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**The influence of a series of sermons on the attitudes and
attendance of the Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church in
New York**

Martin, Linford Lee, D.Min.

Andrews University, 1990

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**Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary**

**THE INFLUENCE OF A SERIES OF SERMONS ON THE
ATTITUDES AND ATTENDANCE OF THE CROSSROADS
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NEW YORK**

**A Project Report Presented
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry**

by

Linford Lee Martin

August 1990

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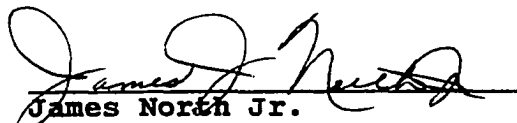
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ABSTRACT

**THE INFLUENCE OF A SERIES OF SERMONS ON THE
ATTITUDES AND ATTENDANCE OF THE CROSSROADS
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NEW YORK**

by

Linford Lee Martin

Adviser: Norman K. Miles

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Report

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

**Title: THE INFLUENCE OF A SERIES OF SERMONS ON THE
ATTITUDES AND ATTENDANCE OF THE CROSSROADS SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH IN NEW YORK**

Name of Researcher: Linford Lee Martin

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Norman K. Miles, Ph. D.

Date Completed: August 1990

Problem

A very important concern felt by the pastoral staff and lay leadership at the Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church, New York City, was that of building and maintaining the attendance at weekly worship services. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of a specially prepared series of sermons dealing with worship-related topics on the attendance and attitudes of those who assemble regularly to worship at this church.

Method

A series of eight sermons on worship was prepared and presented at the church during a one-week period. A pretest questionnaire was administered to members and visitors shortly before the series commenced. Three months after the series, a post-test questionnaire with basically the same questions was administered to the same group to check whether significant changes in attitude and/or attendance habits had been experienced by the test group.

The study was prescriptive, descriptive, and suggestive, rather than empirical and definitive. Data gathered through the questionnaires provided information but did not supply any basis for quantitative factors involved. During the series members were encouraged to invite acquaintances. Subcommittees were entrusted with managing the technical details of actual planning and conducting of the meetings. The desire of the church and its leadership to build its attendance was appropriately coupled with their varied talents and combined concern for the spiritual welfare of attending visitors.

Results

The sermon series, the center of this project, made definite impact on attendees. Post-test responses indicate many changed their views and attitudes on a number of aspects of worship. Tangible evidence of the evangelistic impact of this project is found in the number of individuals whose first contact with the Seventh-day Adventist Church is directly tracable to the worship sermon series .

Conclusions

Certain conclusions were reached from this project. Generally, a positive awareness of worship attendance was awakened among all concerned. It provided a learning experience for the preacher and for those who attended. More specifically, many who attended began to consider more seriously their attendance habits, and their attitude towards worship. For the first time, many have begun to realize the significance of worship in the context of the Advent message.

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My wife, Mazrine, a teacher for the New York City Board of Education, gave me her strong support by reading the manuscript while taking care of our three children, Anthony, Howard, and David.

Above all, the very nature of such a study is in itself a heartfelt response to a divine initiative. As such, my deepest gratitude is due my Creator and Redeemer, God, Who, through His Holy Spirit, has revealed His divine initiative in the Scriptures. My deepest gratitude, as well as all glory, honor, and worship, can never be expressed adequately in human language, love, or understanding.

PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Christian scholars through the ages have had a variety of views on the centrality of worship. E. C. Dargan, a leading Baptist theologian during the nineteenth century, points out that a study of worship is indispensable for an understanding of the church and its ministry.¹ One of the duties and privileges of the Christian church is that of providing for and maintaining the worship of God.² All other aspects of ministry are to be motivated by worship. Without worship, the church is destined to die. Karl Barth appropriately declared that "the Church's worship is the opus Dei, the work of God, which is carried out for its own sake."³

To worship God is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by means of the beauty of God, to open the heart to God.⁴

¹Frank Segler, Christian Worship, Its Theology and Practice (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1967), p. 4.

²E. C. Dargan, Ecclesiology (Louisville, KY: Charles T. Dearing, 1897), p. 517.

³Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1958), 4:47.

⁴William Temple, The Hope of a New World (New York: McMillan Company, 1942), p. 30.

The focus of worship is not a lecture, not entertainment, but Jesus Christ--His life, death, and resurrection. One of the problems of today's worship is the passive nature of the congregation. Most of the time, the people just sing, pray, listen, and pass the offering plate. This passive mode needs to be changed to an active, vibrant form of worship. Worship is not something to or for the people, but by the people. As the Holy Spirit opens certain biblical and historical insights and practices, active worship can be restored to its rightful place in the church. About ten years ago, I began to realize that the congregation at my church wanted to participate more actively in worship. They wanted to become involved in the reality of the worship experience. Their desire led me to identify four areas of concern.

Four Areas of Concern

Re-defining Pastoral Role in Worship

Most worship services are dominated by the pastor; consequently, the talents and potential participation of the members is ignored, neglected, or, at best, not adequately utilized. Since the pastor, as the central figure, is "doing" worship for them, the congregation tends to recede into a spectator role. Without diminishing the key role as the facilitator and leader in worship, the pastor needs to involve the congregation in a more active and directly participatory role in worship.

Helping the Congregation Become More Actively Involved in Worship

A passive congregation means a passive church. The congregation must recognize the importance of their own role as active participants. Pastoral dominance, as described above, can cause the congregation to follow current trends to sit back and relax, while the pastor "acts out" the worship service, much like the actors or newscasters on radio or television. Pastors and parishioners alike need to recognize this malady and seek to cure it. The only known cure is increased understanding by the congregation, of what goes on during the worship service; this, in turn, will lead to more intelligent participation in that service.

Improved Planning and Preparation of Worship Services

While worship should take place free of unnecessary restrictions and formality, this should not eliminate the need for proper planning and preparation of every aspect of the worship service. In most cases, the only planning and preparation done is by the pastor. Such planning and preparation is usually limited to his work on the sermon for the day. Other segments of the service, including the music, scripture reading, pastoral prayer, and offering, are seldom given the attention and prior preparation they deserve. These aspects of worship are usually taken for granted; thus, they detract rather than contribute to the spirit of true worship.

Missing the Mystery of Worship

Neglect of one or more of the three preceding concerns is generally responsible for the dull, uninteresting worship services that take place in too many churches. Worship must be viewed by every individual participant as his/her response to the majesty, power, and glory of God, who is Creator and Redeemer (Ps 19, Rev 4:11; 5:9). Unfortunately, too many of today's worship services fail to draw their participants into an experience of reverence and awe in the presence of God. This is the result of too many services characterized by unwarranted familiarity and inappropriateness in our approach to God. The sense of transcendence, otherness, and holiness of God is a missing factor from our worship services. The all-important spiritual mode which is needed to contemplate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is sadly lacking in today's worship services, and, hence from the lives of too many Christians.

Current Trends May Improve the Picture

In many circles, changes for the better are already taking place. Following are a few notable improvements:

1. Pastors are involving their congregations in planning their worship services.
2. Lay leaders are showing a more positive and active role in worship planning and leadership.
3. Congregations are seeking to participate more intelligently in worship services.

These changes for the better are certainly welcome wherever they are implemented. However, their positive effect can only become a reality if the changes fulfill the existing need to improve the congregation's attitude towards worship. As one considers the potential changes, the following factors come to mind:

Worship Reflects the
Congregation's Attitude

The church cannot identify itself as being Christian unless its worship is Christ-centered and Christ-directed. In its essence, worship is the self-portrayal of the congregation whom God has called out of this world to be His people. In fact, worship may be called the unifying factor which identifies the church as a God's called-out community.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project is to initiate the preaching of eight sermons to enhance the worship and the attendance at the Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church. These sermons were designed to improve the members' awareness and appreciation of worship and attendance. I used a pre-test and a post-test questionnaire was used to evaluate the attitude of the members towards corporate worship.

**Particular Issues Pertaining
to the Crossroads Church**

The Crossroads Church is situated within the territory of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It is located at 410 West 45th Street, Manhattan, New York. The worship-related issues particularly unique to this church are as follows:

1. It is not a community church. Its members live outside the immediate neighborhood.
2. Members who do not have their own cars do not have access to dependable public transportation.
3. Parking facilities are expensive for those members who have cars. Consequently, many prefer to attend churches closer to where they live.
4. The crime wave in the area around the church is very high. This leads many who do attend to leave immediately following the service.
5. The building itself is not physically attractive, either externally or internally. Thus, it is not very presentable, either for the public or for the members themselves.
6. The majority of the members are old and have lost much of their vision and insight for improving the worship attendance.
7. Many of the younger members have left for other churches whose programs are more attractive and sensitive to their needs.

8. Many of the leaders of the church lean heavily towards independent ministries. This concept is threatening to destroy corporate worship and leadership skills.

As current pastor of the Crossroads Church, I am particularly concerned with the existence of the above conditions in my church. My concern has led me to do everything possible to improve the picture. This project is the practical outcome of that concern.

Justification of the Project

1. My pastoral experiences in six districts over the past fifteen years and interaction with my colleagues in the ministry, as well as private conversations with others at workers' meetings, have led me to believe that there is a growing concern among many of my fellow-ministers for improving worship attendance.

2. The Crossroads Church has about 250 members. About 150 of these are present each Sabbath. Certainly, something must be done to reclaim the non-attending members.

3. Although the low attendance seems to indicate a need for improvement in the worship service, very little appears to have been done to remedy the situation. This definitely calls for an improvement in pastoral skills and increased congregational involvement in the area of worship attendance, participation, and leadership.

As mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs, worship is one of eight critical issues involved in the improvement of

attendance at the Crossroads Church. However, as pointed out in an earlier paragraph, worship is the main purpose for which the church exists. Hence, developing an intelligent basis of belief and practice pertaining to worship is indeed a crucial factor affecting attendance at the services of the church.

Description of the Project

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter contains an general introduction to the topic of worship, along with a statement of purpose, biblical foundation, and a summary of the nature of Seventh-day Adventist worship. It also enumerates certain specific worship-related issues pertaining to the Crossroads Church.

Chapter 2 discusses corporate worship during the biblical era. Various periods of biblical history are highlighted. This chapter examines worship attitudes and practices during the patriarchal and Mosaic eras, the tabernacle period, and the time of the Exile. It continues with an investigation of corporate worship during the New Testament period.

Chapter 3 addresses itself to the problem of worship attendance. It investigates the topic from the standpoint of the writings of Ellen G. White and others. Chapter 3 also helps to place the subject of worship within the context of the three angels' messages. It deals with the importance of

worship attendance in the light of the writings discussed in the chapter.

Chapter 4 describes the sermon series and examines the results derived from the questionnaires which were administered before and after the series. The results represent the extent to which the members of the Crossroads Church did, or did not change their attitudes towards various aspects of worship, including regular attendance, through the influence of the series of sermons on worship.

Chapter 5 makes certain recommendations which have seemed necessary as an outcome of the sermon series, the questionnaire the data analysis, and my own personal experience. This is followed by my summary and conclusion.

Limitations of the Project

The research done for this project was governed by the following limitations:

1. The deomographic description is limited to the Crossroads Church.
2. No attempt is made to field-test the suggestions that emerge from this study.
3. This study is descriptive and prescrpitve in its research.¹

¹For information on the requirements for Project II in the Doctor of Ministry program, see Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Bulletin 1989-90 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1989), pp. 58, 59.

Expectations from the Project

The main goal of this study was to suggest ways to improve worship attendance at the Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church in Manhattan, New York. However, every church in the Greater New York Conference can benefit from this study on worship attendance. City churches have peculiar challenges and, therefore, they need a particular approach to ministry. Furthermore, what occurs in the city influences what happens in the rural areas. City churches set the pace. Second, the study is concerned about worship attitudes as well as attendance within the community of the church. Although many of these suggestions have been tried by others, at various times and places, they have not hitherto been tested personally in actual practice. Further research could be done at the conference level, where wider opportunities to implement the ideas may be available, based on an intentional worship attendance analysis, and measurement of attitudes before and after to check its effectiveness. A spiritually healthy church has no choice but to share the good news of the gospel with friends and to demonstrate that good news by attending worship service themselves.

It was further anticipated that, at the conclusion of this project, there would be positive changes in attitude and in attendance at the Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church in Manhattan. Furthermore, the recommendations which are made in this study regarding worship attendance may, if

adopted, improve the quality of the church's worship experience, resulting not only in quantity of attendance but also in the quality to the members individually. As a result of the new awareness this study may create, church administrators may advise a special strategy for worship attendance in the city churches. Improved per capita giving could result from the worship series and from the implementation of the practical suggestions on how to improve worship attendance and a personal giving attitude toward the church.

Finally, it was anticipated that this study would help me to improve my skill of developing greater appreciation for worship among the members of my congregation. This would result in a commensurate improvement in attendance.

CHAPTER 11

CORPORATE WORSHIP DURING THE BIBLICAL ERA

Introduction

The intent of this chapter is to investigate the nature of corporate worship in three selected historical periods; namely, the Patriarchal (Abraham), the Israelite (Mosaic, Monarchical, and Exilic), and the New Testament (Apostolic). It must be noted at the outset that the Old Testament contains no explicit order of worship service as we would understand it today. The Old Testament is, however, full of teaching on worship. No attempt is made to reconstruct an order of worship from the Old Testament materials. However, as many pertinent references as can be made for an investigation of the worship practice in each period are examined.

This chapter examines each biblical period from the garden of Eden to the end of the first century A.D.

The Patriarchal Period

Distinguishing Features in Abraham's Relationship with God

Abraham towers above many Biblical personages, not because of Abraham's own merits and accomplishments, but because of his unique relationship with God. Five

distinctions can be ascribed to Abraham's relationship with God in terms of faith and worship.

1. Abraham is identified as "the man of the tent and the altar."¹ By faith Abraham heeded the call of God to leave his home in Ur (Gen 12:1; Heb 11:8)² and lived the life of a nomad: a pilgrim seeking "the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb 11:10). By the same token of faith, wherever he pitched his tent, Abraham "built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord" (Gen 12:9; 13:4, 18). The altar of sacrifice signifies a reinstatement of the faith and worship of Abel (Gen 4:4) and of Noah (Gen 8:20) in accordance to the Edenic covenant of redemptive promise.

In a land and time of widespread idolatry (Jos 24:2), Abraham's faith and sacrificial worship of the One true God served as a clear and powerful testimony of the sovereignty and redemptive love of the Creator God as expressed in worship.³ The God Whom Abraham worshiped is the "Creator of heaven and earth" (Gen 14:22, 19) and Redeemer (Gen 14:20). For Abraham, faith and worship united in proclaiming the gospel of grace and faith.

¹Robert Rayburn, O Come Let Us Worship (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980,) p. 48.

²All biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise indicated.

³John Watts, Basic Patterns in the Old Testament Religion (New York,: Vantage Press, 1971), p. 42.

2. The unity of faith is further expressed in a concrete act of returning tithe to the Creator and Redeemer God (Gen 14:20). This simple yet significant act of faith and worship is a public acknowledgment of God's sovereign claim and ownership by virtue of His Creatorship. Tithing also expresses the believer's faith in God's sustaining and redeeming grace by virtue of His holiness and charity. Love and gratitude in worship are thus expressed in concreteness. God blessed Abraham in the concreteness of life, prosperity, strength, and blessing. Abraham responded by worshiping Him in a concrete way: he gave back something tangible which he had received from God. While in itself, Abraham's act of tithing may not indicate that this was an act of worship, it does provide the patriarchal foundation for its later inclusion as part of the Levitical worship system.

3. The living communion and divine reality of God prepared Abraham for the greatest test of faith and experience of worship at that time when God commanded Abraham to offer his son Isaac to Him as a sacrifice (Gen 22:2). The command of God is real and so is Abraham's love for his son Isaac. Commenting on this, Rowley makes the following interesting comment,

Abraham felt constrained to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, not because it was a common duty or because Isaac meant so supremely much to him, (but) because he wished to show the completeness of his own devotion to God.¹

¹H. H. Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 25.

First of all, Abraham's worship consisted of the building of altars to the God He worshiped (Gen 12:7). Second, his worship was an expression of his faith. In faith, Abraham accepted the substitutionary death of Christ as sinner, even though Calvary was yet so far in the future. By faith, Abraham acknowledged the "worthiness" of the Lamb slain since the foundation of the world. This was especially so when he indicated his willingness to sacrifice his only son, Isaac to God (Gen 22:9-11). Third, through his example of faith, Abraham taught Isaac. In obedience to that example, Isaac willingly helped his father build the altar on which he himself was willing to be offered. In later years, too, Isaac continued to follow his father's example as he worshiped God throughout his lifetime (Gen 26:24-29). Obedience was yet another factor involved in Abraham's faith. When he left the land of his birth for a land that he knew nothing of (Gen 12:1-30), Abraham continued his monotheistic worship practices, and worshiped only the one true God.

However, such a desire to show the completeness of devotion in the face of tremendous conflicting claims can only be resolved in Abraham's coming to grips with the reality of God whose sovereign claim is absolute (cf. Gen 15:2, 8), yet whose divine charity and holy love "would provide the lamb" (Gen 22:8). True faith and worship are impossible without such a knowledge of God and without a

total commitment in obedience to Him. In this sense, faith and worship are no less than a matter of life and death.

In sum, Abraham's worship may appear simple in terms of liturgy, as it is known today. However, that lack of refinement in comparison to present concepts of worship does not make Abraham's worship either simplistic or naive. The dimension of faith needs to be nurtured continuously. When this is done in the context of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, that faith emerges to boldly proclaim and express faith in worship like that of Abraham. Worship is personalized, intimate, and vibrant, but never flippant; there is a true living communion between God and Abraham. The quality of the life in Abraham the worshiper testifies to a life of habitual conversation with God. Worship is made relevant in that it is contextualized and concrete. At the same time, Abraham never loses sight of the transcendence and the sovereignty of God. The Eternal Deity, though invisible and intangible, always remains the object and focal point of faith and worship .

Corporate Worship in Israel

Historically, the Hebrew Exodus marked the birth of Israel as a nation. God commanded Moses to tell the people what He wanted them to do: "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Exod 25:8). God not only commanded Moses to build a sanctuary, but, in vs. 22, He says, "There will I meet with you." Israel's worship

consisted in the celebration and proclamation of the covenant that God had ordained when He revealed Himself to Israel as Jehovah. The covenant that was thus delivered to Moses at Sinai expressed God's claim upon His people, Israel (Exod 20:1-8). God required sincere worship: "You shall not bow down to them (i.e., graven images), nor worship them, for I am the Eternal, your God, (I) am a jealous God" (vs. 5, Moffatt). From that time on, the tables of stone became, for Israel, the revealed will of God. Perhaps the meaning and purpose of worship in Israel is best summarized in Deut 6:4, "The Lord your God is one Lord."

During their wanderings in the wilderness, there must have been some form of public worship regularly celebrated under Moses' direction. The primitive sanctuary or "tent of meeting" probably resembled an ordinary shepherd's tent, having both inner and outer apartments. The Tent of Meeting seems to have been pitched outside the camp (Exod 3:7; Num 11:26).

Thus, with the building of the tabernacle, congregational worship was established as an institution. God told Moses to consecrate Aaron and his sons to the office of priesthood (Exod 28: 2,3). The duties of priests were listed in detail. The people were to bring offerings unto God continually, as an act of worship (Exod 29:30). In Ps 80:1, God is pictured as one who leads "His people like a flock." In contrast, Ps 99:1 pictures God thus: "God reigns; let the people tremble with reverential fear."

The Mosaic Period: Historical Setting

Mosaic and Christian Worship Compared

The one significant difference between Mosaic worship, as recorded in the Bible, and the worship practices of other nations during the same period of history was the consistent adherence to monotheism, which Israelite worship inherited from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This same contrasting factor is also its key point of resemblance to Christian worship today. The concept of worshipping God as the Creator is portrayed in Rev 14:6,7.

Mosaic worship was addressed to God, who, on His own initiative, had chosen to reveal Himself to His chosen people, Israel.

Mosaic worship was also addressed to a personal God who intervened in the course of history and redeemed them from bondage. Note the similarity to the called-out church worshipping Jesus, the one who redeems us from the bondage of sin.

Mosaic worship was directed to the living and personal God, rather than to man-made idols. Jesus points out that true worship does not depend on where it takes place, but rather on its being "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). In the same text, He emphasized the fact that "God is a Spirit," thus no man-made idol can ever be counted worthy to replace or represent Him.

Mosaic worship, like true Christian worship, was based upon man's response to God's redemptive act. It comprised unworthy man's recognition of God's "worthiness."¹

In contrast, the pagan worship of that time was polytheistic. The nations around Israel worshiped many false gods. Recognizing the danger of spiritual contamination, God warned His people to keep clear of idolatry. The idolatry of the time consisted of numerous sacrifices of animals and human beings, as well as a variety of superstitious beliefs and practices intended to appease the gods and to ward off evil.

For example, Baal was the deity who was supposed to supply the Canaanites' material needs, which included bountiful harvests. Historical evidence seems to suggest the Canaanites did not make a distinction between spiritual deities and natural phenomena in their worship beliefs and practices. The Old Testament records the pagan worship of Baal by the Philistines (1 Sa 7:13,14; 1 Kgs 18:17-19).

Mosaic Period: Evidences
from Archaeology

Archaeologists have discovered inscriptions, artifacts, and other historical evidence of some worship practices followed by primitive peoples who were contemporaries of the Israelites. These discoveries show that the pagan worshipers did not distinguish between

¹Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961), pp. 271ff.

spiritual deities and natural phenomena, and often confused one for the other. Thus, the rivers, sun, moon, planets, fields, fertility, barrenness, and other phenomena were often worshiped as gods. However, it is clear that man has always had a sense of the supernatural in his physical life struggle, as well as in his struggle to understand the forces of good and evil.¹

The Tabernacle

The birth of Israel as a nation marked a great transition, not only in terms of international politics, but also of its national economy, and social life. The changes in the religious life were chiefly expressed in the faith and worship practices of Israel. The religious nature of the Israelite nation is reflected in Moses' formal plea to Pharaoh. Moses relayed God's message to the Egyptian monarch to "let My people go, that they "may worship me (God)" (Exod 4:23 NIV). God made it clear that His people were to "hold a festival to me (God) in the desert" (Exod 5:1 NIV), and "to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God" (Exod 5:3 NIV). These passages would indicate that God's people were to plan a worship celebration. God's purpose for calling into existence the nation of Israel is clear. They were to be primarily a worshipping community. God's purpose for Israel

¹James Frazier, The Golden Bough New York: McMillan Co., 1930); see also Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo (New York: Moffatt, Yard and Co., 1918). Edward B. Tyler, Primitive Culture. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1874).

is expressed in even more specific language, when He describes them as being covenanted to be "a kingdom of priests, a holy nation" (Exod 19:6). To Israel, God made manifest a spectacular divine self-revelation accompanied with a complex system of worship.

To outline Israel's complex order of worship within a short study like this would be a difficult task. It would also result in an over-simplification of the details. Instead, certain major aspects of Israelite worship are considered. The emphasis is on those aspects of Israel's worship which maintain a continuity with the past and assert an uniqueness in its forms and practices that were relevant to the particular time and context. Specific attention is given to the following aspects of Israelite worship: (1) the Sanctuary, with its symbolism, furnishings, and ministrations; (2) the holy Sabbath, with its unique significance and weekly observance; and (3) the three national feasts, their annual celebrations, their purposes and implications.

Each of these aspects of worship represented a continuity with God's original purpose for man's worship activity as expressed in the Genesis account. The sanctuary service was related to God's desire to dwell with His people. The Sabbath was a continuation of the commemoration of creation as recorded in Gen 2:1-3. The three annual feasts symbolized God's desire to restore relationship with mankind after the fall. The Passover reassured God's people

of the availability of salvation through God's redeeming grace after the fall. The Feast of Pentecost showed God's continued sustaining power, and represented man's response to it. The Feast of Tabernacles, the greatest of the three, combined God's creative and redemptive power. It represents the redemption of God's people from sin and bondage.

The Sanctuary System

"And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst" (Exod 25:8). The infinitely great and transcendent Creator God desired to dwell in a material structure. In doing so, He wants to be with sinful and depraved human being. This speaks of His great condescending love and desire to commune with His creatures (Exod 29:45-46). God manifests His intimate personalism and reality in a concrete manner through a sanctuary structure which symbolizes His presence among His people. The sanctuary structure, together with its furnishings, provides a further revelation of God's nature, character, and ministry. The holy and moral purity of God, in contrast to the sinfulness of man, is most emphatically expressed in the following details of the sanctuary and its furnishings:

(1) The enclosure of the sanctuary within high walls (Exod 26:15-23). (2) The successive veils of the sanctuary to ward off any unauthorized approach to God's presence (Ex 26:31-36). (3) The bronze laver for symbolically cleansing and preserving the moral fitness of the mediating priest before

God (Exod 38:8). (4) Symbolic mediation by a sanctified priesthood (Exod 28:3). (5) The high priest's garment and his turban were to bear the inscription: "Holy unto the Lord" (Exod 28:36). In no other place is the alienating nature of sin held in such a sharp antithesis against the righteous and holy character of God as it is portrayed in the structure of the sanctuary.

