Faith on the line
A Journal for Those Who Dare

IV Quarter
Fall 2002
Volume 7 Issue 4

IN THIS ISSUE

Health & Lifestyle
   Calcium 5
   Natural Remedies 7

Creation to Restoration
   by Dr. Walter J. Veith 2

The Danger of a Golden Rule Gospel
   by Richard O'Ffill 8

Our Church Standards
   by Carlyle B. Haynes 22

The New Year
   by Ellen G. White 18

Amazing Discoveries
   Update 14,15,16,17

O taste and see that the Lord is Good; happy are those who take refuge in Him.
Psalm 34:8
Creation to Restoration

Part 1

by Dr. Walter J. Veith

A Perfect World

It is written in the book of Genesis that God pronounced everything that He had created to be good, indeed very good:

And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, [it was] very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Genesis 1:31

There could have been no disharmonious note in this new creation, and according to the Scriptures, this creation was also not subject to death. Man was created in the image of God, and he was to be the ruler over everything that God had created.

And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His [own] image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. Genesis 1:26-28

The creation of man was thus the crowning act of God’s creation, and God made man with the highest honor by granting him dominion of the newly created world. Of all the creatures God had created, man was different from all the other animals in that he was created in the image of God. To man was granted the gift of intellectual capacity, a creative spirit, and a sense of morality. He was also created a free agent in that he was endowed with a freedom of choice. The creation of man was to bring glory to God throughout eternity.

I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth. [Even] every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. Isaiah 43:6-7

These verses show that the children of men are called sons and daughters of God (heavenly princes), and that they were created for the glory of God. Man was to reflect the glory of God, ever increase in knowledge and wisdom, and to ever reflect the glory of God. In the book of Hebrews, Paul picks up the theme of the creation of man and sheds some interesting light on this subject.

Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Hebrews 2:7

The Greek word brachus (for a little) literally means ‘for a little while’ or ‘short time’ and this implies that the full meaning of the text is actually ‘for a little while lower than the angels’. Man was thus to grow in stature, and in the restored world it would not be the angels that would rule upon the earth restored, but restored man would be granted the privilege of sitting with Christ in His throne. This implies even greater glory, since Christ is the ruler of the universe.

For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. Hebrews 2:5

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also am overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. Revelation 3:21

Before being restored, there is, however, some overcoming to be done, for man has forfeited his great privilege through sin, and has lost that glory with which he was originally endowed.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

The Scriptures teach that the change of status and the suffering which this planet and mankind have had to endure since the fall of man would, however, be transformed back to the original through the purchase of the blood of Christ. Through Christ and in Him, man can overcome and be conquerors together with Him. What was lost in Eden can and will be restored through Christ through justification and sanctification to the glorification of those who accept the gift of His purchase, and then only will the full potential of man be realized.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Romans 8:18

And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, Romans 9:23

The earth is also to be restored to its original status and sin will be eradicated from the universe.

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. Isaiah 65:17

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. Isaiah 66:22

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Peter 3:13

The Scriptures also teach that the whole creation is groaning whilst we wait for the restoration that has been promised. Not only is man suffering from the consequences of sin, but the entire creation is also groaning under the burden of decay.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11:9

These verses portray an order of things, which is totally different to what we currently experience on the planet. Firstly, there will be no carnivores and the current predators will thus revert to vegetarian diets, and secondly, all harmful creatures which harm and kill will revert to non-harmful forms. Moreover, even a child will be able to lead the new dangerous predators, so all aggressiveness will be removed from the natures of these animals and man will once more have total control over the animal kingdom. This restoration is in line with what the book of Genesis portrays about the beginning as well as the original diet of all the creatures on the planet.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which [is] the fruit of a tree yielding seed: to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air: and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein [there is] life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. Genesis 1:29-30

According to this verse, all creatures were thus vegetarian, and man’s diet consisted of seeds and fruits and all animals ate the plants of the fields. There could have been no harmful bacteria or parasites, in fact, no creatures with harmful effects at all. What happened then to mar this perfection? The Scriptures teach that sin entered in, and that as a consequence, the order of nature was radically changed. Without the sustaining power of God (for He ‘upholds all things’), the second law of thermodynamics would henceforth ensure that only by the sweat of one’s brow could order and harmony be obtained. Disorder, according to the Scriptures, is the work of the enemy. According to the parable of the sower, it was the enemy that sowed the bad seed among the good.

...Continued On Page 4
The relationship between man and woman was also changed through the entrance of sin, and in order to deal with the changed circumstances there was a shift in role distribution which has become the object of much debate and in some cases much misery. ... Adam would henceforth earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, which means that the provision of the necessities of life was to become his burden in the transformed world. Eve, on the other hand would find the raising of children with right characters a task that would require concerted effort, patience, and many tears. Eve did not receive the lesser role in this new situation, for the raising of descendants with right characters is the noblest of all tasks.

Not only did the role distribution change, but physical aspects of human and animal existence also changed. In a world that would not yield its strength, plants would produce thorns and thistles and the diet and lifestyles of all the created creatures would be affected. To the diet of man, the plants of the field were added in order to augment his diet, and the animals must have also undergone dramatic changes in diet, as their food supply must also have been affected. After Cain killed Abel, there was a further decline, which was to mar the once perfect planet. Cain was cursed, and the ground was to yield even less of its strength (Genesis 4:12). Both animals and man must have been affected by this change of circumstances, and wickedness increased until God destroyed the world by bringing about the flood.

Prior to the flood, the animal world had already changed to such an extent that animals were already classified into clean and unclean categories, since Noah was instructed to take seven pairs of clean animals and one pair of unclean animals on board the ark. The flood brought about a further radical change, and the diet of man and beast must have been further affected, since God added flesh to the already changed human diet. After the flood, there was a rapid decline in the life expectancy of man (and by implication in the animals as well). Life expectancy of man was approximately halved after the flood. After the time of Peleg (when the earth was divided), life expectancy was halved once more, and by the time of Moses the average life span was down to 120 years. By the time of David, it had declined to 80 years, and today it is still lower.

Scientific Evaluation

The existence of evil in a world created by the God of light and love is one of the principle reasons why many reject God. However, God has given all the reasons for the state of affairs and has also provided a solution in Christ to repurchase the lost possession. This same issue plagued Darwin, and he once wrote a letter to his friend Dr. Asa Gray regarding this matter:

I am bewildered. I had no intention to write atheistically. But I own that I cannot see so plainly as others do, and I should wish to do, evidence for design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the L.chromuroides with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice.

He also wrote in 1844 in his initial draft of The Origin of Species:

It is derogatory to the Creator of countless Universes should have made by individual acts of His will the myriad of creeping parasites and worms, which since the earliest dawn of life have swarmed over the land and in the depths of the ocean... We cease to be astonished that a group of animals...
Calcium Absorption

Even though milk has a high calcium content (1 cup contains 290 mg of calcium), 60-80% of it isn’t absorbed through the human intestine. Humans in general absorb as much or more calcium from plant products, including vegetables, than from milk. The exceptions are plants having high concentrations of compounds that block calcium absorption, like phytic acid in wheat bran cereal and oxalic acid in spinach.

Salt and Osteoporosis

Research has revealed that a low sodium diet also reduces the risk of osteoporosis.14 “When the kidneys excrete excess sodium, 23 to 26 mg of calcium is lost along with every gram of sodium excreted.”15 One teaspoon of salt contains 2,252 mg of sodium. The maximum upper limit of sodium intake for a person with normal blood pressure is 2,400 mg per day.16 Many meat substitutes, snacks, bottled and canned foods are high in sodium. A 2-piece serving of Frisch contains 429 mg of sodium,17 one tablespoon of Bragg Liquid Aminos holds 660 mg of sodium,18 and once can of cream of mushroom soup contains 2,111 mg of sodium.19

Phosphorus Affects Calcium Absorption

The best calcium sources are those that contain a high calcium content and a low phosphorus content. Dark green, leafy vegetables like kale, turnip greens, lamb’s quarters, collards and mustard greens are excellent calcium sources and have three to five times more calcium than phosphorus. Foods like beef, pork and fish have large amounts of phosphorus and hardy any calcium. “It’s recommended that at least as much calcium as phosphorus is consumed in the diet if you want to optimize calcium absorption.”20 Tofu and sesame seeds are examples of foods that have nearly equal amounts of calcium and phosphorus. Carbonated beverages have a poor P/C ratio. They have, typically, 41 mg of phosphorus and no calcium.21 Pepsi has 53 mg of phosphorus in a 12 oz can.22 Such drinks are a poor choice of beverage if you want to gain the highest benefit from the calcium in your food.

