see sin as it exists, and then to put it out of the camp, is decreasing among God’s people; and spiritual blindness is fast coming upon them. The straight testimony must be revived, and it will separate those from Israel who have ever been at war with the means that God has ordained to keep corruptions out of the church. Wrongs must be called wrongs. Grievous sins must be called by their right name. All of God’s people should come nearer to Him and wash their robes of character in the blood of the Lamb. Then will they see sin in the true light and will realize how offensive it is in the sight of God.”¹

Spiritual discernment can be experienced only through study and prayer. The straight testimony will separate the wheat and the tares. Study, prayer, and surrender of the will to God each day is the only cure for our spiritual blindness.

We are told that when the straight testimony comes to God’s remnant people, many will rise up against it:

“I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by

the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God’s people.”² The destiny of the church hangs on this very important solemn testimony that has been lightly esteemed—nearly entirely disregarded—which, if it is heeded in this final crisis hour just before probation closes, will bring deep repentance, and, if it is obeyed, will purify the soul from all sin and prepare God’s faithful people for the latter rain, which will bring the loud cry.

Jesus said, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Matthew 22:14.

Ellen White wrote these inspired words for us in this final hour:

“‘And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.’ Matthew 24:12. The very atmosphere is polluted with sin. Soon God’s people will be tested by fiery trials, and the great proportion of those who now appear to be genuine and true will prove to be base metal. Instead of being strengthened and confirmed by opposition, threats, and abuse, they will cowardly take the side of the opposers. The promise is: ‘Them that honour me I will honour.’ 1 Samuel 2:30. Shall we be less firmly attached to God’s law because the world at large have attempted to make it void? Already the judgments of God are abroad in the land, as seen in storms, in floods, in tempests, in earthquakes, in peril by land and by sea. The great I AM is speaking to those who make void His law. When God’s wrath is poured out upon the earth, who will then be able to stand? Now is the time for God’s

people to show themselves true to principle. When the religion of Christ is most held in contempt, when His law is most despised, then should our zeal be the warmest and our courage and firmness the most unflinching. To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason.”³

What is our greatest need?—“A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing.”⁴ Probation still lingers for a short time. The evidence is in the world and in the church that we have come to the end of the six thousand years of the great controversy. The editors of *Our Firm Foundation* feel the responsibility to appeal now to those earnest seekers for truth. May God help our people to awake to our greatest need—revival and reformation.

Ron Spear, Executive Editor

REFERENCES:

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 324.
- ² *Early Writings*, 270.
- ³ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 136.
- ⁴ *Selected Messages*, book 1, 121.

It is the mission of Hope International and the editors of *Our Firm Foundation* to clearly present Christ and His truth. The days that yet remain of this world are few, and what we do we must do quickly. We must boldly proclaim the historic truths of Adventism that place us on so firm a foundation in the midst of this troubled world.
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4 The Name of God
Colin Standish
Is Yahweh the only appropriate name of God?

8 Why Be a Seventh-day Adventist?
Rosalie and Silvia Lewis
Can you grow up in an Adventist home and be excited about the Adventist message? Read this refreshing teen-age testimony!

11 Showdown on Carmel
Ellen G. White
Have we been following today's prophets of Baal?

17 Strange Fire, Part 2
Samuel Jensen
Rock music in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

20 Guidelines Toward an SDA
Philosophy of Music
General Conference Autumn Council
Are we playing by our own rules?

26 Christian Privileges and Duties
Ellen G. White
How to be effective workers in God's church

departments

News Watch	14
Defending the Faith	24
Share Your Faith	29
Letters to the Editor	31

THE NAME OF GOD

Colin Standish



The Lord's prayer begins with the declaration of the sacredness of the name of God—"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." Matthew 6:9.

The conclusion of the prayer gives us an understanding of why the name of God is so sacred:

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." Verse 13.

The universe is the kingdom of God. He alone has infinite power, and His perfect character is represented by glory to which no other being can approach. The name of God is holy because He is holy. Hannah, the mother of Samuel, understood the holiness of God when she said, "There is none holy as the LORD." 1 Samuel 2:2.

In their song of deliverance from the Egyptians and their miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, the Israelites declared the holiness of God:

"Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, *glorious in holiness*, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Exodus 15:11, emphasis added.

Not only is God holy, but His name is holy:

"For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name." Luke 1:49.

"He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name." Psalm 111:9.

In even stronger words the psalmist declares the name of God: "Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy." Psalm 99:3.

Its holiness is the reason why God is jealous of His name:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name." Ezekiel 39:25.

Therefore we should not take upon our lips the name of God carelessly or blasphemously:

"Reverence should be shown also for the name of God. Never should that name be spoken lightly or thoughtlessly. Even in prayer its frequent or needless repetition should be avoided. 'Holy and reverend is his name.' Angels, as

they speak it, veil their faces. With what reverence should we, who are fallen and sinful, take it upon our lips!"¹

This is why, enshrined in the Ten Commandments, God's Word gives powerful warnings against the careless or blasphemous use of His name:

"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." Exodus 20:7.

The Scriptures are replete with strong warnings against profaning the name of God:

"And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name." Leviticus 20:3.

"As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols." Ezekiel 20:39.

"So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people

Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel." Ezekiel 39:7.

"In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger." Ezekiel 43:8.

"That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name." Amos 2:7.

In the early years of the Israelite nation, and later in the years of Judah, God's chosen people had holy reverence for God's name. Perhaps this resulted from great fear of the prescribed penalty for blaspheming God's name:

"And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death." Leviticus 24:16.

To honor God and to revere His name, man is called:

1. To glory in His name, "Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD." 1 Chronicles 16:10.

2. To give thanks unto His name, "And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise." Verse 35.

3. To trust His holy name, "For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name." Psalm 33:21.

4. To bless His name, "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name." Psalm 103:1.

5. To thank Him for His holy name, "Save us, O LORD our God,

and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise." Psalm 106:47.

6. To praise His name, "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Psalm 138:2.

7. To sanctify His name, "But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel." Isaiah 29:23.

God's Name—A Test of Faith?

Like so many other dangerous heresies confronting our beloved church today, we face earnest but misguided people who confidently claim that the only true name of God that we can properly use is His Hebrew name, Yahweh (YHWH).

We face earnest but misguided people who confidently claim that the only true name of God that we can properly use is His Hebrew name, Yahweh (YHWH).

Like many others of these heresies it seems very innocent. Why not use the Hebrew name for God? Is it wrong to use the Hebrew name for God? Of course, the answer to this question is, "No." The problem comes not in the use of the Hebrew name—nor, indeed, the Greek name *Theos*, nor the Latin *Dius*, nor the English word *God*, nor the German name *Gott*, nor the Spanish name *Dios*, nor the French name *Dieu*, nor any other name used by different languages for the name of the true God of the universe—rather, the problem is in making this a cardinal test of Christian faith.

The most important message for us today is to keep the third commandment perfectly. Never should we use God's name repetitiously or carelessly, and certainly not blasphemously. Even

in prayer, God's name might be used irreverently:

"Angels are displeased and disgusted with the irreverent manner in which the name of God, the great Jehovah, is sometimes used in prayer. They mention that name with the greatest awe, even veiling their faces when they speak the name of God; the name of Christ also is sacred, and is spoken with the greatest reverence. And those who in their prayers use the name of God in a common and flippant manner, have no sense of the exalted character of God, of Christ, or of heavenly things."²

"I saw that God's holy name should be used with reverence and awe. The words *God Almighty* are coupled together and used by some in prayer in a careless, thoughtless manner, which is displeasing to Him. Such have no realizing sense of God or the truth, or they would not speak so irreverently of the

great and dreadful God, who is soon to judge them in the last day. Said the angel, 'Couple them not together; for fearful is His name.' Those who realize the greatness and majesty of God, will take His name on their lips with holy awe. He dwelleth in light unapproachable; no man can see Him and live. I saw that these things will have to be understood and corrected before the church can prosper."³

The real danger comes in attempting to make this issue a test of faith. Those who urge that the only valid name of God is the Hebrew name YHWH do so without any clear inspired mandate. Those who urge this perspective, point to many texts concerning the sacredness of God's name; for example, that His name is to be hallowed. See Matthew 6:9. His

name is holy (see Luke 1:49; Psalm 111:9), and therefore they urge that it is essential for us to know and use the true Hebrew name of God. However, in so doing, these proponents face insurmountable problems:

1. When the Hebrew Rabbis translated the Old Testament into the Greek Septuagint in the second century B.C., the Jewish Rabbis, given the responsibility to develop this translation, saw no problem in translating YHWH with the Greek word *Theos*.

2. The writers of the New Testament, when referring to God in their Greek writings also chose the Greek word *Theos*. This was true when they were dealing with the sacredness of God's name. For example, twice, when expounding upon the seven last plagues, John refers to those who blaspheme the name of God:

Some have argued that, possibly, much of the New Testament was written in Hebrew and then translated into Greek; but there is not an iota of evidence for this.

4. In writing the Spirit of Prophecy, Sister White most frequently used the English word *God*—even when directing her counsel to the holiness of God's name:

"This name is hallowed by the angels of heaven, by the inhabitants of unfallen worlds. When you pray, 'Hallowed be Thy name,' you ask that it may be hallowed in this world, hallowed in you. God has acknowledged you before men and angels as His child; pray that you may do no dishonor to the 'worthy name by the which ye are called.' James 2:7." ⁴

"Holy angels have been displeased and disgusted with the irreverent manner in which many

no question that the Hebrew language arose out of the earthly languages of the region, and that the language of heaven is an altogether different language. We believe we will be educated to the heavenly name of God at redemption.

6. There are other matters to consider. While YHWH is commonly spelled today as *Yahweh*, the exact pronunciation is not precisely known. It will be recalled that the ancient Hebrew language was written without vowels, and only in the seventh or eighth century C.E. [Christian Era] were the vowels actually added to YHWH. There is an even greater problem. In ancient times the Israelites gradually ceased to take this word upon their lips because of their fear of profaning it, so either they did not vocalize the word or they substituted *Adonay* which, translated into the English, is *LORD*. As a result we cannot be absolutely certain of the way it was originally pronounced. It is said that the scribes would wash before writing the word YHWH as a sign of the sacredness of God's name. It is recorded that the scribes also used a special pen to write the name of God, which was not used for the writing of any other word. They would then pray before writing God's sacred name. If we followed the Jews' example, we would never mouth the word YHWH.

It is believed by many that the word *Yahweh* is a form of the verb *Hayah*, "to be." This would parallel the name *I AM*, meaning the eternal One, the self-existent One.

Other Biblical Names

The Old Testament reveals other names for God. In fact, the first name used in the Scripture, translated God, is *Elohim*. See Genesis 1:1. It is in plural form, no doubt indicative of the cooperation of the whole Godhead in Creation. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In other passages of Scripture the singular *El* is used.

"And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou

Angels mention that sacred name with the greatest awe, ever veiling their faces when they speak the name of God; and the name of Christ is so sacred to them that they speak it with the greatest reverence."

"And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God [*Theos*], which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory." Revelation 16:9.

"And blasphemed the God [*Theos*] of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." Verse 11.

3. The Greek word *Theos* was used to reveal that the name of God was written upon the faithful in the church of Philadelphia.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." Revelation 3:12.

have used the name of God, the great Jehovah. Angels mention that sacred name with the greatest awe, ever veiling their faces when they speak the name of God; and the name of Christ is so sacred to them that they speak it with the greatest reverence." ⁵

5. In the concept that we can use only the Hebrew name of God, it is strongly implied that the language of the Hebrews is the language of heaven. But it is important to note that the Hebrew language is very much a Semitic language, coming from languages found in the region of the Middle East, from the Tigris-Euphrates area. For example, Hebrew is very similar to the Aramaic language. Indeed, some words are held in common and many other words are very similar one to the other, for they have identical roots. There is

God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" Genesis 16:13.

El means *the almighty One*.

Elsewhere *Yehovah* or *Yehovih* is used, often translated LORD, or GOD, or Lord GOD.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5.

