An Attempt to Increase the Communion Attendance at the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church

Adam R. Bujak
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An attempt to increase the communion attendance at the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church

Bujak, Adam Richard, D.Min.
Andrews University, 1993

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Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

AN ATTEMPT TO INCREASE THE COMMUNION ATTENDANCE AT THE WILLOWDALE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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

Adam R. Bujak
June 1993
AN ATTEMPT TO INCREASE THE COMMUNION ATTENDANCE AT THE WILLOWDALE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

A project report presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Ministry

by

Adam R. Bujak

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

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Date approved: July 6, 1993
ABSTRACT

AN ATTEMPT TO INCREASE THE COMMUNION ATTENDANCE
AT THE WILLOWDALE SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

Adam R. Bujak

Faculty adviser: Abraham Terian, Dr. theol.
Title: AN ATTEMPT TO INCREASE THE COMMUNION ATTENDANCE AT THE WILLOWDALE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Name of researcher: Adam R. Bujak

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Abraham Terian, Dr. theol.

Date completed: June 1993

Problem

Attendance at the Lord’s Supper is often lower or much lower than at the regular Sabbath services. The purpose of this project was to increase the attendance at the Lord’s Supper by generating a deeper understanding of this sacrament among a particular congregation.

Method

My first task was to discover the perceptions of my members regarding the theology and the practice of the Lord’s Supper. A comprehensive survey was prepared and administered. The data was collected and analyzed as reported in Part One.
The empirical data show a number of factors that contribute to low attendance at the Lord’s Table: lack of understanding of the theological significance of the Lord’s Supper, feeling unworthy, having unresolved differences with fellow believers, and feeling uncomfortable about foot washing.

Once I discovered the issues in the empirical data that contribute to low attendance I turned to study the Scriptures, the writings of Ellen G. White and other non-Adventist literature in order to write four studies on the Lord’s Supper which appear in Part Two of this report.

**Results**

Four sermons, informed by the preceding studies were then prepared. The sequel of the four sermons preached showed in the results of a second survey that preaching does have an effect on those in attendance at church. However, changes in attitude are a slow process. For those on the fringes of church fellowship, there is great need for pastoral visits and attention. The whole experiment indicated that the solution to the problem of low attendance lies in better preparation of baptismal candidates, education, home visitation, and some more education through the spoken and written word in the official church papers.

**Conclusions**

Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, God has reconciled humanity to himself. By his word God calls us into a new relationship with himself—a relationship that is inaugurated by baptism into Christ and nurtured
through his Word and deepened through regular participation in the Lord’s Supper. That relationship expresses itself in a life of faith and loving service.

When God’s people are gathered at the Lord’s Table to commemorate this redemptive act, Christ makes effective among them the benefits of his victory and elicits their response of faith, thanksgiving, and self-surrender. Christ, through the Holy Spirit, is present to build up his church, to strengthen its fellowship and to further its mission.

In the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, we proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes in the clouds of heaven. We look back with thanksgiving to what Christ has accomplished for us on the cross, commune with him at the Table, and look forward to his final Parousia.

This project demonstrates that by educating the membership regarding the value of participation in the sacrament, the attendance can be increased and stay at that level while making participation in the sacrament more meaningful to all in the church.
To you who matter most in my life\footnote{Among those created in the image of God.} I dedicate this research project.

Thank you for all the support that you gave me.
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<td>ARSH</td>
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<tr>
<td>COL</td>
<td>Christ's Object Lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Desire of Ages</td>
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<tr>
<td>EV</td>
<td>Evangelism</td>
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<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
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<td>ITS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOVT</td>
<td>Noun Testamentum</td>
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<td>NTS</td>
<td>New Testament Studies</td>
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<td>SDABC</td>
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<td>SDABE</td>
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<td>TDNT</td>
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<td>TM</td>
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<td>7T</td>
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<td>ZNW</td>
<td>Zeitschrift fuer die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Project

This study attempted to discover the perceptions of the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church members regarding the theology and the practice of the Lord’s Supper and then compared those perceptions with the theological views found in the Scriptures, the Spirit of Prophecy, and other Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) and selected non-Adventist literature.