This sharp contrast between the holiness of God and the depravity of man is clearly discernible in the very design and furnishings of the sanctuary.

The basic structure of the sanctuary consisted of two main sections. The first, the Holy Place, was where the daily ministrations took place. The second, the Most Holy Place, was hidden from view by the veil or curtain between the two sections. Within the Most Holy Place, the ark symbolizes the throne of the Creator God and inspires reverence for His awesome presence (1 Sam 4:4; Exod 20: 8-11; cf. Ps 80:1; Num 10:33-36).

The stone tablets containing the Decalogue, placed within the ark, express the standard of God's justice and righteousness, the foundation of His throne (Ps 89:14; 97:1,2).¹

The mercy seat covers both the ark and the stone tables within. It is on the mercy seat that the blood of the sacrificial lamb was sprinkled to make atonement for

¹de Vaux, p. 301.

Israel's sins. Symbolically, the mercy seat was where God met with His people (Exod 25:22). God's grace and forgiveness of sinners, and His willingness to shed His own blood for the expiation of man's sins is symbolically foreshadowed by the mercy seat (cf. Lev 16:14,15; Exod 25:22).

The shewbread in the Holy Place symbolizes God's provision of spiritual and physical sustenance for His people, when the latter fulfilled their part of the covenant (cf. Lev 24:6-7).¹ The offering of the shewbread is regarded as the Old Testament counterpart of the New Testament petition, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt 6:11).²

Also in the holy place was the lampstand, which was to burn continuously (Lev 24:1-4). This symbolized God's continued presence with His people, His sustaining power for them. Other scriptures confirm that God's omniscient, omnipresent Spirit is symbolized by the lampstand in the sanctuary (cf. Zech 4:6; Ps 121: 3,4; Rev 4:5; 1:4,5).³

The sanctuary is rich with symbols of God's presence, character, and ministry. However, in all of this sym-

¹Rayburn, p. 60.

²Frank Holbrook, "The Israelite Sanctuary", in The Sanctuary and the Atonement, ed. Arnold Wallenkampf, (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 1: 25

³Ibid., pp. 26, 27. Holbrook cites three other alternate views on the Lampstand: (1) the tree of life; (2) the invisible Deity; and (3) a conventionalized "burning bush," symbol of Yahweh.

bolism one cannot find a single representation of a cultic icon which was worshiped as a symbol of God. Moses adhered strictly to the divine injunction which strictly forbids the use of man-made images even in worshiping the true God. The Creator God is Spirit. He is a divine transcendence whose essence always remains a mystery. He transcends His creation, and, hence, He defies and forbids any man-made representation of Himself. The image-free worship practiced by Israel distinguishes that nation as a unique worshiping community among the surrounding idolatrous nations. Indeed, that nation could justly claim to be "a sojourner and stranger among the nations."¹

It is significant that various aspects of the high priestly ministry of atonement were not done in full view of the people, but vicariously, through a mediating high priest. Even in symbolic form, God wanted His people to be aware of their sinful nature in contrast to His own Holiness. The various services of the sanctuary, and all of its furnishings had their symbolic significance focused on this central theme. God, in all His holiness, wants to dwell with His people (Exod 25:8). But, man, in his sinful condition, cannot survive the glory of God's presence (Isa 59:2). The entire system of services and sacrifices in the sanctuary is a foreshadowing of Christ in His role as High Priest as well as Sacrifice (Heb 8:1-5).

¹Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1962), 1: 214.

The worshiper's first encounter with the sanctuary takes place as he enters the courtyard. At the altar of burnt offering, he must offer a lamb without blemish. As he lays his hands on its head and slaughters this innocent animal, this impressive ritual becomes part of the liturgy of his worship. This series of liturgical acts poignantly portrays, in symbol, the significance of the atonement effected by Christ in behalf of the sinner. The blood of the lamb is applied on the altar of burnt offering by the officiating priest. The victim is sacrificed on that altar as a burnt offering (Lev 1:3-9), its fat is consumed by fire as a sin offering (Lev 4:32-35). Many important theological considerations emerge from the details of these liturgical acts.

As shown above, the sacrificial services which Israel practiced during the sanctuary period can be traced back to a much earlier date. Its roots are traceable to the Patriarchal period, and even before, to the original covenant made by God with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden (Gen 3:15).¹ The sacrifices and offerings that issue from the covenant "are all parables of the holiness and justice of God."²

¹William Foxwell Albright, "From the Patriarchs to Moses," Biblical Archaeology (May 1973: 48.

²William Dyrness, Themes in the Old Testament Theology (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), p. 156.

The innocent character of the victim clearly discloses the holiness of God as well as His drawing and redeeming grace. The lamb without blemish, brought as an offering, indicates that only a perfect sacrifice can meet the requirements of a just God and His perfect law. The substitutionary nature of this sacrifice is made clear in Leviticus: "And it (the victim) will be accepted on his (the worshiper's) behalf" (Lev 1:4 NIV). The same text also implies that the shedding of the victim's blood on the worshiper's behalf is symbolic of the atonement made by Christ. This act of atonement was intended to meet the just requirements of a holy God. At the same time, the sacrifice restored the relationship with God that man enjoyed before sin caused the separation. "The sprinkling of blood, or expiation, was the means: the burning, or dedication to Jehovah (was) the end."¹

The relation between the altar of burnt offering situated outside the sanctuary and the ark of the covenant within the sanctuary is most impressively portrayed in the service on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16). The ark contained the ten commandments which formed the standard of God's justice; the mercy seat represents the mercy and grace of God on behalf of those who failed to reach His standard. The high priest performs the liturgical act of sprinkling blood upon the altar of burnt offering (Lev 16:14, 18-19). In so

¹J. H. Kurtz, Sacrificial Worship in the Old Testament (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1863), p. 64.

doing, he makes atonement for himself, his household, and for the entire nation of Israel (Lev 16:17). This ritual magnifies the meaning and substitutionary nature of the atonement of the sacrifice, the "part for the whole, the one for the many."¹ The scriptures point out that such an act was to take place once a year "for all the sins of the Israelites" (Lev 16:34 NIV). In both the altar of burnt offering, and the ark of the covenant, the emphasis is clearly on the great controversy between Christ and Satan. The symbolism portrays the stark contrast between the work of righteousness and the work of sin. Over all, the entire service highlights the plan of redemption as the divine solution to the entire sin problem. The sanctuary foreshadows the once-for-all-time offering of God's own Son, Jesus, as the atoning sacrifice to be offered on behalf of sinners. That sacrifice, alone, can adequately satisfy the claims of God's righteous law and thus redeem and restore man to his original relationship with God. At the altar and at the ark, the powerful symbolism and the impressive liturgical acts, by priest and believer alike, were intended to portray God's covenantal and redemptive grace. It is in the sanctuary that "Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other" (Ps 85:10 NIV). It is in the sanctuary that God and man are reconciled.

¹William Dyrness, Scenes in Old Testament Theology (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), p. 157.

The Sabbath

The Sabbath was a crucial factor in Israel's understanding of covenantal grace. (Ezek 20:20.) The ministrations of the ark and the altar converged on the day of atonement and its special services. Those services were designed to bring the worshipers into a "Sabbath rest" (Lev 16:30,31). That state of rest can only be experienced when man is fully reconciled to God and, hence, enjoys full communion with the heavenly Father. The Sabbath is a rest from the condemning power of sin. God has designed the Sabbath to be an eternal sign of the covenant between God and His people, Israel (Exod 31:13).

The Sabbath was founded upon God's original day of rest, which He set aside as a memorial of His creation (Gen 2:1-3; Exod 20:8-11). It was also based on the historic redemption of Israel from bondage in the land of Egypt (Exod 20:2; Deut 5:6). Above all, the Sabbath is symbolic of the triumph of God's redemptive grace over the power of sin. In observing the Seventh-day Sabbath, Israel was to

remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand. Therefore, the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath Day. (Deut 5:15)

An important fact about the Sabbath is often overlooked. Significantly, the observance of the same Seventh day Sabbath points to creation as well as to redemption as the basis for worship. This dual significance of the Sabbath is the context on which the Israelite confession known as

the "Shema" is based: "The Lord thy God is one Lord" (Deut 6:5).¹

The order of creation and the order of redemption are held together. God is One. (This unity, as expressed in the Shema, forms) the matrix of worship in the Old Testament.²

The Sabbath is profoundly significant as a memorial of creation and redemption. It is also important as the seal of the covenant, affirming and maintaining, as it does, man's relationship with God. As such, it constitutes a day of festal joy and worship³ needed for God's people to flourish in their relationship with Him.⁴

The Appointed Feasts:
Worship Contextualized

The concept of God as Creator and Redeemer is again made manifest in the observance of the three great annual feasts. These feasts are closely connected with the land of Israel, as well as with the temple service.⁵ The joys of the harvest, of forgiveness, and of redemption constitute the chief characteristics of these annual celebrations.

¹J. D. Rylaardsam, "The Matrix of Worship in The Old testament," in Worship in Scripture and Tradition Massey H. Shepherd, ed. (New York NY: Oxford University Press, 1963), p.62.

²Ibid., p.44.

³Barth, Church Dogmatics, 4: 47-72. .

⁴Walter Harrelson, From Fertility Cult to Worship (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1969), p. 32.

⁵Abraham Millgram, Jewish Worship (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1971), p. 199.

The passover feast coincides with the barley harvest. Though originally a nomadic feast, the Passover was totally historicized by the Exodus event. That event transformed it into a great feast celebrating God's redemption of Israel.¹ Since then, the Exodus has become a recurring theme in the worship practices of Israel. The celebration of the Passover articulates God as Redeemer (Exod 15:2) and as Creator (Deut 32:6).

The Feast of Pentecost coincides with the wheat harvest. It features the offering of first fruits from the harvest. Along with the offering of first fruits came a liturgical recital proclaiming God's mighty acts of redemption at the time of the Exodus (Deut 26:3-10). The historicizing of the harvest into a commemorative festival of redemption thus points to God as Creator and Redeemer. As the Creator,² God is remembered, because it is He that gives them the land (Deut 26:1-3). As Redeemer, He is mentioned as the One who has, on His own sovereign authority, brought them out of Egypt and granted them possession of the land of Canaan (Deut 26:3.) The children of Israel can possess and enjoy the land and its fruits, only through the power and grace of God. Love and gratitude to God must mark this special occasion.³

¹Rowley, p. 88.

²de Vaux, p. 494.

³Rylaardsam, p. 57.

The Feast of Tabernacles coincides with the time of the vintage. This is the climax of the year's celebration. It represents the most crowded and most important of the annual feasts.¹ Once again, a harvest-related feast is historicized and contextualized in relation to Israel's worship of the living God. Their wanderings through the wilderness, and God's guidance, sustenance, and redemption through that experience are emphasized in this celebration (Deut 23:43).

The annual feasts of Israel are celebrated in remembrance of God's redemptive acts of the past. However, these celebrations are not mere services of intellectual remembrance. As they recount God's mighty deeds of the past, the people confront and realize anew the presence and reality of God in their midst. Habakkuk emphasizes the objective reality of God in worship in these words:

The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him. (Hab 2:20)

When one realizes this objective reality of God, his/her subjective expression of that reality becomes more meaningful. That subjective expression reflects joy and gratitude toward God for all He has done. In the beliefs and worship practices of Israel, these elements of objectivity and subjectivity are found maintained in proper balance. In later years, while exiled in Babylon, it is their recourse

¹de Vaux, p. 495. Lev 23:39 calls the Feast of Tabernacles "the feast of Yahweh." De Vaux cites Josephus' description of this feast as "the holiest and the greatest of the Hebrew feasts." Antiquities 7.4,1

to these same elements in proper balance that helps them to survive. Throughout that dark period of their history there was a "remnant" among them who maintained their worship practices through the reading of God's mighty works as recorded in the Torah. These Jewish exiles continued their worship of God, even without the help of the more tangible elements of worship such as the temple, the annual feasts, and the sacrifices.

It has been noted that most of Israel's feasts paralleled the harvest-related celebrations of surrounding nations and may well have been adapted from the latter.¹ However, the similarity ends there. These celebrations had undergone a transformation that gave them an unique Israelite character. The worship practices of Israel are informed by the theological thought that pervaded their life-style, which was based on their acceptance of God as Creator and Redeemer. The uniqueness of Israel's worship lies in its celebration of creation and redemption as actual events. To the Israelite, God is real and He is their sovereign Lord. As such, He determines and shapes all aspects of life, including creation, redemption, nature, history, people, and events.

The Scriptures confirm that the Exodus became the decisive event that determined Israel's faith, practice, and

¹Harrelson, p. 21.

worship.¹ God's revelation to Israel is thus seen in relation to His redemptive act, the Exodus event. But, He is also their Creator, as well as being the Creator of the entire world. He has particularly created the people of Israel by calling them out of slavery, and redeeming them as His chosen people. God's revelation is progressive, but His truth is constant and eternal. Israel's faith and worship practices affirm and maintain that unity. This is evident in Israel's confession of faith and worship of God as Creator and Redeemer. In the context of that unity and continuity, one sees the beliefs and practices expressed in Israel's worship as an elaboration of the sacrificial system that has existed since the time of creation. That system had its foundation in God's original covenant with man (Gen 3:15) and was continued by Abraham in the patriarchal system of sacrifices and worship. However, Israel's worship goes beyond the basics of that original system by contextualizing and historicizing its details according to the needs of the generation then present. That adaptation to time and place is clearly seen in the entire tabernacle service, the observance of the Sabbath, and the joyous celebration of the annual feasts. All of these expressed themselves as bold object lessons. They are dramatic representations of God's character as He seeks to reveal Himself to them, thereby training His people to be a worshipping community. While the

¹A. H. Herbert, Worship in Ancient Israel (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1959), p. 7; see also Rayburn, p. 51.

form of worship may vary, according to historical context, the core of faith remains true to God's revelation and determines the shape of their worship practices.

The Monarchical Period

The Temple

The rise of the monarchy opened the way to new developments in worship. The scale and splendor of worship during this period in Israel's history was commensurate with the fame and strength that the nation enjoyed at the time. Conceived by David and built by his son, Solomon, the temple in Jerusalem now became the center of Israel's worship. This temple, resplendent with its interior of pure gold, is considered one of the wonders of the ancient world (2 Chron 3:4).

When the temple he built was dedicated, King Solomon played the leading role in the procession which carried the ark into the building (2 Chron 5:6; 7:5). The king also officiated in the dedication of sacrifices and offerings which accompanied the ceremony (2 Chron 5:6; 7:5). He presided over the installation of the ark in the temple, and pronounced the blessing upon the vast congregation that assembled for that occasion (2 Chron 6:3). Solomon also offered the dedicatory prayer (2 Chron 6:14-42). As a sign of God's approval, fire descended from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and sacrifices, and "the glory of the Lord filled the temple" (2 Chron 7:1). In response, the

Israelites knelt and worshiped the Lord (2 Chron 7:3). This glorious worship event became an unforgettable event in the history of Israel.

Ministers of music were appointed from the tribe of Levi. As such, they were supported by the tithe of the land (1 Chron 6:31-33). This text, along with other scripture passages indicate that ministers of music thus appointed were responsible for the instrumental as well as choral and congregational music in the temple's worship services. In the context of the church today, the minister of music should be held responsible for the over-all planning of the total musical needs of the church.

Splendid liturgical embellishment of ornate architecture and skillfully performed music characterized Israel's worship during the monarchical period. However, the unique feature of worship during that period was the leading role of the king. No specific mention of a high priest is made during the early monarchical period.¹ According to some scholars, the king was the "priestly person par excellence, during this period."² (cf. Heb 5:10.) However, scriptural records show that the Levitical priesthood continued to function, while the king officiated on ceremonial occasions

¹The term "high priest" is used in 2 Chron 24:11, during the reign of Joash. This is the only occurrence of the term in the Old Testament. According to some scholars, during the monarchical period, the king served a dual role as ruler and priest. .

²Herbert, p. 23.

as a national defender of the faith. As such, the king did not supplant the priesthood, but, rather, supplemented it. Other titles attributed to the priest-king are the "Anointed of the Lord" (1 Sam 24:10; Ps 2:2), and the son of God (Ps 2:7). Thus, the king rules the nation in God's name and leads out in worship as God's priest. In his special relationship with God, the king became "the psychic center of the life of Israel."¹ The title "son of God" when adapted by the king of Israel, implied that God Himself was, indeed, their true King. Hence, the psalmist sings: "For God is the King of all the earth; sing to Him a psalm of praise" (Ps 47:7 NIV). Thus, to Israel during the monarchical period, God is not only Creator and Redeemer but also their King and, therefore, Lord over all.

With the advent of the monarchical period, the burnt offering assumes a greater importance. Both David and Solomon are seen offering it (2 Sam 24:25; 1 Kgs 7:25; 8:64). The burnt offering is mentioned repeatedly by the prophets. (Isa 1:11; Jer 6:20; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21; Mic 6:6). Ezekiel alludes to it nineteen times. The sacrifice remains central to Israelite worship during this period. This is particularly so since the Jerusalem temple now became the center of Israel's worship system. "For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation" (Ps 132:13). "Out of Zion the perfect beauty of God shines forth (Ps

¹Ibid., p. 34.

50:2). God says, "Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Ps 50:5).

The temple worship is accompanied by music, both choral and orchestral (2 Chron 5:12,13). Great choir anthems and much instrumental music, combined with adoration enthusiasm, and much silence, now characterizes the worship service (Ps 4:4; 46:10; 76:8; Hab 2:10).

Monarchical Worship Theology

The theology of worship during Israel's monarchical period may be summed up in the words of Ps 96, a hymn of praise and adoration addressed to God. The psalmist raises his song of praise to God: "O worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before Him, all the earth" (vs. 9) "For God is the Redeemer" (vss.2,3), the Creator (vs. 5), "the King" (vss. 10), and "the Judge" (vss. 10,13). God is also described in this psalm as "great" and "most worthy" (vs. 4), "holy" (v. 9), "glorious" (vs. 8), sovereign (vs. 10), "just, true, and righteous" (vss. 10,13). Man's response to all of the majestic characteristics of God is to worship Him in the splendor of His holiness (vs. 9), and to praise Him for the salvation He offers (vss. 1,2). Man's response is also to contemplate God's great creation with awesome wonder (vss. 4, 5), and to bring an offering for before the Lord (vs. 8.). Psalm 96 also exhorts God's people to proclaim His marvelous redemptive deeds (vs. 3) and to worship Him with reverence in the sanctuary (vs. 6). This

great cultic hymn contains all the basic ingredients of the worship; it also echoes many of these from the Genesis account (Gen 3:15). (Note: All references from Ps 96 are from the NIV.)

The worship experience of Isaiah in the temple (Isa 6:1-8) makes it plain that true worship consists of more than embellished liturgy and splendid edifices. In the presence of the holy God, Isaiah cries, "Woe to me!" (Isa 6:5). His confession is followed immediately by a cleansing experience and a commitment to the Lord. Sacrifice and obedience, worship and responsible existence, all are one. When man's relationship with God is disrupted, true faith is contradicted, thereby incurring the condemnation of the prophets. Israel honors God with its lips while its heart is far away from Him (Isa 29:13). Worship without repentance fails to fulfill the requirements of God's covenant (Amos 4:4-6; Hos 8:1). Such meaningless worship also defiles His sanctuary (Ezek 23:38). Worship that is not in harmony with God's plan is no better than idolatry (Hos 8:4-6; 13:1,2). Because Israel is spiritually sick (Isa 1:5), God cannot accept its worship. God detests the sacrifice of animals which are brought without a true spirit of sacrifice in the worshiper's heart. Worship brings blessing and judgment. When Israel worships God in love and obedience, He communes with His covenant people in His full glory and splendor. But when Israel perverts its worship practices, God repeatedly warns them of the impending destruction of their majestic

temple (Jer 7:12-14) and of the captivity of their nation (Jer 17:3,4). The Lord is the holy One of Israel.¹ God is righteous in all His ways" (Ps 145:17), and "holy and awesome is His name"(Ps 11:9 NIV). These were the theological implications reflected in the worship practices during the monarchical period.

The Exilic Period

The Synagogue

The warning of the horrible destruction of the Jerusalem temple became a tragic reality in the year 586 B.C. The cream of the Jewish population was deported to Babylon. All sacrificial worship was suspended. The Jews thus relocated in Babylon found themselves isolated from all that had been familiar to them, including their religious life. Through the acts of corporate worship they had developed a sense of national unity and historical continuity. The Babylonian captivity had put an end to all of that. The psalmist expressed the exiles' sense of desolation and desperation in these dramatic words: "By the rivers of Babylon we (the exiles) sat and wept, when we remembered Zion" (Ps 137:1NIV). However, it was not long before the exiles caught the full meaning of the prophetic warnings that had preceded this calamity.

¹Herbert, p. 5. The term "Holy One" is used at least 30 times in Isaiah alone. It is also found in Ps 71:22 and Jer 50:29. The idea of holiness permeated all of Israel's faith and worship.

Soon, they began to realize that God had been exercising His sovereign authority when He deployed Babylon as his sword of judgment against His apostate people (Ezek 21:7-9, 19). God is faithful to His promise, and His predictions of punishment are no idle threats. God's chosen people went into captivity. Nevertheless, during this difficult period, the continued ministry of His prophets inspired the hope of redemption and restoration. The drawing power of the Holy One of Israel makes that nation's repentance possible, and the restoration of worship becomes a reality despite the absence of the temple and the cessation of sacrifices. Here, again, the Genesis scenario is repeated. Disobedience brings sure judgment, but God's love and compassion bring forgiveness and hope.

Having accepted the theological interpretation of their calamity, once again, the Jews turn toward God to worship Him. But, how could they worship God in the midst of such a traumatic experience? In the absence of the temple, the sacrificial system, and the hereditary priesthood, where could their worship find its center? A new and unique phenomenon, the synagogue, emerges from this apparent catastrophe in the worship history of Israel.

The synagogue was not meant to be a substitute for the temple, but, as Herbert points out, rather, it was intended to coordinate the faith and worship of the exiles.¹

¹Ibid., p. 31.

Very likely, this worship revival began in the homes of some of the exiles who sought to keep alive their faith and hope.¹ James F. White characterizes the synagogue worship as an exilic revival agency. Its prime intention was the preservation of Jewish identity by means of sustaining a corporate memory of God's great deeds for them in the past.² The worship services of the synagogue consisted of a variety of activities. These included reading aloud from the Torah (the record of Jewish history), reflecting and expounding the meaning of scriptures through preaching, recounting, and rejoicing in their unique history, praying for forgiveness of sins,³ for restoration of their national status, and, of course, the singing of psalms. All of these worship-related activities helped them to recall their past memories, and to make them a living reality. Once again, they began to experience the presence of the living God in their midst.

The prophet Ezekiel gave the people of Israel the needed reassurance of God's presence. In his opening vision, that prophet sees God descending to be with His people in

¹Rowley, p. 224.

²James F. White, Christian Worship in Transition (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1976), p. 12. White further notes that "Judah could survive through worship, though countless other conquered kingdoms perished completely. Worship could help them overcome even fire and the sword."

³The prayer of confession and supplication of the prophet Daniel, who was with the exiles in Babylon, is recorded in Dan 9:4,5, 17,18. This could easily have been the prayer offered by any exile in their assembly at the synagogue.

Babylon (Ezek 11:16 NIV). The sanctuary is not God, but God is the sanctuary of the exiles. God's role as the sanctuary for the exiled Israelites is further made manifest in the role of the Sabbath. Indeed, the Sabbath had gone into captivity, along with the Israelites. It was the only aspect of their worship system that remained undefiled by the enemy. In the absence of the temple, the Sabbath now became "God's sanctuary in time,"¹ providing them true communion with God. Thus, through their continued observance of the Sabbath, the exiles could experience liberation in the midst of captivity and hope in the time of calamity. Above all, it afforded them a closeness to God in their moments of realization and repentance.

Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, a group of concerned exiles obtained permission to return and rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem. Until its destruction in A.D.70, this second temple remained the focal point of Israel's ceremonial worship. However, the synagogue gained popularity as a non-ceremonial, local or rural center of worship. Its symbolism and architecture were not as elaborate as those of the temple. Since it had been introduced during the exilic period as a temporary measure, it was never intended to replace the temple. Rather, the synagogue was established, and continued to function as a

¹Samuele Bacchiocchi, Divine Rest for Human Restlessness (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1980), p. 88.

center of teaching. As recorded in the gospels and the Book of Acts, Jesus and the apostles made good use of it for that very purpose. (see Acts 4:1).