Occasionally God is referred to as *Elovaah*, meaning *deity*. On other occasions the word *Elahh* is used to refer to God.

"Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time." Ezra 7:12.

Occasionally, *Tsur* is used—meaning *God the Rock*, or *God the Strength*.

"Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction." Habakkuk 1:12.

"Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any." Isaiah 44:8.

And there is the common use of the word *Adonay*, the *LORD*.

"The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments." Habakkuk 3:19.

Adonay normally means the *LORD God*.

Thus it is quite inconsistent to suggest that even in the Hebrew language there was only one name for God, and that it is the only name to use today to address the omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient One of the universe. It was true, however, that YHWH was considered the most sacred name of God.

At the end of time Christ will come with the name of Kings of kings and Lord of lords:

"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Revelation 19:16.

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Revelation 17:14.

Christ is called the Word of God or simply the Word:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1.

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."

Thus it is quite inconsistent to suggest that even in the Hebrew language there was only one name for God, and that it is the only name to use today.

Revelation 19:13.

Jesus also has a name written that is unknown to man:

"His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself." Verse 12.

We are told that the 144,000 have the Father's name written in their forehead:

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." Revelation 14:1.

We are not told which name is there written. We believe that when we reach heaven we will receive the true heavenly name of our God which will reflect, not upon the names of human language, but upon the perfect language of heaven.

Let us not divide God's modern-day Israel by insistence that the only name of God appropriate to be used is YHWH. This unscriptural doctrine has entered the Seventh-

day Adventist Church from the fallen churches of Babylon. Because there is decidedly no support for this belief in Inspiration, and it is not part of the everlasting gospel nor the three angels' messages, it would ultimately undermine confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy and, finally, in the Scriptures. ❖

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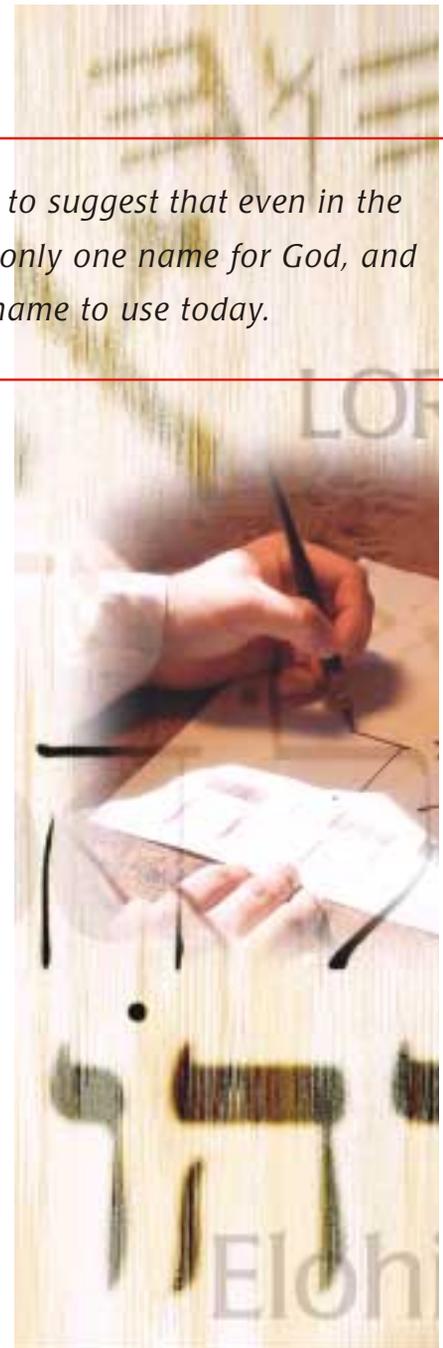
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⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 410.





Rosalie and Silvia Lewis

I'm a third-generation Lutheran. If it was good enough for my grandfather, it's good enough for me!"

"It doesn't matter what church I belong to—they all have different doctrines, and who am I to know which one is right?"

"We're all worshipping the same God. He wants us to express our individuality, so we should join whatever religion we feel comfortable with."

Does that sound familiar? No doubt you have heard plenty of statements like these before. Whenever you ask people why they have chosen a particular set of religious tenets, their answers tend to be variations on a common theme, leaving you wondering if anyone *really* knows why he believes what he believes. Yet, are we any different?

The Bible says in 1 Peter 3:15, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." If someone asked you today why you are a Seventh-day Adventist, what would you say? To answer why *we* are Seventh-day Adventists, we would like to share our testimony with you:

We have enjoyed the privilege of being born into an Adventist home. Our parents took us to Sabbath school and church from the time we were two weeks old, and we have been going ever since. We grew up on *The Bible Story* books, *Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories*, and Josephine Cunnington Edwards' fascinating tales. Family worship was as much a part of our daily schedule as were breakfast and

lunch. Ellen White was more of a household name than Abraham Lincoln. We memorized Scripture long before we learned to read, and our first reading lesson was taken from Genesis, chapter one.

We were both baptized before we entered our teen years, but, being so young, we did not fully understand all that baptism entailed. While it solidified our decision to follow the Lord, we still had plenty of struggles ahead. From there, God used different methods for each of us.

Rosalie's Story

Most people seemed to think I was a model kid: I always knew my memory verse, often sang special music, and even preached a sermon at church for a special youth Sabbath when I was eleven. I was part of a Bible study group

that met every Sabbath afternoon, and I was almost always among the first to volunteer for outreach activities—like literature distribution or caroling or Ingathering. For a long time, I never even questioned the idea that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the right church, and I was sure I would be in heaven.

Eventually, though, doubts began to surface in my mind. I wondered if the SDA doctrines were actually my own convictions, or if I had just been brainwashed by my parents and Sabbath school teachers. Over a period of several years, I struggled with these thoughts. I prayed; I studied; I experimented. I often wondered what it would be like to be a “normal teenager.” I sometimes felt angry that I had lived such a sheltered life. My parents had kept us away from TV and movies, secular music, “Christian” rock, and other things (or people) they considered “bad influences.”

Looking back, I do not know why I should have felt deprived. Yet the first temptation in this world was at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and that is the same kind of knowledge I had craved.

After intellectually concluding that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the only one that agreed with the Bible completely, I went through a Laodicean period in my life. My religious experience went stale. I would have daily devotions, but would get nothing out of them; I would listen to sermons but feel as though I had heard it all before; I would pray to and talk about God, but would feel like I was repeating a memorized speech. This went on for over a year, and then I realized that something was drastically wrong.

“Please God,” I prayed, “I’ll do whatever it takes to get out of this rut and back on the road that leads to eternal life. I can’t stand it to go on like this—pretending to be a Christian and knowing that I could never be saved in this condition.”

Not long after that, I received the opportunity to join Young

Disciple Ministries as they moved to the West Coast. In my heart, I knew that this could be the deciding factor for my life. After praying about it, I decided to go.

From that time on, it has been an upward climb. I realized that working for a ministry like this required 100% commitment and dependence upon God. The Lord showed me that I had never truly surrendered everything to Him, but as soon as I did, I found the peace that had eluded me for several years. As a result, my devotional life became fresh and new, and my faith has been strengthened beyond description!

Just the other day, I was copyediting a series of Bible lessons on the book of Daniel for *Young Disciple* magazine. I had studied

essence of Seventh-day Adventism—the definition of true Christianity.

Truth is timeless, and no matter how many times we hear it, it retains the power to revolutionize and breathe vitality into our lives. I am a Seventh-day Adventist because this church has the truth, and the truth has made me free.

Silvia’s Story

I remember how excited I was to be an official member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. But as the excitement died, which, unfortunately, was quite soon after I was baptized, questions started to arise in my mind. What made this religion so much better than any other religion? Maybe we were wrong, and all those other Christian

I felt as though I had been born blind, and now my sight had been given to me for the first time—everything seemed new and fresh!

these prophecies countless times, taken classes on them, and attended seminars on the subject. I had even studied these exact lessons when they were published several years ago in *Young Disciple*. Needless to say, I was not really expecting to learn anything this time around. But God’s mercies are new every morning!

As I began going over the lessons, I suddenly found my attention gripped, my mind riveted, and my heart pounding in anticipation. God opened up a whole new realm to me! Even though I had read it a hundred times, it suddenly blazed with new meaning and depth. I could not wait to read the next verse, the next sentence, the next word. I felt as though I had been born blind, and now my sight had been given to me for the first time—everything seemed new and fresh! I am still in awe from that experience! Indeed, that is what I believe to be the

religions were right. So my studying began. I was not very diligent at first. I mean I had a good warm home, food, clothes, parents, siblings, and friends. What more did I need? I was having a good life!

I guess my real questions started when I was asked by a non-Adventist, an online friend, what I believed and why. My mind whirled, trying in vain to come up with a good, solid answer. But it did not come. I fished for words, but they were not there. I was scared!

I went to my room and started to read. It all was so familiar, but new! I wished so much that I would have known it all before. Then I realized I probably *had* known it. I just had not thought it important enough to remember. I found that the Bible spoke so plainly on our beliefs that it was impossible to come to any other conclusion than that the Seventh-

day Adventist Church was indeed the true church of God. I was so happy that I did not know what to do with myself! I wanted to tell others what I had learned. Yet I discovered something that made me really sad—a lot of my friends did not care to hear about my new knowledge. “So what,” they would say—“Whatever you say.” My heart sank. Why had I waited to share with them until they did not want to know about my Christian walk?

I became discouraged and negligent in my devotions. I wanted to see what the world was like from their point of view. Reasoning that I would not do all that bad stuff, I decided to try it out a little. My friends seemed so happy that I had at last realized what “real fun” was all about! We would get together and talk about all the “holy kids” who liked to study the Bible and Mrs. White. “What boring stuff! What kind of life do they have? They must really have problems to enjoy doing that!”

At first, I was hesitant in this mocking. After all, I was once one of those “holy kids.” However, as I did it more and more, it became almost second nature. I started talking back to my parents, and getting annoyed by my younger sisters. I was never satisfied with what I had. Yet, there was a place in my

I am glad that I chose this way. My mind is clear, and my heart is full and running over with joy! I am glad to take the name Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

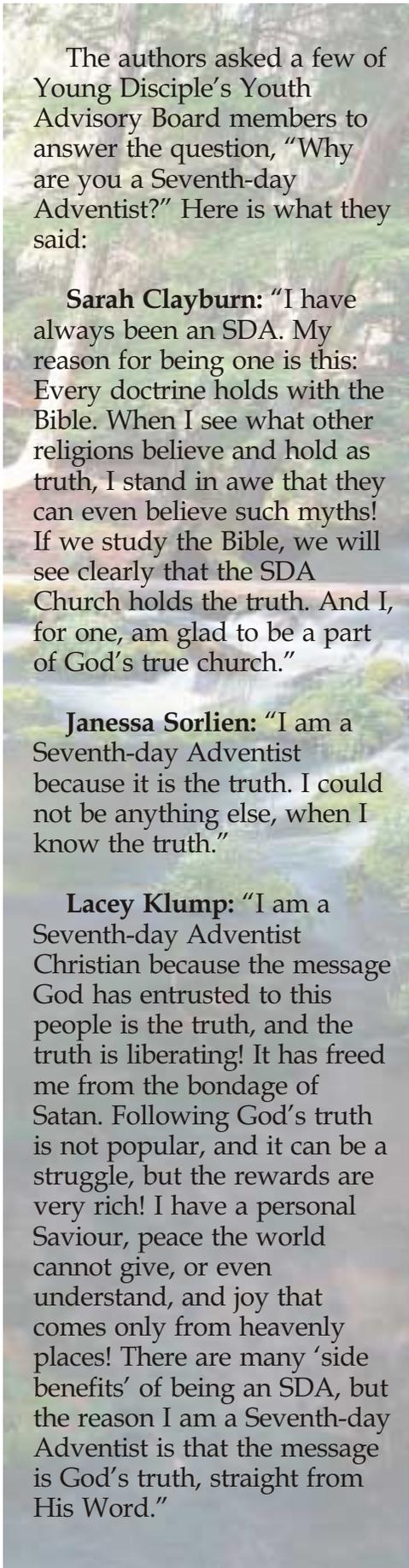
heart that was empty, and deep down inside I knew what was needed to fill it.