These perceptions provided a basis for suggesting theological and practical correctives informed by the above sources, vis-a-vis the responses to the questionnaire, whereby participation in the Lord’s Supper could become more meaningful and attendance could increase.

Justification of the Project

There are a number of reasons why such a project was justified. There seems to be little emphasis on the biblical theology of the Lord’s Supper within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Only two books have been written by SDA writers which deal with the theology of the Lord’s Supper. There is a need to revitalize members’ concern for regular participation in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Pastors do desire to see greater attendance "at the table of the Lord." To the above reasons I might add the perception of problems that appears
to be related to the church’s theology and practice of the Lord’s Supper: the apparent lethargy on the part of the congregation to the church’s celebration of the Lord’s Supper, the skipping of church by some members on the day the Lord’s Supper is scheduled (evidenced also by the fact that scores of members from other Seventh-day Adventist churches in Toronto visit the Willowdale Church on days when their congregations celebrate the Lord’s Supper), and lastly, the apparent loss of meaning of the Ordinance of Humility, seen also in letters to church paper editors with questions about the continued significance of the foot-washing ceremony.

The Tasks and Limitations of the Project

The project began with an empirical study intended to identify attitudes regarding the Lord’s Supper. More specifically, it was aimed at discovering the causes of absenteeism whenever the Lord’s Supper is celebrated in the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church and proceeded to remedy these causes in the course of four sermons. The effectiveness of these sermons is assessed by comparing the responses to the second identical survey with the responses to the first survey and the attendance at subsequent celebrations of the Lord’s Supper.

The theology of the Lord’s Supper developed in this project does not attempt to be definitive. The writing of a theology is for the purpose of comparison with the empirical data obtained from the surveys used in the project. The resources used in this project were limited to the Scriptures, the writings of E. G. White, other SDA and non-SDA literature, the empirical data collected from
two survey questionnaires administered to the Willowdale congregation and interviews with ten members known to have habitually missed the Communion Service. The surveys were field tested prior to their administration and approved by Dr. Sara Terian, a professor of sociology at Andrews University. The collected data was entered into the computer and a program was developed to categorize and analyze the data.

**Expectations from the Project**

The project yielded two kinds of dividends: collective for the Willowdale Church family, and personal for the student.

The main expectation was to see a numerical increase in the attendance at the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church. A 10% to 20% increase would be considered a success. Further, it was anticipated that the four sermons preached would have an effect on the members’ understanding and practice of the Lord’s Supper. It was hoped that the participation in the Lord’s Supper would be seen as essential to Christian growth and fellowship, and as confirming our relationship with Christ. Presently, many display a "take it or leave it" attitude towards the Lord’s Supper.

It was a cherished desire of the researcher that feeling unworthy would not prevent members from taking part in the celebration, and that the participation in the foot-washing would not be considered an uncomfortable and meaningless

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1However, any weakness in the surveys as instruments for data collection is the sole responsibility of the researcher.

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experience. Rather, it was expected that the priesthood of all believers would be practiced as evidenced by each member praying for each other and applying the gospel personally during the ordinance. It was also hoped that bread and wine would not be viewed as the literal body and blood of Christ, yet eating of the emblems would be seen as a response of a saving faith, and assurance that we abide in Him and that our sins have been forgiven.

It would be gratifying to discover that the number of members holding erroneous notions about the meaning of the Lord’s Supper clearly diminish in the second survey.

The student expected to analyze the spiritual ailments of the congregation and then diagnosing the causes and prescribing and delivering the medication (four sermons) capable of rectifying the situation under the influence of the Holy Spirit. In the process, the researcher’s understanding of the theology of the Lord’s Supper would be enhanced and his skills sharpened.

Definition of Terms

In the surveyed literature there are several terms used to describe the so-called "central act of Christian devotion," all of which are derived from Scripture. Each of these terms, properly understood, stresses one particular aspect of the experience.

1. Deipnon kuriakon, the Lord’s Supper, which is based on 1 Cor 11:20.

---

1Ellen White refers to the foot washing as the central pillar of our faith.
This is the most common designation in the Protestant literature. It appears that in the passage indicated, Paul wanted to make a clear distinction between the sacrament itself and the agape meal, which the Corinthians celebrated together and which they abused, making both of them undignified. Paul's usage lays special emphasis on the fact that this Supper is the Lord's. It is not an ordinary supper in which the rich congregate together in the presence of the poor, but a feast in which the Lord provides for all in rich abundance.