The destruction of the temple at Jerusalem (70 A.D.), focused Israel's attention on certain theological implications. Among others, they reviewed the significance of offering animal blood, and the meaning of the destruction itself, together with the cessation of the entire sacrificial worship system. They were now able to see all of that complex system of worship as temporal, and full of symbols and rituals. As all of that was so violently removed from them, it aroused in them a desire and anticipation of a better way. Since the scriptures had declared that the "glory of the latter (temple) was to be greater than that of the former), and since the former temple had been desecrated by the heathen rulers of Babylon, Medo Persia, Greece and Rome), they longed for something better and more permanent. Their new longing for an ultimate permanence and reality rested in their hope in the Lord (Ps 130:7). This newly awakened hope points them beyond all temporal elements of worship to the coming of the Suffering Servant of God portrayed in Isa 53. He who had "done no violence" (vs. 9) was to be "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities" (vs.5), was to "bear their iniquities" (vs.11), and "the sins of many" (vs. 12). He was also destined to bear their grief and sorrow (vs.4), and, as their permanent atoning Sacrifice, He was to be "led as a Lamb to the

slaughter" (vs. 7), making Himself a willing "offering for sin" (vs. 10). As God's appointed substitutionary Sacrifice, the Suffering Servant was to overcome death, for "after the suffering of His soul, He will see the light of life" (vs.11). By His atoning sacrifice, the sinner could now anticipate to "be accounted righteous (vs.11), "healed" and "made whole" (vs.5).

It is obvious that the entire sacrificial system of worship and faith can be traced back to God's original covenant with man, as found in Gen 3:15; it is also clear that, during the exilic period, Israel's entire hope was given a new direction. Isaiah's prophecy of the Suffering Servant provided them with the new focus on the coming Messiah. Thus, while still in captivity, they could anticipate the coming Messiah's vicarious sacrifice in their behalf. This, now, became the new focal point of their worship.

Summary

The consistency of God's character was first revealed in the Genesis account. God's spectacular manifestation through the tabernacle and its services reaffirmed and magnified that revelation during the Mosaic period. In the Exodus event, Israel's trust in God's sovereignty and redemptive power was put to the test as the people of that nation were challenged to believe and obey God. As the sanctuary became the center of their worship celebrations during

their wilderness wanderings, their response was characterized by reverence, awe, gratitude, love, and joy. They recognized and revered God as their Creator and Redeemer. In the solemn services of the sanctuary, and in the joyous celebration of the weekly Sabbath, as well as in their great annual feasts, they contextualized the Exodus event, while exalting the majesty and glory of the one true God of Israel.

Just as the worship practices during the Mosaic period represented an elaboration of the patriarchal worship system, so also did the monarchical period bring in certain refinements of the Mosaic system. The king was anointed by God's authority and was now entrusted with leading the entire nation in worship, as an act of national solidarity. As illustrated in the dedication of Solomon's temple, worship, during the monarchical period, was resplendent with much ornate architecture, elaborate ceremony, and accompanied by plenty of choral and orchestral music. During this period, God's glorious presence in the temple structure and ceremonies enhanced the national might and glory that Israel enjoyed among the nations. They were to be the head, rather than the tail. Worship is brought to a new height of divine exaltation and proclamation of faith that had never been experienced in Israel before that time. God was glorified as Creator, Redeemer, and King. The complementary roles of theology and liturgy find glorious expression in the worship celebrations during the monarchical period in

Israel. This was especially true during the early years of that period.

Israel's subsequent apostasy brought about the destruction of their temple and the captivity of their nation under Babylon, resulting suspension of the sacrificial system, helped them to realize the constancy and consistency of God's sovereign, holy, and righteous character, as revealed in the Genesis account. Some of the restoration took place after they returned from exile. However, they received the prophetic assurance of God's continued presence with them, even while in exile, and the provision of the Sabbath, which now became to the exiles God's "sanctuary in time" (Ezek 20:20). Both of these unshakable facts provided "the basis of worship and communion for the exiles, despite the absence of temple and sacrifice.

During the latter part of same period, the phenomenon of the synagogue provided them with an avenue for continuing their corporate worship. This new institution helped revive and maintain their national identity as they recalled their corporate memories of God's great acts in their behalf. The synagogue also helped the exiled Israelites to preserve the identity of their faith during that difficult period in their history. The circumstances of the Babylonian captivity had reduced their faith to the absolute essentials. They had to accept the fact that faith and worship were primarily matters of the heart and had to do with one's relationship with God. The simple recital of

God's deeds, as they found them recorded in the Torah, enhanced afresh those essential ingredients of faith and worship, the objective reality of God, and the subjective faith and gratitude with which the people must respond to God's presence with them. The period of captivity also served to remind the Israelites that all the temporal aspects of Old Testament worship were focused on the ultimate reality of the coming Messiah, the Suffering Servant of the Lord, the seed of the woman, as promised in Gen 3:15.

Corporate Worship During New Testament Times

In the foregoing investigation of corporate worship during Old Testament times, one major principle seems to stand out. Through the successive historical periods, one observes a sense of continuity coupled with distinctiveness of character that pervades the worship practices of the Israelites. The same principle of continuity cum distinctiveness characterizes the principles and practices of New Testament worship. It can be traced all the way from the Genesis record, with its central concern in the Seed of the woman. Since that time, the anticipatory nature of God's revelation has pointed forward to the coming Messiah and His redemptive sacrifice. God chose to embody the "radiance of His glory, the exact representation of His being" (Heb 1:3) and "the image of the invisible God" in Christ at the incarnation. By this very embodiment, Christ became the

epitome the Father's self-disclosure. Christ could thus declare, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father " (John 14:9). He could also justifiably claim, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6). Jesus could also lay claim to oneness with the Father, when He said, "I and My Father are One" (John 10:30). Christ's unique oneness with the Father fully harmonized with His nature, described by John, as "full of grace and truth" (John 1:4).

God clearly expressed his sovereign will for mankind when He chose to reveal Himself in this unique way through His only begotten Son. By that same sovereign will, God chose to send His Son into this world "when the fullness of time was come" (Gal 4:4). When the time of God's choosing was ripe, His wisdom and pleasure were manifested in the incarnation of Christ. God's own Son appeared in person, as both Messenger and Message to mankind. This was the most sublime reality of God's revelation. In the New Testament the God of the Genesis account comes seeking to save lost mankind through His Son (Luke 19:10).

Continuity cum Distinctiveness of
Holiness and Righteousness

Through the symbolism of the sanctuary, God' holiness and absolute purity, accompanied by his drawing love, dwelt among the people of Israel (Exod 25:8). Despite the sinfulness and depravity that plagued that nation, God condescended to dwell among them as the Holy One of Israel. But, when the "fullness of time was come," the Creative Word

(John 1:1-4; cf. Gen 1:1) "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The distinctiveness of this revelation centered in the incarnation. That event has been the overriding theme of divine revelation, ever since God announced His plan in Gen 3:15. However, that incarnation remains a divine mystery, even during New Testament times (1 Tim 3:16). It is also described as a sovereign act of the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20; cf. Luke 1:30). Christ, the Creator incarnate, is divine (John 1:1-4; Col 2:9; Phil 2:6) as well as human (1 John 4:1-3; Rom 8:3). He is sinless (1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5), yet, not exempt from human weakness, needs, and temptations (Matt 4:2; 8:24; cf. Heb 2:18). As God-man, Jesus Christ is truly an unique Person.

The incarnate Christ, Who tabernacles among men, identifies Himself as the true Temple (John 2:21). As such, all that Israel's temple ever symbolized is now realized in Him. It is in this same context that Jesus declared Himself the "Bread of Life," the reality of the shewbread (John 6:35; cf. Lev 24:7). Likewise, when He claims to be the "Light of the world," Christ stands as the reality of the golden lampstand in the temple (John 8:12; cf. Lev 24:4). By His incarnate life, Christ ministers directly to the needs of mankind, even as the types and symbols of the sanctuary and temple served to symbolize His ministry to the people during its historical context.

The observance of the holy Sabbath was God's original means of communion with mankind. This was further

enhanced by the tabernacling of the God-Man, Christ Jesus. Through His exemplary observance of the seventh-day Sabbath (Luke 4:16; cf. Mk 2:25, 26), Christ demonstrates His obedience to God's eternal law (Matt 5:17). Thus, He upholds and magnifies that law. Thus, also, does He maintain His unique oneness with the Father. As Lord of the Sabbath [Mark 2:28], He invites all to come and find true rest in Him [Matt 11:28]. In the deepest sense of the word, Christ is the true Temple, the true Sabbath, as well as the true Source of rest. To love Him is to obey His law and to enter into His rest (John 14:15; 15:10). Divine Charity undergirds God's creation of this world, and His hallowing of the Sabbath, as recorded in the Genesis account. That same charity undergirds the incarnation, as well as the Sabbath in the context of Christ's ministry.

The Continuity cum Distinctiveness
of Redemptive Atonement

As mentioned above, the heart of divine revelation is redemptive atonement in Jesus, the ultimate disclosure of God's character and ministry in behalf of humanity. The process of atonement begins at God's covenant with man, in Gen 3:15. The long history of Israel's complex sacrificial system takes a startling turn when John the Baptist suddenly points to Jesus as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Later on, following the horror and agony of Gethsemane, Jesus submits Himself to His oppressors, "like a lamb led to the slaughter" (Isa 53:7).

He humbles Himself and becomes obedient unto death, even death on the cross (Phil 2:8). On the cross of Calvary, Jesus shed His blood and died as a ransom for all mankind (Heb 9: 15,22; Matt 28:1; 1 Tim 2:4-6.).

The bruising of the divine Savior on the cross spelled fatal defeat for the devil. This was already confirmed in Gen 3:15. The New Testament endorses that defeat. The writer of the book of Hebrews states that the purpose of Jesus' death was that "He might destroy him who holds the power of death that is the devil" (Heb 2:14). Thus, in overcoming death, Christ "has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:10). He who believes in Christ is a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17). Christ is "the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:25), the Creator (1 Pet 4:19), the Savior (Titus 1:4), and Lord over all (Phil 2:11). He holds in His hands "the keys of hell and of death" (Rev 1:18) as well as the "keys of the kingdom" (Matt 6:19).

The distinctiveness of Christ's redemptive atonement lies in its absolute nature. At the time of His death on the cross, the temple veil was rent asunder (Matt 27:51), thus signifying the end of the entire system of temple rituals and sacrifices that had functioned throughout the Old Testament times. That same event signified God's approval and acceptance of the absolute efficacy of Christ's once-for-all atonement (Heb 9:28; 10:12). The centrality of the cross carries with it a blessing and a gift. Through

Christ's sacrifice at Calvary, God offers the gift of eternal life to all who believe in Him (John 3:16). Through that same sacrifice, also, is sealed the judgment of all those who reject Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of mankind. The apostle Paul states that this became "a stumbling block to those who do not believe (1 Cor 1:23). In the light of what took place at the cross, all of life and religion is reduced to one essential fact, a heart-relationship with God, through the crucified and risen Savior, Christ Jesus.

The cross fully reflects the holy and righteous character of God. The cross also fully portrays His irreconcilable wrath against sin, even when it was borne by HIS own Son on behalf of the world. The holy and righteous God "spares not His own Son (Rom 8:32). Jesus, "Who knew no sin," made Himself "to be sin for us" (2 Cor 5:21). "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23), and Jesus accepted our sins on our behalf (John 3:16). Thus, at the cross, the fulfillment of the sanctuary, God's "love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other" (Ps 85:10). This accounts for the centrality of the Calvary event in Christian worship.

Continuity cum Distinctiveness
of Mediation

Depraved, sinful man's need for a mediator between himself and God is made clear by two scriptural facts: First, no man is inherently righteous, and, hence, no human

being is qualified to stand before a holy and righteous God (Isa 64:6; Ps 53:3; Eccl 7:20; Rom 3:10); second, God has already recognized man's predicament and provided for a Mediator. Symbolically, man had access to God through the patriarchal sacrifices, the sanctuary, and later the temple, along with the services and sacrifices conducted therein. The patriarch, priest, or charismatic ruler or prophet served as the symbolic mediator. However, all that these symbols could accomplish was to provide a prefigurement of the true Mediator, the antitypical Lamb of God, offered by the antitypical high priest. Jesus fulfilled the antitypical role in both these cases.

When Jesus offered Himself as the Supreme Sacrifice on the cross, the whole meaning of divine mediation became clear. Jesus Christ, the only true High Priest and Mediator between God and man, offered Himself as the only true Lamb of God without blemish of sin (Heb 9:11,14). Thus, all of the typical mediating priesthoods of the Old Testament were now to be replaced by Christ, the only true Anti-type. It is only in Christ that "God reconciles the world unto Himself" (2 Cor 5:9). Herein lies the uniqueness of Christ's mediatorial work. Jesus Christ is described as the anti-typical High Priest "Who has entered into heaven" and "is seated at the right hand of God" (Heb 9:24; 12:2), there to plead with the Father on our behalf as our Divine Advocate (1 John 2:1). For those who accept Him as Mediator, He "always lives to make intercession" (Heb 7:25).

Now that the way into God's presence has been made clear, through Jesus our High Priest, the apostle Paul can say,

Let us then, with confidence draw near the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb 4:16)

Continuity cum Distinctiveness
of Judgment

The Genesis account of the creation of man in the image of God places man in a position of freedom, accompanied by responsibility for his actions. Disobedience results in judgment. This was made abundantly clear when man's fall into sin resulted in his expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Sin is doomed, as foreshadowed in Gen 3:15. That condemnation is ratified at the cross. The ultimate punishment reserved for sin and its author is ensured. Man is constantly faced with the choice between serving one or the other of the opposing forces in the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Man's response to this challenge determines his eternal destiny. His positive response can only be accepted through the Divine Mediator, and His Divine sacrifice on Calvary. Man's negative response to that provision made on the cross results in his facing the final judgment without the help of Jesus, his "Advocate before the Father." Thus, the focus of man's response in worship is the cross.

In the light of the cross, both man's separation from God through the judgment, as well as the restoration of

that relationship through the atonement, become a reality (John 12:31; cf. 1 Pet 4:17). Thus, while eternal life was made available to mankind through the cross, through that same cross, the ultimate annihilation of sin is also guaranteed as an eschatological reality (Heb 9:27; 10:26). The future has intruded into the present with unfailing regularity, at various points in sacred history. Although the Messiah's first Advent was hailed as the coming of the kingdom of God, that kingdom is yet to be consummated at His second Advent. Sin and its author must be destroyed, and Jesus will become "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Mark 14:25; Matt 25:31; Rev 11:15).¹ The certainty of present judgment makes the final event just as certain, inevitable, and imminent. The cross, with the perfect atonement that it offers, implies a complete annihilation of sin. That same cross makes the parousia a necessary conclusion to the total work of the cross. In this context, the parousia becomes a vital theme in New Testament faith and worship. Christ repeatedly assured His followers of the certainty of His return (John 14:1-3). At His ascension, the two angels reassured the distraught disciples, that "this same Jesus, will so come" (Acts 1:9-11). The final affirmation in the sacred scriptures is an expression of hope in the second coming of Christ (Rev 22:21). To the believers, the soon return of Christ is, indeed, a blessed hope (Titus 2:13,14),

¹A. M. Hunter' Introducing New Testament Theology (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 25-27.

a time when they will receive the promised reward. To those who are not ready for Him there is only a "fearful looking for, of judgment" (Heb 10:26; Rev 22:12).

In terms of faith and worship, one can safely conclude that the New Testament period was a significant period of transition. The focus was shifting from the Israelites by physical descent from Abraham, to those, who, regardless of physical ancestry, but, because of their faith in Christ, were now considered "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:26,29). There is a clear continuity which binds the worship practices of God's people during the this period and those that had gone before. Nevertheless, there is also a distinctiveness that characterizes the worship practices of first century Christians; that uniqueness provides the bridge between the symbolic representations of the Old Testament, and the vibrant worship practices of Christians ever since. This involved the transition between type and antitype, symbol and fulfillment, shadow and reality. The point of change for all of these contexts was the Person and ministry of Christ Jesus, culminating in the cross of Calvary. New Testament faith is rightly centered in Christ. Christ, in turn, as God incarnate, reflected God's character and nature, reflecting in all His glory, the divine Image that was only partially accessible to man since the fall. In Jesus' life, one sees the ideal embodiment of the relationship between God and man. Such a relationship is characterized by freshness, spontaneity, directness,

intimacy, dynamism, and growth. Based on the foundation thus laid by Jesus, one can now proceed to examine the way that new relationship affected the worship practices of the New Testament community.

Theological Implications
of New Testament Worship

Robert Rayburn rightly observes that the New Testament offers only the barest glimpse into the worship services conducted by the apostles.¹ In view of that lack of an explicit order of worship in the New Testament record, this paper focuses its attention on the scattered references that do exist in the New Testament. The scanty resources available on the worship practices of the apostolic community are likely to convey the impression that the early church was more concerned with doctrines and beliefs rather than with worship practices. However, the very purpose for which the church is called out (Greek: ekklesia) is specified as showing forth the praise of God (1 Pet 2:9). The church is called to be "a royal priesthood, a peculiar people" for this very purpose. Earlier, in the same chapter, the apostle Peter speaks of God's people as a "spiritual house . . . offering spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5). Clearly, then, this describes God's people as primarily a worshipping community.

¹Rayburn, p. 27.

Jewish Heritage of Christian Worship

The Christian worshipping community traces its roots back to Judaism, and would naturally develop its liturgical life within the context in which it was born. The New Testament church had two options: the temple services, with all of its ritual sacrifices and annual feasts, or the simpler, more recent synagogue services with little or nothing of the elaborate symbolism of the temple or sanctuary. According to some scholars, the temple services in Jerusalem were still being continued with all its sacrificial rites, mystery, and annual feasts, although, it was the synagogue service that now asserted its enormous influence on the majority of the Jewish people.¹ However, the gospel record, as well as the writings of Ellen White indicate that the temple rituals continued to exert an influence on the Jews until it was destroyed in 70 A. D. It was this latter model that the early Christians chose to follow. In later years, Christian churches even followed the architectural design of the synagogue, as shown below.

Abraham Millgram² describes the synagogue worship of the first century as follows: The Jewish worship book is known as the Shiddur. The order of worship is organic in its formulation, rather than logical. The basic structure of the Jewish liturgy is the Benediction or Berekah, commonly

¹Ferdinand Hahn, The Worship of The Early Church (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Pres, 1973), p. 10¹.

²Millgram, pp. 89-120.

understood as "praise of God" rather than "blessing to God." The standard form for the beginning and ending of the Benediction is: "Praised art Thou O Lord our God, King of the universe." The central worship elements contained in the Shiddur consist of:

- (1) The Shema and its Benedictions
- (2) The Tefillah--a series of supplications
- (3) Readings from the Torah.

The first of these core elements in the Jewish liturgy, the Shema, consists of three creedal affirmations: (1) the unity of God (Deut 6:4-9), (2) the certainty of reward for the just and punishment for the wicked (Deut 11:13-21), and (3) the holy duty of commandment-keeping (Num 15:37-41).

Closely linked to the Shema is the Tefillah, which contains a series of benedictions and prayers. Nineteen of these are prescribed for weekday services, and only seven for Sabbaths and festival days. The first three benedictions concentrate on praise to God as the God of their fathers, the holy One of Israel, the Quickener from the dead.¹ The next thirteen benedictions are congregational petitions for

¹Ibid., p. 102. Millgram points out that the doctrine of the resurrection assumed central importance for the Jews, because it was challenged by the opponents of the Pharisees. By including this benediction, the rabbis effectively excluded from the synagogue worship all those opposed to Pharisaic doctrine concerning the resurrection from the dead. During the trial of Paul by the Sanhedrin, this doctrine stirs up the controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. (Acts 23:6-8; cf. Matt 22:23).

such boons as wisdom, forgiveness of sin, the restoration of Israel, good health, and sustenance.² The three concluding benedictions in the Tefillah focus on thanksgiving for god's benediction and peace.

The third core unit of the Jewish liturgy is the teaching of the Torah, which the Jews hold with deep reverence.¹ The prescribed procedure in Shiddur calls for readings from the Pentateuch. On Sabbath, the selection might include a portion from the prophets (cf. Luke 4:18, 19). The centrality of the reading from the Torah and its independence from the first two core units of Jewish liturgy is emphasized rather strangely. A traditional call to worship precedes the reading of the Torah. This reading is was often accompanied by a translation of the text into the vernacular, followed by an exposition of the portion read.²

In short, the synagogue service consisted of a creedal confession, benedictions, prayer, scripture reading, and sermon. The minimum audience needed to conduct a synagogue gathering was ten male adults, a leader, and the availability of a copy of the Torah. Some scholars consider

²Ibid., p. 105

¹The reading of the Torah is a biblical injunction. It is commanded in the Shema (Deut 6:7). It has received great impetus since the days of Ezra (Neh 8:5-8). Thus, the act of teaching the Torah to all the people became a characteristic of Judaism since those early days.

²This became necessary, especially as Hebrew was no longer the spoken language of the Jewish people during the New Testament era. The Jews in Palestine and Babylonia spoke Aramaic, while those in Egypt spoke Greek.

the synagogue liturgy a lay liturgy, in which any worshiper could be called upon to lead out in any part of the service.¹ At least two scripture references may be cited to validate this point.

While attending the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus was called upon to read the Haftarah. He opened the scroll to Isa 61:1,2, read, and sat down to preach (Luke 4:16-28). A few years later, at another synagogue, in Pisidian Antioch, "after the reading from the law and the prophets," the officials of the synagogue invited Paul and his companions to elucidate the reading (Acts 13:15). Jesus and His disciples were familiar with this type of worship. Jesus sanctioned it by His regular attendance on Sabbath (Luke 4:16; cf. Matt 4:23; Mark 1:21; Luke 6:6). The disciples continued to attend the synagogue until they were cast out of it (John 9:22).

When these early Christians eventually began having their own gatherings separate from the synagogue, their own form of worship continued to follow the same pattern. Acts 2:42-47 mentions that the disciples gathered for prayer, praise, and fellowship, as well as for the breaking of bread. The breaking of bread referred to in this passage is the Lord's supper, established by Christ Himself. Thus was introduced a new element into the liturgy of early Christian worship. Despite its distinctly Christian nature, the

¹George Arthur Buttrick, Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York, : Abingdon Press, 1962), 4: 883, 884, s.v. "Worship."

earliest celebrations of the Lord's supper were patterned closely after the passover meal, with its unleavened bread and benedictions before partaking of the meal. Although the early Christians adapted the basic elements of their worship from the synagogue services, the content of their prayers, preaching, fellowship, rituals, and praise underwent a radical transformation. Christ became the central focus of their worship. Their liturgy was based on the Lordship of Christ.¹

The core of their preaching was the Christ, the crucified and risen Lord (1 Cor 1:23; 2:2). The content of their prayer expressed their hope and longing, "Maranatha," "the Lord is coming!" The blessed hope of the parousia was on the lips of every believer (1 Cor 16:22; cf. Titus 2:13). Their response and commitment were expressed in their offering of gratitude and sacrifice of praise; they applied that commitment through good works and mutual sharing of their possessions and wealth with one another, and especially with those in need (Heb 13:15,16). They dedicated themselves to the Lord as living sacrifices, which they regarded as part of their reasonable service, and spiritual worship. (Rom 12:1,2).

¹Christ is acknowledged and worshiped as Lord by Thomas (John 20:28). This title and position of Christ is sealed by his resurrection (1 Cor 6:14; 2Cor 4:11), exalted by God (Acts 2:36), and confessed at baptism (cf. Rom 10:8-13). Christians look forward with anticipation to the day when, at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow (Phil 2:5-11; cf. Heb 1:6; Rev 5:6-14).

The earliest form of distinctly Christian worship contained two basic parts: (1) the service of the word, based on the synagogue model, and (2) the service of the "upper room," (the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist, which traces its origin to the Passover). Simplicity seems to have been the key characteristic of worship in the early Christian community.

The New Christian Dynamics in Worship

The absence of a system of complex liturgy does not necessarily point to a deterioration or a de-emphasis on worship during New Testament times. Rather, it heralds the beginning of a new dynamic of worship, in the context of the incarnation of Christ. This new dynamic finds expression early in the ministry of Jesus. In His conversation with the woman at Sychar, Jesus provides a crucial insight into New Testament worship. The guidelines He set are described below in detail:

Worship the Father (John 4:21)

True worship must always begin and end with God the Father. No temple, or sacred mountain, or any living being, human or otherwise, can ever deserve to be worshiped. God alone is "worthy." "If we do not begin at that point (i.e., with God,) our worship is not Christian." (It must begin "with the descent to us of the divine charity which loved us

first."¹ The God of the New Testament is the same God who created the universe. He is characterized not only by divine charity (1 John 4:8) but is also transcendent and sovereign, for, "God is Spirit" (John 4:24). As such, He cannot be confined to a place or a building, although He may, through His sovereign will, choose to be present where He will, such as in His temple or in His church. Christian worship, therefore, must find its primary focus in God. Any adulteration of this principle would be tantamount to idolatry. This happened frequently in the experience of Israel, whose several periods of apostasy resulted from their placing other things above God in the context of worship (Isa 1:10-12). Such apostasy eventually led them into captivity. Christ's words to the Samaritan woman contained a prophetic warning of the impending rejection of the temple worship of that time.

Christ's act of cleansing the temple showed his disapproval of some of the corrupt practices allowed in the temple, and of the perversion of its services. Greed and commercialism were enthroned in the temple and had replaced the holy One of Israel as the recipient of worship. Christ's emphasis was not on a total rejection of the place of worship. Instead, He sought to help His listeners consciously re-orient themselves toward the God of the Bible, the one true and living God.