Then, I received an invitation to volunteer at Young Disciple Ministries for a month. I had worked there before they moved out West, and it had been a blessing! Yet since they had gone, I had fallen away from my spiritual friends and gone back to my old friends. Still I was excited at the idea of renewing my positive experience! Rosalie was working there, and she had told me how her spiritual walk with the Lord had become freshened. So I bought a plane ticket and was soon on my way to Washington state.

When I arrived, I knew for sure that I had done the right thing! The atmosphere here is so different from what I was used to! Especially enjoyable are the morning and evening worship services, when we each share what we had learned in our devotions. I am learning—and feeling the happiest I have ever been in my life!

I can truly say that the time I have spent here at Young Disciple Ministries has changed my life. Sure, there will still be struggles. I know that following God is not always the easiest way to go. However, I am glad that I chose this way. My mind is clear, and my heart is full and running over with joy! I am glad to take the name Seventh-day Adventist Christian. ✠

Rosalie Lewis, age 18, and Silvia Lewis, age 16, enjoy music, writing, witnessing, and outdoor activities. They have three younger sisters.

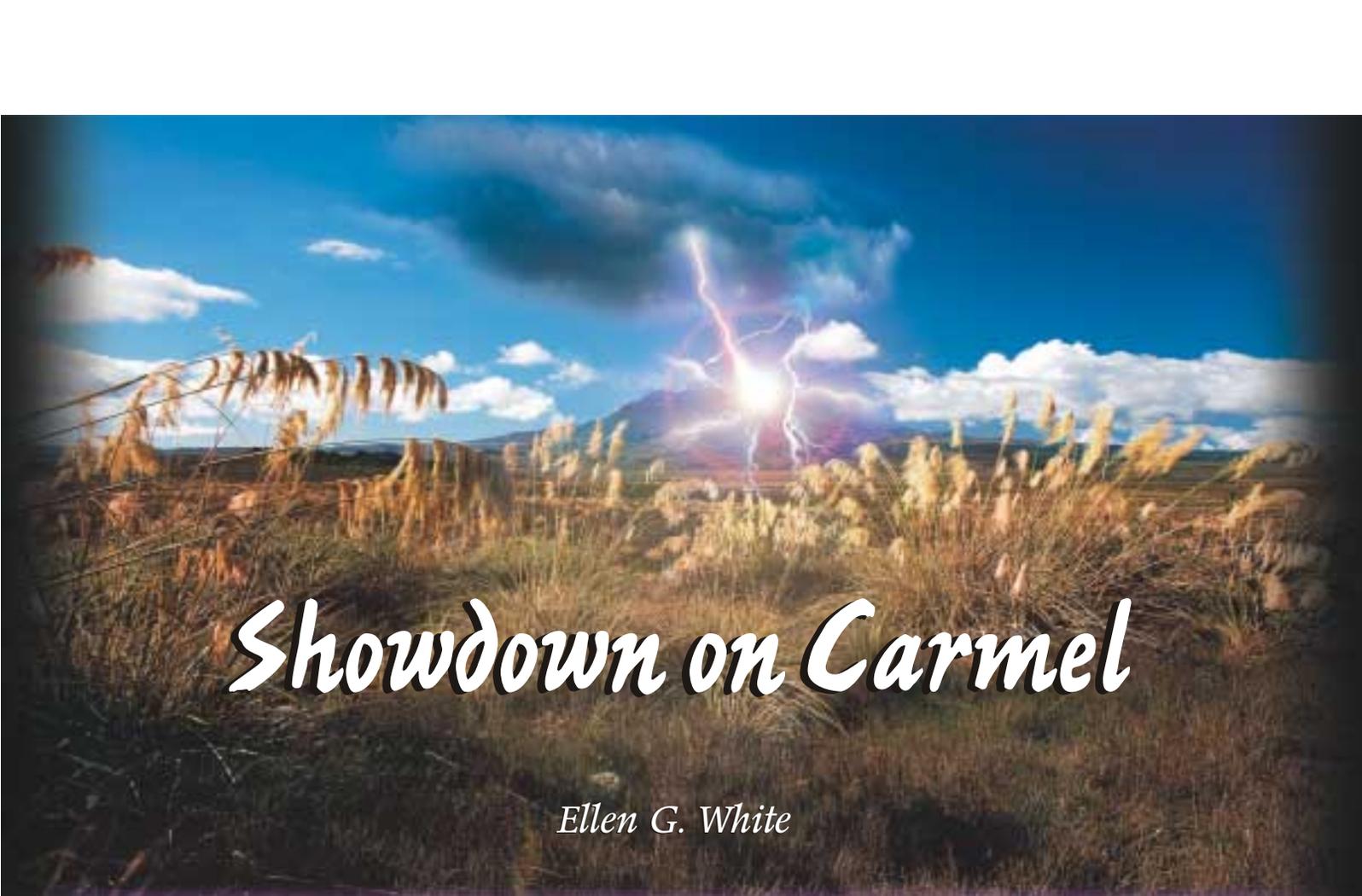


The authors asked a few of Young Disciple’s Youth Advisory Board members to answer the question, “Why are you a Seventh-day Adventist?” Here is what they said:

Sarah Clayburn: “I have always been an SDA. My reason for being one is this: Every doctrine holds with the Bible. When I see what other religions believe and hold as truth, I stand in awe that they can even believe such myths! If we study the Bible, we will see clearly that the SDA Church holds the truth. And I, for one, am glad to be a part of God’s true church.”

Janessa Sorlien: “I am a Seventh-day Adventist because it is the truth. I could not be anything else, when I know the truth.”

Lacey Klump: “I am a Seventh-day Adventist Christian because the message God has entrusted to this people is the truth, and the truth is liberating! It has freed me from the bondage of Satan. Following God’s truth is not popular, and it can be a struggle, but the rewards are very rich! I have a personal Saviour, peace the world cannot give, or even understand, and joy that comes only from heavenly places! There are many ‘side benefits’ of being an SDA, but the reason I am a Seventh-day Adventist is that the message is God’s truth, straight from His Word.”



Showdown on Carmel

Ellen G. White

In the days of Elijah there was great apostasy in Israel. Ahab, the king, had connected with himself men and women who had departed from the living God, and turned to the service of idols. The king should have been loyal to God, one who by both influence and example would have bound his people to God; but instead of this, he joined with apostates, and led the people into idolatry. Leading men are endowed with great influence for good or evil, and their responsibility is very great. Ahab had used his influence to propagate evil, and Israel sank deeper and deeper into sin.

Elijah was a worshiper of the living God, and his soul was stirred within him as he saw apostasy prevail, and the people of God follow the customs of the nations around them. He was a man of prayer, and he sent up fervent petitions that God would arrest the tide of evil that seemed about to sweep Israel into perdition. God regarded his prayer, and he was

commissioned to announce to Israel, in the presence of the king, that God would bring chastisement upon His people. They had dishonored God in the sight of the nations, and as a result, darkness as a thick cloud enveloped them, and abominations accumulated within their borders. In every direction they had reared the temple of idolatry, the altar of profanity, before which prophets and loyal men, servants of the God of heaven, had poured out their blood. Satan swayed his scepter over Israel, and the moral atmosphere was clouded with the smoke of national idolatry.

Elijah Confronts Ahab

In this time of great depravity, Elijah made his way to Ahab, the leader of the apostasy. In his presence he reached forth his hand to heaven, and declared, "As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." 1 Kings 17:1. In making such an

announcement it might seem that Elijah was taking great risk. If dew or rain had come with no command from Elijah, the king would have represented him as a false prophet, and the priests of Baal would have attributed the blessing to a deliverance wrought by their idol, and would have exalted Baal as triumphant over Jehovah.

The judgment threatened was so unexpected, so terrible, so sudden, that Ahab seemed paralyzed, and he did not realize that the prophet had left his presence unrebuked, until the man of God had gone beyond recall. Then the king roused his servants, and called for the man who had declared that heaven was shut up according to his word. But Elijah was not to be found, and neither dew nor rain fell upon the land of Israel for three years and a half.

Showdown on Carmel

The object of this affliction was to arouse Israel to a realization of

their sin, to bring them to repentance, and turn them to God, that they might honor Jehovah as the only true and living God.

After three years and a half of drought, the Lord said to Elijah, "Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth." 1 Kings 18:1. "And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table." Verses 17-19.

number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD." Verses 29-32.

Then he had the people pour on twelve barrels of water. "And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and

because the Spirit of the Lord moved upon his mind, and led him to believe that his prayer would be heard. He had done all that was possible to make manifest his faith, and now he began to pray for the outpouring of the abundance of rain.

He "said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times." Verse 43. The servant watched while Elijah prayed. Six times he returned from the watch, saying, There is nothing, no cloud, no sign of rain.

But the prophet did not give up in discouragement. He kept reviewing his life, to see where he had failed to honor God, he confessed his sins, and thus continued to afflict his soul before God, while watching for a token that his prayer was answered. As he searched his heart, he seemed to be less and less, both in his own estimation and in the sight of God. It seemed to him that he was nothing, and that God was everything; and when he reached the point of renouncing self, while he clung to the Saviour as his only strength and righteousness, the answer came. The servant appeared, and said, "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel." Verses 44-46.

Similar Apostasy Today

There are many lessons to be drawn from the experience of Israel and of the prophet of God. We are living in a time of apostasy similar to the time of which we have read; for there is great religious declension in the churches, among the professed people of God. The children of God should have a realization of their accountability, and should direct their hearts toward God, seeking for

We are living in a time of apostasy similar to the time of which we have read; for there is great religious declension in the churches, among the professed people of God.

The king obeys this command as though he were the servant, and Elijah the king. Then Elijah orders them to bring two bullocks, one for the prophets of Baal, and one for himself, and he bids the prophets dress their bullock and put it on the altar, and call upon Baal for fire. He says, "Call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken." Verse 24.

The priests of Baal called aloud, and cut themselves, even unto the going down of the sun, but there was no response from their idol; for "there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the

the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God." Verses 36-37.

Before the sacrifice, Elijah had said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." Verse 21. After the destruction of the prophets of Baal, Elijah said to Ahab, "Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain." Verse 41. After the king's departure, Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; "and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees." Verse 42. When he had bidden Ahab go up and eat and drink, did he have an evidence that the showers were about to fall? Did he see the clouds in the heavens? Did he see the rain, or hear the thunder?—No; he spoke these words

strength and grace with an earnestness which they have never before manifested.

There never was a more solemn time in the history of the world than the time in which we are now living. Our eternal interests are at stake, and we should arouse to the importance of making our calling and election sure. We dare not risk our eternal interests on mere probabilities. We must be in earnest. What we are, what we are doing, what is to be our course of action in the future, are all questions of untold moment, and we cannot afford to be listless, indifferent, unconcerned. It becomes each one of us to inquire, "What is eternity to me?" Are our feet in the path that leads to heaven, or in the broad road that leads to perdition?

All around us the world is manifesting intense activity. There is a feeling of apprehension among all people; they are looking for some great event, but know not what it is to be. The state of affairs in Europe excites men's fears, and all are looking for those things that shall come upon the earth, and their hearts are failing them for fear. The nations

are filled with anxiety, and there is a spirit of unrest and tumult on every hand. If ever there was a time when men should know their position, it is now. No man can afford to go on blindfolded, not knowing in what road he is traveling, but careless and hoping to come out right in the end; for great and disastrous will be his awakening. Those who do not appreciate eternal life enough to work diligently for it, will never obtain it. Those who are seeking earthly pleasure, worldly gain and honor, will never make a success of winning eternal life, unless they repent, and turn to God with all the heart.