Calcium Supplements

“Calcium supplements are used, be sure they are NOT made from bone meal or oyster shell. These substances are often contaminated with arsenic, lead, or mercury, that accumulate in the bones and shells of these animals.”23 Nutritionists recommend that calcium be obtained from whole plant sources rather than from supplements.24 Chemists have discovered how to chelate vitamin and mineral supplements to make them more absorbable. But why pay high prices for bioengineered vitamins and minerals when God has already provided them in whole-some forms in natural plants just waiting for you in the produce section of your grocery store, in the local farmer’s market, and from the bounty of your own garden?

How to Get Enough Calcium

Here’s a list of plant foods that can provide plenty of calcium. Remember, on a low-protein diet of 30g or less per day, especially protein from plant sources, daily calcium needs are only 500 mg.

Lambquarters 1 cup 464
Collard greens 1 cup 35
Amaranth grain 1 cup 298
Figs, dried 10 269
Green soybeans 1 cup 261
Tofu, firm 1/2 cup 238
Turnip greens 1 cup 249
Kale 1 cup 179
Sesame seeds, dried 2 Tbsp 176
Blackstrap molasses 1 Tbsp 172
Okra, boiled 1 cup 154
Baked beans 1 cup 154
Mustard greens 1 cup 152
Dandelion greens 1 cup 146
Artichoke, boiled 1 medium 135
Quinoa grain 1 cup 102

Kelp and Blackstrap molasses are foods containing the highest amount of calcium. Carob powder is also high in calcium, as is dulse parsley, almonds, watercress, brazil nuts, brewer’s yeast, and broccoli. Sunflower seeds, dried apricots, buck-wheat, walnuts and peanuts all contain low to medium amounts of calcium as well. With a varied diet, there is no reason why one could not obtain sufficient amounts of calcium per day without using dairy or fish.

How to Avoid Osteoporosis

Here’s a short list of lifestyle changes that can be adopted to lower your risk of getting osteoporosis and to combat it if you already suffer from its effects:

1) Adopt a healthful, low-protein diet.
2) Stop smoking, as well as the use of caffeine.
3) Take a brisk 20-30 minute walk outside in the sunshine every day.

Vegan Nutrition: Pure and Simple, p. 28-29

Onions have many qualities in common with garlic, but milder. Unlike many vegetables which lose some of their virtues in cooking, cooked onions are rich in vitamins. Add them to stews or bake them, but do not fry them.

Energy

Onions are an energy fuel. A boxer once used onions as “fuel,” and a champion race runner ate raw onion at each stop for energy.

Skin

Onions are also excellent for the complexion. There is a great satisfaction in watching one’s skin improve, eruptions disappear, and know that the intestinal lining is undergoing a similar process. In addition, onion destroys intestinal parasites and corrects various forms of constipation.

Diuretic

Onions is a good diuretic which acts against retention of fluids and cleanses the system of urea and sodium. Externally, onion promotes elimination. Rub the loins with half an onion to increase urination by 25%! Such onion massage is also helpful in cases of sciatica. Eating raw onion promotes transpiration and cleanses the pores as effectively as a good sauna bath. It is especially recommended for rheumatic patients.

Tophoid, Flu, High Fivers, Scarlet Fever

To treat these conditions, use a Foot Poultice: Spread several large onions, chopped fine, on a thin linen cloth and wrap around the feet of the patient. Keep it overnight, or eight hours (be sure to protect the bed). This produces a good deal of moisture and is highly diuretic. Within three days, the illness should pass. (All treatments should be made under doctor’s consultation)

Onion is an excellent antibiotic - antiinflammatory and has antidiabetic properties, inasmuch as it lowers the sugar content in the blood.

Onions may be considered among the foremost of the health-giving vegetables. Nibble some parsley or mint to soothe your breath afterward.

Excerpted from Healing Edibles & Other Home Remedies by Joe & Elsa Wills of Maranatha Medical Ministries. Information given here is for consumer education only. It is not meant to replace the advice of a qualified health care professional.
The Danger of a Golden Rule Gospel
by Richard O'Ffill

This sermon is part of an audio series entitled How Shall We Escape available from American Cassette Ministries.

On one occasion my wife and I were attending a Sabbath evening program. I am glad that there are still some churches that have meetings at the close of the Sabbath. I know that it may not seem worth it to many people come. But then it reminds me of the story of the preacher out in the West who went to church one Sunday morning. There was no one there for Sunday school, but that wasn’t unusual. After all, this was ranching country and the people had chores to do before they came to church. After a time, the clock on the front of the church read 11 o’clock and still no one had come. The minister was patient, but by 11:15 he had just about decided that Adventist church’s vision and core values. I want to share with you, if you don’t mind:

- Our Vision
  The vision of the church’s name is to be a biblically functioning community where people are becoming fully devoted followers of Christ.

- Our Core Values
  - Christ’s followers should be authentic and yearn for continuous spiritual growth through prayer, devotion, and Bible study.
  - A person’s relationships directly impact Christian growth and the church’s spiritual life.
  - Personal growth is best nurtured by friendliness, love, openness, and tolerance.
  - To be Christ’s disciple is to be a servant.
  - People are more effective and derive greater satisfaction from service when they use their spiritual gifts.
  - An individual’s spiritual growth and effectiveness in ministry are better served within a small support group.
  - Understanding and experiencing God’s grace is the only hope for lost people.
  - Excellence in programming and facilities honors God and inspires people.
  - We seek to share and enhance our understanding of the Bible, recognizing that we can learn from others.

I believe this vision and the core values expressed are noble. As I looked them over, I thought I recognized the concepts from somewhere else. I was curious and so went onto the Internet. There I found that the vision and the core values are essentially the same ones that are the vision and core values of one of mid-America’s largest non-denominational, congregational churches.

You might ask, so what is wrong with that? Truth is truth. We should be glad that the large church in the Midwest expresses those truths. But think clearly. Don’t take anything for granted. These values and the vision must not be coming from the perspective we are coming from, or else the megachurch in the Midwest would be an Adventist church instead of being non-denominational and congregational. The other possibility could be that the Adventist church is somehow being drawn toward a non-denominational, congregational point of view.

Notice, the last core value in the list from the Adventist church. It says, “...we seek to share and enhance...”

Here at the end of the twentieth century, we must take nothing for granted. We have no idea of what is before us, and unless we are intentional about insuring that truth and our message is spelled out in our plans and programs, it is impossible that our plans and programs could actually choke out the very truth they were meant to advance.

How would Jesus treat Monica Lewinsky?

I am firmly convinced that we are in the last days. I don’t know how many days the last days are, but I am aware, as you are, that something is going on around us that is radically affecting not only the way we act but verily the way we think. Of course I don’t need to tell you that the thinking of those who are not followers of Christ has not changed, unless it might be said their opposition to the truth has become more systematic. The systems that the Bible refers to as the heathen have developed a philosophical counterattack against the gospel that may not have existed in the days of the apostle Paul for the simple reason that the early preaching of the gospel took the heathen world by surprise. What has changed in modern times, and is continuing to change, is the mind set of the so-called Christian world. There are ominous signs that we are being hurled back to a spiritual dark ages. The light of truth seems to be going out among those who are supposed to be the light of the world. But we should not be surprised, because Jesus said that all of this would happen just before He came back the second time. It was prophesied that darkness would cover the earth and gross darkness the people. It was prophesied that there would be many false prophets and false christs, that it would not be easy to know who was who, and that if they were possible the very elect would be deceived.

Friends, we must understand that we are in a war, and the devil intends that you and I become casualties of this war. The war is first and foremost a war for the mind. When the first part of the war is over, those who resist error and take refuge in the truth will be targeted. As a result of all this confusion that, if carried out, would make the hollowness and the corruption of it to happen in Cambodia, Taiwan or somewhere is like a hook that is caught by the Red Guards and the Russian Gulag look like kindergarden. The other day I was talking with a young lady, who has written about some church plans and programs. I told him I believe that we must be intentional to put wording into the plans that we are putting together these days to make sure that the truth is not compromised or compromised in our plans and programs.

He said to me, “Oh, we don’t need to do that, we are taking that for granted.” I understood this by that he was saying truth is automatically built into all of the plans and strategies we make. I am afraid I am not as confident as his that this is true.