¹William Nicholls, *Jacob's Ladder--The Meaning of Worship* (Richmond, VA: Knox Press, 1958) p. 28.

Worship in Spirit and
Truth (John 4:24)

Worship in the spirit means worship from the heart rather than worship which consists purely of ritual forms and practices. Time, place, and form of worship are subordinate to one's attitude in worship. (Matt 5:3; Mark 7:6-9.) Jesus' statement in John 4:24 indicates that all else is false. The worshiper's true attitude in worship can only be generated under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit.

Worship in truth indicates worship that is in harmony with God's revealed truth; it must also be focused on Jesus who describes Himself as "the Truth."

Worship in spirit is worship in the Holy Spirit.¹ Indeed, Christian worship would not be possible without the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He alone can lead us to God and plead on our behalf, "Abba, Father" (Rom 8:15, 26). Karl Barth has made the following significant comment on the Holy Spirit:

In a decisive passage, Paul mentions only one thing, ... as the children of God, we cry "Abba, Father" (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). It is marvelously, yet of a surety, not accidentally, the same cry which the gospel narrative (Mk 14:36) put in the mouth of Jesus in Gethsemane, as He prays. So then, in this form, the Son of God is the prototype of the sonship of believers.²

An important aspect of New Testament worship was music. It occupies a significant position in New Testament worship (Eph 5:18-21; Col 3:16; 1 Cor 14:14,15). The Holy

¹Rayburn, p. 51.

²Barth, 1: 524.

Spirit alone can enable the Christian to make his music and singing of praises truly worshipful 1 Cor 14:15).

A worshiping community is also a redeemed community. Such a group not only confesses its allegiance to God and Christ but also willingly confesses sins to God. Confession is an integral part of worship. The scriptural injunction "grieve not the Holy Spirit" (Eph 4:30) implies that the Christian will not continue in his/ her rebellious attitude. This involves genuine repentance from sin, thus fulfilling the requirement for worshiping God acceptably.

Worship in Truth
(John 4:24)

Jesus Who declared "I am the Truth," (John 14:6) also promised that the Holy Spirit would "guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). declared "I am the Truth" (John 14:6.) True worship involves worshiping God in the Son through the Holy Spirit, thus involving all three Persons of the Godhead. In Robert Rayburn's words: "The character of Christian worship must correspond to God's revelation of Himself, which is essentially Trinitarian."¹ Another writer makes the following comment concerning the role of the Trinity in worship:

"Worship in truth" involves sincerity without pretense, illusion, or sentimentalism. No element that is unreal and untruthful can find a place in worship that is

¹Rayburn, p. 112.

acceptable to Christ, who is the Truth, and Who demands truth and faith in worship.

While both worship and theological reflection upon its nature are carried on "through Jesus Christ our Lord, they are also to be carried on "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The Trinity constitutes a basic morphology which cannot be violated if liturgical theology is to be Christian.¹

Worshiping God through Christ implies seriously considering all of Christ's person and ministry. Therefore, "worship in truth" means more than giving mere mental assent to His word. It involves living a life of absolute obedience, even as the Son of God lived a life of absolute obedience. Divorced from the reality of Christian living, worship becomes unacceptable to God. Such worship is detestable to Him, despite all the offerings and sacrifices that might accompany it (Isa 1:10-15). "Worship in truth" also involves knowledge and understanding. To the woman at the well of Sychar, Jesus said, "We worship what we do know, for salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). "For the Christian, worship must always be under the judgment of theology."²

True Christian worship, therefore, must articulate the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, His atonement, His resurrection, His high priestly ministry, and His parousia. In its articulation of Christ's atonement and Parousia, the

¹Paul Hoon, The Integrity of Worship (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1971). p. 115.

²Rayburn, p. 33.

Lord's Supper emphasizes the meaning of worship. Likewise, Christian worship derives the significance of Christ's resurrection and high priestly ministry as our risen Lord from the sacrament of baptism. Thus, worship speaks to present reality as well as to the eschatological reality of life and faith.

Frank Segler points agrees with Rayburn's idea when he makes the following significant comment:

Worship without theology is sentimental and weak; theology without worship is cold and dead. Worship and theology together combine to motivate a strong Christian faith, and to empower a faithful Christian life.¹

Summary

In sum, New Testament worship is essentially Christo-centric. However, worship can only become Christo-centric in the light of the Trinity. Such worship is addressed to Christ, Who glorifies God the Father, and acts in full cooperation with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The church, in turn, receives the ministry the Holy Spirit from Christ. New Testament worship maintains a continuity with the past. At the same time, it manifests a distinctiveness of its own in the light of the unique Person and ministry of Jesus Christ, the incarnate God. Spontaneity, directness, intimacy, and freshness characterize the revelation of God through Jesus. Those same characteristics are

¹Frank Segler, Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1967), p. 57.

evident in New Testament worship. Temple rituals and symbols that were once necessary and meaningful in their respective contexts of time and place are now replaced with new symbols that reflect a completed atonement and divine personalism. These unique features are reminiscent of the ideal worship which was instituted in Eden. The one difference is that, in the context of the New Testament, Christ, the second Adam, leads out as the perfect High Priest to Whom also man's worship is due, since He is their Creator, Redeemer, and Lord.

Spontaneity, freedom, and creativity characterize the worship practices of the New Testament believers. This is due to a number of significant factors. The absence of an explicit order of New Testament worship, the clear revelation of two sacraments, and the provision of basic principles of dynamic worship are some the most important. This regenerated form of worship has a dual objective, namely, to be true and faithful to God's eternal truth while seeking to be relevant to the immediate context of time and place.

The patriarchal form of worship, as practiced by Abraham and his contemporaries, may have appeared to be simple in comparison to the Mosaic period when the liturgy required an elaborate system of animal sacrifices and ceremonial actions. However, the Abrahamic pattern of worship was characterized by a spirit of intimacy, vibrant faith, and relevancy, all of which fit into both historical context and biblical revelation as found in the Genesis account.

During the patriarchal period, faith and worship enhanced and complemented each other. They united in proclaiming the gospel of God's redemptive grace in anticipation of the promised Messiah.

During the Mosaic period, the worship practices of the Israelites featured a complex liturgy which, in turn, was informed by a spectacular revelation of God. This led to the building of Israel as an important nation whose primary concern was intended to be the worship of the living God. The complex liturgy of this period comprised an elaboration of the worship practiced during the preceding period.

However, the worship of God on the holy Sabbath for a covenantal communion, the daily and yearly sacrifices, and annual national feasts observed in connection with the sanctuary are all made relevant in the light of the Exodus. That event was the turning point in Israel's history. That was when God manifested Himself as the nations' Redeemer and also created the people of Israel. God's sovereignty and transcendence over and above all the nations of the earth and, in fact, over the entire universe, was complemented by His immanence as the Holy One who dwelt in the Israel. The truth of God was well articulated in the worship practices of Israel.

Especially during the early stages of the monarchical period, Israelite worship reached a high point. The splendor and glory of the temple and its services was commensurate with the heights of fame to which the nation had

risen by then. The king of Israel became a symbol of God's theocratic rule and, hence, assumed a prominent role in the faith and worship of the nation. The worship symbols and practices of Israel were never more resplendent than during this period. The transcendent majesty and sovereignty of God, glorious, yet condescending, was made as real as humanly possible during the reigns of David and Solomon. Theology and liturgy were splendidly bonded one with another as they bore joint witness to the biblical revelation of God, the Creator, Redeemer, Lord, and King over all the earth and all the nations. Jerusalem and its temple became the center of the worship of God. God was glorified and greatly feared among the nations.

Unfaithfulness to God led the people of Israel into apostacy. Apostacy, in turn, resulted in their being taken into captivity by the Babylonians. During the period of their exile, they were deprived of all that had been dear to their hearts. All the tangible symbols that they had learned to depend on as supporting pillars of their faith and worship had now been pulled out from beneath them. Nevertheless, out of their most distressing situation arose a new center of worship, the synagogue. As these homeless exiles assembled from Sabbath to Sabbath in the newly formed synagogues, they read from the Torah and recounted the mighty acts that God had done for them in the past. They recalled their glorious past as a nation. These regular gatherings helped to give them the much-needed reassurance of God's

continued presence and reality among them, even while in the land of exile. The disruption of their national worship led them to look beyond the temporal character of the tangible symbols that had characterized their worship during the sanctuary and temple eras, and to anticipate the ultimate reality of the coming Messiah.

During New Testament times, worship resumed the continuity of the biblical revelation. That revelation included the divine ministry of Christ as it was manifest in the covenant, the atonement, the plan of redemption, and Christ's mediatorial ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. All of this was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah. New Testament worship was characteristically Christocentric. It was now cast in the glorious and mysterious revelation of the Trinity. God's glorious character is held up in stark contrast to the depravity of mankind. This took place at the cross of Calvary where all that was typical and symbolic in the worship practices of past generations met reality and realization in the great once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus. Christian worship represents a transformation of all that was earthly and temporal in the Old Testament worship system into one with a distinctly dynamic eschatological outlook. The cross and the parousia in Christian worship are an affirmation of faith based on divine revelations which are rooted in the Genesis account. God is worshiped as Creator, Redeemer, Lord, Coming Judge, and King. This is the worship

in "spirit and in truth" that Jesus Himself described and foresaw.

The Christian church today has an important responsibility to fulfill. Worship in its totality must include all the essential elements described in the early part of this chapter. The biblical guidelines are clear.

The book of Revelation describes the singing heavenly hosts worshipping God the Creator, and Jesus, the Lamb slain since the foundation of the world (Rev 4:11; 5:12). In another part of the revelator's vision, he sees the heavenly choir singing a glorious anthem attributing blessing and honor and power to God.

And all the angels the throne stood around about the throne ... and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever. Amen. (Rev 7:11,12)

Dwight L. Moody agrees with many New Testament scholars when he point out that several New Testament passages are, in fact, hymns. He lists Philip 2:5-11; 2 Tim 1:9,10; and Titus 2:11-14.¹ The poetic or hymn-like structure of these passages is obvious in the original Greek. Many New Testament scholars believe that these and other similar passages in the gospels and the epistles formed the core of the early church's hymnody. No doubt, the New Testament believers used these in addition to selections

¹D. L. Moody, Christ and His Church (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), p.ii3.

from the book of psalms which it had inherited from the synagogue worship.

Ellen G. White confirms the significance of music, especially congregational singing, in the context of worship. The following quotation is an example of her comments on the subject:

I saw that all should sing with the Spirit and with the understanding also. God is not pleased with jargon and discord. Right is always more pleasing to Him than wrong. And the nearer the people of God can approach to the correct harmonies, the more God is glorified, the church benefited, and the believers favorably affected.¹

The Bible record in both Old and New Testaments is very clearly in favor of total and intelligent participation of the entire congregation in worship. The church today is obligated to follow those guidelines as it plans its worship services. Bible-based planning also assures the building and maintaining of attendance by members and visitors alike.

Based on this significant biblical record, Christians today would do well to make practical application of those same guidelines, rather than following their own personal inclinations and preferences.

Pastors and lay leaders of the church are responsible to act as role models for introducing and implementing those Biblical guidelines to their congregations.

¹Ellen G. White, Testimonies to the Church (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1892), 1:146.

CHAPTER III

INVESTIGATION OF WORSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

Background of the Development of Adventist Worship and Attendance

As stated above, the goal of this study was to investigate the influence of a series of sermons on worship attitudes and attendance in the Crossroads Church. However, before we go any further, it is necessary to understand the background of the development of the church's corporate worship. An investigation of this background briefly examines worship in the early church. Concepts of worship are studied from the perspective of the writings of Ellen G. White and other Adventist writers.

The distinctive faith and mission of the church is centered in the three angels' messages of Rev 14:6-12. The worship practices of the church are examined in light of this text.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that they "have been set in the world as watchmen and light-bearers" who "have been given a work of the most import, the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages"¹ of Rev. 14:6-12. At the very heart of this proclamation is a call to

¹E. G. White, Testimonies 9:19.

"worship Him that made heaven, and the earth" (Rev 14:7). The message proclaiming the end time, according to Adventist understanding, is really the "everlasting gospel" as "first announced in Eden after the fall of man."¹ This being the central mission of the church, every Adventist Christian is "called to have a personal part in the worldwide witness."² The result of this proclamation of the gospel brings into existence all of the church's "institutions of learning, publishing houses, and health institutions"³ for the furtherance of the gospel work throughout the world. Thus, in the light of this clearly stated purpose and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church, it seems natural to expect great concern for worship as it had development in various worldwide institutions within the historical development of the church. One would expect such concern to call for a theology and practice of worship that would clearly and boldly reflect the denomination's beliefs and edify the worshipping community. Such worship also bears effective witness before the world. However, this has not always been the case.

¹Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1888, 1907, 1911), p. 355.

²Seventh-day Adventist Year Book (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1981), p. 6.

³Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), p. 20.

To gain an understanding of how corporate worship did develop in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we must consider the following:

1. A brief survey of the general practice of worship in the church, the writings of early Adventists, and the church manuals.

2. An examination of the concerns about worship from individual Adventists such as Ellen G. White and others.

3. An investigation of the traditional emphasis of the three angels' messages, with respect to worship, and its impact on the form and content of Adventist worship service. (For Seventh-day Adventists, worship takes place on several occasions during the week: The Sabbath school, the 11 o'clock worship service, youth meetings, vespers, and prayer meetings are some of these. However, for the purpose of this paper, the main Sabbath morning worship service is the focus of study, and is referred to as the "worship service."¹

4. A brief discussion on the relationship between worship service and attendance in the light of the local church.

The above factors are examined because many local congregations are unaware of the relationship between what happens in church and its biblical /theological roots.

¹Ellen G. White, Spirit of Prophecy Treasure Chest, (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1960), pp. 86-89.

The Practice and Development of
Seventh-day Adventist Worship

Literary sources for Seventh-day Adventist worship practices are scanty. The paucity of information does not necessarily mean a lack of interest or concern for worship. Lack of proper church buildings did not deter early Adventists from gathering "in private homes, in large kitchens, in barns, in groves, and in school houses" to worship the Lord.¹ In 1855 a church edifice was constructed, close to the publishing house in Battle Creek. The building of this church was not without some objections. Some early Adventists feared it would soon lead the church towards increased formality. The meager information available seems to indicate a strong emphasis on the spirit of worship rather than on its form. The series of twenty-three Sabbath conferences held between 1848 and 1850 provides what is probably the earliest example of a concern for worship among early Adventists. In the conferences, particularly the seven study conferences in 1848, the doctrines were discussed and unified.² Some immediate effect was felt on worship development. For instance, during the conferences at Volney, New York, on August 18, 1848, sharp disagreement arose on the

¹Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1962), p. 26.

²P. Gerard Damsteegt, Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1977), p. 192.

meaning and observance on the Lord's supper.¹ During this conference one brother strongly maintained that the Lord's supper was a continuation of the passover and should be partaken of but once a year. The error was corrected by Ellen White after her vision and instruction. However, no details were mentioned. She only wrote, "Our meeting closed triumphantly, truth found the victory."² That foot washing might have been included in the Lord's supper may be inferred from the first hymnal (dated 1849, but actually published in 1850), which includes a hymn on foot-washing.³ In 1902 when Ellen White recalled those Sabbath conferences she alludes to elements of worship:

We would come together burdened in soul, praying that we might be one in faith and doctrine. . . . Scriptures were opened with a sense of awe. . . . We bow in prayer. . . in earnest supplication.⁴

Prayer, Bible study, preaching, and singing seem to have been significant elements in early Adventist worship. The accounts of the itinerant meetings of James and Ellen White in the 1850s also contained scattered references to elements of worship. James White reported one such meeting

¹Ellen G. White, Life Sketches (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1915), pp. 110-111.

²Ibid.

³James White ed. Hymns For God's Peculiar People Who Keep The Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus (Oswego, NY: Richard Oliphant, 1849).

⁴Ellen G. White, Christian Experience and Teaching (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1922), pp. 192-193.

in Michigan in 1853 during which prayers, testimonies of the brethren, and his preaching of the three angels' messages constituted the worship service.¹ Very little of liturgy or a rigid order of worship was followed. The book Church Order, written H. M. J. Richards in 1906, probably reflects the general concept and practice of worship among Adventists during the early 1900s and perhaps earlier. The author states that "the Seventh-day Adventist church has no creed but the Bible. It also has no ritual. Its services are conducted with simplicity."²

Ellen White's Concept of Worship

Ellen White's concept of worship reflects the feelings of one who had beheld the awesome glory of God, in her case, through visions, which occurred many times in life. Her concept is abundantly reflected in her many statements on reverence and awe in the worship of God.³ There are almost two pages of references on reverence listed in the Comprehensive Index to the Writings of E. G. White.⁴ It is

¹James White, "Western Tour," Review and Herald, July 7, 1853, p. 28.

²H. M. J. Richards, Church Order (Denver, Colorado: Colorado Tract Society, 1906), p. 64.

³Ellen G. White, Messages to Young People (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1962), p. 265.

⁴Board of Trustees of the Ellen G White Estate, Comprehensive Index to The Writings of Ellen G. White (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1963), 3: 2272-2274.

true that many of these references are a corrective to the growing irreverence occurring in the churches; however, the counsels must have stemmed from her profound experiences with the Holy God through visions and guidance given by the Holy Spirit. To her, God is most real. He is there, especially in the assembly of worship.¹ Here she urges all to "come on bended knee."² Believers are to come before God in prayer, with great reverential awe.³

Worship must also include the preaching of the word. Worship must include the hearing of his truth.⁴ and reverence during the service of the sanctuary.⁵ Such reverential awe can be induced only by a genuine awareness and acknowledgement of the "infinite greatness"⁶ of God. There must be a consciousness of the presence of God who is mankind's "Creator and . . . rightful sovereign."⁷ Man is

¹Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1917), p. 48.

²Ellen G. White, Selected Messages (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 2:314.

³Idem, Gospel Workers (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1915), pp. 176-78.

⁴Idem, Christian Experience and Teaching (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1922), pp. 192-193.

⁵Idem, Testimonies to the Church, 5:607-608.

⁶Idem, Prophets and Kings, p. 48

⁷Idem, Patriarchs and Prophets (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1958), p. 48.

to approach with humility and contrite spirit before the Holy God.¹ Worship must also reflect man's gratitude to his Maker and Redeemer.² In our worship of God He is "to be the subject of thought, the object of worship and everything that attracts the mind from the solemn, sacred service is an offense to him."³ The stamp of God's creatorship is His Holy Sabbath which "therefore lies at the very foundation of divine worship."⁴ To the worshipers, "the house of God on earth is the gate to heaven." Christian worship is to be pervaded with the very atmosphere of heaven.⁵ If worship services are to be characteristic of heavenly order, rules with regard to time, place, and manner of worshiping must be observed.⁶ Rules and order, however, must never lead to formalism of worship.⁷ Instead, Christian worship must be skillfully studied, planned, and conducted to make it intensely interesting and attractive.⁸ Only when it is thus

¹Idem, Prophets and Kings, p. 565.

²Idem, "Our Example," Review and Herald, October 24, 1899, p. 677.

³Idem, Testimonies to the Church, 5:499

⁴J. N. Andrews, History of the Sabbath, cited in E. G. White, Great Controversy (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1888), pp. 437-438.

⁵Idem, Testimonies to the Church, 5:491, 607.

⁶Ibid., p. 491.

⁷Ibid., 9: 143.

⁸Ellen G. White, Christian Service (Washington, DC: Home Missionary Department of General Conference of S. D.A., 1947), pp. 211-212.

well-planned can it do the greatest amount of good to the worshipers.¹ Worship is to be made intelligent. ²Worshipers need to be impressed "with the elevated, ennobling character of the truth and its power to cleanse the heart." This means that worship should reflect the theology of the message. White urges the church to "to make the Sabbath meeting interesting."³ Active participation by all present is important.⁴ Such worship is truly a communion, a divine-human dialogue. Ellen White rightly conceives of worship as consisting "much of prayer and praise" and "also of preaching."⁵ Such a proper balance between planned orderliness and spontaneous, active participation can only be achieved by prayerful preparation and planning. When congregational singing with understanding and spirit is added to all the other ingredients of worship, that balance is easier to arrive at.⁶ In addition, singing gives the congregation a meaningful opportunity to participate in worship. In sum, Ellen White's concept of worship is a lofty

¹Idem, "The New Heart," Review and Herald, April 14, 1885, p. 235.

²Idem, Testimonies to the Church, 2: 582.

³E. G. White, Evangelism, p. 207

⁴Idem,, "Love for the Erring," Review and Herald, November 30, 1886, p. 738.

⁵Idem,, "Acceptable Worship, Signs of the Times, June 24, 1886, p. 369.

⁶Idem,, "Acceptable Worship, Signs of the Times, June 24, 1886, p. 369.

and realistic one. Her idea embraces the sovereignty, and the transcendence, immanence, and mercy of God. She contrasts these aspects of God's character with the creatureliness of man and his dependence on and gratitude to Him. Thus she calls for an exalted worship of the Creator God with reverential awe, humility, joy, and gratitude. She urges adherence to order and rules but also insists on spirituality, intelligence, beauty, and meaning in worship. She calls for greater emphasis on the preaching of the Word, while giving due place to the congregation's active participation in worship. She calls for a right spirit of worship without neglecting form and content that should reflect the truth and character of God. The objective reality of God, His awesome creativeness, as well as the subjective value of congregational participation make worship truly a communion.

Richards describes the order of worship service as follows:

The minister enters the pulpit and kneels for a few moments in silent prayer to God. All the people bow their heads and unite with their minister in silent prayer, imploring the divine blessing upon the services of the hour. Then the minister announces the opening hymn. Then all stand and join in the singing. After this the minister and all the people kneel in prayer, while he leads them in public extemporaneous prayer of moderate length and appropriate to the needs of the people and the subject of the sermon. Usually a second hymn is then sung, and the sermon follows this. The sermon is concluded by another hymn sung by the entire congregation after which the benediction is pronounced by the minister.¹

¹Ibid.

This order of worship is recognizable in many Adventist churches around the world today. The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual provides further information on the development of worship since the 1900s. The 1932 edition of the Church Manual stresses the need for reverence and pious decorum in the sanctuary.¹ The statement that the church prescribes no set form of worship is still retained in the more recent editions of the Manual. The suggested order of worship includes the following items: Invocation, Scripture Reading, Hymn, Prayer, Offering, Special Music, Sermon, Hymn, and Benediction. For many churches, this suggested order has become a set order. The Manual also emphasizes avoiding long "preliminaries" so that "more time can be given to the study of the Word of God."² Since the early days of Adventism, worship has centered around the sermon, with the rest of the service being regarded as "preliminaries." This seems to be the general concept of worship held by a majority of Seventh-day Adventists, even today.

The Church Manual of 1951 presents a new awareness of the holistic view of worship. It describes two main divisions of worship service; the first comprise the

¹Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1932), p. 151.

²Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (1951) (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1951), p. 108.

congregational response in prayer, singing, and gifts, while the second contains the the message of the Word.¹ Prayer is regarded as the holiest exercise; the giving of offerings is considered a vital part, and the sermon is highlighted as the most important part of the worship service. Clearly, then, there has been an increasing awareness of the importance of other worship elements besides the sermon, over the years.

The Church Manual of 1976 states that long preliminaries of "opening exercises" should not consume time otherwise reserved "for the worship" and the preaching of the Word. The idea still lingers, that the service consists of the sermon and the preliminaries. The Manual for Ministers (1977) seems to correct this concept. It stresses that

there should be no preliminaries in worship, for the offering, music, prayer, preaching, benediction--all are acts of worship and should be considered as such. (For,) every part of the worship service is important. . . However, every feature must be related to the whole which must show progression, climax, and culmination in congregational response.²

The foregoing quotations show evidences of a gradual but definite development toward a holistic concept of worship that treats all the elements of the service as being integrally important. This awareness seems to have

¹Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1976), p. 113.

²General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Manual For Ministers, (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1977), pp. 86. 92

intensified, especially since the 1950s. During the same time the church has also paid increasing attention to the structure and content of the order of service; the emphasis has been on progression, movement, and culmination in worship. However, the emphasis on meaningful form, based on the the theological beliefs of the church, was not yet fully considered.

Concepts of Worship as Expressed in the Writings of Ellen G. White

The gradual development of Adventist worship practices often came in response to calls for improvement proceeding from various sources. One such source was the writings of Ellen White. She clearly delineated many significant guidelines for Adventist belief and practice in worship. Another important source has been the creative concern of many Adventists, based on their study of Biblical principles and the counsels of Ellen White. New concepts and understandings are constantly being introduced for developing a worship service that more nearly meets the needs of each historical context.

Concepts of Worship from Other Adventist Writers

Adventists are as concerned about their worship as they are about Sabbath keeping. The matter of reverence in worship seems to be a personal, perennial problem since the early days. In the 1880s, Ellen White wrote that there had been "a great change, not for the better, but for the worse,

in the habits and practices of the people with reference to religious worship,"¹ and that unless a correct idea of true worship and true reverence are impressed upon the people, mere aloofness would only be "an offense to God and a disgrace to religion."²The numerous articles on reverence in worship that appeared in Ministry magazine reflect the same perennial problem, particularly during the 1930s and 1940s.³

Of the forty-three articles on worship listed on one page, more than twenty deal with reverence in worship. Most of these articles define reverence as quietness in the church. The topic "Growing Irreverence in the House of God" was included in the agenda as conference presidents of the North American Division met in 1929. A brief report on their discussion on reverence appeared in Ministry⁴ Delegates who had worked in areas under a strong influence of Roman Catholicism or Anglicanism reported that they had very little problem with reverence in worship. Suggested solutions rarely touched theological grounds.