How many seek their pleasure in the gaming table, in attending the theater, while thoughts of God and eternity are put far from their minds! They think more of what they shall eat, what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed, than of the salvation of their souls; and can these expect to gain heaven when they neglect the great salvation purchased for them at infinite cost? They give no proof that they love God, no proof that they love the atmosphere of Heaven. By the

characters they develop they say distinctly that they are in the broad road that leads to ruin.

Those who make a success of the Christian life will count all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Only those who are abiding in Christ, can know what true life is. They realize the value of true religion. They have brought their talents of influence and means and ability to the altar of consecration, seeking only to know and do the will of Him who has died to redeem them. They know that the path they must travel is strait and narrow, and that they will have to meet many obstacles and temptations, as they resist the enticements of the broader road that leads to ruin; but they will discern the footsteps of Jesus, and press onward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in their Lord and Saviour. They will choose the royal way that leads to heaven, although it is strait and narrow; for they have respect unto the recompense of the reward. ❀

Review and Herald, May 26, 1891.
Originally entitled "Lessons from the Time of Elijah."

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S.D.A. Conference in California Votes to Ordain Women Pastors

News Item: “The Southeastern California Conference (SECC) executive committee voted on March 16 to issue male and female pastors in their district the same ministerial credentials. The decision by the committee is believed to be a first for the Adventist Church. . . . ‘The document was adopted without one dissenting vote. . . .’

“The new credential states that the individual is an ‘ordained-commissioned’ minister in good standing. . . . They are also ‘set aside’ for ministry in a public ceremony that includes prayer and the laying on of hands.

“ ‘This procedure could show the way for the rest of the [Adventist Church in North America] on how to handle this matter with equality and yet abide by the spirit and letter of church policy,’ said Thomas Mostert, Pacific Union president.

“Commenting on the SECC vote, General Conference president Jan Paulsen expressed regret for the action. ‘The issue is not the rightness or otherwise, ethically, morally, or biblically, of the position that there should be no difference between them,’ said Paulsen. ‘My regret is that the SECC could not, out of deference to the larger international family of Seventh-day Adventists, have held in check their exercise of “freedom,” knowing that the church makes her decisions sometimes frustratingly slowly, but in a very deliberate manner with an eye to many issues. Moving together until we have agreed to give room to differ on specific issues is the price we pay for unity. . . .’

“SECC accepts women pastors who have met the same requirements as men to be fully qualified and authorized within its

borders.” *Adventist Review*, May 2000, *Adventist News Network*.

End-Time Perspective: The Southeastern California Conference is in rebellion to the Biblically based decision of the 1995 General Conference in session that voted against the ordination of women as pastors. Additionally, the Pacific Union president approves this rebellion, and the General Conference President refused to condemn this action as being un-Biblical. GC President Paulsen instead “regretted” that this action was taken before the General Conference in session could be convinced to change its ruling. Pray that the world church leadership will rise up against this course taken contrary to God’s order given in the Bible and thus avert its spread in the church.

Methodist Laity Hold Off Liberals

News Item: The majority of the 992 delegates to the quadrennial General Conference session of the United Methodist Church, held last May, defeated the agenda of the church’s liberals for another four years. Delegates voted by a solid two-thirds majority to retain the church’s rejection of homosexual practice as being “incompatible with Christian teaching,” to disallow ordination of practicing homosexuals, and to forbid its ministers to conduct same-sex union ceremonies.

Additionally, the delegates strengthened their Judicial Council and also requested from it, and received a ruling upholding the laws of the church’s Book of Discipline as sovereign over their church. This prevents liberals from creating local or regional covenants in opposition to church law. Also, the delegates strengthened delegate representation and “resoundingly placed the UMC on record

opposing partial-birth abortions . . . in contrast to its adamant pro-choice stance in years past.”

Liberal forces demonstrated outside and were arrested as a group for blocking a driveway. Inside they paraded in the balcony, trespassed onto the conference floor, and took over the podium. Again many were arrested.

“Many delegates were heard asking among themselves how bishops, who are sworn to uphold and defend church teaching and the Book of Discipline, can so blatantly speak out against the teaching and work so hard to sabotage it—and get away with it. Over and over the question was raised: ‘Where is accountability?’ ”

Some liberals indicated they would leave the Methodist Church, while others promised to continue their battle within the church during the next four years (including picketing and civil disobedience) and then to bring the battle again to the General Conference session (promising many more arrests).

The UMC faces a hard struggle ahead. “Liberals control most of the denomination’s boards, agencies, and 13 seminaries. Traditionalist influence is growing in the pews, enough to make liberal administrators step more cautiously—and feel heat when they don’t. Yet the face of United Methodism in the United States remains largely a liberal one both socially and theologically.” *World*, May 27, 2000.

Greek Orthodox Church Condemns Homosexuality

News Item: “The Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church severely condemned homosexuality and couples of the same sex living together, Italy’s largest news agency reported The Holy Synod also condemned the non-binding proposal of the European



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Parliament to guarantee homosexual couples the same rights as heterosexuals." *National Catholic Register*, April 23-29, 2000.

California Rejects Homosexual Marriage

News Item: "Golden State voters overwhelmingly approved Prop 22, a 14-word amendment to the state constitution that reads, 'Only marriage between a man and a woman is recognized or valid in California.' The initiative, which homosexual activists claimed would strip gays and lesbians of civil rights, passed 61 percent to 39 percent." California is now the 31st state to ban same-sex marriage. *World*, March 18, 2000.

Adventist Sunday Services

News Item: Mountain View Church, a Seventh-day Adventist Church in Las Vegas, is sponsoring an Adventist Sunday church called Higher Grounds Community Church.

"It's a high tech "seeker-style" service, not designed for Adventists, but for Anglo Boomers and GenXers who may not be acquainted with the inside of any church," explained David Gemmell, pastor of the nearby Las Vegas Mountain View church which is sponsoring this creative evangelism project.

"Most Adventists would not be comfortable in this service with its contemporary band and laid-back style," he remarked. "But this type of service has already proved highly successful with three other rapidly growing churches in Las Vegas."

According to its project proposal, this church intends to lead its attendees to become Sabbath-keeping Seventh-day Adventists.

"Sunday morning Evangelistic Project will bring the gospel to unchurched people at a time when they are most receptive to religious

things. This project will not be a worship service for the believers, but instead will be an evangelistic meeting that believers can bring their unchurched friends to."

"The seekers will be gradually drawn into a home cell church where they can begin to grow in their walk with Christ and their understanding of the fundamental beliefs of the Adventist faith."

Pastor Gemmell and the Sunday church's pastor, Tim Dunfield, "hope that this model can be replicated in other cities across the country." *Pacific Union Recorder* [SDA], February 2000.

End-Time Perspective: Can evangelism carried out in opposition to God's design receive God's blessing? It may be that the opposite may be the result—Seventh-day Adventists could be drawn away from the Sabbath to Sundaykeeping and further away from following God as His remnant people. To ask the public to join a Sundaykeeping church and then seek to convince them of the Sabbath, is deceptive and degrading to God's truth. Can truth and error work together? "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" 2 Corinthians 6:14; see also Amos 3:3.

Religious Persecution Increasing

News Item: "We are confronted today with the reality of increasing religious violence around the world—violence that has bloodied the history of centuries," warns M. Maurice Verfaillie, secretary-general of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty.

"Speaking at a meeting of communicators in Lisbon, Portugal, on March 6, Verfaillie cited instances of religious violence in East Timor, Indonesia, Pakistan,

Iran, India, Algeria, Egypt and the Sudan as proof of the 'rising tide of conflict based on religious intolerance.'" *ANN Bulletin*, *Adventist News Network*, March 7, 2000.

Paganism Growing

News Item: "Books coming out of a pagan, New Age, or Buddhist worldview take up far more shelf space in the 'spirituality' section of most bookstores than Christian titles do. At universities, campus ministry organizations increasingly include among their members Wiccans (self-described 'pagans,' also known as witches).

"As Christianity becomes less of a presence in the culture, the ancient pagan religions are rushing into the void. Progressives had always assumed that once Christianity faded, people would do without religion entirely. But this was naïve. Without an advanced religion like Christianity, people are reverting to what came before, to nature worship, neo-animism, and primitive superstitions.

"Though sacrificed chickens and other animals have become a public health nuisance in cities with large Santeria populations (a folk religion for some Hispanics, with something similar for some Haitians), the full pageantry of paganism is hardly evident. But the worldview of paganism—the divinity of nature, the deity of animals, devotion to forces of nature such as sex—as well as the inner mysticism and cosmic unity posited by the more sophisticated Eastern religions, are very much in vogue. And the culture's moral shifts may be a cultural reversion to paganism, which sometimes used prostitution and homosexuality as means of religious awakening and which often tolerated euthanasia and infanticide.

"But the main religious shift in American culture is not so much to

overt paganism as to syncretism, the attempt to combine a biblical faith with a pagan one In the 1960s the ecumenical movement tried to reconcile the various Christian traditions. Today, it tries to reconcile the various world religions. Liberal mainline Protestants increasingly employ Native American rituals and goddess-idolatry in their worship services and shrink from 'exclusive' teachings such as the First Commandment and that faith in Christ is the only way to salvation." *World*, May 6, 2000.

Tsunami Threat to Atlantic Coast

News Item: A twenty-five-mile-long series of cracks found on the Atlantic seabed sixty miles off the coast from Chesapeake Bay have recently been discovered. Scientists are investigating whether or not these seabed cracks indicate a geologically unstable area, which would portend an undersea landslide that could cause a tsunami, threatening the coast. Current feelings that a massive Pacific-style tsunami are slight, but the Atlantic Coast would be overturned if these cracks are determined to indicate a major threat. *U.S. News & World Report*, May 15, 2000.



Meat and Dairy Products Contaminated

News Item: An Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report has sounded an alarm that meat, fish, and dairy products are contaminated by dioxin, an

industrial pollutant. Dioxin from the environment accumulates in fatty tissues and is passed to humans when the above items are consumed. The EPA believes that the resulting cancer risk to those who eat a rich diet is tenfold more than what was previously thought. Children are at even greater risk because of their milk consumption. *Time*, May 29, 2000.

Anger Proved Unhealthy

News Items: "Anger-prone people are three times as likely to have heart attacks as more passive folks, according to a new study of 13,000 people published in the British journal *Lancet*. That finding was echoed in a study of 8,000 people published in the Archives of Internal Medicine." This study found that related depression increases coronary heart disease risk by 72 percent. *Newsweek*, May 22, 2000.

The risk of calcification of the coronary arteries more than doubles for 18 to 30-year-olds with high levels of anger. This may damage the heart and lead to heart disease. *Time*, May 29, 2000.

Fiber and Vitamin C in the News

News Items: "Just weeks after reports that fiber-rich foods probably don't protect against colon cancer, a study shows that they may benefit folks with a different disease. Diabetics who eat 50g of fiber a day—equivalent to seven or eight portions of fruits and veggies—had lower and more stable glucose levels than those who barely touched the stuff. (There was another advantage: cholesterol dropped an average of 7%)." A high-fiber diet "may allow patients to reduce their drug intake—or stay off medication entirely." *Time*, May 22, 2000.

"A regular hefty dose of vitamin C may help lower blood pressure." Participants in a small study done

recently experienced a 13-point drop of their systolic pressure as a result of taking 500 milligrams of vitamin C. *Adventist Review*, May 2000.

The Institute of Medicine increased the recommended daily intake of vitamin C to 75g for women and 90mg for men after two new studies supported the increase. One study demonstrated that vitamin C with vitamin E reduced the chances of seniors getting vascular dementia by 88 percent, and another study "found that women taking vitamin C supplements had 34 percent less gallbladder disease." *Newsweek*, April 24, 2000.

Shark Cartilage Fraud

News Items: "Sharks don't get cancer; could it be something in their cartilage? This hope has led to a small industry with more than 40 brands of shark-cartilage supplements, and 50,000 Americans a year eating and injecting the substance. Since the FDA considers it a food supplement, the industry doesn't have to prove the cartilage works. But scientists at the Registry of Tumors of Lower Animals, in Washington, D.C., recently said they have 20 reports of shark tumors on file. 'Sharks are being slaughtered at an alarming rate to satisfy people's desperate desires for this cancer cure that's based on a false premise,' says Gary K. Ostrander, a biologist at Johns Hopkins." *Newsweek*, April 24, 2000.