Here at the end of the twentieth century, we must take nothing for granted. We have no idea of what is before us, and unless we are intentional about insuring that truth and our message is spelled out in our plans and programs, it is impossible that our plans and programs could actually choke out the very truth they were meant to advance.
Danger of a Golden Rule Gospel

Continued From Page 9

our understanding of the Bible, recognizing that we can learn from others. "I am not trying to quibble, but what is meant by "our understanding of the Bible"? What is going to happen when a majority of members of that particular church don't see things from an orthodox Adventist perspective anymore? "Our" understanding then could become everybody's understanding, and then everybody's understanding could become anybody's understanding.

I repeat, I believe we must take nothing for granted. It would have been much safer if the Adventist church had said, "We seek to share and enhance the understanding of the Bible as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church." But then someone may say again, "But we are taking that for granted."

Again, I must reply. No, not in the nineties. These days in the area of faith and morals, we must take nothing for granted. I have another question about this particular core value. What does it mean when it says that it recognizes we cannot learn from others? It seems to be saying we can learn from other denominations. But, you may be thinking, can't we? Let me ask you a question before I answer. Learn what?

Are we speaking of doctrines and theology here?

I am convinced there is an intentional effort being made in some branches of Adventism ethically to dismantle the doctrines that make us Seventh-day Adventists. If this is true, it would not be a new phenomenon. The devil has always found that the best way to strip the church is to join it. In many places these days he is already exercising voice and vote. We must be on our guard or we could greatly regret it some day.

By now you might be thinking, are you going with all of this? I urge you to keep thinking and you will soon see. I repeat, Jesus has warned us that in the last days many would be deceived. For the deception must take place, it would have to be well veiled and seemingly, on the face of it, true. Remember, the devil doesn't come to the door of our hearts and say that he has some lies he wants to sell us. Truly he comes to the door of our hearts with lies, but they will be wrapped in a skin of truth. For all practical appearances, the devil himself becomes converted. I repeat, we are in a battle for the mind. If we close our eyes, even for a moment, we could be fatally surprised.

I would like to share with you an article I read not long ago. The article is entitled, "Gospel-Free Christianity." I will go over the highlights of it with you; and as I do, I think you will begin to understand better what I am trying to say. Remember, we began by talking about "What Would Jesus Do?" Then we talked about a generic church vision and values statement. Now we are going to add another piece of the puzzle.

The article states that one of the most striking features of post-modern America is the virtual disappearance of Christian conviction. The larger Christian culture is now a "theology-free zone" in which Christian conviction may be tolerated, as long as congregations resemble little more than special interest organizations with pretty buildings and religious entertainment.

Tanya T. Ammerman is a sociologist and researcher at Hartford Seminary. She believes that we are seeing the rise of a new form of Christianity in America. She calls it, "Golden Rule Christianity." Studies show that there is a growing number of both liberals and conservatives who are what might be called Golden Rule Christians. These people do not see Christianity in terms of beliefs and doctrines but simply in terms of a basic moral outlook on life, such as is expressed in the Golden Rule. Golden Rule Christians define their faith in terms of practices, not doctrines. It has been found that this new faith-style may soon be the dominant form of religion among middle-class suburban Americans. That means that the majority of people who go to church these days may be in this category.

Golden Rule Christians still want to keep some connection with classical Christianity. They want their faith to be grounded in the Bible, but they do not want to take it literally. They see Scripture as not having so much to do with doctrine as with choices and practice. Golden Rule Christians believe that the Bible is useful as a tool for making one's own life and the life of others. We must be on our guard or we could greatly regret it some day.

Golden Rule Christians are not interested in developing a system of doctrines. They are more concerned with the development of their personal lives and spirituality. They are concerned with helping others and in making the world a better place to live in. This is a kind of low-key religion. For Golden Rule Christians, the Bible is a place to find interesting stories, but not special and revealed knowledge about the true and living God.

As you might imagine, the secular culture does not mind Golden Rule Christianity. It is not offensive because it makes demands on others in the way of low-key living. The Bible itself is not a part of personal theology. The Bible itself seems to be followed is that they should treat others as they would wish to be treated. Biblical doctrines such as sin and redemption are out. God is our fellow struggler. He is not seen as the Holy One of Israel, the Creator of the universe, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and merciful. Jesus Christ is seen as the great religious teacher who preached and lived the Golden Rule. It is not necessary to believe that He is the pre-existent Son of God, the Messiah promised to Israel, our substitutary Savor.

Or course, in this narrow context there is no need for the Atonement. The main thing is that we should go along and get along and help a few fellow strugglers along the way. When you ask a Golden Rule Christian about their concept of God, they will usually tell you about the God of their own experience, not the God revealed in the Bible. You will often hear them say, my God is this way, or I think that my God wants me to be that way. Their religion is a lived religion. What used to be a part of the Christian life has become the whole. They are not willing to know anything about the supreme God who is revealed in the Bible.

Golden Rule Christianity is simply unmessy Christianity. It is what is left after you remove the gospel. Golden Rule Christianity is popular precisely because it makes few demands and makes few distinctions. On the other hand, authentic Christianity is high-demand and is based upon important values. But these days, more and more churches are willing to offer themselves as safe meeting grounds for Golden Rule Christians, maybe even the Adventist church whose vision and core values I read to you.

You may be thinking, but what does the Golden Rule Christian have to do with a person who is wearing a wrist band that has WWJD stitched into it? WWJD is possibly just another form of Golden Rule Christianity. It could be simply a code of conduct that uses Jesus as a role model. There is nothing wrong with using Jesus as a model, except there have been any number of foolish people down through the ages who we might use as role models for our lives. A person could even have Jesus as a role model and yet reject Him as the Son of God and the Savior of the world. To that person Jesus may just be a good person to patten your life after, like Buddha or Gandhi.

If we are going to talk about what Jesus would do, then let us remember that Jesus preached and served.

h had a message and He had a ministry. But we must never forget that His message was God focused. His ministry was people focused. For many years, some have joked that we were so heavenly minded, we were no earthly good. These days we may have gone to the other extreme. It might be said today that we have become so earthily minded that heaven and the God of heaven are now a concept that has little relevance to our day-to-day lives.

I am more and more convinced that God is playing less and less a role in our church life. We, our, and mine are now a great extent at the center of our focus. We are turning the purpose of our creation on its head. We must never forget that God was not created to serve us, but it is just the other way around—we were created for His glory and to serve Him.

We need a sitting committee meeting the other day. The purpose of this meeting was to study how to establish more churches in a particular region. While listening to the discussion, I began to have some of the thoughts I am sharing with you now. I wrote myself a note in which I asked myself, question, "Is it possible to have a ministry without a message?" I answered myself, "No, it is not possible."

Then I wrote (and I will quote from my note), "The problem is, will the message be meaningful to the God centered? What we call a social gospel is simply a message that has people as its center."

Jesus had both a message and a ministry. His message was God centered and His ministry was people centered. This is the way it must be, because, after all, the purpose of the gospel is not to bring God down to the people but to bring the people back up to where God meant them to be when He created them in the beginning in His likeness and in His image.

These days we are using the word ministry for just about everything. I guess that is OK, but we must be careful or we may discover that an exaggerated emphasis on ministry could make theology and doctrines disappear. This is what I meant when I began by referring to the WWJD fad. There is surely nothing wrong with using Jesus as our model, as long as we have accepted Him as our Lord and Savior first. There is nothing wrong with trying to pattern our lives after His, as long as we realize that without being born again and being forgiven of our sins we will not be able to see the kingdom of heaven, no matter how nice our message is.

The mind-set of the nineties is not about repentance and cleansing. It is about support groups and seminars. It is about "tell me how to do it and I will put it into practice the

...Continued on Page 12
best way that I know how. If I fail, then no matter. After all, Jesus understands.”

The mind-set of the seventies seems to have forgotten that the first and great commandment is that we must love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind. It seems to have forgotten that unless we have done that, the Golden Rule doesn’t mean very much, or if it does, it has just become a motto, like that of another club or a club or one to wear as a braceklet with WWJD stitched on it.

We must not forget that our love for each other must follow and be the result of a supreme commitment to God. Jesus said that to love those who love you is not so special, because even the bad guys do that.

I would be very happy if the trend toward ministry and love and service for each other were an outflowing of a renewed interest in theology and doctrine; but unfortunately it seems more that more ministry and love are being emphasized in place of theology and doctrine.

I would be very happy if the trend toward ministry and love and service for each other were an outflowing of a renewed interest in the Word of God and a commitment to follow it’s commands for our lives; but it seems that while love is being promoted, faithfulness and obedience to the Scripture is being downplayed in many places.