Various suggestions solutions for combating irreverence emerged from that discussion. These included

¹Ellen G. White, Testimonies to the Church, 5:491.

²Ibid., p. 500.

³Comprehensive Index to Ministry, 1928-1961.
(Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association,) p.156.

⁴"Reverence in Public Worship," Ministry, January 1930, pp. 18-21.

exemplary conduct on the part of worship leaders, asking the congregation to remain seated until properly dismissed, properly training children in the home, ushering children straight from their Sabbath School classes to their parents' pews in the sanctuary. Pastors and church officers were encouraged to print or mimeograph bulletins containing the order of worship. Another idea was to display a card with the words, "Sorry, please be quiet." In 1940, one pastor wrote that the Adventist over-reaction to formal worship had led to the opposite extreme of informality in worship which, in turn, contributed largely to the problem of irreverence.¹ There was a move to unify the order of worship, more from pragmatic necessity to avoid confusion and embarrassment and to save time rather than a desire to improve the spirit of reverence in church. Conference officers traveling around the churches are often embarrassed by the lack of uniformity in worship practices followed in different churches.² The suggested order of worship of the 1932 Church Manual, mentioned above, was generally followed by most churches. Adventist worship was unmistakably sermon-centered, since the sermon was considered "the heart of the service."³ Since 1950, there seems have been an awakening to the nature

¹Howard Capman, "Reverence in the Church Service," Ministry, October 1940, p. 17.

²R. R. Bietz, "Uniform Church Service," Ministry, November 1945, p. 11.

³A. E. Millner, "Order of Service on Sabbath," Ministry, January 1945, 18.

and theology of worship. At the "heart of worship, there is a fundamental need, the need to commune with God." Worship is truly a form of "communion," so writes R. A. Anderson.⁴ Worship is not mere activity. The focus and center of worship is God and Christ the Savior. The function of the minister in worship is both priestly and prophetic. In his priestly role, the minister represents his people before the throne of God. In his prophetic role, the minister speaks for God to the people.¹ P. O. Campbell, in 1952, considered that "preaching is not the all important thing of worship. Prayer, singing, and scripture reading are all divinely ordained parts of the whole."² Others who wrote concerning the subject of worship, to Ministry magazine during the 1950s include W. E. Strickland,³ and A. Myer.⁴ In 1957, Anderson reiterated the God-centeredness of worship, in another article. This time, he did so in the context of the three angels' messages. He stated, "At the heart of God's last message is a call to worship."⁵ This is probably

⁴R. A. Anderson, "True Worship," Ministry, June 1951, p. 11.

¹Ibid.

²P. O. Campbell, "Soul Winning Music," Ministry, February 1952, p. 31

³W. E. Strickland, "The Pastor as Leader of Worship," Ministry, July 1951, p. 16

⁴A. Myer, "A Reasonable Worship," Ministry, July 1956, p. 20.

⁵R. A. Anderson, "The Supremacy of Worship," Ministry, June 1957, p. 14

the first time that an Adventist writer links Rev 14 explicitly with public worship. But, Anderson did not go beyond that point. The church, in the context of Rev 14, not only has "a great work to do, but also a great God to worship."¹ He proceeds to urge a balance between preaching and other elements in worship, in order to allow for more congregational participation. No essential parts of worship must be termed "preliminaries."² Many of Anderson's ideas are incorporated into subsequent editions of the Church Manual, particularly the 1977 edition. In an editorial note to the article by R. D. Moon in Ministry, the editor urged that worship in both form and content calls for careful study. Adventists must not be so iconoclastic as to abolish all forms in which reverence is expressed.³ Moon himself considered true worship as an active entity rather than a passive attitude. Hence, he concludes that congregational participation is imperative. Moon also correctly points out, that, without an ounce of understanding of true worship, congregational participation would be meaningless. Such a lack of understanding would thus add to the apathy already prevalent in the church; he is referring to the attitude held by many that worship is something approved by the church, but which can be neglected without serious spiritual

¹Ibid.

²Manual for Ministers (1977), p. 86.

³R. D. Moon, "The Act of Public Worship," Ministry, January 1963, p. 16

loss.¹ In 1964, yet another article by Anderson affirmed Adventist worship as being pulpit-centered. He expressed great satisfaction at the symbolic change of the kneeling position of ministers in the pulpit. It was not without the cry of "heresy" that ministers gradually changed from kneeling with faces toward the rostrum chair and backs toward the pulpit and the congregation do an about-turn position. To Anderson, the act of facing the rostrum and the congregation correctly symbolized the prophetic, rather than the priestly function of the minister.² The book And Worship Him by Norval F. Pease represents the first book on worship published by a Seventh-day Adventist writer. In his book, Pease asserts that

The success of the church to which we are devoting our lives depend to a great extent on what happens between eleven and twelve o'clock on Sabbath mornings. All the great activities of the church would be dissipated if not nurtured with worshipful services . . . Adventist worshipers should pay as great attention to the way they worship as they do to the day of worship.³

Pease rightly insists that the way one worships should reflect the theology of the worshipers even more so than the day on which they worship. He underscores the importance of having a sound theological basis for worship, when he states that "we must have form, but we do not want

¹Ibid.

²R. A. Anderson, "Effective Worship," Ministry, September 1964, p. 48.

³Norval F. Pease, "And Worship Him" (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1967), pp. 7, 8.

formalism, and the form must take on its significance from the content."¹

Notwithstanding the traditional Adventist aversion to liturgy, Norval Pease boldly and correctly points out the positive role of liturgy to Adventist thinking and practice. The unfortunate association or equation of liturgy with formalism is neither proper nor necessary and inevitable. Formalism is no respecter of any form of worship. It can just as easily invade Adventist worship despite its non-liturgical content. A century ago, Ellen White made this complaint regarding Adventist worship:

There is too much formality in our religious services. The Lord would have His ministers who preach the Word energized by His Holy Spirit; and the people who hear should not sit in drowsy indifference, or stare vacantly about, making no response to what is said.²

Since the Adventist church has never been known to have engaged in "liturgical worship" similar to what is practiced in certain other churches, Ellen White could not have been criticizing such a liturgy. Nonetheless, the non-liturgical worship of the Seventh-day Adventist church had already fallen into formality even during her time. In fact, a study of her writings would reveal her strong reaction against worship which does not allow for active participation of the congregation.

¹Ibid., pp. 51,78.

²E. G. White, Testimonies to the Church, 5: 318-319

It seems that the problem actually lies in the lack of proper liturgy, a lack which turns the congregation into passive spectators rather than active participants. Such dull worship turns the minister into a soulless person, uttering meaningless words, with no effect on the congregation. Many other statements of Ellen White concerning the evil of formalism portray her strong reactions, not against liturgy as such, but against erroneous liturgy which reflects false theology.¹ Ellen White's strong reaction in Great Controversy is directed at the enticing Roman worship, with its false theology, and not against liturgy or form of worship as such. Improper and erroneous liturgy is dangerous and detrimental. Non-liturgy that becomes formal is equally harmful. Wisdom and responsibility demand a proper liturgy that would correctly reflect not man's fancy but God's truth and character. In 1973, Raymond Holmes wrote on the relationship between liturgy and theology with an application to Adventist worship.² Since then Holmes has developed his thesis into a book manuscript.

Having defined liturgy as the content and action of an order of worship and having recognized the three angels'

¹E. G. White, The Great Controversy, pp. 556-557; Testimonies to the Church, 9: 143.

²C. Raymond Holmes, The Liturgical Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Lecture notes distributed in Principle of Worship class, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, February 8, 1973, pp. 1-10. (mimeographed)

messages as the central mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church, Holmes is convinced that the church does indeed have a liturgical mission to the world. This liturgical mission involves and demands a clear and unambiguous liturgical expression of a unity between doctrine and worship practice. Holmes singles out the Sabbath, the priestly ministry of Christ, and the Parousia as being the significant focal points of the three angels' messages. These constitute the Adventist distinctives. With these three doctrines, Holmes accordingly organizes an order of worship that confesses the Sabbath truth in the introit, the heavenly ministry of Christ in the prayer response, and the Parousia in the benedictory response. Undoubtedly, this would give the participant a profound impression of these three doctrines of the church. However, the question arises as to whether these are the only beliefs based on the Bible that Adventist worship must emphasize. Obviously not. The whole message of the three angels takes in the entire revelation of God's character and ministry, reaching back all the way to the creation of the earth and the fall of man, as recorded in Genesis. The last message is essentially the message of restoration of that which was lost in the beginning. The book of Revelation predicts a recovery of the true worship which began at creation, addressed to God as the Sovereign Creator (Rev 14:6,7).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a mandate to make its worship services reflect its theological concepts.

Since those concepts are founded on the three angels' messages (Rev 14:6-12), they must of necessity inform the worship practices of this church. Raymond Holmes identifies this mandate as the "liturgical mission" of the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

The way we implement that liturgical mission -- the way we conduct our worship services - must be determined by our understanding of the whole gospel message. What we do must grow out of what we believe and teach. Because it is a part of communicating the gospel, what happens in worship is not a matter of indifference. It is not an incidental matter that can be left to the whim and fancy of pastors and / or presiding lay elders. It requires prayerful thought and careful planning to create a deeply meaningful service. It also requires careful education of the congregation as to the meaning of symbolic actions.¹

Holmes also points out that Seventh-day Adventist worship must be distinctive:

While we share many liturgical traditions with other denominations, our worship ought not to be identical with theirs. The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church must be made audible and visible in its worship services, thereby reflecting the distinctive doctrines we hold to be essential and vital.²

This leads conveniently into the next point of inquiry. How has the Seventh-day Adventist church traditionally interpreted the three angels' messages in the context of worship life within the church? The section which follows traces the relationship between the three angels' messages and worship.

¹C. Raymond Holmes, Sing A New Song, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1984), p. 15.

²Ibid.

Worship and the Three Angels' Messages

For the Adventist church, the point of emphasis in the three angels' messages has been the urgency of the proclamation of the "everlasting Gospel," in view of the arrival of God's judgment hour and the imminent parousia (Rev 14:6,7). Historically, the first and second angels' messages were fulfilled in the Millerite movement. The first angel's message was fulfilled in the preaching of the imminent parousia or return of Christ in 1844 and before. The proclamation of the second message took place during the summer of 1844, when the Advent message was rejected by the popular churches. Those churches began expelling those of their members who had espoused the advent cause.¹ However, as the Adventist teachings continued to develop, the third angel's message came to be taught, not only as culminating, but also as including the the entire threefold message.² In the words of Ellen G. White,

The first and second messages were given in 1843, 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third, but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed.³

This last message of God is also cast in the context of worship. Worship has been the central and basic issue

¹Don F. Neufeld, "The Three Angels' Messages in Their Historical Application," Review and Herald, April 11, 1974, 14.

²Idem, Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, [Commentary Reference Series, vol. 10 (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1966), 10:1484.

³Idem, Counsels for Writers and Editors (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1946), p. 26.

throughout the ages. Man either worships God or worships the competitors of God. Pease rightly observes that the conflict of the ages is a conflict regarding worship. This has become the crucial issue in the last days.¹ The message of the first angel calls for the worship of the Creator God. The message of the second angel intensifies the call by demanding a total separation from Babylon, the false or mixed system of loyalty that usurps the purity of faith and allegiance due the Creator God. The message of the third angel once again focuses on worship as the final issue of the conflict. The third angel's message challenges everyone to choose between worshipping God or worshipping the Beast and its image. The test of loyalty is the law of God, particularly the Sabbath commandment (cf. Rev 14:12; Dan 7:25). The traditional Adventist view on worship in the context of Rev 14:6-12 has almost always meant an obedience born of loyalty to God and His divine Law. And rightly so. Andrews continues his comment on the issue of worship in the third angel's message, with the following words:

It is not difficult, therefore, to see how men will be made to worship the beast, for whenever they obey the requirements of the beast, in the place of the commandment of God, they worship the beast, for they acknowledge him as above the Most High" (emphasis supplied).²

¹Sabbath School Quarterly, October-December, 1976, p. 79.

²J. N. Andrews, The Three Messages of Revelation 14 (Battle Creek, MI: Review & Herald Publishing Company, 1892), p. 113.

The focus of Adventist worship is to give glory to God.¹ Rev 4 and 5 record the prophet's vision of the heavenly worship celebration, the prototype on which earthly worship must be based. These two chapters contain five verbal elements of worship. Two of these are recorded in chapter 4, and three in chapter 5.² Holmes lists these five elements as follows:

1. The speech of the four living creatures in the form of a Sanctus or ascription of holiness to God.

2. The response to that sanctus in the form of a doxology (glorifying God) by the twenty-four elders who match action to words by casting down their crowns before God's throne.

3. The third verbal element represents a change in focus, which takes place between chapters 4 and 5. Worship attributed to the Creator in the earlier chapter is now focused on an equal basis to Jesus the Lamb of God.

4. Next, the multitude of angels breaks forth in a doxology of their own, also acknowledging the Lamb that was slain.

5. The whole world joins the heavenly chorus in a grand doxology-anthem, attributing blessing, honor, glory and dominion forever to the Lamb that was slain (Rev 5:13).

¹Holmes, pp. 18-24

²Ibid.

Worship and obedience have been used interchangeably and are often treated as synonyms of each other. This is illustrated in the following quotation:

Worship is a total giving of oneself to God. It is a way of life, a fundamental loyalty. Worship is complete obedience to our Creator.¹

Kenneth H. Wood places the matter of worship even more definitely within the scope of Rev 14 when he confirms that this scripture offers man a choice "between loyalty to God and defection against His government."² True worship cannot be offered without obedience to God. However, worship must consist of more than a mental or emotional assent or even an attitude of obedience to God. It must be expressed in actual activities of worship, of the bowing down in reverential awe, as the Greek term (proskunvew) means in Rev 14:7. The same term describes the twenty-four elders bowing down before God (Rev 4:10; 19:4).³

In recent decades, Adventist writers have become more aware of the implication of the term "worship" in Rev 14 for the worship service in the Adventist church. In his study of the first angel's message, Russell Holt points out that "Adventist worship should emphasize the creatorship of God as His basic claim for man's allegiance, faith, and rev-

¹Russel Holt, "The First Angel's Message," These Times, January 1975, p. 29.

²Kenneth H. Wood, "A People Who Will Triumph," Adventist Review, August 21, 1980, p. 8.

³A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 4th ed. (1952), s.v. "proskunvew".

erence."¹ Yet another noted Adventist preacher and writer, Louis D. Venden, addresses Adventist worship in the context of Rev 14. Venden sees this chapter as a call to regard worship as the very mission and existence of the church.² The 1977 Manual for Ministers clearly describes the heart of the Advent message as a call to worship the Creator God in corporate worship. The Manual for Ministers also makes a very interesting observation: The imperative "and worship Him" is set within the context of God's last call to mankind. This, according to the compilers of the Manual for Ministers, would imply that the meaning of true worship had been either perverted or forgotten.³ The implication is clear. The message not only directs man to worship the right God but also the right way of worshipping Him. Worship, as a life of obedience to God, must of necessity involve the expression of that obedience in corporate worship in a way that is proper and effective.

Holmes suggests that, in view of the current awakening within this church to its responsibilities in the area of worship,

Ministers should teach congregations the relationship between theology and worship, between beliefs and rituals, and to train them to appreciate the best. To fulfill this responsibility, worship leaders must

¹Holt, p. 29.

²Louis D. Venden, "Upgrading Worship Hour," Ministry, December 1976, p. 23.

³Manual for Ministers, (1977), p. 84

receive adequate training in harmony with Adventist theology.¹

Worship and Attendance in
the Local Congregation

Not neglecting our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. (Heb 10:25)

The writer of the above scripture is obviously referring to Christian gatherings for the purpose of worship and mutual encouragement. During New Testament times, such gatherings were commonly held in the homes of believers.² Obviously, some church members were in the habit of not attending worship service. Some were neglecting to fellowship with their brethren in the seasons of worship and devotion, to their own detriment. In so doing they were living in contravention of the counsel that had just been given in the previous verse. The writer has just admonished them, in vs. 24, to encourage their fellow believers in love and good works. In view of the political situation prevailing at the time the book of Hebrews was written, some may have absented themselves from fear of incurring governmental displeasure and possible civil penalties. Others may have remained absent from religious services because of their carelessness and indifference. (See vs. 26, 27).

Why should the church increase its attendance? Why must its members attend services regularly? Is it necessary?

¹Holmes, p. 16.

²E. G. White, Testimonies to the Church 6:47

Is church attendance viewed as a duty, a habit, a moral responsibility, a chore, a pastime, a diversion, or a privilege? Even church leaders must face the same question, clearly. Do they attend church because it is their duty, or because they are paid to do so? When one is no longer in a position of leadership, will he maintain the same degree of dedication and involvement? How many church goers know the true purpose of their attendance? Doubtless, some go from force of habit. This was the case of a blind man who came to church, regularly each week, accompanied by his seeing-eye dog. Long after his master's death, the dog continued coming to church. How many can give a reasonable answer to the question: "Why do you go to church?:" God has established a day for public worship, the Sabbath, and a place for such worship, the sanctuary (Exod 20:8-11; 25:8).

On that day, in the place assigned, God promised to meet with His people. Prior to the erection of the Mosaic tabernacle, worshipers built altars where they met with God in public worship (Gen 8:20; 12:7; 13:19; 22:9; 26:25; 33:20). Such places became "Holy Ground" (Gen 28:16-19; Exod 3:5). Early Christians congregated in rooms, private houses, or at the Jewish temple (Act 1:13, 14; 2:46, 47). The Bible presents at least eight reasons why believers should attend church regularly:

1. To pray and sing to God with understanding (1 Cor 14:15, 25)

2. To express to God joyful praises and thanksgiving
(Ps 100: 1-4; 122:1)

3. To edify and strengthen one another in the faith
(1 Cor 14:26)

4. To engage in meaningful fellowship (Act 2:46,47)

5. To participate in the study of God's Word (Luke
4:16-21)

6. To listen with understanding to the proclamation
of His Word (Rom 10:17; Rev 2:7)

7. To offer one's means to God's service (Deut
16:15-17; Rev 2:7)

8. To kneel before God with a heart fully
surrendered to Him (Ps 95:6-9).

Rightly understood, church attendance provides a
wonderful means for personal Christian growth. Roy L. Smith,
religious writer and columnist, observes,

The strength of the church does not consist of the host
of those sick saints who gather on the Sabbath day seek-
ing strength to get them through one more week, but lies
in the effective force it can put into the field to
battle against entrenched wrong and militant evil . . .
We come to the house of God as soldiers to a conference
on strategy. We receive our marching orders and accept
our assignments.¹

Going to church should recharge our spiritual bat-
teries, so that on the morrow and in the succeeding days we
may go forth to carry out God's glorious purposes for daily
living. The Psalmist testified, "I was glad when they said

¹Vincent Q. Tigno, Jr., "The Wise and Wherefores of
Worship," Adventist Review, October 10, 1985, p. 9.

unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Ps 122:1). Church attendance ought to be a joyful experience, something eagerly looked forward to, not in the sense of worldly entertainment, but in terms of attaining the true purpose for living. In writing of the sanctuary, the Psalmist understood the meaning of life's paradoxes (Ps 73:17). He had felt perplexed by the prosperity of the wicked (vs. 3) "These fat cats have everything their hearts could ever wish for," he sighed (vs. 7, The Living Bible). But, when he contemplated the sanctuary, God enlightened his mind, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary," He gratefully acknowledged (Ps 77:13). Church leaders are appointed as communicators of God's will through the church services. They are not to waste people's time with meaningless messages and irrelevant promotions of various church-related fund-raising campaigns. People come to church to hear God's voice through the preacher (Rom 10:14). When there is no "Word from the Lord," the people are cheated and the temple becomes a mere center for money changers. Charles Spurgeon was once quoted to have remarked, "An altar with nothing but cold ashes cannot set the church and the world on fire."¹

If the preacher behind the pulpit does not have a message in mind, no sacred flame in the heart or on his lips, he might as well keep silent. Otherwise, he is

¹Quoted by Vincent Q. Tigno, Jr., "The Wise and Wherefores of Worship," Adventist Review, October 10, 1985, p. 8.

offering "strange fire" on the altar (Num 3:4). One's position does not guarantee an effective performance in the pulpit. Spiritual gifts vary for the "edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph 4:11, 12). Some men are suited for administrative roles while others are called to preach the Word. In such cases the leader should be humble enough, honest enough, and kind enough not to accept an invitation to preach. Perhaps, he could function better by leading God's people to Him on the wings of prayer. He will not be a less important person if he declines to preach. Parishioners should come to church in the true spirit of public or corporate worship. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). To come in the true spirit of worship is to come in a mood to listen. "Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools" (Eccl 5:1). The Lord speaks in the worship hour through various means. He uses songs, prayers, the lesson study, or the sermon. Oftentimes, just to sit and meditate does wonders for the worshiper. Women in the nursery or mothers' room should stop their weekly gossip and listen to the good news. "Outside committees" on the front step or in the parking lot should meet inside the sanctuary instead to communicate with God. "We would see Jesus" is the quest not only of the Greeks of old but also of many earnest, seeking souls today.

Calvin Coolidge is quoted as having expressed such a need in the following words:

I can conceive of no adequate remedy for the evils which beset our society, except through the influence of religion. There is no form of education which will not fail. There is no form of reward which will not fail. We do not need more national development; we need more spiritual development. We do not need more intellectual power; we need spiritual power. We do not need more knowledge; we need more religion. We do not need more of the things that are seen; we need more of the things that are unseen.¹

The worth of the human personality, the freedom of worship, the freedom of speech and the press, these heritages are priceless, and must never be lost. The church is the symbol of these liberties. Those who make the sanctuary a regular place for naps should rise and shine for a change. Youngsters who construct paper air planes out of church bulletins should soar on wings of prayer and song instead. Why increase church attendance? God has promised to meet there with His people (Exod 25:8). Christians are urged not to "neglect the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is" (Heb 10:25). Unless attendance at church is encouraged and increased, there can be no church. Empty pews make prayerless people and powerless lives. In an article dated March 1, 1989, C. E. Bradford, vice-president for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, had this to say about non-attendance at worship service:

A careful review of the records indicates that there are more than 700,000 men and women in North America whose

¹Albert H. Gage, Increasing Church Attendance Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House), p. 15.

names have been dropped, and at least 300,000 more who are still on the books but never attend church . . . It is estimated that there are one and two million former and non-attending Seventh-day Adventists in North America. Six major studies have been completed by Adventist researchers since the mid-1970s and much has been learned.¹

Who Are the Drop Outs?

The surveys mentioned in Bradford's article paint a composite portrait of a drop out who grew up in the Adventist faith, a young adult who has gone through a divorce or never married, had few friends in his or her local church, holds a professional job that is very demanding, and does not find that the program of the local church meets his needs. Bradford points out that "one of the most widely held myths about dropouts is that they are the result of quick, high pressure public evangelism."² In fact, half of them grew up in Adventist homes and only one in seven came into the church through public evangelism. Four out of five spent more than two months in preparation for baptism, and the majority have attended church regularly for six years or longer. The method of evangelism or conversion has little to do with whether the person will or will not drop out of the church. However, one's age is a powerful predictor. Nearly half of the drop outs are in the 20-to-35 year age group, and another quarter are in the 36-50 year age bracket. "The church is loosing its younger members,"

¹Bradford, "Homecoming Emphasis, Adventist Review, March 1, 1989, pp. 2,6.

²Ibid., p. 6.

according Jerry W. Lee, a researcher at Loma Linda University, who is quoted in Bradford's article.¹

"Individuals in the missing and apostate groups are also more likely to report having been divorced,"² states Lee. Dropouts are three times as likely as active members to be divorced and remarried, and four times as likely to be divorced and single. Half of the former members that Lee surveyed were single at the time they dropped out. "Perhaps as many as half of our single members never attend church."³ The above information is very alarming, yet encouraging. If the church works hard enough for those who do not attend worship, we can retrieve at least some of these individuals.

The following blessings result from going to church with the right spirit and the purpose:

- More action and less faction.
- More workers and fewer shirkers.
- More backers and fewer talkers.
- More praying and less straying.
- More of God's plan and less of man's.
- More burden bearers and less talebearers.
- More tongues of fire and less fiery tongues.
- More zealous efforts and less jealous thoughts.
- More love for the Word and less love for the world.