According to pathologist John Harshbarger of George Washington University, who studies tumors in animals, sharks and their close relatives, skates and rays, do indeed get cancer. Sales of \$25 million annually of shark cartilage are endangering some shark species, as an estimated 100 million sharks are slaughtered per year. *Scientific American*, June 2000.

End-Time Perspective: Not one of God's people should have fallen to this fraud because we know that anything from an unclean creature is unfit for human consumption. See Leviticus 11. ❄



A number of months ago the editors of Our Firm Foundation became aware of a conference youth director in the South Pacific Division who sent to the youth leaders of his conference a series of articles addressing the question of whether rock music is appropriate within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We were encouraged that he was willing to stand for what we believe are godly principles – especially so in a day in which members and leaders seem to be increasingly open to the use of rock music in Seventh-day Adventist worship services. What follows are the last two of the four letters, reprinted with permission. Samuel Jensen is a pseudonym.

THE EDITORS

Last time we looked at some of the facts surrounding Christian rock music in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Now we will conclude this discussion by looking at some of the fruits that have been borne by the Christian rock music phenomena in the church.

Again, I pray that the Lord will bless you as you read this last part of the article. I believe that if your heart lies with Jesus, then in the

end the conclusions that you arrive at will be His and not your own. Thanks for taking the time to consider this issue with me.

What are some of the fruits of Christian rock?

In the last decade-and-a-half there has been a massive exodus of young people from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Western World. It would be too simplistic and even slightly absurd to blame this departure from the faith on the advent of Christian rock music. There are many factors that have led to this exodus – not the least being the spiritual walk of young people themselves. Nevertheless, Christian rock has been predominantly the genre of music used by many youth leaders as the basis for numerous church programs during this period.

When we use rock music in our church programs, we are offering young people the same music that they find out in the world. It is almost impossible to distinguish between the world's and the church's music when the only difference is the words – words that

in most cases cannot be heard. This is why, after attending a series of church meetings in 1998, a young lady passionately stated to me: "You tell me not to go to clubs, and yet I don't drink; I don't smoke; I don't do drugs. You are always saying that I should not go out dancing, and yet you played the same music in tonight's program as I heard in a club the other Saturday night!"

Let me assure you that it certainly was not the same music as she heard in the downtown ——— club, and yet the fact remains that she was unable to distinguish the difference. This lack of distinction between secular and Christian rock helps to blur the minds of our young people in an already confusing environment, which leads to the Christian Rock Tree's first fruit:

1. Loss of identity – Identity comes from being able to clearly distinguish one thing from another. This is becoming difficult, if not totally impossible, for many young people who are exposed to the same genre of music in the church as in the world. When one loses a

sense of identity, one loses a reason to exist. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why so many young people failed to understand the significance of Adventism in the closing years of the twentieth century.

Our music plays a large part in our worship culture. I believe that the Bible clearly portrays this as being good and healthy. (See the book of Psalms.) However, when the music is rock music, a large section of our worship becomes heavily influenced by a genre of music that has its source in the world. When the world starts to influence our worship services, we begin to tread on very dangerous ground. Our worship services

to make a balanced decision on whether to follow Christ or not. This is the second fruit of the Christian Rock Tree:

2. Distorts God—Christian rock distorts the real character and nature of God. Christian rock artists and song writers have “‘redefined’ the Lord Jesus Christ as being a ‘politically correct,’ ‘tolerant,’ ‘lovey-dovey,’ ‘nonjudgmental,’ ‘partying,’ ‘hip-hop,’ ‘rapping-rocker’ that appeals to the world.”¹ Albums like, DC Talk’s “Jesus Freak,” Messiah Prophet’s “Master of the Metal,” and so forth, have all encouraged this distortion of God. Carman, one of Christian rock’s most popular artists, describes the Lord in one of his songs as “a

was a camp meeting in Indiana, over one hundred years ago, and what went on there is similar to what is going on in some of our churches and in some of our youth programs today. I will quote directly from the prophet:

“The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, *the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation.* Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. *There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing.* The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.”³

Two things should be very clear to us as we read this passage:

1. What was happening in Indiana will happen in some churches and in some youth groups and in some worship services within the Seventh-day Adventist Church before the close of probation.

2. What the prophet is describing is what is taking place in a religious setting that is dominated by shouting, drums, music, and dancing.

I do not believe that it is too big of a jump to conclude that what Ellen White was shown by God is the exact thing we are seeing today in some Adventist worship services. If God is not describing Christian rock in His church at the end of time, then it would be very interesting to know what He is describing to the prophet. I know of no other apostasy in the church that even remotely fits this description. The next paragraph is very serious indeed for any thinking Seventh-day Adventist young person:

“The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. *This is an invention of Satan* to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to do the work that last January was

I do not believe that it is too big of a jump to conclude that what Ellen White was shown by God is the exact thing we are seeing today in some Adventist worship services.

become a fertile ground for Satan to work in, because we are using his tools—not God’s. This must play a part in the secularization, and sometimes in the departure from the church, of our young people.

Young people are finding it increasingly difficult to identify their church as offering anything different than other Christian and non-Christian churches. The danger of this is that they will go to whoever offers the “best rock music” rather than to the church that offers the truth. I personally have friends who have left Adventism for Pentecostal churches, using as the basis for their decision the supposed better worship style of the charismatic church—a worship style that is largely rooted in Christian rock music—music that creates unholy excitement. The truth becomes secondary in their search for a better experience—an experience generated by Christian rock music.

We live in a world that has a distorted view of God. The incorrect portrayal of God has limited the opportunity for many young people

‘street hippie,’ crucified in a street-gang fight who is then thrown in a dumpster.”² There are many examples of Christian rock distorting and often blatantly changing the truth about God and the Bible. These Christian rock artists attribute characteristics to God’s character that are nonexistent. To do this so openly within the context of Christianity is blasphemy.

The work of the Holy Spirit is an important and vital ministry of God to His church. Christian rock claims to be of the Holy Spirit. However, the facts belie this notion. This leads to the third fruit of the Christian Rock Tree:

3. Misrepresents the Holy Spirit—The Holy Spirit will only come and minister in the worship setting within a particular environment. Ellen White, the prophet of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, gives us some timely warnings regarding what seems to be rock music in the church at the end of time. There

represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings. The truth for this time needs nothing of this kind in its work of converting souls. *A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing.* The powers of satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working."⁴

Notice that God tells Ellen White that not only is the Holy Spirit not revealed in this music, but Satan, the fallen choirmaster of heaven, is its author. Perhaps now some of you can see why I have made such an effort to write this article and distribute it to our youth leaders. It is possible—might I say probable—that some of the music we use in "worship" has for its author Satan himself. This is sobering information. Ellen White further states:

"I was instructed to say that at these demonstrations demons in the form of men are present, working with all the ingenuity that Satan can employ to make the truth disgusting to sensible people."⁵

*"Those things which have been in the past will be in the future."*⁶

"Angels are hovering around yonder dwelling. The young are there assembled; there is the sound of vocal and instrumental music. Christians are gathered there, but what is that you hear? *It is a song, a frivolous ditty, fit for the dance hall.* Behold the pure angels gather their light closer around them, and darkness envelops those in that dwelling. The angels are moving from the scene. Sadness is upon their countenances. Behold, they are weeping. This I saw repeated a number of times all through the ranks of Sabbathkeepers."⁷

Again we are presented with demons working in our worship services. I am not sure about you, but this brings fear to my heart. I want to worship God in spirit and in truth with the presence of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead.

It is also interesting to note that the music that is being played in these apostate worship services is music fit for a dance hall. If today

we are attempting to identify the music Ellen White is talking about, we need to go no further than to the clubs and pubs—our dance halls. The music played in them must be similar in kind to the apostate music being played in some of our worship services. The music played in our clubs and pubs is rock music. Is it then feasible that the music Ellen White is speaking about is really Christian rock music? She spoke under the direction of God regarding this matter, which makes it very serious indeed. Though the lyrics and venue are different, the music being played in many of God's churches is the same as is being played out in the secular world.

I will not pretend that some of this material has not been rather heavy. It would not be difficult to write a book of 500 pages on this subject. The material is vast, extensive, and compelling. However, I do not want to exhaust you. My aim has been to alert you as to what I perceive to be a real danger to our young people—namely, Christian rock music. If I have done nothing but drive you to your knees and into your Bible and Spirit of Prophecy books to sort this issue out, then I would count this effort as having been successful.

I also recognize that what I am writing will not be very popular with some of you. However, as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, I have a responsibility, and that is to teach and preach the truth to the young people and youth leaders here in ———. It is what God has called me to do. The road God asks all of us to walk is narrow. The Bible tells us that not many people want to walk it. It is the road far less traveled. Through the grace of God, I intend to continue to proclaim the truth in these last days of earth's history—no matter what the cost. I pray that you will join me in this glorious responsibility.

Part 4

I hope by now that we have firmly established that we should

not be using Christian rock music in any of our youth programs. Jesus said in John 12:32: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Our music, like our preaching and everything else we do in worship, should lift up Jesus. That must be its stated and practiced purpose. The aim of this article is to give you principles you can use in choosing and playing music in the worship setting of our church.

Let me start by stating what I am not saying:

1. I am not saying we should use only hymns. I personally believe that some of the contemporary songs that have come to us in recent years are some of the finest spiritual songs ever written. However, it saddens me that many of our greatest hymns are put on the shelf and never used in our youth programs.

2. I am not saying we should exclude certain instruments from our worship. I believe every musical instrument can be played to the glory of God. Yet, there are certain instruments such as drums that lend themselves to easier abuse than others. Therefore, I would rather exclude an instrument than have it continually ruin good sacred music.

Since 1972 the church has had a set of voted music guidelines. They have been re-voted on at several General Conference Sessions since, and are, I believe, the most balanced guidelines we have on this emotive topic. The following are these guidelines as written and accepted by the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church. Please read them carefully, check them, and then, by God's grace, follow them. ❀

REFERENCES:

- ¹ *Adventists Affirm*, Music issue, "Not All Youth Want to Rock"
- ² Internet, www.rock.com, "Why Can't I?"
- ³ *Selected Messages*, book 2, 36; see also *ibid.*, 31-39. (All emphasis by author unless otherwise noted.)
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.
- ⁷ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 506.

Guidelines Toward an SDA Philosophy of Music

General Conference Autumn Council voted that the following guidelines for a Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music be adopted:

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has come into existence in fulfillment of prophecy to be God's instrument in a worldwide proclamation of the Good News of Salvation through faith in the atoning sacrifice of God's Son and of obedience to His commands in preparation for our Lord's return. The lives of those who accept this responsibility must be as distinctive as their message. This calls for total commitment by each church member to the ideals and objectives of the Church. Such commitment will affect every department of church life and will certainly influence the music used by the Church in fulfillment of its God-given commission.

Music is one of God's great gifts to man and is one of the most important elements in a spiritual program. It is an avenue

of communication with God, and "is one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth" (*Education*, p. 168). Dealing as it does with matters of eternal consequence, it is essential that music's tremendous power be kept clearly in mind. It has the power to uplift or degrade; it can be used in the service of good or evil. "It has power to subdue rude and uncultivated natures; power to quicken thought and to awaken sympathy, to promote harmony of action, and to banish the gloom and foreboding that destroy courage and weaken effort" (*ibid.*).