We have clown ministries, puppet ministries, and music ministries. We have ministries for this and ministries for that. But we must not forget that some of the great oppressors of all time began as what we would term in modern language, “outreach ministries.” By that I mean they began by emphasizing caring and helping someone oppressed class of society.

Unless we make God our message, making man our ministry will only be a passing fad and in the end may result in the oppression by the majority of those who disagree - and the strong over the weak; and instead of a church where we come to worship Jesus as Lord, it may well become a place where selfishness actually become institutionalized in the name of ministry.

When Jesus becomes just our role model and the Golden Rule our law of life, what may appear to be the ideal may indeed end up being just the opposite. I am convinced there is an intentional strategy to play down the preaching of absolute truth, the teaching of absolute moral values of behavior, and the teaching of anything that would sound to be definitive from the Word of God.

As I read in the vision and the core values of the Adventist church that I mentioned, references to the specific mission and doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have been replaced with a vision and core values that are generic and which, to a large extent fill the mind set of Jesus as a rule. One model for the Golden Rule as a law of Jesus is to follow the lead of the Lord and Savior and the Ten Commandments as the standard of righteousness. There is no mention of a commitment to preach the unique message that God has given to this church in this generation, which is meant to prepare a living generation to meet a Holy God.

I am not a person who is satisfied with the way things have been. I do not believe that we should not change. On the contrary, I believe that the gospel is about change, and that being ready for the coming of Jesus is the most wonderful change that will have ever been effected in the lives of human beings.

However, I greatly suspect that we are much too narrow and shallow in our thinking. We know that we have to change. We crave change, and yet when the moment comes, when we see the opportunity to change, we feel that we must give up our trust in God. I will admit that when trust comes we must be willing to give up error. Yet what I see happening in more and more places is that we seem to throw out truth to make room for new truth. If we continue to do this, the Holy Spirit will never be able to lead us to the truth.

You know the old saying that we ought to “practice what we preach.” There is no doubt about that. But beware. To practice what we preach does not mean that we should stop preaching and start only practicing. This is the theme and focus of this sermon. We are now into ministry, but ministry will lead us down a dead-end street unless it is firmly rooted in true doctrine and in the true gospel. A ministry that doesn’t begin with a God focus is doomed to lead us astray.

Can you see what has happened? Human nature being what it is, we prefer to do anything and everything as long as it doesn’t require a commitment to Jesus as our Savior and as the Lord of our life. We prefer anything and everything as long as it doesn’t require that we have a Word of God tell us how to live. This is why we are more comfortable with Jesus as our role model and the golden rule as our guideline than we are with confessing our sins and making the Ten Commandments the rule for our lives. Perhaps it is the old righteousness by works thing wrapped in a banner that has the name of Jesus all over it. One must be able to understand that though Jesus may be a role model for our lives, there is nothing within that can bring us anywhere near the model unless we have been born of water and of the Holy Spirit. We must understand that, although the Golden Rule is a wonderful principle, the natural selfish human heart can only be selfish. A selfish person can only help others for selfish reasons. The Golden Rule for a person who has not been born again will sooner or later boil down to the fact that the one who has the god rules. This is why, my friend, David said, “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” This is why Jesus prayed to the Father, “Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth.”

The WWJD fad must be no substitute for sound doctrine. The God of the Golden Rule Christian tends to be the God of their own point of view unless they have found the true God which is revealed only in Scripture.

A vision and core values that are so generic that they could be adopted by any denomination or every denomination are not the vision and values that God is calling upon those who will be alive to meet Him when He comes.

What would Jesus do? That depends on who you are. Is He the Jesus of the Mormons, who say He was once just like you? The Bible warns that in the last days there is not one christ, there are many. It is simply not safe to ask, “What would Jesus do?” unless you are sure that you are talking about the true Jesus; and the only way you can be sure you are talking about the true Jesus is to go to the Word. That is why whenever He was confronted with a situation that meant a serious decision, Jesus the true Jesus—would say, “It is written.” The sacred Scriptures were His safety, and they are ours too.

Faith on the Line

It is simply not safe to ask, “What would Jesus do?” unless you are sure that you are talking about the true Jesus; and the only way you can be sure you are talking about the true Jesus is to go to the Word. That is why whenever He was confronted with a situation that meant a serious decision, Jesus—the true Jesus—would say, “It is written.” The sacred Scriptures were His safety, and they are ours too.

TRANSFORMING PRAYER

By Richard O’Neill

The theme and the underlying premise on which this book is based is that the first purpose of prayer is not to get but rather to be. You will see the importance of putting first things first in your prayers and of seeking first the kingdom of heaven and His righteousness. “But what other lodges, or material needs?” Don’t worry; our Lord has promised that if we will be more concerned about being than about getting, all the other things we have tended to worry about for so long will be added unto us! 134 pp $ 16.00 US or $25.00 CDN + 15% S/H CDN Residents add 7% GST
Where in the World is... Dr. Veith!

The year 2002 has been a busy one for Dr. & Mrs. Veith. They started their year with a 2-month-long evangelistic series and a camp meeting in South Africa and two series of evangelistic meetings in Spain and Mallorca. In April & May, Dr. Veith lectured in USA, holding an evangelistic crusade in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Fort Worth, Texas. From there, Dr. & Mrs. Veith travelled to Vancouver, Canada for a brief stay presenting some updated lectures at the Westminster SDA Church and a health seminar at the Radisson Hotel in Burnaby, BC. They then flew to Australia to hold meetings in Melbourne and Sydney. Their next stop was Norway—but first they had to return to the United States to attend the Faith and Science Conference in Utah where Dr. Veith participated in several discussions on the validity of the creation theory in light of science and the impact this has on our understanding of the Bible. After a week in Utah, they reached their final destination for the year—Skotsoy, Norway at the European Bible Institute, where Dr. Veith is holding another series of evangelistic meetings, as well as instructing approximately 35 eager young students in evangelism for the next three months—equipping them to continue similar evangelistic crusades around the world. Needless to say, the year has been a busy one, but God has blessed in every location, and Dr. Veith deserve a much needed rest. But, he won’t be getting a very long one— for he begins what hopefully will be his final year at the University of the Western Cape in January of 2003! During this time, Dr. Veith will also be busy preparing some new books on some very important subjects! Please continue to pray for Dr. Veith and the heavy responsibilities he faces at the university and through his continued work in evangelism.

Our Mission is:

1. To share the gospel in the context of the Three Angels' Messages
2. To show the harmony between science and the Bible with special reference to our Creator God
3. To share the Health Message (the right arm of the Third Angel's Message)
4. To place the message in the context of our day with special emphasis on the deceptions which would detract from these messages
5. To reach out to intellectuals, atheists, and the secular world as well as strengthening and confirming the church in the pillars of our faith and certainty of the prophetic Word
6. To introduce people to the remnant church of God who keep the commandments of God and who hold to the testimony of Jesus Christ.

If you wish to support this ministry, and would like to see the three angels' message disseminated around the world in the form of seminars, lectures, and the Internet, please consider a donation to Amazing Discoveries so that we are enabled to carry out this important work.

Yes! I want to be a part of Amazing Discoveries' end-time efforts!

We invite you to become a regular supporter!

Send your cheque or money order to:

AMAZING DISCOVERIES
PO Box 189
7101C - 120th St
Delta, BC V4E 2A9
Canada

Thank you so much!

From August 23-29, 2002, a selection of 84 Seventh-day Adventist theologians, scientists, and church leaders met together in Ogden, Utah for the first ever Faith and Science Conference. The Conference was the first in a series to be held between 2002 and 2004 concluding in a second international conference in 2004. Regional meetings will continue between now and the concluding session to facilitate "dialogue on questions of science and theology that impact Adventist understanding of the Biblical account of the origin of earth and life... The initial proposal stated that the Church's understanding of origins affects and informs other dimensions of its life. Therefore there is wisdom and value in the Church exploring the theological and scientific implications of various views of Genesis 1:1-11" (Adventist Review Oct 2002)

It seems that "the rapid advances in scientific knowledge that are generally framed within certain assumptions about origins" need to be reconciled with the "fundamental belief in regard to creation". Several scholarly establishments in the church were represented, including the Geoscience Research Institute, the Biblical Research Institute, as well as Lorna Linda University, La Sierra University, and Andrews University. Among the group were also church leaders, theologians, and researchers. "According to printed material from the conference, the Adventist view of life and our world is in direct tension with the modern science worldview that views existence on the basis of wholly natural and random events over long ages." (ibid) This Adventist view (or perhaps it should be better called the Biblical view) can pose a problem to scientists and researchers even in Adventist circles and, as Jan Paulsen said, "these issues are there in the church". "The seriousness and breadth of differences concerning questions of origin that are present in the Seventh-day Adventist community" was recognized at the Conference, and "several key issues of faith-science interface that either affirm or challenge the Seventh-day Adventist (Biblical) understanding of origins" were identified. These various views and positions were explored with respect to integrating the information of science with Scripture." (ibid)

In 2004, another international conference will meet and prepare a report summarizing the next three years' conversations to be submitted to the administration of the world church. The outcome should be interesting.
NEW ITEMS AVAILABLE

THE LOST PAGES OF HISTORY - Part 1
By LLT Productions
Featuring beautiful location photography, original art and interviews with experts, The Lost Pages of History is a gripping documentary that meets the high production standards of network television. It traces the Sabbath through the lives of patriarchs and prophets, priests and apostles - then through ages of conflict and trial to its ultimate victory. It brings to light forgotten heroes - Celtic saints like Patrick, Nestorian missionaries, Waldensian colporters, Puritan reformers - who preserved the Sabbath in places like Africa, Armenia, the British Isles, Ethiopia, India, Italy, and Syria. Thoroughly documented, drawing from history, ancient literature, archaeology, physics and theology. It may well be the definitive video treatment of the Sabbath truth. Available in English and Spanish.