2. *Trapeza kuriou,* the table of the Lord, is another designation found in 1 Cor 10:21. Some of the Christians in Corinth thought it was permissible to sit down with Gentiles at their tables and eat meat offered to idols, since all flesh is alike and all meals were to be commemorative of the Christ event. But Paul was of the opinion that such meals constitute sacrificing to demons, and thus having communion with demons. This would be in direct conflict with sitting at the table of the Lord, confessing allegiance to him and having communion with him.

3. *Klasis tou artou,* the breaking of bread, a term that is used in Acts 2:42, and also in Acts 20:7. This term, most probably, does not refer exclusively to the Lord's Supper. It refers to all the love-feasts, including the Lord's Supper.

4. *Eucharistia,* thanksgiving, and *eulogia,* blessing, are terms which are derived from 1 Cor 10:16; 11:24. In Matt 26:26,27 we read that the Lord took the bread and blessed it, and he also took the cup and gave thanks. Most likely these two words were used interchangeably and refer to a blessing and thanksgiving combined.
Other terms used by various traditions include the following:

1. **Holy Communion**, which suggests that we come to the celebration in order to deepen our communion and fellowship with a holy God and with other members of his family.

2. **Mass** probably means either "meal" or "dismissal" or those who have not been baptized into Jesus Christ. This intimate family meal is for the believing members of the family and not just anyone. The name, Mass, has no connection with, or reference to, the institution. It gives no hint to the doctrine or purpose of the Lord’s Supper and embraces a ritual unknown to the New Testament. "It declares the Sacrament to be a sacrificial offering of the flesh and blood of Christ, not a symbolic representation of the one."¹

3. **Last Supper** stands for the last meal Jesus had with his disciples in the upper room the night before the crucifixion, as recorded in Matt 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19,20 and 1 Cor 11:23-34, consisting of two distinct acts: (a) the breaking and eating of bread and (b) the drinking of unfermented wine. The Passover meal preceding the Last Supper need not be considered a part of it. Embraced within the expression is the experience of fellowship.

4. **Foot washing** describes the Johannine ordinance preceding the Lord’s Supper, sometimes referred to as the **Ordinance of Humility**. In this report both


terms are used interchangeably. They refer to the practice of participants washing each other’s feet in connection with the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. The term Ordinances of the Church is taken to mean the combined practice of Foot Washing and the Lord’s Supper.

To the Roman Catholics, the Eucharist is one of the seven sacraments.1 The other six include: Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordinance, Penance, and Extreme Uection. The Fourth Lateran Council in A.D. 1215 decreed them to be channels of grace. St. Augustine and all the scholastic writers defined a sacrament as "a visible sign of an invisible grace, instituted for our justification."2 The sacraments to Roman Catholics "are among the means of attaining righteousness and salvation."3 It is understood that the rite itself confers grace.

Seventh-day Adventists believe Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are as sacred rites,

to be outward signs of the inward operation of God’s saving grace upon the heart. They do not believe that these rites, in and of themselves, confer grace, but that they accompany the work of grace, and that by participating in them the recipient testifies to his faith in, and acceptance of, grace.4

In this report the word sacrament is used with the above meaning.


2Ibid.

3Ibid.

PART ONE

EMPIRICAL DATA ON THE THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE
OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AT THE WILLOWDALE
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
CHAPTER I

PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE THEOLOGY
OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Introduction

This chapter seeks to interpret research data relating to the theology and practice of the Lord’s Supper at the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Toronto, Canada. The research identifies relationships and trends within the church that correlate with the theology and practice of the Lord’s Supper.

Three hundred and fifty surveys (see appendix A) were given out, one to every member of the congregation and 334 forms were returned. Of this number, 31 were only partially completed and were discarded. Fully completed were 303 forms, which represents 86.6 percent of the congregation in attendance on the day the survey was administered. This is an excellent response rate by any standard.