Those, therefore, who select music for the distinctive purposes of this Church must exercise a high degree of discrimination in its choice and in its use. In their endeavors to meet these ideals,

more than human wisdom is needed. Turning then to revelation for guidance, the following general principles are revealed:

The music should:

1. Bring glory to God and assist us in acceptably worshipping Him (see 1 Corinthians 10:31).
2. Ennoble, uplift, and purify the Christian's thoughts (see Philippians 4:8; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 594).
3. Effectively influence the Christian in the development of Christ's character in his life and in that of others (see *Manuscript 57*, 1906).
4. Have a text [words, lyric, message] which is in harmony with the scriptural teachings of the Church (see *Review and Herald*, June 6, 1912).
5. Reveal a compatibility between the message conveyed by

the words and the music, avoiding a mixture of the sacred and the profane.

6. Shun theatricality and prideful display (see *Evangelism*, p. 137).

7. Give precedence to the message of the text, which should not be overpowered by accompanying musical elements (see *Gospel Workers*, pp. 357–358).

8. Maintain a judicious balance of the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual elements (see *Review and Herald*, November 14, 1899).

9. Never compromise high principles of dignity and excellence in efforts to reach people just where they are (see *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 143; *Evangelism*, p. 137).

10. Be appropriate for the occasion, the setting, and the audience for which it is intended (see *ibid.*, pp. 507–508).

There is much that is spiritually uplifting and religiously valid in the music of the various cultural and ethnic groups; however, the musical tastes and practices of all should conform to the universal value of Christlike character, and all should strive for oneness in the spirit and purpose of the gospel, which calls for unity rather than uniformity. Care must be exercised that worldly values in music which fail to express the high ideals of the Christian faith be avoided.

The above principles will serve as effective guidelines in the choice and use of music for the varied needs of the Church. Certain musical forms, such as jazz, rock, and their related hybrid forms, are considered by the Church as incompatible with these principles. Responsible persons involved in the Church's broad-ranging music activities, either as leaders or performers, will find little trouble in applying these principles in some areas. Certain other areas are much more complex, and a more detailed discussion of the factors involved follows.

I. Church Music

Music in the Worship Service.

Worship should be the primary and eternal activity of mankind. Man's highest end is to glorify God. As the worshiper comes to the house of God to offer a sacrifice of praise, let it be with the best possible music. Careful planning of every musical element of the service is essential so that the congregation is led to be a participant and not a spectator.

The hymns used for this service should be directed to God, emphasizing praise and utilizing the great hymns of our heritage. They should have strong, singable melodies and worthy poetry. The

accompaniment of hymns. He is in a unique position to raise the level of worship music in his church. If in the service there should be vocal solos or other special music, preference should be given to material with scriptural texts and music that is within the singer's range of ability, and be presented to the Lord without display of vocal prowess. The communication of the message should be paramount.

Music in Evangelism.

Music used in evangelism may also include gospel music, witness music, or testimony music; but there should be no compromise with the high principles of dignity and excellence characteristic of our

The musical tastes and practices of all should conform to the universal value of Christlike character, and all should strive for oneness in the spirit and purpose of the gospel.

pastor should take a keen interest in increasing the quality and fervor of congregational singing. "Singing is seldom to be done by a few" (*Counsels on Health*, pp. 481–482). Christian experience will be immeasurably enriched by the learning and use of new hymns.

Where there is a choir, meaningful anthems chosen from master composers of the past and present, sung by dedicated and well-prepared musicians, will add much to the service and assist in elevating the quality of worship.

Instrumental music, including organ or piano, should harmonize with the lofty ideals of worship and be chosen carefully from the best materials consistent with the ability and training of the player. The instrumentalist responsible for accompanying congregational singing has an especially great responsibility to set the right standard in all his contributions, be they preludes or postludes, offertories or other voluntaries, or

message to ready the people for the second coming of Christ. The music chosen should:

1. Direct the hearer to Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
2. Prepare the way for the presentation of the message from God's Word, or continue its appeal, evoking a response from the hearers.
3. Be played and sung by those whose lives are consistent with the message they bear.
4. Be a vehicle for the deep impression of Bible truth, which will inspire a positive change in the life.
5. Be presented in a carefully planned, orderly manner.
6. Be simple and melodic and presented without emphasis on personal display.
7. Give precedence to the preaching of the Word, both in emphasis and in allotment of time.
8. Maintain a balanced appeal to the emotion and intellect and not just charm the senses.

9. Be understandable and meaningful in content and style for the largest possible cross section of the audience.

Music in Youth Evangelism.

In the field of youth witnessing, most of the above suggestions apply. Consideration also needs to be given to certain aspects that are unique to this area.

Young people tend to identify closely with the music of the contemporary youth culture. The desire to reach these youth where they are with the gospel of Christ sometimes leads to the use of certain questionable musical idioms. In all these idioms, the element which brings the most problems is rhythm, or “the beat.”

musical stream. Some of these are acceptable as vehicles for expressing the Christian witness. Others, which might find acceptance in a Christian secular atmosphere, may be inappropriate for bearing the Saviour’s name. Still others may fall completely outside the Christian’s experience. It must be clear, then, that any form of “folk” musical expression must be judged by the same general principles as all other types discussed in this document.

“Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children” (*Education*, p. 18). Those who strive for this high ideal and who lead in youth witnessing will find guidance through prayerful study of music by the aid

should be a sensitivity to the spiritual needs of those giving the witness and of those who are to receive it. Careful consideration should be given to the selection of instruments for amplification.

Performances. The primary objective in the performance of all sacred music should be to exalt Christ rather than to exalt the musician or to provide entertainment.

Music in the Home.

1. Music education and appreciation should begin early in the life of the child through: (a) the introduction to great hymns and gospel songs in the informal happy experience of family worship; (b) the establishment of right listening habits through home audio equipment, which includes carefully selected music; (c) attendance with the family at music concerts with standards conforming to those outlined in this document; (d) the proper example and influence of parents.

2. Family singing and participation in family music instrumental ensembles should be encouraged.

3. Experiments in writing poetry and song compositions might be encouraged.

4. A home music library of wisely selected materials should be established.

5. It must be recognized that Satan is engaged in a battle for the mind and that changes may be effected imperceptibly upon the mind to alter perceptions and values for good and evil. Extreme care must therefore be exercised in the type of programming and music listened to on radio and TV, especially avoiding that which is vulgar, enticing, cheap, immoral, theatrical and identifiable with trends in the counter culture.

Music in the School.

1. In preparing and presenting music for religious functions, school administrators and teachers should work with the students in a way that will uphold the musical standards of the Church.

The primary objective in the performance of all sacred music should be to exalt Christ rather than to exalt the musician or to provide entertainment.

Of all the musical elements, rhythm evokes the strongest physical response. Satan’s greatest successes have often come through his appeal to the physical nature. Showing keen awareness of the dangers involved in this approach to youth, Ellen G. White said, “They have a keen ear for music, and Satan knows what organs to excite to animate, engross, and charm the mind so that Christ is not desired. The spiritual longings of the soul for divine knowledge, for a growth in grace, are wanting [i.e., lacking]” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 497). This is a strong indictment of the way in which music may be put to a use that is in direct opposition to God’s plan. The previously mentioned jazz, rock, and related hybrid forms, are well known for creating this sensuous response in masses of people.

On the other hand, we have many traditional folk-music idioms which have been respected as legitimate branches of the

of the Holy Spirit.

In addition to the problem of rhythm, other factors affect the spiritual qualities of the music:

Vocal Treatment. The raucous style common to rock, the suggestive, sentimental, breathy, crooning style of the nightclub performer, and other distortions of the human voice, should be avoided.

Harmonic Treatment. Music should be avoided that is saturated with the 7th, 9th, 11th, and 13th chords, as well as other lush sonorities. These chords, when used with restraint, produce beauty, but when used to excess distract from the true spiritual quality of the text.

Visual Presentation. Anything which calls undue attention to the performer(s), such as excessive, affected bodily movement or inappropriate dress, should find no place in witnessing.

Amplification. Great care should be exercised to avoid excessive instrumental and vocal amplification. When amplifying music there

2. Witnessing and folk-music groups going out from campuses should receive sponsorship and guidance from those appointed by the administration, be they music-faculty members or others.

3. Directors of radio stations on Seventh-day Adventist campuses and those who are responsible for the selection of music played over institutional public-address systems should choose music that is in conformity with the philosophy of music as expressed in this document.

4. Music teachers in school ensembles and in private teaching activities should make positive efforts to teach music literature that may be used in church and in soul-winning activities.

5. Because one of the primary objectives of school music-appreciation courses is to teach discrimination in the light of divine revelation, instructors in these classes on all educational levels are urged to include information in the art of making qualitative value judgment in the area of religious music.

6. Efforts should be made by the local church and conference to close the culture gap. To this end the trained music personnel of the schools should be used in musical training and activities so that the lofty ideals of worship will be effectively promoted.

7. Musical presentations in Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions should conform to the standards of the Church. This applies to local talent as well as to visiting artists, ensembles, and music on entertainment films.

II. Secular Music

Music "rightly employed . . . is a precious gift of God, designed to uplift the thoughts to high and noble themes, to inspire and elevate the soul" (*Education*, p. 167).

The Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle demands that the individual Christian exercise a high degree of discrimination and individual responsibility in the selection of secular music for

personal use, solo, or group performance. All such music should be evaluated in the light of the instruction given in Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." He will also keep in mind the warning given by Ellen G. White in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 497:

"I was shown that the youth must take a higher stand and make the Word of God the man of their

He will consider music such as blues, jazz, the rock idiom, and similar forms as inimical to the development of Christian character, because it opens the mind to impure thoughts and leads to unholy behavior. Such music has a distinct relationship to the permissiveness of contemporary society. The distortion of rhythm, melody, and harmony as employed by these styles, and their excessive amplification dulls the sensibilities and eventually destroys the appreciation for that which is good and holy.

Care should be exercised when using a secular tune wedded to sacred lyrics, so that the profane

He will consider music such as blues, jazz, the rock idiom, and similar forms as inimical to the development of Christian character, because it opens the mind to impure thoughts and leads to unholy behavior.

counsel and their guide. Solemn responsibilities rest upon the young, which they lightly regard. The introduction of music into their homes, instead of inciting to holiness and spirituality, has been the means of diverting their minds from the truth. Frivolous songs and the popular sheet music of the day seem congenial to their taste. The instruments of music have taken time which should have been devoted to prayer. Music, when not abused, is a great blessing; but when put to a wrong use, it is a terrible curse."

The Christian will not sing songs that are incompatible with the ideals of truth, honesty, and purity. He will avoid elements that give the appearance of making evil desirable or goodness appear trivial. He will try to avoid compositions containing trite phrasing, poor poetry, nonsense, sentimentality, or frivolity, which lead away from the counsel and teachings found in Scripture and in the Spirit of Prophecy.

connotation of the music will not outweigh the message of the text. Moreover, the discerning Christian, when selecting any secular music for listening or performing which is not included in the above categories [blues, jazz, rock, etc.] will subject such music to the test of the principles given in the general principles outlined in this Philosophy of Music.

The true Christian is able to witness to others by his choice of secular music for social occasions. He will, through diligent search and careful selection, seek out that type of music which will be compatible with his social needs and his Christian principles.

"There must be a living connection with God in prayer, a living connection with God in songs of praise and thanksgiving" (*Evangelism*, p. 498). ✠

Official Action of the Autumn Council of the General Conference Committee, October 14-19, 1972, Mexico City, Mexico.

Baptism

How to mark your Bible and know God's Word better

We present this study with the desire that it will encourage you, our readers, to pursue a deeper examination of God's Word. The warning has been given us that "none but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict." *The Great Controversy*, 593–594. It is our suggestion that you use this study personally, in group settings, or with your family. We also encourage you to add other Scriptural references to this study as you proceed in your own personal, attentive scrutiny of God's Word.

The Editors

Bible Marking Directions

1. In this month's study our Bible marking key letter is **B**, which represent "**B**aptism."
2. On the blank flyleaf at either the beginning or the end of your Bible, write in the key letter followed by the first Scriptural text. This month's beginning entry should appear as follows: *1B: Mark 16:16.*
3. Turn to the first reference and, in the margin near it, write the second reference. Then turn to the second reference and, in the margin near it, write the third reference, and so on to the end of the lesson. When you come to the last reference write "*End B.*"

1B: Mark 16:16.