THE LOST PAGES OF HISTORY - Part 2
From the time of Jesus till the 4th Century - 47 min.
Hosted by Hal Holbrook. Did you know that church leaders conspired to kill Jesus Christ because He broke their Sabbath rules? That early Christians continued to keep Saturday for hundreds of years except for those in Alexandria, Egypt, and Rome, Italy? Part 2 of The Seventh Day exposes the political and religious intrigue behind the Saturday - Sunday controversy in the early Christian Church. Hal Holbrook, in his intimate and captivating style weaves little known historical data and expert testimony into a tapestry of compelling truth. Available in English and Spanish.

THE GENESIS CONFLICT EXPANDED 2nd Edition
A powerful exposé of the truth concerning the evolution-creation question, the origin of life, archaeology and the validity of the Bible and the creation account. Enjoy the clear and logical presentation of these popular and vital issues. Enlarged and enhanced with two full chapters of photos.

$19.99 US or $28.99 CDN
+ 12% Shipping & Handling (min. charge applies)
CDN Residents add 7% GST

THE TWO BABYLONs
By the late Rev. Alexander Hislop
(323 pages) Where did the practices and beliefs of Roman Catholicism come from? In this scholarly classic, first published over eighty years ago, Alexander Hislop reveals that many Roman Catholic teachings did not originate with Christ or the Bible, but were adopted from ancient pagan Babylonian religion, and given Christian names. This historically-accurate book provides a fascinating in-depth examination of the shocking similarities between the practices of ancient Babylonian religion and those of today's Roman Catholic church. See how a religion that was started by Nimrod and his wife spread to various regions, taking on different names, but keeping the same pagan rituals and trappings. These same rituals embody the Catholic church of today.

$14.95 US or $22.00 CDN
+ 12% Shipping & Handling (min. charge applies)
CDN Residents add 7% GST

$24.95 US or $35.00 CDN each
+ 12% Shipping & Handling (min. charge applies)
CDN Residents add 7% GST
+ PST where applicable

AMAZING DISCOVERIES UPDATE

On August 23 & 24, 2002, Amazing Discoveries held a weekend revival series at the Westminster SDA Church with Pastor Richard O’Fill. The weekend consisted of sermons on several thought-provoking subjects. Pastor Richard O’Fill is the Revivalist for the Florida Conference in Orlando, Florida. During his more than 39 years of ministry, he has served in Southern Asia, and Latin America, as well as North America. Pastor O’Fill believes that a Holy God, through the Holy Spirit, is developing a holy people for the soon return of Jesus Christ and his prophetic works were a great blessing to those who attended. His talks included some thoughts on the twentieth century home, Are Adventists the Only Real Christians?, the secret of answered prayer, and much more. The audio tapes of the series, as well as his book, Transforming Prayer, are available through Amazing Discoveries. Pastor O’Fill’s personal website, www.revivalsseries.org - includes a large number of excellent sermons and audio clips, covering a wide variety of topics including contemporary Christian worship, family life, and personal relationship with Jesus. It is an uplifting place to visit!

We, at Amazing Discoveries, praise God that He is in control of the work of spreading the gospel through the three angel’s messages as presented in Dr. Veith’s seminars. Over the last several months, Dr. Veith’s book Truth Matters has been published in the German language, and his book The Genesis Conflict has been published in Spanish! In addition, Dr. Veith’s second edition of The Genesis Conflict is, as we speak, off the press and will be available shortly in English. Translators are already hard at work to translate the 2nd edition of Truth Matters and this new edition of The Genesis Conflict in Spanish and German, and the website and books are also being translated into French! We praise God when champions are few - this will be our test. At this time, we must for the opening of doors to make this possible - that as many people may have access to the final message of the three angels' even in their native languages. We have also been made aware that Dr. Veith’s video series is being translated into Russian, Norwegian, and other languages, in addition to the already available German and Afrikans. It can only be God's hand that has caused the message to become so widespread, and we thank Him for His leading. We thank you for your continued prayers and generous donations! Below are some comments received via our updated website which now contains a message board, a guest book, several audio clips, new articles, updated navigation, and a continuous on-line evangelistic series. Please visit us often at: www.amazindiscoveries.org

Dr. Veith, I just want to thank you for providing refreshing and stimulating resources for Christians. I was introduced to your teachings years ago in Vancouver, and have found your products to be insightful and without ado, the best things I’ve read since E.G. White’s books. Thank you for showing people our worship can be intelligent, and not just purely an emotional exercise. These videos are exactly what I needed my family need to stay focused. A sincere thank you, and may God continue to use you and bless you. I look forward to one day meeting you - perhaps in heaven - SW

I simply love the ABC videos I bought from you. They make me think and really grow spiritually... JG

Tremendous message! So well documented and put together! I have ordered the series of 5 videos, printed out your reports on the various topics, and am planning on sharing about hosting you in our church or in nearby venue upon. Thanks for your commitment and powerful testimony and message! CK

I am researching health articles for an upcoming seminar at my church, and was led by the Holy Spirit to your website. Thank you for such excellent articles, I now feel more confident in presenting the material I have been preparing. God bless your ministry. MM
The New Year
by Ellen G. White
This article is taken from the Review & Herald, December 16, 1884

Another year has almost passed into eternity; [2002] is almost dead; [2003] will soon be here. Let us review the record of the year that is soon to pass. What advancement have we made in Christian experience? Our work--we have so done it that it will bear the inspection of the Master, who has given to every man work according to his several ability? Will it be consumed as hay, wood, and stubble; but it will be laying on the foundation-stone, gold, silver, and precious stones--works that are perishable, but which will stand the fires of the last day.

Is our earthly, temporal work done with a thoroughness, a fidelity, that will bear scrutiny? Are there those whom we have wronged who will testify against us in the day of God? If so, the record has passed up to heaven, and we shall meet it again. We are to work for the great Taskmasters eye, whether our painstaking efforts are seen and appreciated by men or not. No man, woman, nor child can acceptably serve God with negligence, haphazard, sham work, whether it be secular or religious service.

The true Christian will have an eye single to the glory of God in all things, encouraging His purposes and strengthening His principles with this thought, "I do this by the grace of God." The customs and maxims of the world are not to be our criterion, unless by the word of God we can prove them to be right. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." It is not the greatness or insignificance of an action that makes it honest or dishonest. God requires that in all our transactions we pursue the straight line of duty.

If we have but little time, let us improve that little earnestly. The Bible assures us that we are in the great day of atonement. The typical day of atonement was a day when all Israel afflicted their souls before God, confessed their sins, and came before the Lord with contrition of soul, remorse for their sins, genuine repentance, and living faith in the atoning sacrifice.

Settling Debt

If all who profess to be servants of Christ are faithful in that which is least, they will be faithful in much. If there are debts yet unpaid, make settlement or, if you have run up accounts at the provision store or with the dry goods merchant, settle them if you possibly can. If you cannot, go to those to whom you are indebted, and frankly tell them the impossibility of meeting these demands; renew your note, and assure them you will cancel the debt as soon as you can. Then deny yourselves of everything you can do without, and be very economical in your expenditures, until your promises are fulfilled.

Do not indulge yourselves in the use of other men's money for the sake of gratifying appetite or love of display; you may thus remove a stumbling-block whereby many were hindered from believing the truth; and your good will not be evil spoken of. Will not our brethren make diligent efforts to correct this slack, haphazard way of doing business? The old year is fast passing; it is nearly gone. Make the most of the few days remaining.