¹Quoted by Bradford, Homecoming Emphasis, p. 4

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

More seeking for grace and less seeking for place.
 More holiness of life and less bickering and strife.
 More fasting and praying and less feasting and playing.
 More religion in politics and less politics in
 religion.¹

True attendance gives public witness to the Lordship of Christ over one's time, means, and service. It becomes a gathering of God's saints in anticipation of that great glorious get-together in God's tomorrow. Ellen White, describes that grand occasion thus:

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him Who created all, flow life, and light, and gladness, through the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.²

Church attendance is the voluntary and outward expression of an inner spiritual life. It cannot be forced or commanded. People do not attend church through fear or compulsion. Nor do people go to church expecting a tangible reward. No compensation, however great or attractive, would maintain attendance at any church over any long period of years. Love never fails. After all other methods have failed, love opens the way. In Christ, all things hold together. In the world all things tend to fall apart but in

¹Quoted from The Lutheran Herald, by Vincent Q. Tigno, Jr., "The Wise and Wherefores of Worship," Adventist Review, October 10, 1985, p. 9.

²E. G. White, The Great Controversy p. 595.

Christ all things consist (hold together) (Col 1:17). Albert

H. Gage makes the following observation:

Church attendance can be taught. We teach a little by what we say, more by what we do and most by what we are. In the home and at church school we can teach the art and the power and necessity of public worship. The most enduring and most effective form of instruction is a living example, lived out by a parent, teacher, or church officers. Best of all a Christ-like character and a Christ-like habit of church attendance is a lesson that can never be forgotten nor completely ignored by children, neighbors and friends.¹

Paul Leetan suggests that church attendance is good for health:

A Johns Hopkins University medical researcher has just discovered what the Presbyterian Ministers' Life Insurance Fund has known for more than two centuries: Attending church is good for your health. The risk of fatal heart diseases is almost twice as high for the non-church goer than for men who attend church. This was revealed in a study made by Dr. George W. Comstock of Johns Hopkins University's Department of Epidemiology. The doctor also observed that the "clean life" associated with church attendance appears to be statistically related to a lower incidence of other major diseases, Dr. Comstock's study also shows that going to church is a very favorable input.²

Why increase church attendance? Statistics show that in Sweden, Sunday church attendance averages little more than 3 percent of the entire population, as reported by the state Lutheran church in that country.³

Noeline Johanson, Children's Ministries Coordinator for the North American Division Church Ministries, states:

¹Gage, p. 19.

²Paul Lee Tan Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, for Pastors, Teachers, and Christian Workers (Rockford, IL: Assurance Publishers, 1984), p. 241.

³Ibid.

People attend church for a variety of reasons: to fellowship, to visit, to gain blessings and refreshing, to worship as a congregation, to pay their dues to the sub-culture. To receive help, to dress up and look good, to feel good, because they have a part in the program, or feel needed because they are curious to see or hear someone, because they hurt or need help, or simply because the Bible says to, while some of these reasons are better than others, they are all valid.¹

This shows that the church needs to project a caring image of itself, in order to attract and retain its members.

God commanded the Israelites to "observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my Sanctuary" (Lev 19:20). One wonders what basic value God had in mind when He gave that command. Does God consider people as being the basic value? (Mark 12:28-31). Notice that, from a human point of view, love is not the bottom line. God is. He is the reason for love. Gen 1:1, puts this in perspective. "In the beginning God." We go to church because God is. We go in order to "ascribe to the Lord the glory due to His name," to "worship the Lord in splendor of His holiness" (Ps.29:2). A perusal of the comprehensive index to the writings of Ellen G. White reveals that she says little by way of exhorting attendance, probably because non-attendance was not a problem.² However, she does say much about church being a warm, accepting place.³ She counsels leaders to plan the services so as to

¹Noelene Johnson, "How Important Is Worshiping Together?" Adventist Review, September 21, 1989, pp. 12-14

²E. G. White, Testimonies to the Church, 2: 578; idem, The Ministry of Healing, Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1905), p. 511.

³E. G. White, Testimonies to the Church, 5: 608-610)

attract people, particularly the young.¹ She has also written a great deal regarding reverence in the house of God.²

A thoughtful hour of such worship lifts the load of care; worries give way to courage, strength, and optimism. Worship takes place in many settings. One can worship with his family, or in solitude, or participate corporately with the congregation of believers. Family worship draws the family members together, offering them a sense of security. Private, personal worship allows a depth of experience possible only in solitude. Corporate worship, on the other hand, provides people a special opportunity to broaden their understanding of God. For, while we are all made in the image of God, none of us is capable of reflecting Jesus perfectly. It takes the entire body of Christ, the corporate body, to provide the full image. "To the humble, believing, soul, the house of God on earth is the gate of heaven." The worship service here is a preparation for the church above. The home is the sanctuary for the family. The word is for the individual,

but the church is the sanctuary for the congregation.
 . . . Happy are those who have a sanctuary where they can worship. Be it high or low, in the city or among the rugged mountain caves, in the lowly cabin or in the wilderness.³

¹Ibid. 2:579,582.

²Ibid., 5: 491-494, 496; see also idem, Prophets and Kings, pp. 565, 566; Evangelism, pp. 505, 507.

³Ibid., 5: 491-492.

Ellen White continues by recounting the experience of the Israelites in the wilderness. She describes the Exodus narrative, when the pillar of cloud above the tabernacle demonstrated God's presence in such a manner that no Israelite doubted that God dwelt among them. He still draws close when we gather in the house of prayer. He dwells among His people, reconciling and reuniting them with God and with each other. Knowing this, how can they absent ourselves from Him? What are the positive advantages that regular attendance brings? According to Ted Wick, Youth Ministries Coordinator for North American Division

Going to church keeps you aware of who you are and what your life is about. Avoiding the corporate body puts you on a different track. You can get caught up in work and entertainment, and not realize that you are distracting yourself from God.¹

The apostle Paul exhorted the sailors: "Unless these men stay with the ship, you can not be saved" (Act 27:31). People adhere to a congregation when something keeps them together. Love is the adhesive that keeps a congregation together. People like to go where they are made to feel good about themselves.

When you manifest a hard, unfeeling spirit, you are repulsing the very ones whom you should win. Your harshness destroys their love of assembling together and too often result in driving them from the truth" . . . (But when we meet together with God's love in our hearts, it will be) "welling up like a spring in the desert," and

¹Ted Wick, Adventist Review, September 21, 1989, p. 13.

we will refresh others, making them also "eager to drink of the waters of life"¹

Fault finding and criticism of others undo the ties that bind the young to the church. The offering of a humble and contrite spirit is "the most important ingredient of true worship."²

When we come to worship before God we are all on the same level before Him. The only vertical line of status is from God to the worshiper.³ Participation in the choir and other musical activities in the worship service can often be an effective and valid incentive to help retain young people in the church.

One of the most effective means of internal evangelism is in creating interest and participation of young people by involving them in choirs or other assemblies from an early age. In becoming contributors to the worship services they develop a sense of belonging and ownership in the church. Church growth experts again suggest that building a youth choir of 35 voices often will do far more to encourage attendance than allocating equivalent resources to developing a high school youth group.⁴

Leaders of educational institutions in this denomination have often been involved in heated discussions on the advantages and disadvantages of requiring students to attendance at worship services. In discussing this topic remarked:

¹Ibid., pp. 608, 609.

²E. G. White, Prophets and Kings, p. 565.

³Noelene Johnson, pp. 12-14.

⁴Joylin Campbell-Yukl, Music Ministry (January-March, 1989), p. 8.

It seems to me, that unless worship attendance is required of students at least part of the time, the faculty is remiss in upholding the church's principles. Class attendance is required. Is this considered cause for rebellion? The student must realize and understand that religious schools are under mandate from God to emphasize the spiritual as fully as the academic. The rules of our schools exist, apart from scholastic goals. To help young people in their formative years to bond so strongly with the Lord that the bond can not be broken by the later buffetings and trials of life.¹

Many honest Christians and others would agree with Celia Allison Hahn, director of Publications for the Alban Institute, and editor of the institute's journal, Action Information, who poses the question, "Do you have to go to church to be religious?" She says,

Most Americans agree that one can be a good Christian or Jew without attending church or synagogue. That is the opinion of 88% of those who do not go to church and 70% of those who do, according to a 1978 Gallup poll. The statement that one can be religious without attending church is seen by some, as a new, grandiose assault on organized religion.²

While church attendance does not necessarily indicate the level of a person's piety, it is a fair indication of the extent of his commitment to the church, and ultimately, to His Lord.

Russel Hale says that fewer than in ten Americans claim to be formally affiliated with any religious institution³ Throughout the history of the Seventh-day

¹Miriam Wood, "Should Adventist Colleges Force Worship Attendance?" Adventist Review, April 1, 1986, p. 19.

²Celia Allison Hahn, "Do You Have To Go To Church to Be a Christian?" The Christian Century, February 27 1985, p. 1.

³Russel Hale, The Unchurched: Who They Are and Why They Stay Away (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), p. 4.

Adventist church, its membership has experienced continued growth until it reached its present high level. Some church watchers believe it will continue to climb. The vitality of American churches may owe a great deal to the existence of so many competing religious traditions. This would motivate each church to work hard to attract and hold its members. In "Faith Without a Sanctuary," a CBS Documentary on the unchurched (aired November 1, 8, and 15, 1981), one man commented: "Great religious leaders like Jesus and Buddha, went into the wilderness, no one was preaching to them; maybe those people who go to church don't have the capacity to go into the wilderness."¹ The assertion that people who have no church affiliation can be religious, is often a declaration of independence. Those for whom belonging to a church is a central part of life find this rejection of organized religion hard to accept. Hahn continues,

There are both private and corporate sides of religious life and both are important. A study in Appalachia revealed: 80 percent engaged in religious activities each week--activities like prayer. We assume that congregational leadership is most commonly drawn from those to whom "belonging" in the congregation is most important: Those persons understandably have difficulty understanding those church participants for whom "belonging" and church-related activity is of little importance.²

The church tells corporate truths while individuals listen and are seldom encouraged to share their faith. A young lady says, For me, Marriage Encounter provided the way into the church, a way to decide that the church

¹Quoted by Celia Allison Hahn, When People Seek the Church (New York: Alban Institute, 1982), p.14.

²Ibid.

participation was not something I owe to God, but something that I wanted in my life. Dean R. Hodge, Converts, Drop Outs, Returnees: A Study of Religious Change among Catholics (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981), pp. 152-6.¹

Although many Americans believe that one does not need to go to church, 71 percent report that they do belong to a church or synagogue, and 40 percent say they attend weekly. Not only do most people belong, but the indications are that most of those who do, not once did.²

Another study showed that young Catholic dropouts did not see themselves as having abandoned religion when they left their church.³ The research done on those who separate themselves from institutional religion suggests that for some people dropping out is a protest against the church's implicit claim of total ownership of their religious lives. Martin Marty reported on a survey revealing that 85 percent of Americans prefer to pray alone, 74 percent remember being taught to pray by their parents (not by their preachers or teachers), and a large majority prefer to pray at home rather than at church. All these studies underline the fact that the communal and solidarity dimensions of religion are different from each other, and that both are essential.⁴ In an article dated March 1, 1989,

¹Dean R. Hodge, Converts, Drop Outs, Returnees: A Study of Religious Change among Catholics (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981), pp. 152-6.

²David H. Smith et al., Participation in Social and Political Activities, New York: Josey Bass, 1980), p. 222.

³Hodge, pp. 90-101.

⁴Celia Hahn, "Do You Have to Go to Church To Be Religious?" pp. 211-214

General Conference vice president for North America, Charles Bradford had this to say on why people leave the church:

Three out of four leave for reasons having to do with their relationships with people and groups; while less than one in five leave because they no longer believe in some teaching of the church. In fact, . . . 37% of former members say they are still practicing the Adventist faith; 75% still believe in the Sabbath; 69% still believe in the Second Coming; 53% still believe in the inspired role of Ellen White. The dropouts are people who never bonded with the core groups of the congregation, never felt a part of the inner circle. There was absolutely no proof that anyone left the church because they no longer believed in the doctrines,¹

Harold K. West made a study based on 1,500 former members while he served as Ministerial Director of the Florida Conference. Charles Bradford quotes West's conclusions, based on the results of that study:

They left the church because of the way the church treated them . . . People drop out of the church because the church no longer meets their needs or the church disappointed them.²

Reasons or excuses for dropping out of church are about as varied as the number of people who have drifted away from the church: "I am ashamed I left because of my own sinful ways," "I am appalled," "I am among the missing but I would never join another denomination; yours is God's truth forever," are some of the excuses. None of these are in any way connected with doctrinal disagreement or controversy between the member and the church. Yet another reason often cited is loneliness. One former member wrote,

¹Bradford, Homecoming Emphasis, p. 4.

²Ibid.

"I hope the church will love one another not in word but in deed."¹

Dr. John S. Savage, Director of LEAD Consultants, when interviewed by J. R. Spangler, head of the Ministerial Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, says this about the non-attending members. "We are not listening to them. Listening builds a relationship quicker than any other type of behavior."²

Bradford, who was quoted earlier in this paper, asks the question, "What can be done about reclaiming the non-attending member?" Interviews conducted with inactive members over the past five years, during pilot projects conducted in the Columbia Union Conference, the Carolina Conference and other areas reveal that the only true, effective means of reclaiming the missing and non-attending members is through personal visitation and an appeal to return. At least two essential elements are involved in this process. The first consists of face-to-face visits by church members who have been trained to listen rather than preach or simply make social calls. The second is to prepare the congregation so that the returning members can come back to a receptive atmosphere of love, acceptance, and forgiveness toward the one who returns.

¹William G. Johnson, "Missing, Tell Us Why," Adventist Review, September 7, 1989, p. 8.

²John S. Savage, "Reactivating the Inactive Member," Ministry May 1983, 4-8.

Unless their needs are met, and they feel wanted and needed in the congregation, the former and inactive members will soon drop out again.

Conflict and family instability are key causes for people not attending church. A strong family life program is a must in every strong church, if we intend to keep our members. Being an inclusive church is more important than having activities and programs. Each member must learn to put away judgmental and intolerant attitudes, and "bear one another's burdens" in times of crisis and pain.¹

Churches that have followed this method have reported that up to half of the former and non-attending members have been reclaimed. Bradford's article confirms the need for churches to do this. The leadership of the church, at all levels, must be conscious of the needs of its members. In the context of worship, the members' basic need is to be able to meet God in a meaningful encounter during the worship service. Such worship experience can only occur when it is planned and prepared with prayerful consideration of every element involved in the service. This includes the music, the scripture reading, the offering, the sermon, and everything else that takes place during that service. That planning and preparation must come as a joint effort between pastor, lay leadership, and every member of the congregation. Without such mutual concern and cooperation, worship will continue to lack its appeal and attraction.

¹Bradford, pp. 5.

PART TWO

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF FIELD RESEARCH METHOD

Experimental Design

I am a pastor in the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. I was transferred from a 700-member church, the largest in the conference, to my current pastorate at the Crossroads church. Among the many problems I face at Crossroads, the greatest and most urgent is to build the attendance at worship. I have found very little recorded information on the attendance trends at this church. The leaders and members were sadly lacking in vision regarding the concept of worship attendance. In addition, the local leaders were unable to conduct a meaningful worship service that adequately satisfied the members' needs.

When I entered the Doctor of Ministry program, the research requirements for the degree included the completion of a project that combined both theory and practice. With an earnest desire to improve the situation at the Crossroads Church, I chose to do my research in the area of attendance at corporate worship. The experimental design for the project included a series of pre-tests and post-tests. These were based on the paradigm of the members' understanding and reaction to the meaning of worship. The next step was to

instruct the members in the areas where the tests revealed they were misunderstanding these basic terms and concepts. This was accomplished by a series of sermons on various aspects of worship. The post-test was administered following this series, to test whether a significant change had occurred in the members' attitude towards and understanding of worship.

Location and Time of Field Study

The field work for this project took place at the Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church, in the Manhattan district of New York City during the Spring of 1988. New York City has a population of over 17,000,000. It is a largely middle-income society whose chief source of income is the industrial base of that city. The Greater New York Conference, in which the Crossroads Church is located, has a total membership of 14,000. Crossroads Church has a membership of approximately 230, although its facilities can accommodate up to 450 worshipers. Many issues faced the church at the outset of this project. Some were: the high cost of parking in the vicinity; the large proportion of members whose chronological age rendered them too feeble to participate in many of the church's activities, along with the related problem of losing most of the younger members to other churches which offered them more vigorous and active programs. In addition, the problems in the surrounding community added to the challenges of Crossroads. These

included: the high incidence of homelessness in the immediate area, the antiquated condition of the church's own physical structure, and the unattractive exterior and interior appearance of the facility. These problems all contribute to a poor attitude towards worship attendance among the members of the Crossroads Church.

The questionnaire used in this project was given to a limited group which included only the members and visitors of Crossroads Church above the age of ten years.

The Research Instrument

A questionnaire was developed to determine both general and specific information regarding the participants' attitudes, behavior patterns, and experiences in relation to corporate worship. The components of worship that were to be evaluated included the offering, the pastoral prayer, music, the church building, and the Sabbath, as well as several other more general aspects of the worship service. The answers were to be evaluated from the standpoint of the respondents' personal theology of worship as presented in the first part of this project report. I sought to determine whether the church members were confronting these issues from the same perspective I was. If this evaluation revealed a misunderstanding of the members' concept of corporate worship, I planned to develop a series of eight sermons on the importance of worship attendance, as well as giving the members a clearer understanding of corporate worship. A

post-test questionnaire was administered three months after the sermon series ended to evaluate whether any significant attitude changes had taken place as a result of the series.

Implementing the Study

The study was carried out at the Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church, New York City. The elders and ushers aided me in distributing the questionnaire to members and visitors.

A pre-test questionnaire was used to determine the attitude, behavior, and experiences concerning worship which the participants had before attending the sermon series on worship. A post-test questionnaire was meant to record and measure any change of attitude and behavior that might have resulted from the series on worship.

Preparation of Sermon Series by the Church

When I moved to the Crossroads Church and observed the low attendance at worship, I brought it to the attention of the church board and told them that some action should be taken to correct the situation. They agreed that a worship committee should be formed to address the matter. The worship committee studied the matter and brought it to the attention of the entire congregation. As a result, the church decided to prepare for a series of sermons on the subject of worship attendance.

The pastor and the worship committee collaborated in developing a series of eight sermons on worship. The topics considered were:

Worship

Worship and the Bible

Worship and Christ

Worship and the Music of the Church

Worship and Prayer

Worship and the Sermon

Worship and The Church

Worship and the Sabbath

The series lasted from Sabbath, May 13 to Sabbath, May 20, 1988. Each day's program consisted of an opening song, prayer, welcome, scripture reading, special music, closing song, and benediction. The worship committee, including the pastors, music directors, head elder, youth leader, head deacon, Sabbath school superintendent, and several individuals interested in improving the worship attendance acted as the steering committee. They, in turn, selected sub-committees to care for ushering, music, transportation, attendance, platform, advertising, and fellowship. Each group received well-defined instructions prior to the series regarding specific responsibilities.

Functions of the Committees

The music committee provided the highest quality music during the series (see table 4). The ushers who

welcomed both visitors and members to the meetings, distributed flyers in the community, and kept attendance records at the church, four weeks before and four weeks after the series, to determine whether there was an increase in attendance as a result of the series. They were also entrusted with the distribution and collection of the pretest questionnaires preceding the series.

Transportation service was provided because many members and potential visitors had to travel considerable distances to attend the meetings. The fellowship committee provided refreshments for the visitors at a brief fellowship time following each meeting. This helped members and visitors to become personally acquainted. In fact, the visitors soon began to look forward to this time of fellowship. The relaxed atmosphere led many visitors to return each successive night. The visiting committee kept an open ear for problems and were ready to encourage the newcomers to continue attending. The visiting team sought out and encouraged non-attending members and visitors to resume their attendance. They did this by letter, telephone, and personal visits. The combined work of these sub-committees was to show that they cared for the "people who were crying out for help."¹ The committees carried out their duties with dignity, and the Lord blessed their efforts.

¹Savage, p. 5.

The worship series described above proved its effectiveness for the church in several ways. The planning and organization invested by the various officers and members of the various committees, along with the impact of the sermons on the congregation, made a positive contribution. A new awareness and an increased understanding of worship as a human response to a divine initiative is evident. The members learned that worship on earth originated with God's first visit to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, as recorded in Genesis. Although their responses to the post-test indicate no change in attitude following the series, except in the case of music in worship, yet, observation of personal views expressed by members indicate otherwise.¹ It can only be entered into "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23). These are only two scriptural examples which illustrate God's desire to initiate, restore, and maintain fellowship with His children. These and other scriptures also indicate that man's response to God's initiative fulfills the worship experience. However, unlike in other religions, human response can never initiate a worship encounter with the living God.

The members of the Crossroads Church have begun to realize that worship involves the Christian's response to our heavenly Father's overtures of love. One member suggested, "We have not worshiped the Lord until spirit touches

¹See table 2, p. 134.

spirit." Other writers confirm the Christian's need to focus true worship toward the only true God. A. W. Tozer is quoted as saying that "the essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him."¹ Frank Laubach describes true Christian worship thus:

Of all today's miracles, the greatest is this: to know that I find Thee best when I work at listening. I really believe all thought can be conversations with Thee.²

When members of the church share an experience similar to that of Isaiah, they too can exclaim, "Woe is me, for I am undone!" (Isa 6:5). The series on worship was not without tangible numerical growth for the Crossroads Church. A letter from John Williamson, Ministerial Secretary of the Greater New York Conference (see appendix D), indicates that eighteen persons recently baptized into this church trace their initial contact with Adventism to the worship series in 1988. In addition, a new company of believers has been raised up in Brooklyn, New York (see appendix D). The members were also made personally aware that worship is not something they come to church to find, but an experience they bring with them when they come. They see that there are no "preliminaries" in worship, but rather, everything that takes place is an integral part of the entire worship

¹Quoted by Richard J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 139.

²Frank C. Laubach, Learning the Vocabulary of God, pp. 22, 23. Quoted by Richard J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline, (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 14..

experience.¹ Terry Pooler of Atlantic Union College describes this as follows:

Shared Ministry is a worship philosophy where the pastor, music director, and members share ideas to improve the total worship experience for the whole day.²

Worship, then, is not the responsibility of the minister alone. It involves, first, the initiative of God, and, second, the joint response (and equal responsibility!) of pastor, congregation, and community. Each of these human elements shares not only an equal responsibility but also a mutually complimentary and important aspect of that responsibility. Among the many gratifying results of the recent worship series at the Crossroads Church is the significant increase in stewardship and attendance. The report included in appendix D reflects a more positive attitude among the members toward the services of the church. The church is currently experiencing a fresh spirit of revival and togetherness.

Like the psalmist, the hearts of the members cry out, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps 51:10 Amplified Bible). I was touched by some of the positive comments made by the members following the series of sermons on worship. One North American said, "Pastor, I am proud of this worship series. I have never

¹Frank C. Laubach, Learning the Vocabulary of God, pp. 22, 23. Quoted by Richard J. Foster, Celebration of Discipline, (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 14..

²Terry Pooler, "Shared Ministry," Ministry, January-March 1989, p. 6.

seen worship in this light before." Another American reflected, "My attitude toward the church has changed for the better, thanks to the worship series." A West Indian believer commented: "Worship is the beauty of holiness which will be fully attained when we reach heaven at last." An Asian member expressed his reaction thus: "I want to worship God in a better fashion, because of the information I have about Him through these meetings." A Panamanian's response was: "The worship series has been very informative and inspiring."

When I remember these and other comments from the members regarding the blessings they received from the meetings, I feel amply rewarded for having initiated them. The pastor of the church adds his thoughts, I cannot forget how I myself received a blessing from them, and this prompts me to pledge myself anew to a continued growing experience in Christ.

Questionnaire Review

The data analysis for this study followed the procedure developed for the study. The appropriate computer evaluations were done by the Department of Research and Statistics at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. This analysis serves to identify the following factors:

1. The respondents' attitude to worship attendance.

2. The issues which develop an awareness of the subject and which lead to the creation of new programs to improve worship attendance.

The result of this analysis is shown in tables 1-5.

The post-test analysis on attitudes and understanding of worship was made on the basis of the same questionnaire as the pre-test, but, with the coverage reduced to only those areas discussed during the sermon series on worship, and, hence, the second questionnaire dealt with only those areas which were targeted by that series. These included changes in concepts of various aspects of worship.

Table 1 reflects the varied tendencies in attendance that prevailed during the series. It was not clear whether variations in this area had any bearing on the changes in attitude reflected elsewhere in the survey. In fact, statistical evaluation of individual subjective attitude changes is virtually impossible. However, the tabulation of responses to the post-test questionnaire indicate that there was very little change of attitude and understanding of the subject following the worship series. Table 2 shows this. Table 3 shows that the respondents did not experience any significant awareness of the Biblical concepts of worship or of the preaching of the gospel, as result of the series on worship.

During the worship series, the members seemed to regroup the various concepts of worship, and this variation in grouping of concepts was anticipated when the

questionnaires were planned. The results of the study demonstrate that rapid changes in the attitude of respondents cannot be expected.

However, Table 4 indicates that music plays a vital part in building and maintaining worship attendance; 71.6% of the respondents said so. Considering this important fact, the church felt obligated to place a greater emphasis on the use of high quality music in the worship services. Some of the guidelines that the Crossroads Church chose to follow are listed below:

Well-trained choirs from other churches would be invited to come and assist in the training of the Crossroads choir.