To be baptized is a part of our Christian duty. It is an act of obedience—faithfulness to our belief in Christ as being our Saviour. See Acts 2:37–38.

2B: Mark 1:9–11.

Jesus was baptized by immersion in the Jordan river. The text says, "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw. . . ." This makes the manner of His baptism clear as being by immersion. Even the Greek word for "baptize" means "to immerse." Unfortunately, in some Bible versions the Greek word *baptizo* is used instead of giving a correct translation of it, thereby leaving the meaning unclear and to be interpreted by the reader. Baptism was a recognized rite among the Jews, for which the Jerusalem *Talmud* required total immersion.

3B: 1 Peter 2:21.

We are to follow Jesus as our Example. See Matthew 16:24. He is our perfect Pattern. If we follow Him in the manner of baptism, we will be baptized by immersion.

4B: Acts 8:36–39.

This is the only description we have of how the apostles baptized people. Note that in this act of baptism both the minister and the believer went down into the pool. The baptism took place when they were both in the water, and then after the baptism they both came up out of the pool of water.

This proves that the apostles baptized by immersion. If we are baptized in the right way, we will be baptized by immersion just as this man was.

5B: Colossians 2:12.

We are to be buried with Christ in baptism. To bury means "to cover over." When a few drops of water are sprinkled on a person's head, or a cup of water is poured on his head, he is not buried with Christ in baptism. The fact that baptism is a burial with Christ proves that immersion is the *only right mode of baptism*. Baptism is a divinely appointed memorial of the burial and resurrection of Christ. In Biblical immersion a person is laid back once in the water as Jesus was laid back once in the tomb. Therefore, we see that no other method of baptism is correct—not sprinkling, or pouring, or even several immersions. Only single-immersion baptism rightly sets forth the burial and resurrection of the believer with his Lord.

6B: Matthew 28:19–20.

Before a person can have a true baptism, even by immersion, he must be taught to observe all things that Jesus has ordained in the Bible for a Christian to follow.

7B: Acts 19:1–5.

This scripture indicates that if, when you were immersed the first time, though you had been taught only a part of Christ's truth, when the true message comes to you and teaches you the full truth of Christ

for the Christian, it is well to be rebaptized. According to Matthew 28:19-20, we really must be taught to observe all things that He has commanded before we can have a true baptism.

8B: Romans 6:3-4.

When we are baptized we are to be buried with Christ that we may rise to walk in the newness of life. We cannot be truly buried with Christ in baptism unless before that baptism we make a full surrender of all to Jesus—to do His will in all things. No one is ready to be buried with Christ in baptism until he dies with Christ to the sinful things of this world. There must be death before there is to be burial. One cannot come up from baptism to live a new life unless he really buries the old life of sin with him in baptism. Before a person is ready to be baptized, he must have the victory over such wrong habits as the use of

alcoholic liquors, narcotic drugs, tobacco, pork, tea, coffee, and so forth. He must have laid aside all worldly ornaments and jewelry. He must have turned from the sinful ways of the world, such as card playing, dancing, reading lewd books, viewing inappropriate video productions, and visiting iniquitous places of amusement. See 1 John 2:15-17. By the enabling grace of Jesus, we may resist all temptation, obey His holy law, and come off more than conquerors!

9B: Galatians 3:27.

When we are truly baptized into Christ, we put on Christ, to live henceforth for Christ. With our surrender, and through His abiding presence and Spirit, we adopt His principles, follow His example, and respond to His leading. Christ lives within us and works through us. We learn to think His thoughts, speak His words, and do His deeds.

10B: 1 John 2:6.

The word “ought” in the Greek means “to be under obligation.” Thus, we are morally obligated to follow Christ. After being baptized, we are to walk as Jesus walked; and having risen with Christ, we are to set our affections on heavenly things (see Colossians 3:1-4), and then to live from that time on according to the will of God. See 1 Peter 4:1-2. Thus, we need to earnestly study Jesus’ character, example, and all of His revealed light.

11B: Revelation 22:14.

If we follow on in the way of God’s commandments after we are baptized, someday we will surely pass in through the pearly gates, to live forever in the wonderful City of God. ✨

Adapted by Alan F. Esselbach from *Helps to Bible Study*, by J.L.Schuler.

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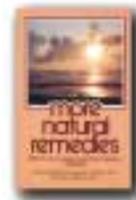
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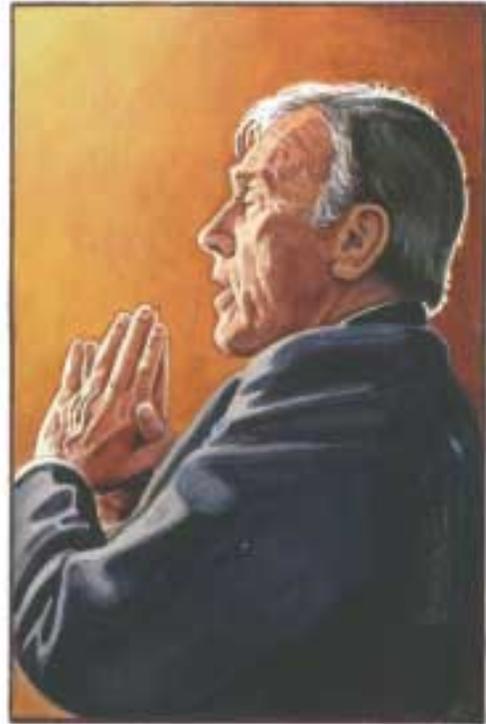
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Christian Privileges and Duties



Ellen G. White

It is the privilege of every soul to seek and find peace in Christ. Yet this peace is granted only upon conditions. We must surrender our own ways and wills and plans, and thus put off the grievous yoke which we have bound upon our own necks, and we must take upon us the yoke of Christ, which will bring rest to our souls. "Learn of me," says the Divine Teacher; "for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:29-30.

We each need to learn in the school of Christ; and it is because we are not more humble and diligent students that we are so slow to manifest meekness and lowliness of heart. It is only when we cherish these precious graces that peace and rest can abide in the soul. Only the humble and contrite ones find shelter in the promises of God; only these obtain a saving knowledge of the Scriptures, and a rich experience in trusting God and obeying His precepts. In our own strength we are indeed feeble; but in the strength of our Redeemer we may be strong. In the midst of tumult we may have quietness and peace. We must believe in Him, even though darkness envelop the

soul; we must work from principle, rather than from feeling. By this continual, unwavering trust, Satan is baffled and disappointed.

Says the psalmist, "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies. . . . Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:98, 105.

How to Stand in the Judgment

If we would maintain our fidelity to God, in this time of danger and deception, we must constantly rely upon the power of Christ. We must be often before God in prayer, holding every emotion and every passion in calm subjection to reason and conscience, banishing all unholy imaginings, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. By earnest prayer and living faith we can resist the assaults of Satan, and keep our hearts unspotted from pollution.

The strongest temptation is no excuse for sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to sin. The will must consent, the heart must yield, or passion cannot overbear reason,

nor iniquity triumph over righteousness.

I appeal to you who profess to be followers of Christ to depart from all iniquity. You must do this, if you would represent the truth as it is in Jesus. God wants wholehearted, thorough-going men. These only can stand the test of the Judgment.

The Gospel Ministers

If those who have received the light were but true to their trust, what a flood of light would be poured upon the world! But how is it, not only with the members of the church, but with those who stand as ministers of the gospel? Do their habits and experience correctly represent the purity and simplicity of a holy, cross-bearing life?

The true toilers in the Lord's vineyard will be men of prayer, of faith, of self-denial—men who hold in restraint the natural appetites and passions. These will, in their own lives, give to the world evidence of the power of the truth which they present to others; and their labors will not be without effect. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with

him." Psalm 126:6. "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal." John 4:36.

Fellow workers for Christ, time is short; we have no moments to idle away. Are you watching for souls as they that must give an account, or are you yourselves drowsy, ease-loving, and lukewarm? Have you a living faith? Are you every day increasing in the knowledge of Christ? Do you possess practical godliness, Christian meekness, and deep love for the souls for whom Christ died? Search the Scriptures. Do not depend upon the little knowledge which you already have. Pray for clearer light. Dig for the precious gems of truth as for hid treasure. Thus will you be enabled to bring forth from the storehouse of God things new and old.

Our Only Hope of Success

In this age of conflicting doctrines, when fables abound, and there is so much sensational preaching on the one hand, and so great formality on the other, it is a difficult matter to arouse the people. Our only hope of success is to reach them through God. We must give evidence of earnestness, zeal, and devotion commensurate to the importance and solemnity of our work. There should be no exaltation of self. We are not to call attention to the instrument, but to present Christ and the sacred truths that are to test the people of God. If these truths sanctify our own hearts, if they purify and ennoble our own characters, we shall be living epistles, known and read of all men.

The ambassadors of Christ must learn where their strength lies. They must themselves drink of the living water before they can guide others to the Fountain. We must learn by experience what it is to lean upon the arm of our Beloved. There is no evil more fatal to the prosperity of the church than the influence of professed teachers and ministers of the gospel who are deficient in Christian experience, in faith, self-

denial, self-control, and in the tact and energy essential for skillful warfare.

My brethren, you should be constant learners in the school of Christ, obtaining from the heavenly Teacher precious lessons to impart to others. You have lost much in your labors because you have not constantly felt the necessity of vital connection with God. There is earnest solemn work to do in every branch of the cause of Christ. You need the Spirit and power of God, that your testimony, like a sharp, two-edged sword, may cut to the heart of those who hear.

Willfully Blind

The faithful witnesses for Christ will keep themselves unspotted

Benefiting From Camp Meeting

In all parts of our country, during the summer and autumn, large companies assemble in the tented grove, to worship God and to listen to words of warning and instruction from His servants. Great privileges are afforded by these yearly convocations. The Lord Jesus Himself comes up to the feast. We have a precious opportunity to humble our hearts before God, and to become settled and grounded in the truth. Are these opportunities wisely improved? They will prove to us either a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. After these seasons are over, and those who met together have returned to their

Are you watching for souls as they that must give an account, or are you yourselves drowsy, ease-loving, and lukewarm? Have you a living faith?

from the world. Those who seek to be popular with the world will not love the testimony of the Spirit of God. They are not sanctified through the truth; and after a brief period of half-hearted service, they will make a decided move toward uniting with the enemies of God. They reject the light, and it is withdrawn from them. In time it will be seen that they are in utter darkness.

Many retain a form of godliness and a connection with the church, when they bring no strength, help, or blessing to the church. They seek to make the narrow way broad and pleasant for the multitude to walk in. Such are destitute of spiritual eyesight. They have put out their own eyes, and they stumble at every step. The Word of God has not widened the narrow way; and if the half-hearted and pleasure-loving choose a path where they need not bear the cross or suffer tribulation, they are in a path where the Saviour did not walk.

homes, will they be prepared to let their light shine forth to the world? Will their works correspond with the faith which they profess? If we continue to love the world, to have fellowship with the works of darkness, or to find pleasure in unrighteousness, then we have put the stumbling block of our iniquity before our face, and have set up idols in our hearts. If we do not heed the word of the Lord, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate . . . and touch not the unclean" (2 Corinthians 6:17), we are in a worse condition than if we had not listened to the words of truth.

The Scriptures clearly set before us the high and holy position which we should occupy as sons and daughters of God. If all who attend the camp meetings would seek earnestly to attain this position, and would receive the spiritual benefit which it is their privilege to receive, they would be prepared to do good when they return home. If the love

of Christ is kindled afresh in their own hearts, if they have drank anew from the heavenly fountain, their cheerful testimonies and their prayers, sent up in faith, will be as great a help to the church as ministerial labor. The Spirit of God will come into their meetings, and the hearts of believers will say, It is good to be here.

Fellow Christians Trim Your Lamps!

Every church, be it large or small, should be taught not to depend on ministerial labor. Therefore, fellow Christians, there is the greater need that you kindle your

tive, to occupy a neutral position. It behooves us now to be wide awake, ready for every good work, ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us.