Settling Old Quarrels

The Chinese New Year commences in February, and lasts one week. They have a custom of settling all quarrels between themselves and all outstanding debts; and if there are any who are unable to pay their debts, they are forgiven them. Thus the new year is commenced with all difficulties and accounts settled. This is a heathen custom that the Christian world would do well to imitate. God's law requires all this of us, and more--we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. That is, we are to deal with our associates as we would wish them to deal with us. If we wish to act fairly and justly toward us, then we should act fairly and justly toward them. We are simply to do as we would be done by. ...

If there have been difficulties brethren and sisters--if envy, malice, bitterness, evil surmising, have existed, come to the Church person, and in love, with your best efforts, seek to make peace with brother and sister, and your own soul.

Let the remnant of this year be improved in destroying every fiber of the root of bitterness, burying them in the grave with the old year. Begin the new year with more tender regard, with deeper love, for every member of the Lord's family. Press together, "United, we stand; divided, we fall." Take higher, nobler stand than you ever have before taken for the Lord! Many appear to be steadfast in the truth, firm, decided on every point of our faith; yet there is a great lack in them,--the tenderness and love which the great character of the great Pattern. If a brother errs from the truth, if he falls into temptation, they make no effort to restore him in meekness, considering themselves lest they also be tempted. They seem to regard it as their special work to climb upon the judgment seat and condemn and disfellowship. They do not obey God's word, which says, "Ye which are spiritual, restore such one in the spirit of meekness." The spirit of this passage is altogether too rare in our churches. It is the lack of it that shuts out the Spirit of God from them, from the church. Shall we not forthwith practice the Bible plan of restoring erring ones in the spirit of meekness? Shall we not have the spirit of Jesus, and work as He worked?

Keep back that disposition to crowd out a brother, even if you think him guilty, even if he has hindered your work by manifesting a spirit of independence and selfishness. Remember that he is God's property. Err always on the side of mercy and tenderness. Treat with respect and deference even your most bitter enemies, who would injure you if they could. Let not a word escape your lips that would give them opportunity to justify their course in the least degree. Give no occasion to any man to blaspheme the name of God or speak disrespectfully of our faith for anything you have done. We need to be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

The old year is in its death struggle; let all wrath, malice, and bitterness die with it. Through hearty confession, let your sins go beforehand to judgment. De- vote the remaining moments of the swift passing year to humiliation of self rather than to harrying your brethren.

With the new year, commence the work of lifting them up,--commence it even in the waning moments of the old year. Go to work anew, brethren and sisters,--go to work earnestly, unselfishly, lovingly, striving to lift up the hands that hang down, to strengthen the feeble knees, remove the heavy burdens from every soul.

Let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke. Bring to your homes the poor that are cast out. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, the glory of the Lord shall be thy rewarer. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and the Lord shall say, Here am I. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shalt thou light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." Isaiah 58:6-11

A Work of Confession

Brethren in every church, will you follow the conditions God has specified, and prove the Lord, and see if He will fulfill His promises? I believe He will. I have not the shadow of a doubt of it. He will do just as He has said He would, and the exceedingly bountiful promises of rich blessings will be realized if we but comply with the conditions. Your heads may be hard and sound, but let not this hardness steel into your hearts. If you will fall on the Rock and be broken, then your self-righteousness will no longer exist. There will be instead soft, impressionable hearts, kind, tender, true hearts, like that of Jesus, who was ever touched with human woe. You will weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn. Try it, brethren; God's way is always best. You have tried your own...
should have been transformed to lay their eggs in the bowels and flesh of other sensitive beings; that some animals should live by and delight in cruelty; that animals should be led away by false instincts; that annually there should be an incalculable waste of the pollen, eggs and immature beings..."

Charles Darwin was thus swayed to reject the hand of God in nature and to accept the naturalistic approach, but his conjectures and conclusions were based on the assumption that the present biological interactions apparent in nature, must have existed since the inception of life. This is not necessarily true, and we could ask the question: Does the evidence point to decay with elements of perfection and design serving as reminders of a once perfect situation, or does the evidence point to past imperfection and progress toward greater and greater perfection? The fossil record already reveals greater diversity in the past than in the present, and life also exploded on the scene in what has been termed the Cambrian explosion. These two factors alone point in the exact opposite direction to what naturalistic evolution would propose and they are consistent with the creation account. In coming issues, let us examine some of the issues involved.

...to be continued in Winter 2003 issue. To order your copy or to renew your subscription, contact Amazing Discoveries

El Conflicto Del Génesis
Dr. Walter J. Veith
First Edition Now Available in Spanish!
A powerful exposé of the truth concerning the evolution-creation question, the origin of life, archaeology and the validity of the Bible, and scientific and environmental concerns affecting our planet. You will enjoy the clear and logical evidence presented showing that the Bible truths of creation are not only believable but can also be scientifically proven. Includes 30 photos. $9.95

OUR CHURCH STANDARDS Shall We Abandon or Enforce Them?
by Carlyle B. Haynes

[Editor's Note: This article appearing in the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, April 26, 1934, was a sermon preached at the Battle Creek Tabernacle on March 31, 1934. As you read it, you will be surprised at how current it sounds. Despite its age, it merits careful consideration.]

A few weeks ago, out of a distressed and burdened heart, I spoke to you from this pulpit on the subject of church standards, and raised the question as to whether the time had come for this denomination to alter its platform and abandon its standards. At that time I took occasion to point out that the rising tide of worldly-mindedness observable among us called for a serious decision upon the part of the church leaders, either to maintain and enforce the old, established standards of the faith, or to cast them aside altogether. And I proposed a set of resolutions dealing with the peculiar evil of church pages, shows, and acted representations—resolutions which the Tabernacle executive board later adopted with unanimity, and which, therefore, embody the accepted policy of this church today.

It is a source of peculiar gratification to me to observe how wholeheartedly the various activities of the Tabernacle church have endeavored to follow the counsel contained in this policy. From Battle Creek Academy, including both teachers and students, earnest inquiry has been made as to how to bring all activities into compliance with this policy. From the various activities of the Tabernacle, Missionary Volunteers, Senior and Junior, the Sabbath school, the musical organizations, and the women's organizations, the same inquiries have been made and the same purpose has been made evident. This is indeed heartening.

On the publication of the sermon preached here, in the columns of our widely circulated church paper, the REVIEW AND HERALD, a most astonishing response has come, that has nearly overwhelmed me. From north and south and east and west in North America and from many foreign fields, letters have come to me which disclose a widespread, and by me unsuspected, but nevertheless most positive and pronounced, conviction on the part of the writers that the time has fully come for a restoration of a new pledge of loyalty to the old-time ideals, standards, and teaching of this closing message of the gospel. This, too, is wonderfully heartening. Many of these correspondents pointed out that while they deplored these tendencies toward worldly practices which they observed coming in among us, they nevertheless felt a sense of helplessness and timidity in opposing them, fearing they would be counted "old fogies," and that they would be hopelessly outnumbered and thus unable to protect the temple.

The impression seems to prevail with some devoted souls that the tendency has gone too far to be checked, that the dikes have given way, and there is no use now to resist. It is this particular phase of the matter which I address myself today. I do not think this position is warranted. I am no pessimist regarding this message and movement God has given us. The old standards are not lost. The church of Christ is not apostate. The threefold message has not become Babylon. The world is not in the church to such an extent that the future is hopeless. There is a glorious triumph just before us. This is not time for despair. Rather, this is a time when God's loyal, faithful people, who recognize and accept the essential, basic teachings and standards of this message, should speak forth vigorously their convictions, and support every effort in the right direction.

There is no people on earth so responsive to right and spiritual leadership, so ready to follow right principles, as this people. They are going through to the kingdom.

A LESSON FROM THE PAST

There has come to me, as I have further considered the whole situation, a desire to analyze and understand it more clearly. So I have turned to the word of God, and endeavored to bring the light of former experience to bear upon our present condition. And out of this study I bring to you the text of this morning's sermon, Ezekiel 9:3-6:

The glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whitherupon He was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be in the midst thereof. And to the other He said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maidens, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark: and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancients men which were before the house.