Musical programs would be prepared and presented. These would be designed to increase the members' appreciation of music in the context of worship.

Youth musical groups would be encouraged and nurtured. These, in turn, would be instrumental in inviting other youth to attend worship services.

More congregational singing would be introduced during the worship services. This would facilitate and encourage a greater proportion of the congregation to participate in singing.

A brief but inspiring song service would precede the worship service each week.

The attendance would be further motivated by the introduction of a Bell Choir which will begin functioning as

soon as the equipment is available and a group can be trained.

When the total membership cooperates with the church board, and when, under the pastor's leadership, the entire church works together in the above manner, the attendance at worship is bound to improve. Such improvement will not only be reflected in numerical increase, but in a marked spiritual growth among the members of the congregation as well.

TABLE 1
RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON ATTENDANCE
AT PUBLIC WORSHIP
(expressed in percentages)

FACTORS	Yes	Pre-Test No	%	No	Post-test No	%
Almost always	20		31.3	32		45.1
Usually	27		37.0	17		23.0
Regularly	23		35.9	16		22.5
Often	7		10.9	8		11.3
Sometimes	4		6.3	5		7.0

The majority of those who responded in the post test (45.1%), acknowledged the importance of worship attendance.

TABLE 2
RESPONDENTS' "TRUEST" WORSHIP EXPERIENCES
(expressed in percentages)

FACTORS	Yes	Pre-Test	Post-test	%
	No.	%	No.	%
Corporate worship	31	42.5	29	39.2
Communion with others	15	20.5	17	23.0
Communion with God	25	34.2	26	35.1
In Pleasure-seeking activities	2	2.7	1	1.4

The 42.5% responding in the pre-test, as opposed to the 39.2 % who responded to the post-test seem to indicate that the respondents' did not experience a significant change in their view of corporate worship as a result of the series.

TABLE 3
RESPONDENTS' ACCEPTANCE OF THE BIBLE AS AN
IMPORTANT TOOL IN WORSHIP
(expressed in percentages)

FACTORS	Yes Pre-Test		No Post-test	
	No.	%	No.	%
Agree	69	95.8	70	95.9
Disagree	1	1.4	3	4.1
Not sure	--	--	--	--
Usually	2	2.8	--	--

The high positive pre-test response shown in this table (95.8% in the pre-test, and 95.9% in the post-test) seems to suggest that the Bible is an important tool in worship

TABLE 4
RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDSMUSIC AS
A VITAL PART OF WORSHIP
(expressed in percentages)

FACTORS	Yes Pre-Test		No Post-test	
	No	%	No	%
Almost always	39	53.4	53	71.6
Usually	27	37.0	17	23.0
Not sure	7	9.6	3	4.1
Sometimes -	--	1		1.4
Never	--	--	--	--

The high percentage of 71.6 reflects the respondents' view that music is vital to worship.

TABLE 5
PRAYER RESPONSE FOR WORLD CHURCH
(Shown in Number and Percentages)

FACTORS	Yes	Pre-Test	%	No	Post-test	%
Almost always	23	31	40	54.8		
Usually	33	44.6	18	24.7		
Not sure	1	1.4	2	2.7		
Sometimes	15	20.3	12	1.4		
Never	2	2.7	1	1.4		

Pre-test responses shown in table one 31%, while the corresponding figure in the post-test was 54.8%. This indicates that there was a change in the respondents' attitude to prayer.¹

¹Since the data in Tables 6-13 do not indicate any overall change of the respondents' attitude those tables are included in Appendix E.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The members' attitudes and understanding of worship were studied with the help of an questionnaire that participants answered anonymously. This questionnaire was distributed to 149 participants who attended the Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church in New York City. The pre-test questionnaire preceded a series of sermons on various aspects of worship. This series was designed to improve the understanding of worship among the members and visitors who attended it. It was also intended to provide practical experience in conducting meaningful worship services for the pastor as well as the lay leaders of the church. For all who attended, the series of sermons on worship brought a sense of joy and satisfaction, and a new understanding of the meaning of worship. The members rejoiced to see so many visitors participating in these meetings. Seventeen of the visitors were baptized at the close of the series. Three months after the close of the series, an abridged form of the same questionnaire was administered to the same group.

Those who attended the series gained a good general understanding and appreciation of the broad general concepts

involved in worship. However, some of the specific details, such as the relationship between the Sabbath and worship, the use of the Bible in worship, and the gathering of offerings in the context of corporate worship, as well as the mission of the corporate church, would still need clarification for a large number of members and visitors. Even three months later, those who responded to the post-test questionnaire still needed to correct several erroneous views on a variety of worship-related concepts. This indicates that people's concepts on worship are difficult to change. The solution seems to be to begin training the very young people and enlisting the cooperation of their parents in order to accomplish this.

Recommendations

Based on the findings revealed in the two sets of questionnaires, as depicted in the series of tables, I would like to make the following suggestions and recommendations, with specific application to the worship services at Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church:

Recommendations on the Role of Music

As indicated in Table 4, 71.6 percent of the congregation stated, in response to Question 13, that music plays a vital and major role in the worship service.

This signals the need for an increased budget to help develop and improve the choir and the work of the

minister of music. This would also enable the music leadership of the church to build up a music library and repertoire, as well as provide for other incidental expenses, such as transportation to and from rehearsals for those who need it. This would also provide for incentive (albeit only as a token of appreciation), payments to instrumentalists, vocalists, and choir members, for their services to the church.

Special times for regular rehearsals should also be scheduled to provide for adequate preparation for the musical items in the worship service, whether by the choir or orchestra (if available), or individual vocalists and their accompanists. Since research has shown that for each new member added to the choir three more are drawn to attend the service, the choir and, for that matter, other musical groups, whether instrumental or vocal, can be fostered as an attractive entry point for new believers. These potential additions to the church thus feel wanted and needed and would find it easier to commit themselves to Christ and to His church when the opportunity arises.

The role of the director or minister of music is as significant as that of the pastor, since preaching and music are intended to complement each other. One of the principle subjects taught in the "schools of the prophets" was music. These schools played a significant role in the life of Israel, not only as disseminators of religious truth, but as

preservers of the spirit of vital godliness.¹ Indeed, even more so since the worship series was conducted, music has become a vital force in the Crossroads Church community.

Recommendations on the
the Pastor's Role

As pastor of the church, I recommend that I, or whoever succeeds me, should provide adequate leadership in preparing and conducting worship services to the lay leaders and members of the church. In my role as worship leader, I must encourage the dual requisites of meditative reverence and joyful celebration in proper balance at every worship service. I must train my leaders and members to exercise care and caution not to tip the scales too much in either direction. I must help them to focus on that proper balance in every choice they make, in the context of corporate worship. This involves their choices in music, sermon topics, language, and deportment during prayer and other parts of the service, sermon topics, and platform personnel, to mention a few items.

Recommendations for Teaching
the Laity the Significance
of Worship

Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church need to recognize that worship is God's special mandate to this church. They need to remember God has called them to come

¹Francis D. Nichol, ed, Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1954), 2: 1037.

out of the world for the express purpose of rendering praise and worship to Him (Rev 14:6,7). In harmony with that mandate, the local leaders of the Crossroads Church arranged the special series of sermons on worship, which forms the basis of this project. I recommend that the church should plan to conduct a similar series each year. This would help the entire membership to sense the significance of worship in the context of the Advent message.

In addition to such an annual series, the local church should provide the budget to furnish the church library with a generous selection of books on the heritage and origin of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as well as of the final destiny and triumph of this movement.

The youth would find it meaningful and instructive to prepare book reports or dramatic presentations which they could give before the congregation, thus mutually helping themselves as well as the rest of the church to learn more about their church. In turn, this would encourage them to have an intelligent understanding and appreciation of their church. This would be a retaining factor to hold the young people in the church. It would also help boost the attendance.

Recommendations Concerning the Role of Prayer

Every Christian accepts the fact that prayer changes things and people. It is recommended, therefore that the members who regularly attend services be enlisted to pray

for the non-attenders, whether the latter are baptized members or occasional visitors. Members should also be encouraged to participate actively in discussion groups, Sabbath school classes, and to take an interest in the worship-related activities of the church. The example of regular members in such discussions would encourage visitors to ask relating to the distinctive doctrines and practices of the church. Honest answers given to such sincere questions can lead the inquirers into an understanding and eventual acceptance of the gospel. When prayerfully followed up, and when such follow-up is coupled with caring concern on the part of members, the numerical growth of the church is assured.

Recommendations Concerning
Guest Speakers

While the role of the pastor as leader in worship must never be lost sight of, it is strongly recommended that the church invite guest speakers several times during the year. These can be made special occasions when friends, relatives, and neighbors may be invited to come and hear the visiting speaker. Special music and other features could provide additional interest and incentive to encourage newcomers to attend on such occasions. The speakers themselves could be requested to speak on topics for which their background or position may especially qualify them. A fellowship meal following these special services helps the members and their friends to get better acquainted with the guest speaker as well as with one another. The visits of guest

speakers can be mutually beneficial to both speaker and congregation alike.

Recommendations Concerning
Preaching

It is also strongly recommended that the quality of preaching at Crossroads Church must be improved. The value of biblical preaching has received renewed recognition during the last two decades. Several options are available in this area. These include traditional expository preaching, storytelling which emphasizes and restates the biblical narrative in contemporary language and imagery, and the didactic or teaching sermon. Each pastor should determine the type and style of preaching which best suits his personality and background. His choice of an appropriate preaching style determines the size and regularity of the congregation.

Quality preaching should be accompanied by meaningful pastoral visits in the homes of the members and others who attend. Most members appreciate a pastoral visit. Such visits help the minister to become better acquainted with his/her parishioners. It is on such occasions that many members prefer to confide in the pastor about some of their problems, spiritual or otherwise, which they would rather not discuss in a more public setting.

It is also on such occasions, in the quietness of a member's home, that the pastor gains valuable insights into the needs of the people. Such insights can help the pastor to make preaching more relevant and meaningful. Later on, in

personal study at home or in the church, he can polish and improve the delivery of his sermon with the aid of modern technical devices, such as audio and video tape recorders. In visiting the members' homes, the pastor will also find opportunities to receive their feedback on recent sermons. This would help to evaluate his work, and to know whether his preaching is really helping the people as much as he would like it to. Depending on the preacher's attitude to such feedback, this can be either a humbling experience or it can serve to feed his ego. It is up to the pastor to make sure that he receives such information objectively and uses it, in turn, to enrich his preaching, especially in the context of worship. In preaching, as in every other part of the service, the only Person worthy of exaltation, praise, and glory, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Increased attendance, improved attitudes towards worship, stewardship, or any other Christian practice all should be viewed only as they contribute to a sense of the "worthiness" of God in contrast to man's unworthiness.

Recommendations concerning
Planning and Preparation
of Worship Services

Another significant recommendation emerges from this project. Well-planned and meaningful worship services do not "happen." They need to be planned and prepared. The activities of the Sabbath day, especially those that take place in the context of corporate worship, need to be so programmed

as to keep the members continually aware of the sanctity of that day. When the events taking place at church are properly planned and prepared, the members begin to look forward to the Sabbath and to the services at church with joyful anticipation. A well-organized program also helps to draw and maintain the congregation's attention.

On the other hand, a poorly planned, haphazardly prepared program gives the impression that whatever is taking place is not worthy of being adequately planned and prepared. The apostle Paul urged the Corinthian believers to "Let everything be done decently and in order (1 Cor 14:40), because "God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace" (vs. 33). The congregation should be able to observe progression and unity in the worship service. In response to Question 11 in the questionnaire, 46.7 percent of the post-test respondents agreed that they feel good when the Sabbath begins.

Recommendations Concerning Children and Youth

A very effective way to enhance the worship attendance is child evangelism. Many surveys have revealed that parents of young children who attend Sabbath School, Vacation Bible School, and other meetings targeted toward children and youth are more likely to attend the regular worship services of the church than those who do not bring their children to such meetings. Such surveys have also shown that parents who bring their children to the regular worship ser-

vices attend more frequently than those who do not bring their children along. Also, when the children and young people take an active interest in attending church, it is reasonable to expect that when they become parents, they too will someday attend with their children. One way to motivate and encourage the children's interest would be for the pastor to occasionally arrange for a special service where the children are given a leading role. Such a service is likely to arouse the interest not only of the regular members but also of their neighbors and others in the community. A well-planned children's program can thus be made a drawing point that the members could use to invite their friends and neighbors to church. As an added incentive, the members may be requested to bring a friend when they come to church for the special children's service.

The church school can also become an effective agency for evangelism and for increasing worship attendance. Parents of church-school children, as well as of other school-age children who might be attending public school, can be invited to attend a special time of fellowship. Such an evening can help ease some of the strain that many parents face in their everyday lives. It also helps the pastor and others to get better acquainted with them. A friendly spirit exercised by the members appointed to host such a gathering helps build bridges across whatever resistance may still be keeping some of those from attending the worship services. Many will accept the invitation to come to the

regular services as a result of these tangible expressions of concern.

The youth need the support of the church. The members can demonstrate their love and support for them through a variety of means. They can arrange financial assistance to help the young people achieve their educational goals. While the youth are away at school, the members can show their concern by writing to them. Especially those who are away from home for the first time will appreciate news from their home church. Letters can be as important as financial help for young people who go away to college.

Young people need help to find employment when they graduate from high school or college. A spirit of concerned interest on the part of church members can help many young people to fulfill this need. This can open up opportunities to invite them for worship services. Such interest is the salt on which the plant of knowledge grows. Table 13¹ indicates that 26.8 percent of the youth at Crossroads Church are potential college students.

Recommendations Concerning the
Physical Condition and
Appearance of
the Church

Another important recommendation that was deemed necessary as a result of this project was the proper maintenance of both the interior and exterior of the church build-

¹See appendix E.

ing. A building which has a clean and presentable appearance attracts people to come and associate with those who regularly assemble in it. On the exterior, the sign proclaims the name of the church, announces the service times, and lists the pastor's name and telephone number. In giving all of this information, the sign comprises the first point of contact for any stranger who passes by. As such, if the sign presents an attractive appearance, it attracts that stranger to inquire about and possibly to attend the services of the church. On the other hand, if it is poorly maintained, it repels rather than attracts. Depending on the location of the church, other directional signs need to be strategically located at all important intersections leading to the church. Visitors from out of town or from across the city, should not have difficulty locating the church.

Recommendations Concerning Parking and Participation

The availability of adequate parking space at or near the church is closely related to the extent of participation and attendance at the worship services. Consequently, it is recommended that the church make this a matter of high priority in their planning. For many people who have to drive any distance from their homes to get to church, this could be a decisive factor which affects their regularity of attendance. At the Crossroads Church, a strong correlation was observed between the availability of parking and the giving habits of those who attend. Those who feel assured of

parking on a regular basis when they come tend to develop a progressive and regular pattern of giving. This could be because they feel more secure and relaxed while they are at church. Future building plans for any church should allow for at least a third of the available land space to be set aside for parking. This could go a long way toward increasing and maintaining attendance at worship services.

Conclusion

The factors contributing to the worship attendance among members of the Crossroads Church have been identified and addressed during the research and development done for this project. Consequently, information gained through this study has exposed to a deeper insight into the complexity of the issues faced by the members. Many members of the Crossroads Church face a variety of issues which could influence them in either a positive or a negative way in their intentions to regularly attend the worship services of the church. This exposure has facilitated and improved my pastoral skills and sharpened my creative senses regarding appropriate measures I should take in order to improve the attitudes and practices relating to worship attendance and participation in the church which I pastor. I have outlined some of the main items under various recommendations described earlier in this chapter. It is anticipated that participation in this project has awakened the members of the Crossroads Church to recognize worship as the mandate

not only for this church but for the entire Seventh-day Adventist denomination. It is also hoped that the members will seek to perpetuate that concept from now on. This study is not intended to be conclusive or comprehensive in its scope. Rather, it should be viewed as part of the ongoing study of worship attendance. It is also hoped that this study will receive acceptance as a relevant and meaningful resource document. The material included herein can be used in training future pastors and leaders of the Crossroads Church. It can also be adapted to the needs of pastors and local church leaders of any church or district that senses the need to improve the quality of its worship services and to use that improvement as an motivating factor to increase its attendance.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE ON ATTITUDES
TOWARDS WORSHIP

Pre/Post Test

Dear fellow church member,

Your help is required in answering the following questions.
Please answer all of the questions. Thank you for your
cooperation.

The Pastor.

1. Prayers offered in church make me aware of the church
being a world church.

- a. () almost always
- b. () usually
- c. () not sure
- d. () sometimes
- e. () never

2. The pastoral prayer helps me to feel as if someone is
praying for me personally during the worship service

- a. () almost always
- b. () usually
- c. () not sure
- d. () sometimes
- e. () never

3. As I give my offering, I do it because of my recognition of the sacrificial offering of Christ

- a. () almost always
- b. () usually
- c. () not sure
- d. () sometimes
- e. () never

4. I give my offering with gratitude and joy.

- a. () almost always
- b. () usually
- c. () not sure
- d. () sometimes
- e. () never

5. The worship service leads me to experience worship, adoration, and thanksgiving

- a. () almost always
- b. () usually
- c. () not sure
- d. () sometimes
- e. () never

6. My truest worship experiences are found

- a. () in corporate worship
- b. () in communion with others
- c. () in communing with God alone
- d. (in pleasure-making activities

7. How often do you read your Bible in your daily devotion?

- a. () almost always
- b. () usually
- c. () not sure
- d. () sometimes
- e. () never

8. Do you think that the Bible is an important tool for worship?

- a. () agree
- b. () disagree
- c. () not sure
- d. () usually

9. I come to worship service

- a. () always
- b. () often
- c. () sometimes
- d. () never

10. The church of Christ exists for the following reasons:

- a. () to preach the gospel
- b. () for fellowship
- c. () for admiration of architecture
- d. () for social activities
- e. () for community activities

11. When the Sabbath comes, I feel

- a. () uncomfortable
- b. () compelled to go to worship
- c. () tired
- d. () happy
- e. () I have an appointment with God

12. The church is the only place where I can worship God

- a. () agree
- b. () disagree
- c. () not sure
- d. () usually

13. Does music play a vital part in the worship service?

- a. () almost always
- b. () usually
- c. () not sure
- d. () sometimes
- e. () never

14. Why do you think God made the Sabbath?

- a. () for man's benefit
- b. () for God's adoration
- c. () for pleasure
- d. () for fellowship
- e. () for community activities

15. While hymns are being sung

- a. () I prefer to keep silent
- b. () I feel I should always sing
- c. () It makes no difference whether I sing or not
- d. () I sing because singing is a part of worship

16. I come to the worship service
- a. () always
 - b. () usually
 - c. () regularly
 - d. () often
 - e. () sometimes
17. How long have you been a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?
- a. () not yet a baptized member
 - b. () less than one year
 - c. () 1-2 years
 - d. () 3-5 years
 - e. () 5-10 years
 - f. () over 10 years
18. (If you are visiting), what is your present church affiliation?
- a. () Protestant
 - b. () Catholic
 - c. () not a member of any church
 - d. () Other
19. My present age is between
- a. () 10-20 years
 - b. () 21-30 years
 - c. () 31-40 years
 - d. () 41-50 years
 - e. () over 51 years
20. My occupation is
- a () student
 - b. () housewife
 - c. () agriculture
 - d. () factory worker
 - e. () clerk
 - f. () professional
 - g. () other (specify) _____
21. My current educational level is
- a. () 1-6 years: elementary
 - b. () 7-9 years: secondary
 - c. () 10-12 years: preparatory
 - d. () 13-16 years: college
 - e. () vocational school
 - f. () graduate school
 - g. () other: (specify) _____

APPENDIX B

Sermon Outlines

Sermon Outline 1.

Title: "Worship, What Does it Mean?"

Scripture Reading: Ps 95:1-7

Introduction:

a. Dictionary definition of worship: "Reverence for worth, honor, high respect paid anyone . . .that deserves it."

b. Bible definition of worship: "Bow down to earth" (Gen 18:12; 24:52).

I The Original meaning of worship

A. The Hebrew word presupposes mental disposition; inner attitude; reverence and service; Example: Abram

B. The Greek word proskunew means "to prostrate oneself before a person and kiss the feet of hem of that person's garment, bow to the ground."

C. In the New Testament the object is always someone divine. Examples: Matt 8:9; 9:21; Acts 10;26; Rev 22:9.

II Who is involved in worship?

A. At least two persons are involved in worship; the one who bows down, and the one before whom the bowing is done. Abram bowed before the Lord. Christians worship Christ and God.

B. Christian worship presupposes a relationship between the Redeemer and those whom He has redeemed. (e.g. John 14:6).

C Karl Barth said, "Worship is the most important, the most momentous, and most majestic thing which can possibly take place on earth."

III. What is involved in worship?

(Five essential elements in worship)

A. Awareness of God's presence. The present situation: God is now here.

B. Man's response to this awareness of God's presence: if there is no such awareness, worship cannot take place.

C. Humility. Frail sinner-man is ushered into the presence of the Almighty God, the Creator of the universe. Example: Isa 6. Therefore, reverence, honor, devotion, adoration, praise. Humbleness.

D. Worship is the acknowledgment by the redeemed individual that God is the Almighty Creator and loving Redeemer of mankind. "God reseen and man remade."

E. Worship is the individual's expression that God is reigning in his life. It is the devotion of man's heart to this God-Savior. Matt 12:28; Rom 14:17; Gal 2:20.

Conclusion:

1. Do you want to devote your heart and yourself to God?

2. Do you wish to experience God's love in your life?

3. Do you like to search the scriptures to receive more light on this most important, most momentous experience which can possibly take place on this earth?

4. I want to learn more about worship; would you like to join me in my quest?

Sermon Outline 2.

Title: "God Takes the Initiative"

Scripture Reading: Ps 100

Introduction: As long as one' worship experience does not stand the test of scripture, such worship is not valid. The scriptures help us to detect false worship, while leading us on to discover true worship. John 5:39; 17:17.

I The scriptural background of worship

A. From Gen 1:1 to Rev 22;21, God is revealed as Creator and Recreator.

1. God is the Creator Exod 20:8-11; John 1:1-3; Rev 14;6,7. His Creative power and authority (He created us, and, hence, we can never be His equals.)
2. The inhabitants of heaven worship God for the same reason Rev 4:9-11 (especially vs. 11b) makes this very clear. Other scriptures which uphold the same truth are Ps 19; Heb 1:1-2; and 2 Tim 3:16.
3. God's people today are privileged to understand more fully the mighty creative power of God; renewed awareness of the worship experience, as explained in the writings of Ellen G. White (e.g., Gospel Workers p. 178: True reverence for God is inspired" (Illustration: the testimony of Grady Davis). We are challenged today to accept the living Creator as our personal God, and to worship Him (Rev 14:7).

B. God Initiates Worship

1. It is God Who wills that worship should take place. He wants to meet with His people.
2. It is He Who calls man to come and worship Him; He creates within us the desire to worship Him as our Creator and Redeemer.

3. The direction of worship is from God toward man, rather than from man toward God. He wants to dwell with man (Exod 25:8).

C. The outstanding biblical example is Isaiah's worship encounter, recorded in Isa 6:1-9.

1. This passage contains Isaiah's fivefold concept of worship: adoration, confession, affirmation, dedication, and service.
2. The most significant point in Isaiah's worship experience is God's very first action of making His presence known to the prophet.
3. Without God's having taken that initiative. Isaiah could never have expressed or experienced any of the above aspects of worship.

Conclusion:

A. Brief review of God's initiative in worship:

1. Worship is based on a relationship between God and man. God takes the initiative to establish that relationship.
2. Before man can express anything in his worship of God, he must first be aware of what God has done, is doing, and will yet do for him.
3. Through His manifold revelations in the scriptures, in nature, and by His Holy Spirit, God makes man aware of His power and majesty as Creator, Savior, and Redeemer.
4. Thus, in worship God always makes His presence known first, before man can respond in meaningful worship.

Examples:

Moses' experience in Exod 2 and 3
Daniel's experience in Dan 9
God's people today, as described
in Rev 14:6,7

The religion which comes from God (His initiative) is the only religion which will lead to Him (true worship). (Ellen G. White, Testimonies to the Church 9:156.)

Is this your experience too. How do you relate to this great Creator/ Redeemer/ God?

Sermon Outline 3.

Title: "Christ, the Center of Worship"

Scripture Reading: Rev 5:6-24; John 14:6

Introduction: Various religions direct their worship to various deities:

Judaism directs it to the Almighty Adonai
Buddhism directs it to Buddha
Hindus worship many different gods and goddesses
Only in Christianity is the true God worshiped in and through His manifestation as the Redeemer of mankind, Jesus Christ.

God is at work through the realization of His plan of salvation. Did man ever see God? Read John 1:18; 1 Tim 6:16.

God revealed Himself to mankind in and through Jesus Christ.

- A. YHWH -LORD is the pre-incarnate Son of God John 10:11,14. Christ says, "I am David's Shepherd I am also his Lord" (Ps 23; cf. John 8:58.)
- B. God created through His Living Word, Jesus John 1:1-3; Ps 33:6,9.
- C. God is recreating the world in and through Christ John 3:16; 2 Cor 5:17-19.