Brethren, you must come closer, closer to the bleeding side of Jesus. Instead of yielding to every passing influence, seek earnestly to know the truth, and then endeavor to form a character consistent therewith. Seek to be like Christ, meek and lowly of heart, and, like Him, be resolute also; in principle be firm as a rock; be pure, sincere, and holy. Be ever cheerful, humble, grateful. Keep yourselves separate from the spirit and influence of the

with all longsuffering and doctrine." 2 Timothy 4:2. If the Lord has given this command, there is certainly a work of reproof, rebuking, warning, and correction to be done. Let all be careful, then, how they allow their hearts to rise up against the reproofs of God through His servants; for in so doing they rise up against God.

Like the Pharisees of old, the self-deceived, the self-sufficient, the self-righteous, refuse to be warned. The Lord points out their dangers, but they do not heed His voice. As they assimilate to the world, they become the friends of evildoers. While God reproofs the transgressor, they feel inclined to excuse and encourage him. Thus they say to the sinner, It shall be well with thee. Such persons call good evil, in that they oppose and denounce those who faithfully deliver the messages of warning and reproof committed to them of God. They call evil good by extolling those who have no reproofs to bear and no warnings to give, who pass along in a careless, indifferent spirit, excusing sin, and by their own course encouraging worldliness and backsliding. All these are sanctioning a deception which has proved the ruin of many. The blood of souls is upon them. Their course is more offensive to God than is that of the open sinner.

Anciently, the Lord always had among His people faithful prophets, whom He sent to reprove sin. He has never removed these from His church. Those who rise up against warning and reproof, and seek by their jests, their smart speeches, or their deceptions, to make of no effect the plain words of reproof prompted by the Spirit of God, will find, in the great day of final reckoning, an account against them which they will not wish to meet.

God calls upon you to be zealous and repent of your half-heartedness. Strive to walk wisely, in a perfect way. Begin and end each day with earnest prayer and close self-examination.

tapers at the divine altar, that the light may shine forth to all around. However weak you may be, you can become a help and blessing to others, if you will keep your own souls in the love of God, and search the Scriptures for a clear understanding of the truth. It is not only your privilege but your duty to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. You may rejoice in a living Saviour, and may show to all connected with you that He is the Center of your affections and your hopes.

Would that all might view this matter of daily, practical Christianity as it has been presented to me; would that they could see what we might be in spiritual power, and what we are because we neglect the light which God has given us! Many will have to combat intellectual slothfulness and spiritual stupor, before they can be a blessing to themselves or to their fellow men. We are living under the most solemn message of warning ever given to our world. We are altogether too near the closing scenes of this world's history to be inatten-

world. Let not sin find a sanction in your position. Give no occasion for evildoers even to imagine that they have your sympathies. Let not irreligion find in your lax principles a pretext to excuse itself.

God calls upon you to be zealous and repent of your half-heartedness. Strive to walk wisely, in a perfect way. Begin and end each day with earnest prayer and close self-examination. Compare your life and character with the law of God, mark where its precepts condemn you, and set to work at once to correct the wrong by repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Wash your robes of character, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Let your words be well chosen. Put away all lightness, trifling, and irreverence.

Our Need of Reproof

Those who really desire to advance in the divine life will cherish every ray of light, and heed every warning given by the servants of God. The Holy Spirit admonishes those who preach the gospel, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort

Serviceable Christians

To be a Christian is to be Christ-like, a man of faith, a man of principle. The Christians most serviceable in the church are those whose convictions are so firm, whose characters are so strong, that nothing can sway them from their

Census 2000

— what saving good is it?

faith or deter them from their duty. As a people, we are altogether too much like the world. We are not the separate, holy people that God requires us to be. When we come up to the high standard of God's law, then shall we be indeed the light of the world.

The professed church of Christ has wandered from her privilege, her duty, and her God. Like ancient Israel, she has forsaken the covenant, and joined herself in harmony with the world. Pride, luxury, and pleasure are invited into the sanctuary, and her holy places are defiled. Those who have pledged their allegiance to God, enjoy the company and spirit of His avowed enemies. Their choice determines their character. Strong is the Lord God who judgeth them.

But, thank God, in every age He has had men who were not timeservers, men who would stand firm for the right, and risk all consequences. In the strength of God, Martin Luther fearlessly proclaimed the truths of the Bible. In vain, earthly potentates sought to intimidate him. In vain, they attempted to break his hold on God, and drive him to seek the favor of the pope or the protection of the emperor at the sacrifice of his faith. His one answer was, "God and the right will triumph." Neither men nor devils could silence him. Gold, ambition, honors, could not win him from his work of exposing error and declaring truth. In like manner Huss, Jerome, Ridley, and many others, counted not their own lives dear unto themselves that they might keep the testimony of Jesus. Amid torture and flames, amid dungeons and horrible deaths, these faithful standard-bearers held aloft the banner of the cross of Christ.

We also, who are called to stand in these last trying days of peril and conflict, must be willing, for the truth's sake, to sacrifice our ease, our time, our reputation, yea, even life itself. At whatever cost, we must be true to principle and to God. ✠

Signs of the Times, October 4, 1883.

Mrs. B was taking the U.S. Census in our area, and she stopped me for directions to a particular house number as I was walking home for lunch.

I had heard that some people were refusing to answer questions that were "unconstitutional," but I decided that I would follow Jesus' example: He did not get caught up in the civil issues of His day, realizing that His kingdom was not of this world. Jesus, Daniel, Joseph, and others showed that we are to cooperate with the laws of the land when they do not require a compromise of God's law. So I resolved that I would answer the Census.

When Mrs. B came to my house, I invited her in.

When she finished with her questions, it was my turn. "I've got a short, 6-question survey that our church youth have been asking of our neighbors to see whether we are relevant. Would you like to answer the questions?"

"Well, it wouldn't be fair for me to say No, would it!" she declared.

Q. "Question number 1 . . . " (as I took out a pad of paper and a pen to write down her answers): "Do you believe in God?"

A. "Yes, I do."

Q. "Number 2. Do you believe in Jesus Christ?"

A. "Oh, yes, absolutely!"

Q. "Number 3. What church do you attend most often?"

A. "Faith Temple in —. (The Census Bureau brought me all the

way up here because they were having trouble getting people to answer the questions.)"

Q. "Number 4. How often do you attend?"

A. "Almost every Sunday."

Q. "Number 5. If you were the leader of your church's organization, what do you think would be the greatest contribution you could make to your members and to the world? Some people answer that they would help their church members understand the Bible better; others give different answers."

A. "Yes, that's a great need. A lot of people don't really take the Bible just the way it reads."

Q. "Number 6. Do you understand all you need to know about the Bible, or do you still have more to learn?"

A. "I'm sure I still have a lot more to learn."

"To those who answer this survey we are offering a set of Bible study guides." (I handed her a set of the "Storacle" study guides from Amazing Facts.)

She said, "Well, thank you very much. I'll drop you a card and let you know what I think about them."

I am looking forward to hearing from her.

I was excited as I saw how the Lord had a purpose in making sure what time I was at home that day and in impressing me how to capitalize on the opportunity. ✠

Harvey Steck (Washington)

Do you have an experience that illustrates how to share the three angels' messages with others? Have you found an effective way to distribute present-truth literature? Write it down (in 300-750 words) and send it to the Managing Editor of Our Firm Foundation. We pray that many others will be better instructed and inspired to spread the gospel to all the world.—THE EDITORS.

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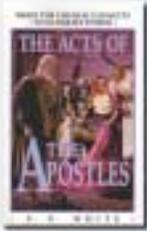


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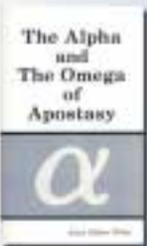
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letters to the editor

Have a letter to share?

contact editor@hopeint.org or see page 3 for our mailing address.



I was really delighted to get your new issue of *Our Firm Foundation* in the mail! I had lost track of you for several years, and I'm so glad you found me!

I would like to receive a year's subscription. I will mail in the card, or if I can get started this way, will just send in the money with a note that we are already in the system.

CH, Oregon

Thank you so much for your spirit-filled magazine! It is my heart's greatest desire and love to study these things. I worship alone, so it means even more to me. I am thankful for your introductory offer, and I am ordering *Our Firm Foundation*.

MH, California

From Overseas

My father, a faithful Seventh-day Adventist residing in Port St. Lucie, Florida, is responsible for introducing me to your inspiring publication, *Our Firm Foundation*. Five years ago, he had sent me a gift subscription, but the truth is, I had not really begun to pay much attention to it until I visited him the following year. I was searching for God, but somehow I had gotten all entangled in 'church work' without truly knowing the loving Saviour who had given me the command to 'Go.'

In my wonderful, awesome studies with Daddy, I began to see who God really is and what He really requires of me. I enjoyed watching video Round Table discussions with Ron Spear, the Standish brothers and Ray deCarlo. Also I marvelled at the discoveries I made as I watched videos by Dr. Agatha Thrash. I grew to love you all as if I knew you personally.

I came back to Jamaica with a new vision and determination and I started digging for truth as hid

treasure. I never knew that God's Word was so *amazing!* I spent hours at a time feasting on the truth, and my smiles became wider and wider as I felt God's presence right beside me unveiling awesome truths to ME!—unworthy me!

I now have access to the Internet and I'm able to view Hope's website, which is one reason why I'm sure God answered my prayer. I just read your article in the June 2000 edition and once again my heart has been stirred within me! I am convinced that it is now the end. Oh for a heart to serve God as I ought! I do believe with all my heart what the servant of the Lord has said. Through my study of her work, I have grown to love her as a second mother. I just pray that God will give me the strength to carry out His will.

EW, Jamaica

My prayer is "Inspire us, Lord. Teach us through your servants at Hope International and others that you are using. Help them give us more pure light and defend the pillars of our faith." This is my prayer every time when I kneel down in humble supplication.

Moreover, I am requesting any books that you have in the ministry that can help me and my brethren and sisters here. How can we obtain the *Spalding and Magan's Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies*? I saw it advertised in one of your magazines. What about some free tracts that I could share as I am out in the field conducting Bible studies?

Your great desire to work for the Lord is so precious! Please help us. Any literature sent to us is so much appreciated!

MD, Zambia

I've read some of your magazines and I agree with you when you say that every wind of doctrine

is blowing in the midst of our Church. I'm fighting the same battle in my Church. All I can say now is, Praise the Lord for the people like you who are crying for, and attacking the sins and abominations in our Church (like Isaiah and other prophets). Just keep up the good work in the strength of our Lord, waiting for our blessed hope—the return in glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

ID, Macedonia

May I convey to you my sincere greetings in the grace and name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

May I also take this opportunity to thank you for the scriptural books, which you gave to my Bible study group, namely, *The Divine Book Lending Library*. Having read some of the books, our scriptural welfare has improved very much.

Our believing in Jesus Christ has been strengthened very much. We now understand the power in the Word of God better, especially the book entitled *The Great Controversy* by Ellen White. It is a book we are reading again and again because of its powerful message. May God bless your ministry!

OM, Zimbabwe

I am a leader of a singing group that has the task of going out to preach the Adventist message every Sabbath evening and Sundays. We go from house to house. Because they enjoy Adventist songs we have it easy entering into the houses to preach the Word of God to them. My aim of writing you is that, we don't have any Adventist literature to give to our dear listeners. So I kindly appeal to you that if it is possible, please do help us by sending us Christian magazines, Bibles, books, preaching cassettes, etc. I will be very glad if you can get us such materials every month.

SA, West Africa



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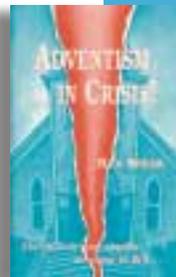


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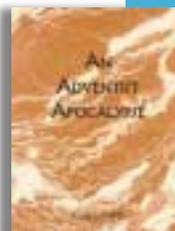


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