The circumstances which form the setting for this passage are these: Ezekiel was among the captives in Babylon. As he was sitting in his house, with the elders of Judah about him, the hand of the Lord fell upon him. Out of an appearance of fire, a hand was stretched forth. It took the prophet by a lock of his head, and the Spirit lifted him up between earth and heaven, and brought him in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the inner court of the temple. Then God displayed to him in successive scenes the iniquity of His people, their departure from right and holy practices, their abandonment of the religion of God. Ezekiel was carried forward through the different parts of the temple and of the city to witness the increasing abominations committed by various classes of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The whole city was filled with iniquity. It had not stopped in the city. It was engulfing even the sanctuary of God. This holy place was desecrated by the polluting devices of wicked men. Seventy of the ancestors of the house of Israel, each swinging a censer, offered a thick cloud of incense to every form of creeping things, abominable beasts, and idols, which were portrayed upon the wall, while they said, "The Lord seeth us not; and the Lord hath forsaken the earth." Women were engaged in all the superstitions of their false worship. Even between the porch and the altar of the temple, men stood with their backs to the temple, and worshipped the sun toward the east.

GOD'S ESTIMATE OF SIN

Looking upon these varied scenes of guilt, Ezekiel heard the voice of the Lord saying: "Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke Me to anger: and lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in fury: Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry inMine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them. Ezekiel 8:17,18"

At once the fulfillment of this solemn denunciation was shown the prophet. The heavenly beings in charge of the city closed in, each with his destroying weapon in his hand. Six others came from the way of the high gate, toward the north, and these, too, each had a slaughter weapon in his hand. One man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side. These went in and stood by the brazen altar.

The glory of the God of Israel was gone up from cherubim to the threshold of the house. The Lord forsook a sanctuary which had been so polluted by man's transgression, and stood at the door of the temple, to direct the work of separation and partition among the people, which it was now determined to accomplish. His wrath was about to be

...Continued from Page 4
Our Church Standards  
...Continued From Page 23
visited upon them. He was about to take vengeance for the iniquities of men, to deal with them in His fury, for all the sins of the whole world, as well as for the hardiness and impertinence of their hearts.

There remained some among God’s people, however, who had not forsaken or provoked Him. As in the time of Elijah, so there was a remnant who had not been influenced by the apostasy from God. They had retained their loyalty to Him. They had not engaged in these abominations. These must be preserved from the destruction which was coming; they must not go down in the general ruin. They had displayed their zeal for God’s honor, and He would now display His power for their safety.

THE MARK OF LOYALTY
And so to the man clothed in linen, with the writer’s inkhorn, the Lord said: “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the forehead of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.” So were the servants of God distinguished.

They had done all they could to maintain God’s authority, to teach God’s way, to uphold God’s standards; and when all they could do was not sufficient to stem the tide of apostasy, still they sighed and cried over the abominations which they could not prevent. They did not go with the crowds. They did not compromise. Tears of sorrow filled their eyes because men kept not the divine law. These souls wept in secret places when men would not hear. And God hearkened and heard.

Their witnessing was not in vain. A book of remembrance was kept for those who feared the Lord, those who thought upon His name. (Mal 3:16) Now that sudden destruction was decreed upon the faithless apostates, these faithful servants of God were to be preserved. As in Egypt the Israelites were distinguished by the blood on the doorposts, and thus escaped the destroying angel, so these were now marked by divine appointment, that they might escape the evil to come.

The destruction then began at the sanctuary of God, with the ancient men who had engaged in these abominations. The destroying angels went through the city, searching out all who had acted on the conviction that “the Lord seeth not; the Lord has forsaken the earth;” and had fallen away into corrupt practices. None were spared. No pity was shown. Old and young, maid and little children, and women were smitten. No place, no circumstances, were a protection for impenitent guilt. Only those upon whom God’s mark were delivered.

THIS MOVEMENT OF GOD
These things, “written aforesay,” were written for our admonition. They have lessons of guidance, of courage, of comfort, for us. May the Lord, the Spirit, make us wise in their consideration, and faithful in their improvement for ourselves. God has given this people their teachings. He has given them their standards. He had placed before them their objectives. He has assigned them their work. He has given them His Spirit for the finishing of their task. And He has given them special equipment in the varied gifts of His Spirit for the carrying forward of His message.

This movement is God’s movement. This denominational organization belongs to Him. He brought it into existence. He commissioned it. It has a divine call. It is doing a divine work. It has not apostatized. It is going through to the kingdom. Men who lead it may and do make mistakes. But its real Leader is the real Leader. The head of this movement is God Himself. After years of service in this work both at home and abroad and in various capacities, during which I have seen the weaknesses and sins of men as they have affected the work of God, and seen these men either corrupted or set aside, a profound conviction has been created in my soul, which is constantly deepening, namely, that the God of heaven, the Creator of the universe, the Upholder of all things, is in charge of the work of this message, and is carrying it out to certain victory by the truth, dear friends. A glorious triumph is just ahead.

This conviction, however, does not blind me to the very obvious fact that practices which formerly were forbidden have made their appearance among our churches. Influences which corrupt and defile make themselves felt among us. Tendencies which are altogether worldly are becoming too pronounced. Standards are being lowered. Attitudes and relationships are being changed. Some of our people are inclined to look at things with different eyes than they did a quarter of a century ago. A tide of worldliness is threatening the church. Some are fearful it will overwhelm us, that it has already gone so far that it is useless to resist it. They are wrong. We recognize the evil, we deplore the drift, we acknowledge the danger, we sigh and cry for the abominations. But I assure you they will not sweep it away. God is still in charge of affairs. He has not been set aside, nor has He relinquished His control. He and His truth will yet triumph.

The time has come, however, fully come, for every devoted, faithful, single-hearted follower of God, and especially those who recognize and properly estimate the dangers of the time, to follow the leadership of lowered standards, to take a positive stand in opposition, to any further lowering of our standards, and a positive determination to lift them back where they ought to be where God would have them.

A comprehensive survey of this tide of worldliness against which we must set our faces is not possible within the limits of this sermon. It is possible, however, to point out some tendencies and influences, and direct attention to the principles which they undermine.

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD
This message of truth from God is sent into the world because it contains, and is designed to give, a proclamation of the nearness of the coming of our Lord, and to prepare a people to meet Him in peace and safety. To do this it makes a separation between this people and the world. This message teaches simplicity, plainness, meekness, humility in life, in character, in conduct, in habits, in dress, in eating, in drinking, in recreation, in everything pertaining to life and godliness. The people who give this message to the world are a plain, simple people, in correspondence with the messages they give. All their practices, all their proceedings, are, of course, to be simple and plain. All going after of the world, all following of the fashions of the world, whether in dress, in food, in amusement, in church procedure, in music, in education, in medical practice, in reading, or in any other direction, is offering strange fire to God. God has His own methods for carrying forward His work. We do not need to adopt human methods. He has His own standards for His people. To adopt worldly standards is to turn our back upon Him.

It is inevitable that there should be a struggle between divine influences and material and human standards, in carrying forward the work. It has always been so. The devil is not dead, and he is more active now than ever. He does not propose to have God’s work triumph without a supreme challenge and conflict. But it will triumph, nevertheless. Do not ever lose your faith in that.

The drift worldward is almost imperceptible while in progress. But comparing its effects over a period of years brings out the difference it makes. Just as we compare church standards now with those of a former generation, we are enabled to discern how far the drift has carried us. Borderlines between the world and us seem to be rapidly disappearing. They will disappear altogether unless we plainly mark them again.

Some of our people have become careless about Sabbath observance. Perhaps some are un instructed. I cannot find any present hour when it is [aud TV?] is so during Sabbath hours, secular papers are read, business is talked if it is not transacted, pleasure rides are taken, social engagements are arranged for and sometimes consummated, many entirely unnecessary household duties are performed, and altogether there is a sad departure from the earlier faithfulness and devotion and loyalty to God’s holy command. These things should be changed. The Sabbath is God’s day. All the hours belong to Him. He has prescribed how they are to be used. There is a wonderful renewal of strength and uplifting of the spirit of religious service in using them as He has appointed.

In our home, our minds are fixed that the day shall be God’s. We will not read secular papers, no matter how important and world-shattering the news may be. The radio [and TV] is quiet during all its sacred hours. No entrance is left here for Satan to take our minds from God and heavenly matters. But it is God’s day, and He shall have it.

The artistry and imagination and enjoyment of the work of God’s greatest musicians must not encroach on this holy time. No announcement, no message, no entertainment, no news the world has to give, is important enough to be allowed to interfere with, or interrupt, or affect, or cancel the weekly appointment the God of heaven has with His waiting and struggling people on earth.