The data files have been analyzed by several statistical programs. Three groups of responses were used: (1) profiles of the total group (see appendix B) and similar subgroup profiles, (2) chi-square tables (see appendix C), and (3) written comments in answer to question 42.

Thirteen sets of chi-square tables were developed. A title was supplied for each set and underneath the title is indicated the question and the response.
Each set has multiple tables which show the relationship between answers to each of the questions and one of the variables. The same type of analysis was done with all seven subgroups represented by questions 49-57. Those subgroups identify (1) gender, (2) marital status, (3) families with children under ten years of age, (4) drivers, (5) age, (6) education, (7) type of schools attended, (8) number of years the respondent has been a Seventh-day Adventist, and (9) previous church affiliation.

The methodology uses two broad categories of analysis: (1) descriptive and (2) inferential. Both methods are used because the information lends itself to both approaches. Most of the data in this research are expressed in frequencies or categories such as "disagree" or "agree." The research question is whether the frequencies observed in the subgroup profiles differ significantly from the profiles of all respondents. Chi-square values were accepted as valid only for those differences of responses that had a level of probability greater than .05. In other words, there are fewer than 5 chances in 100 that a difference as large as was observed in this study would occur by chance. Therefore, any differences above .05 percent in the study were rejected.

Since the purpose of chi-square is to compare frequencies with expected frequencies, it is reasonable that the more closely the observed and expected agree, the smaller the value of the chi-square. In other words, the greater the difference between the observed and the expected responses, the greater the value of the chi-square and the greater the probability of a significant difference.
Results from the study are displayed in two ways. In the first, the percentage of responses, and in the second, the mean or arithmetical average is given. The written suggestions from question 42 have been categorized, evaluated, and interpreted.

This chapter describes the attitudes of the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist church members in Toronto relating to the theology of the Lord’s Supper. First, the descriptive profiles are presented and briefly discussed, then the analyses of the twenty-four variables with the profiles of the total group and subgroups are explained and interpreted.

Of the total group surveyed, approximately 86 percent tended to be middle-aged or older with the largest group of respondents (37 percent) being between 36-50 years old; 57 percent had college or university training, and more than a third "were educated only or mostly" in Seventh-day Adventist school systems. Sixty percent of the respondents were female, 50 percent were married, and 41 percent were single. Those with twenty or more years as Seventh-day Adventists constituted the largest group of respondents (36 percent).

**General Attitudes**

Questions 2 to 7, 9 to 13, 15 to 16, 28, 34, 47 and 48 focus on the attitudes of respondents toward the theology of the Lord’s Supper. Each of these items was presented as a statement to which the respondents were asked to respond on a scale from 1 to 5 on the left hand side of the survey page. If they "strongly disagreed," they would circle 1, and if they "strongly agreed" they
would circle response 5, 3 indicating "not sure." The first results are the percentages from those answering "disagree" or "agree." Those who answered "not sure" are omitted and account for the extent to which the first two percentages on the accompanying tables fail to total 100 percent.

The second way of displaying the results is to give the mean or arithmetical average. Here the values 1 to 5 have been assigned to the answers. The answer "strongly disagree" is assigned a value of 1, "disagree" 2, "not sure" 3, "agree" 4, and "strongly agree" 5. If everyone had answered "strongly agree," the mean would be 5. If everyone had answered "strongly disagree," the mean would be 1. The higher the score, the more likely the respondents were to answer "agree" to the question. Questions 3 to 7, 9 to 12, 15 and 16 are displayed on table 1.

A careful study of table 1 reveals that most members seem to feel very positive about the Lord's Supper as a means of receiving God's grace. Ninety-seven percent of the respondents see the Lord's Supper as a sacrament where the Holy Spirit is present to impart spiritual life to those taking part. This response was the highest in percentage among the statements agreed with, and also received the highest mean score. This high response does not appear to result from a lack of understanding of the meaning of the sacrament, because 93 percent of all respondents believe that a person can experience regeneration at the time of participation. But "repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and baptism in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit as indispensable terms
TABLE 1
RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON THE THEOLOGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
(Responses given in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Lord's Supper a sacrament</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lord's Supper a mere symbol</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Regeneration at Lord's Supper</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lord's Supper brings forgiveness</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Christ is more present</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Necessary for salvation</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Open communion</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Bread is the literal body of Christ</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Feel unworthy to participate</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Repentance/faith/baptism are indispensable terms of approach</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Footwashing a &quot;mini-baptism&quot;</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of approach to the Lord’s table" are not crucial for 30 percent of the members. In answering this question they may have been thinking of our policy of "open communion," or considering those who have not had opportunity to be baptized by immersion. This is further underscored by the fact that almost 37 percent see the Lord’s Supper merely as a symbol and nothing more.