I. Christ is the incarnate manifestation of God the Father

- A. As God manifested Himself in Christ during Old testament times, so also is Christ still God's incarnate Son in the New Testament. All idols are certainly "idle" as well, but the living God is always active in creation and re-creation. Col 2:9; John 14:31; 5:17, 30.

"The heart of the action is God's deed in the Person of His Son, Jesus, the Christ"(Lutheran theologian.)

- B. God acts through whatever His son Jesus, does, and will do for us. God is at work in Christ! God is alive! God is still at work!
- C. Since Christ is God's active agent in Creation and Redemption, God can only be meaningfully worshiped through Christ. Man's decent response and reaction to God is only possible through Jesus Christ
- D. Jesus is, thus, the Center of Christian worship Matt 28:20. Notice vs 17 (Proskunosis.) The disciples worshiped the risen Christ
- E. When God speaks through Christ, His words become action. This can only be understood by faith. Gen 1; When He speaks (Matt 18:20, 28:20,) do we believe and respond? Worshiping God is the response of the redeemed person to his Redeemer, Jesus Christ

(Worship) is God in Christ: by His grace it is: man in Christ

It is: God-Christ-Man, and man-Christ-God. That is the only way. Jesus Christ is the Center of Worship Think also of John 10:9; 15:5; Phil 4:13.

Conclusion

- a. Without Christ your worship is not biblical
- b. Without Christ your worship is not in harmony with the Word
- c. Without Christ, your worship is no better than mere idolatry and vanity

A noted scholar writes: "All true worship is Christocentric, for only in Christ can God be found" (Segler.)

Have you found God? Find Him today, in Jesus Christ. Having accepted Him as your Creator and Redeemer, your natural response will be to worship Him.

Sermon Outline 4.

Title: "In Spirit and in Truth"

Scripture Reading: John 14: 19-26

Introduction: There is an ultimate link between worship and the Spirit

- a. The task of the Holy Spirit John 16:8**
- b. The regenerative power of the Holy Spirit John 3:3-6**
- c. The vicarious power of the Holy Spirit: Christ's presence is continued through the Spirit John 10**
- d. The transforming power of the Holy Spirit Rom 8:9 "if He really dwells in you . . ."**

I The Holy Spirit's Influence in Worship

A. God, acting through Christ, provides guidance in worship through His Holy Spirit 2 Cor 3:18

The Holy Spirit is indispensable in the worship of God. God's people are wholly dependent on Him to help make their worship a decent response to God. Rom 8

B. Christ's presence in His Church is through the Holy Spirit Matt 28:20; Gal 2:20.

The Holy Spirit is "always God, and always God at-work." It is in setting of worship that "God meets His people in the Spirit" Prophets and Kings pp. 49,50.

C. The Holy Spirit directs God's people into true worship Gen 1:2; John 16:8; Rom 1:16.

God's Spirit moves upon His own people. He is the divine Agent Who helps the Christian in the way of sanctification, changing him from glory to glory, thus improving the quality of his worship

II Man's response in worship: "In Spirit and in truth"
John 4:23

- A. God is more concerned with one's attitude in worship, than in where it takes place

In His conversation with the woman at Samaria, Jesus pointed out that the real issue was not "this mountain" (Gerizim)

or

"that mountain" (Zion, Jerusalem), but whether one worshiped in "spirit and in truth."

- B. That phrase contains Christ's definition of genuine worship

1. The nature of worship: inspired and controlled by the Holy Spirit, coming from the depths of one's heart.
2. The form of true worship: based on, and in harmony with God's revealed word of truth John 14:6 (Jesus says "I am . . . the Truth")
3. If you want to become a true worshiper, you must bring your belief and practice of worship into complete harmony with

the

direction of His Spirit, and with His revealed truth Such commitment must be undivided, unreserved, complete, whole Heb 4:16 This involves obedience to God's revelation in Christ His Son. The Holy Spirit strengthens the believer to make such a commitment John 16:13; Rom 8:9, 15-17, 26.

"Not by seeking a holy mountain . . ."
Desire of Ages p. 189.

"Unless they worship Him in spirit and truth in the beauty of holiness, their coming together will be of no avail." Prophets and Kings p. 50.

Sermon Outline 5.

Title: "Church and Mission: Where is Worship?"

Scripture Reading: Matt 5:14-16; 1 Pet 2:9-10

Introduction: What does the Church consist of?

It consists of people who have been saved by grace, through faith in Christ Jesus Eph 2:8

- a. The saved must first meet God before being sent out to represent Him
- b. The church has no right or authority to go out into the world, unless it has first received the message from the Lord

I. Worship and the Church

- A. The church exists primarily to praise God; hence, its first duty and function is worship Acts 1:4-9
- B. When the church is truly involved in worship, it identifies itself in two ways
 1. The church realizes anew that its members are God's people
 2. The world recognizes the church as a "peculiar people"
- C. The church consists of God's redeemed people, the children of God
 1. Christ is their Elder Brother; God is their heavenly Father
 2. The members come into fellowship one with another (Gk koinonia) in the family of God

II. Worship and Mission

- A. God is the One Who Sends. Angels, prophets, and ultimately His own Son, Jesus, were sent as God's special messengers to mankind. Christ sent His disciples to preach the gospel. He now
forth
sends
His church. Matt 11:28 must precede Matt 28:18-20
 1. God calls His people together in worship
 2. God sends His worshiping people out into the world

- B. The church is both a redeemed as well as a redeeming fellowship. "church" and "missionary" mean the same thing. God-initiated worship helps to keep the church and mission in a healthy balance
- C. We enter into the worship of God in order to be enabled to depart for service. (Examples: Moses, Isaiah, the apostles)

Conclusion

A. The biblical sequence: Worship followed by mission; not mission and worship

B. The reason? Where there is no worship, there can be no commission. Where there is no vision, there can be no mission

It is from the life of worship . . . that the church spreads itself abroad into the world to mingle with it (von Allmen)

1. Thus, the healthy outflow of worship in spirit and in truth is mission. Man cannot worship God "in spirit and in truth" and do it "empty handed." (cf. the unfaithful steward in Matt 25:14ff).
2. We leave the place of worship to continue doing God's will, at work or study, while we relax, or walk, or talk. This continues all week long.
3. At the end of the week, on God's special day, we return to the place of worship, to honor Him Who has been so gracious to us all week long.
4. Only then can our worship become meaningful, and we can honor, confess, and glorify our Creator and Redeemer
5. What the heart is to the body, worship is to the church

Worship is the heartbeat of the church's mission. Worship Him, the God Who redeems and the God Who sends.

Are you aware that God is calling you? if so, are you aware that He is also sending you? If you sense His call, you cannot dare enter into His presence empty handed

Sermon Outline 6.

Title: "Liturgical Christians: Yes or No?"

Scripture Reading: Heb 4:14-16; 8:1,2

Introduction: Generally speaking there is a rather negative attitude towards liturgy among most Seventh-day Adventists. The reason seems to be twofold: one, a misunderstanding of the true meaning of "liturgy," and two, a mistaken identification of the word with Roman Catholicism

I The Real Meaning of Liturgy

- A. In its original Greek form, it was a composite of two words, leitōs (= people) + ergon (= work or doing) (Illustration: the ancient Greeks at Athens)
- B. When the Septuagint (LXX) translators chose LEITOURGIA, as a cultic expression to translate the Hebrew word Shereth, it became an ecclesiastical term.
- C. Since that time, it has applied chiefly to the role of the priests
- D. During New Testament times, the early Christian church reverted to using leitourgia in its original context, to mean "all Christians doing service" 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6
- E. It was translated "worship" in Acts 13:1-3

"The liturgy of the Christian Church is a religious service offered by the public to the Lord" (R. Paquier, p. 49.)

II. The Relationship between Liturgy and Christ

- A. Christ is the Minister (Liturgist) Who functions in behalf of of God's people (Heb 8:1,2.)
- B. Christ offers a far superior liturgy to all those previously available Heb 9:21ff.

C. Moses served as liturgist to the people of Israel; likewise, Jesus Christ is the Liturgist for all of God's people

D. Christ continues as Liturgist, serving in our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary.

III. The relationship between Liturgy and Worship

A. New Testament writers used synagogue language to describe the early church's liturgy Heb 1;1-4; Gal 1:3; 6:8

B. Worship creates the need for, and begets liturgy

"It is impossible to conduct a (worship) service without liturgy (Pease, And Worship Him p. 51.

(Thus, the church, worship, and liturgy, are inseparably related)

C. How does one use liturgy in worship?

1. Liturgy is a natural action in the presence of God

2. Liturgy is the work or service which God's people offer before Him (This aspect is discussed in Sermon No. 8.)

In worship, the liturgy stands for the actual service of all faithful Christians as they gather together in fellowship to serve Christ

Conclusion

A. The church is the place set apart for corporate worship by God's people

B. We need to enter into God's presence in a spirit and attitude of reverence

C. We need to participate actively in hymn singing and in prayer, as an integral part of worship

D. We need to bow down before the Lord and confess our sins before Him

E. We need to pay close attention to the reading of His word, the Holy Scriptures

F. We need to listen carefully and thoughtfully to the sermon, applying its principles to our own lives

In short, how do we react, in our worship, to God's act of love?

WORSHIP involves the entire church praising, praying, hearing, affirming, offering, fellowshiping, answering God's call.

MISSION involves entire church; every member is invited to become a co-liturgist with Christ, on behalf of other human beings. He is our Liturgist in the heavenly sanctuary, and wants you to be His co-liturgist to serve the needs of your fellow-humans throughout the world.

Would you like to join in serving God and mankind?

If so, your response will be, "Yes, Lord, I am, your servant, liturgist, priest, ready to serve You and all mankind."

Sermon Outline 7.

Title: "The battle About Worship"

Scripture Reading: Rev 14:9-12; 12:17

Introduction:

The first conflict in the world resulting in the shedding of innocent blood (Abel's) was concerning worship; the last great conflict will also be about worship. All through the scriptures, from Gen 4 to Rev 16:13,14, portray the history of the conflict between true and false worship. The crucial issue in Daniel and Revelation is the final controversy between true and false worship. You and I are challenged to worship the true God, the One Whom Daniel and John worshiped

I. Worship, as portrayed in the Books of Daniel and Revelation

A. The Book of Daniel

1. Basic content:

- a. First half: Daniel's personal life and conduct in the Babylonian court**
- b. Second half: Prophecy**
- c. Common concern for worship and liturgy in both parts**

2. Daniel 1-6 (the first part of the book) shows God's true worshipers as victorious, while the idolators suffer defeat

- a. Dan 1:20: God blesses Daniel and his friends for their faithfulness and integrity**
- b. Dan 2: Idolators were unable to tell and interpret the king's dream**
- c. Dan 3: The three faithful worshipers/servants of the true God are delivered from the burning fiery furnace**
- d. Dan 4: Self-worship leads to self-destruction**

- e. Dan 5: False worship and sacrilege bring death and destruction
 - f. Dan 6: The liturgical, worshipful, Daniel is delivered from the lions
3. Daniel 7-12 (part two) reveals the prophetic history of true worship vs. false worship
- a. Dan 7:21, 24-27: the anti-Christ, who falsely claims the worship due only to God
 - b. Dan 8: The sanctuary (symbol of true worship) trampled underfoot
 - c. Dan 9: Daniel involved in true worship (his prayer vs 3-19)
 - d. Dan 11: God's faithful people delivered
 - e. Dan 12: Michael stands up to deliver His people, God's true worshipers
4. As illustrated in the book of Daniel, God's servants (liturgists) come forth victorious. Do YOU want to join them?

When oppression, captivity, famine, temptation, assail, where do you stand? Will you maintain your liturgica life? If your remain faithful. Like Daniel and his three friends, God will deliver you, regardless of the circumstances

B. The Book of Revelation

- 1. The Roman Empire John is exiled; the issue is worship
- 2. Emperor-worship was required of all citizens, including Christians. Those who refused were brutally massacred

3. The secular empire of Rome foreshadowed the mystical power of Rome as a spiritual authority: the papacy. All who refused to declare that "Caesar is lord" were put to death. Faithful Christians would always accept only that "Jesus is Lord"
4. The emperor Domitian was deified by his subjects who saluted him thus: "Hail Lord and God!" Every Roman citizen was expected to worship the emperor
5. Papal persecution of those who did not accept its form of worship resulted in the persecution and putting to death of many faithful Christians
6. The prophetic picture of the last days: conflict between true and false worship predicted Rev 13; 14:9-11,17.
7. God's servants (liturgists), worshipers, are encouraged to remain faithful; examples of those who worshiped "in spirit and in truth" are given for their encouragement:
 - a. Rev 4:1-11 The heavenly liturgy and worship
 - b. Rev 7:9-12 Joint worship by the redeemed and the angels
 - c. Rev 7:13-17 The experience of God's faithful worshipers

Conclusion

What is your choice? Whom will you worship now, and tomorrow?

Two choices are available:

- A. God, through Jesus Christ. Is He your Lord? Do you choose to worship Him
 1. This involves worshipping the Lamb of God Who was slain from the foundation of the world
 2. This also involves perseverance in loyalty to the Lord of the church

3. This involves accepting God's true day of rest and worship, as faithfully serving HIM all the rest of the week
- B. The man of lawlessness: the anti-Christ. Many today are casting their vote for him and will thus become enslaved to him
1. This involves worshiping the beast and his image
 2. This involves accepting the false day of rest and worship
 3. This involves being subject to persecution and tribulation because one chooses to obey and worship the true God
- C. Making this choice means fighting the battle within oneself, here and now. Each person must make his own individual decision; God does not force anybody
- D. On whose side do you choose to be? To whom do you pay your loyalty? To whom do you render your service? Whom do you honor, revere, love, and worship? Whose priests and liturgists are you?

ALTAR CALL based on Rev 14:7-11; 18:4; 14:12

" . . .and worship Him" today!

Sermon Outline 8.

Title: "The Climax of Worship: The Sabbath"

Scripture Reading: Ezek 20:12; Mark 2:27,28

Introduction: God created the heavens and the earth in six days, and rested on the seventh Gen 1:31; 2:1-3

- A. "Rested" does not mean inactivity, or fatigue, but joy, happiness, gladness, because creation is complete. This indicates a celebration of a completed task on God's part**
- B. Resting also indicates another aspect of divine activity: upholding and sustaining creation**

I. God's blessing was pronounced Gen 2:3

A. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy

That blessing was on an intangible element: a special day His blessing was not pronounced on anything material: Not on light, waters, grass, trees, not on living creatures who move in the waters, the air, and on dry land. God did not hallow any of these creatures, nor even man. God chose to sanctify a special portion of time, the seventh day

B. He sanctified it: He set it apart for a special purpose:

- 1. "For man(kind): Adam, Eve, Abel, Noah, Israel, for you**
- 2. He did so for a special purpose**
- 3. He alone could thus hallow a day, because He Himself is holy. God is Light He creates light He is Life. God is holy, He can hallow. He set apart the Sabbath, and made it holy for all mankind**
- 4. For the purpose of worship**
 - a. The seventh day was Adam's and Eve's first full day of life**
 - b. As they enjoyed that day, Adam and Eve partook of the holiness of God**

c. Despite the entrance of sin, the sanctity of the Sabbath remains

5. The Sabbath also functions as the climax of the Christian's life

a. It is essential for the maintenance of a worshipful life (liturgy)

b. The redeemed people of God gather to worship Him, and are then sent forth into the world as a into the world as a redeeming people into the world as a redeeming people (mission / liturgy)

c. God's sanctified people meet for worship on the day that He has sanctified Ezek 20:20

"We have seen with our own eyes the tremendous change that the holiness of the Sabbath brings about . . ."
(R. Hayyim)

d. The Sabbath commandment is a relational commandment "Remember"
Exod 20:8-11

i. God is a God of remembrance Exod 2:23,24, (because,)

ii. He is our Savior Exod 20:1,2

iii. He makes His people holy Lev 19:2

(Note: Redemption precedes sanctification Exod 31:14.)

e. The Sabbath reminds us of Re-Creation 2 Cor 5:17-21; Heb 4:9

God continues HIS work of salvation for mankind, and within man on (the work of sanctification on the Sabbath day. Therefore, let us remember the Sabbath

**" . . .improvement of his(i. e.,man's) spiritual condition
Testmonies 4:249**

- f. Having fulfilled six days of worshipful living, God's people respond to the invitation to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Exod 20:8) Jesus invites all to "Come unto me, . . .and I will give you rest (Matt 11:28). O Sabbath, climax of heavenly rest!**
- g. The Sabbath is not an interlude in life, but the climax of living. It is the inspirer of all that takes place on the other six days.**

Conclusion:

What YOU and I are ALSO depends on how we relate to the Sabbath.

- A. "A religion which is confined to Sabbath worship emits no rays of light to others (Testimonies 5:339)**
- B. To the degree that YOU and I live a worshipful, liturgical, serving life during the week, to that same degree can we expect to enjoy a meaningful worship encounter with God on the Sabbath**

"Man himself must be holy to keep the Sabbath holy" o Sabbath throughout eternity (E. G. White)

- C. From Sabbath to Sabbath, until Christ returns, and from Sabbath throughout eternity, we will worship the Lord (2 Cor 3:18; Isa 66:22,23. O Sabbath, O climax of worship, O blessed rest!**

APPENDIX C

**Quotations from Ellen G. White
on the Sermon Series**

PLEASE NOTE:

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These consist of pages:

181-198, Quotations from Ellen G. White on the Sermon Series

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APPENDIX D

Letters



TELEPHONE: (516) 827-9350

Greater New York Conference Of Seventh-day Adventists

P. O. BOX 1029 • 7 SHELTER ROCK ROAD • MANHASSET, NEW YORK 11030

April 23, 1990

The Seventh-day Adventist Theological
Seminary at Andrews University
Doctor of Ministry Program

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to certify that Linford Martin is an ordained minister in our Conference, currently pastoring the Crossroads church in New York City.

During the Spring of 1988, Elder Martin conducted a seminar on worship and attendance at the Crossroads church, making eight presentations.

The records at the Conference office, and reports received from the local church seem to suggest there have been significant improvements. The attendance at worship services has increased, as well as contributions in tithes and offerings during the weeks and months after the seminar.

It is apparent to us that this seminar did not only serve the membership of the church, but also had an outreach dimension. Several individuals who attended the seminar were baptized, after follow-up work was done with them.

I hope what has been presented in this letter will help you assess the work done by Elder Martin.

Respectfully Yours,

Willie Oliver, Director
Youth Ministries/Family Life

WO:ta



TELEPHONE: (516) 627-9350

Greater New York Conference Of Seventh-day Adventists

P. O. BOX 1029 • 7. SHELTER ROCK ROAD • MANHASSET, NEW YORK 11030

March 27, 1990

Dr. Raymond Holmes
Seminary Hall
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, MI 49104

Dear Dr. Holmes:

I should like to give a report to you concerning one of our pastors, Linford Martin, who is faithfully pastoring our Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church in Manhattan. The church has recently informed us of a new group they are forming in a dark area of Brooklyn.

Elder Martin's special project has been worship in our church, and they have experienced some encouraging progress. Since 1988, when he first presented his eight sermons and gave emphasis to this important facet of service, the tithe has increased from \$154,137 for 1988 to \$161,536 for 1989. There were seventeen people who chose to be baptized following the program, with five more planning for baptism next Sabbath.

Another marked improvement may be seen in the attendance of the church, with a spirit of renewal being evident in their attitudes. All in all, the Crossroads Seventh-day Adventist Church is experiencing a closer walk with God and a spirit of renewal. Elder Martin has seen, first hand, the "fruit" for his labor.

Sincerely,

John T. Williamson
Ministerial Director

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CROSSROADS S.D.A. CHURCH TITHE INCREASE

YEAR	TITHE	PERCENTAGE Increase (Decrease)
1980	\$136,655.21	(1.7) %
1981	140,962.81	3.1 %
1982	135,739.68	(3.7) %
1983	127,055.17	(6.4) %
1984	143,255.24	12.75 %
1985	135,517.01	(5.4) %
1986	116,867.33	(13.8) %
1987	148,638.16	27.2 %
1988	154,137.92	3.7 %
1989	161,536.61	4.8 %

ATTENDANCE INCREASE

The worship series began at the Crossroads Church May 13-20, 1985. The attendance was approximately two hundred prior to the series. At the conclusion of the series, five weeks later, twenty-five non-attending members and fifteen new visitors had come to the series. Thus increasing our attendance to two hundred and forty. Twenty-three visitors have been baptized to date and more visitors are still attending the worship service. Our attendance increase to date is sixty-five.

Signed: Linford Martin, Pastor.

APPENDIX E

Tables

Table 6 tabulates the extent to which the respondents consciously felt that those leading in prayer during public worship were indeed praying for them personally.

TABLE 6

RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDE CHANGES TO PASTORAL PRAYER
(Expressed in Numbers and Percentages)

FACTORS	Yes Pre-Test		No Post-test	
	No.	%	No.	%
Almost always	26	36.6	36	49.3
Usually	26	36.1	25	34.2
Not sure	2	2.8	1	1.4
Sometimes	16	22.2	8	11.0
Never	2	2.8	3	4.1

The post-test revealed a high percentage of 49.3, in contrast to the 36.1% indicated in the pre-test, thus indicating that the respondents felt that someone was indeed praying for them personally.

Table 7 illustrates the response to the question, "When I give my offerings, am I doing in recognition of the sacrificial offering Christ made in my behalf?"

TABLE 7

RESPONDENTS WHO RECOGNIZED THE GIVING OF OFFERINGS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF WORSHIP
(expressed in Percentages and Numbers)

FACTORS	Yes Pre-Test		No Post-test	
	No.	%	No.	%
Almost always	36	49.3	46	63.0
Usually	27	37.0	20	27.4
Not sure	2	2.7	2	2.7
Sometimes	5	6.8	3	4.1
Never	3	4.1	2	2.71

The increase of 63.3% represented in the post-test results, in comparison to the 49.3% shown in the pre-test results, indicates that the giving of offerings was considered a very important part of the worship service.

Table 8 indicates the responses to the question, "Does the worship service lead me to enjoy the worship, adoration, and praise of God?"

TABLE 8
RESPONDENTS WHO INDICATED THEIR ENJOYMENT OF
WORSHIP SERVICES
(expressed in percentages)

FACTORS	Yes Pre-Test		No Post-test	
	No.	%	No.	%
Almost always	33	44.6	39	53.4
Usually	31	41.9	24	32.9
Not sure	--	2	9.6	--
Sometimes	10	13.5	7	9.6
Never	--	--	1	1.4

Table 8 seems to indicate a definite increase in the enjoyment of the worship services between the pre-test (which showed 44.6%), and the 53.4% positive responses in the post-test.

Table 9 shows the responses received when the members were asked why the church of Christ exists.

TABLE 9

RESPONDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF
WHY THE CHURCH OF CHRIST EXISTS
(expressed in percentages)

FACTORS	Yes Pre-Test No.	%	No Post-test No	%
Preach the gospel	62	83.8	69	92
Fellowship	12	16.2	5	6.7
Admiring architecture	--	--	--	--
Social activities	--	--	--	--
Community activities	--	--	--	--

The primary reason for the existence of the church is to preach the gospel, as indicated in the post test result of 92%

Table 10 indicates how respondents feel when the Sabbath begins.

TABLE 10
RESPONDENTS' EXPRESSION OF HOW THEY
FEEL WHEN THE SABBATH BEGINS
(expressed in percentages)

FACTORS	Yes Pre-Test		No Post-test	
	No.	%	No.	%
Uncomfortable	2	2.7	1	1.3
Compelled to go to worship	6	8.2	8	10.7
Tired	7	9.6	--	----
Happy	27	37.0	35	46.7
Appointment with God	31	42.5	31	41.3

According to the post-test, 46.7% indicated that they were happy when the Sabbath began.

TABLE 11

**INDICATION OF RESPONDENTS' MEMBERSHIP HISTORY IN THE
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
(expressed in percentages)**

FACTORS	Yes Pre-Test No.	%	No Post-test No.	%
Not yet Baptized	5	6.9	3	4.2
Less than one year	5	6.9	1	1.4
One to two years	3	4.2	5	6.9
Three to five years	7	9.7	10	13.9
Five to ten years	10	13.9	11	15.3
Over ten years	42	58.3	47	53.3

The pre-test figure of 58.3% indicates that the majority of the respondents have been in the church for over ten years.

TABLE 12**AGE PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS
(expressed in percentages)**

AGE GROUP	No.	%
10-20 years	11	15.1
21-30 years	15	20.5
31-40 years	20	27.4
41-50 years	18	24.7
Over 51 years	9	12.3

The largest percentage of respondents (27.4 %) fall within the 31-40 year age group.

TABLE 13
EDUCATIONAL PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS
(expressed in percentages)

Grade Completed	No	Response %
Elementary: Grades 1-6	--	--
Secondary: Grades 7-9	10	14.1
Preparatory: Grades 10-12	5	7.0
College: (1-4 yrs)	19	26.8
Vocational school	12	16.9
Graduate school	5	7.0
Other	13	18.3

Table 13 shows that 26.8% of those who responded are college-trained.

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