Turn off your radios [and TV], dear friends, on God’s holy day. Keep them off during the sacred hours. Put away your secular papers. Let this day be wholly God’s. Prepare for the Sabbath on the day before. Guard your lips from speaking your own words. Guard your feet from going your own ways. Guard your mind from finding its own pleasure. Guard your heart from departure from God and the things of God. Do not forget the ‘holy of the Lord, honorable,’ and you will find it a wonderful bulwark of strength, a restorer of spiritual life, a renewed vigor and faith. It was intended to do far more for us than we are permitting it to do. We are losing much by our carelessness.

PLAINNESS AND SIMPLICITY IN DRESS
Simplicity and plainness in dress are not so noticeable among us today as they were years ago. I am putting it mildly, as you all know. As I look over the twelve hundred people who are here today, well, to discern the differences between this and any other congregation requires a close and prolonged search. We have become careless regarding our standards of dress. Personal adornment is quite conspicu-
Our Church Standards

...Continued From Page 25

ous. Necklaces are in evidence. Rings are quite plentiful; chains and bracelets are not unknown. All of this is a lowering of standards. We profess to be a people who follow the instruction of the Bible, and refrain from the wearing of gold and jewels for display. I plead with you to heed God's command, "Put off thy ornaments from thee." Ex. 33:5

This matter of dress, however, affects far more than ornamentation. A marked characteristic of this time is immovable respect for the person, a display of physical charms, an accentuation of the most bodily part which is calculated to create—what shall I say? Admiration?—On the part of the beholder. O dear friends, if the desire to create admiration in this matter stopped with admiration, it would be going too far. But it is more than that. I do not need to tell you. Your flesh is as my flesh, your impulses and cravings inherent in fallen human nature are not unknown to you. No one can dress in such a way as to call attention to and accentuate the sensual, the fleshly, and then look with apparent innocence into my eyes and tell me he does not know what he is doing. No one is as dumb as that. He is not degrading and encouraging miniagerizing to the earthly, the passionate, the sensual, the lower nature. And the masculinity of the pronoun I use need not be considered as limiting my application to one sex.

O people of the church of God, let us return in prac-
tice to the newness of the world and chastity and purity and sweet sim-
plity were more than words, and carry on in our lives what the principles of the gospel demand—separation from the world and its fashions, abandonment of its evil practices, an entire following of our Lord in all matters pertaining to life and godliness and our walk as Christians among men.

THE QUESTION OF DIVORCE

Time was when we looked with uneasiness upon a divorced person. That has changed. Divorce has become common. It is all about us. Indeed, it is decidedly among us. And we display our newly acquired breadth of mind and modernity by smiling indulgently about it. And we indifferently put divorced persons into places of prominence and influence in church work thus endorsing them as models for our members, especially our youth. I do not mean to imply that a divorced person is thereby disqualified for church work. That is not true. That would be an injustice to an innocent party. We have no right to receive a person who has failed and gone astray. There is no question here regarding God's acceptance of a divorced person into fellowship with Himself, whether that person be the sinner or the innocent. But the participant in a divorce should realize that any prominence given him by the church is bound to make him a target for criticism. And the church itself suffers in reputation and standing as well as himself.

VAINGLORIOUS DISPLAY

Let me return to the principle of simplicity and plain-

ness, and apply it now to our proceedings as well as to our dress and conduct. I notice that when we have social gatherings, dinners, banquets, entertainments, celebrations the tendency is to be very elaborate and extravagant. Simple pleasures, modest expenditure, reasonable entertainment, normal recreation, these belong to a former time. They no longer are sufficient. Everything must be done to excess. It must surpass everything of the kind attempted before. Simplicity and plainness are too tame. There is no thrill in them. The unusual, the new, the exciting, the risky, the daring, the thrilling, the truly magnificent, these are what we must have today in the practice of some.

We see this in many things connected with the church. It flowers into its most extravagant fruitage and positive silliness in weddings and graduation exercises. But it touches every other thing—musical programs, thirteenth Sabbath exercises, holiday gatherings, and every social event. I have seen people work themselves to the point of complete exhaustion, financially as well as nervously, to put on a bigger, better, and more elaborate wedding than anything known before, until it ceased to be a sacred, solemn, divine ordinance, and became only a gaudy, cheap tinsel show. And it does not stop even at funerals. I have seen people strive to make a funeral service into a grand display, until it ceased to be a simple, dignified tribute of honor and respect to the dead and the exaltation of the word of God and became only a means to attract attention to the living.

OUR SCHOOLS

The thing affects our schools as well. I grow with me every time graduation time comes, when I am compelled to witness the display, the extravagance, the pageantry, the pomposity connected with these exercises. My growing struggles with mirth as I watch the class striving to master the intricacies of the ridiculous "goose step" which has become as much a part of these affairs as the granting of diplomas. It settles into genuine groaning again as I realize how much heartache, jealousy, envy, hard feelings, anxiety, and perplexity have been experienced by parents in order to make God glorified this show, with its special thesis, with its ribbons for flower, and gifts, and class pins, and photographs, and class "Anual," and social gatherings. And my groaning is altogether unalloyed when I consider how wide a departure all this is from what this denomination and message stand for. We teach our children that this message is essentially one of simplicity and plainness and meekness and humility, and then we permit them to go contrary to all the message stands for, by allowing these elaborate affairs in our churches and schools.

I appeal to you, dear friends, let us get back to our original standards, and set our faces against this whole world. When we plan for weddings, let us make them simple, dignified, godly, impressively beautiful of God, leaving off all of man-made embellishments. When we plan for funerals, let them be occasions when the word of God can impress its eternal truths upon saddened and susceptible hearts. When we plan for graduation exercises, let them be for the glorification of the divine, not the human. And in all our social activities, I appeal for arrangements and proceedings which will build us up as men and women of God.

WORLDLY PLEASURES

I must direct attention to one more thing. Carelessness has come in among us with reference to card playing, theater-going (movies), and dancing. I do not mean, of course, that any considerable number of our members are engaging in these questionable and forbidden things. There are those, however, who are. "Bridge" and other card games, but especially "bridge," are by some looked upon as the only possible method by which they seek to entertain socially with their non-Adventist friends. As Adventists, they do not play in their own homes; but when they mingle among non-Adventists, they play. And they argue that they do this to retain their influence with their friends. I raise the question, Influence—in what direction?

It seems to be a rather common idea among Christians who mingle socially with those outside the church fold, that they gain added influence over their unbelieving friends by conforming to worldly customs. They claim they do it to impress their friends that religion need not be "bigoted," "tarrow," "strait-laced."
Our Church Standards
...Continued From Page 27

His way, for His church. And when they can do nothing more by active effort, they still mourn over evils they cannot cure.

They neither feel nor profess indifference to the conduct and condition of their brethren. Being jealous for the honor of God, happy in the acceptance of a Savior, knowing the comforts of the Holy Spirit, believing in the triumph of the message and the doom of the sinner, they long to the end of life for the salvation of the erring, and they sigh and cry to God while they live above a condition in which they have no participation.

Such people God marks as His own. He takes particular care that they shall be saved from the coming destruction. And when the slaughter weapons begin their dread work, these are saved. “Go through and smite,” rings the command, “but come not near any man upon whom is the mark.”

THE RAPIDLY APPROACHING END

Dear friends, it will not be very long before the destroying angels are ordered to do their terrible work. There are daily developments all about us which make it absolutely certain that we are rapidly nearing that dread day when the image of the beast, having received life, will speak, and issue its orders for branding with the mark of the beast and for death to those who refuse. Blind indeed must be the eyes of the Bible student who cannot discern in the present economic confusion and the wild experimentation which is made to reduce it to order, all the elements of fulfillment of the apocalyptic prophecy. Practically every product of union labor now has its mark upon it. Boots and shoes, clothing, newspapers, even bread, are all labeled. Every secret society has its mark, password, grip, and badge. The whole tendency of our time is combination. It is demanded by religion, by politics, by capital, by labor, by government. Everything is working together to put the world under the domination of the beast and his image, and to mold things for the last great battle God and Satan.

RETURN TO THE FIRST LOVE

This is no time, dear brethren, to drift away from God, to depart from the faith, to waver in our loyalty. Eternal issues are about to be settled. The end of all things is right upon us. All we have been hoping for is about to be realized. The kingdom of God is at hand. In view of these solemn times, I call for a return to our first love, our first ardor, our first devotion. Let us walk as men who know their Lord. Let us not waver in our allegiance. Let us be what we profess to be. Let us faithfully uphold every standard, every truth of this blessed message which God has so graciously given us. Let us hear and heed the call so familiar to us:

“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”
Jer. 6:16

“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may

be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”
Phil. 1:9-11.

May God give us this experience.