A very high percentage (78%) of respondents believe that the participation in the Lord’s Supper brings forgiveness, but many responding to this question indicated that only "a believing person" can experience regeneration. This seems to indicate that forgiveness is granted to those sincerely repentant.

Over half (51.8%) of the respondents either do not believe that the participation in the Lord’s Supper is necessary for salvation or are not sure. This indicates to me the low profile that the Lord’s Supper has in many respondents’ minds. Likewise, only 17.7 percent feel worthy to participate in the Lord’s Supper. An unbelievable 67.3 percent sometimes feel too unworthy to participate. This could indicate that the congregation is carrying a tremendous burden of guilt. Among all respondents, only 66 percent are willing to equate the ordinance of foot washing with a "mini-baptism."

There appears to be great confusion concerning the meaning of Christ’s words: "This is my body." A shocking 48.5 percent of the respondents believe that the communion bread is the literal body of Christ. (However that figure also includes almost 11 percent of those who are not sure.) Related to this is the fact that almost two thirds (62.6%) of the congregation believe that during the
celebration of the Lord's Supper, Christ is present in a more significant manner than in any other worship service. This indicates to the researcher the subjectivity with which members approach this sacred service.

Throughout most of its history, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has viewed the Lord's Supper only in symbolic terms, and it could well be that the symbolism has lost its power, leaving room for some confusion. Sound theological attitudes expressed in sermons on this theme would help to correct these misconceptions and misunderstandings.

Subgroup Attitudes

For the chi-square analyses of the subgroups, age, education, and number of years as Seventh-day Adventists have been considered. In table 2, abbreviated titles and variables correspond to the subgroup being discussed. The percentages indicate the number of respondents affirming the statement in each variable.

Careful comparison of the age groups reveals that there are different attitudes toward the theology of the Lord's Supper, with those age 19 and under showing the greatest variation. It was pointed out earlier that 97 percent of all respondents indicate their belief that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament. However, of those 19 years of age and under, 92 percent appear to hold that view. The responses of this age group generally are about 10 percent lower than the attitude of the general membership to any particular question. Sixty-seven percent of all respondents indicate they feel unworthy, but only 50 percent of those age 19 and under feel the same. The same holds true concerning "the need for repentance
toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost as indispensable terms of approach to the Lord's

**TABLE 2**

MEMBERS WITHIN AGE GROUPS HOLDING ATTITUDES CONCERNING THE THEOLOGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
(Responses given in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>under 19</th>
<th>20-35</th>
<th>36-50</th>
<th>51-65</th>
<th>over 66</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Sacrament (question 3)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regeneration (question 5)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brings Forgiveness (question 6)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary for Salvation (question 9)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Communion (question 10)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal body of Christ (question 11)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel unworthy (question 12)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repentance/Faith/Baptism (question 15)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among all respondents, 70 percent agreed with this statement, while in the younger age group, only 60 percent are of the same opinion.

It would appear that the age group of 19 and under is the most liberal (not bound by traditional understanding) in their attitudes to the theology of the Lord's Supper, while the groups 36-50 and 51-65 are the most conservative.

However, people in their retirement years tend to look again at life with attitudes often similar to those of the 19 and under group, though not always. An exception in that trend in attitudes is noticed in their answers to a statement that the Lord's Supper is a sacrament and question 10 dealing with open communion. The younger respondents do not feel as strongly that participation in the Lord's Supper is necessary for salvation. The reasons for those changes in attitude go beyond this study, but one can notice that a change may be taking place with the younger members of the congregation.

Interesting data surfaced concerning the participation in the Lord's Supper being necessary for salvation when compared with different educational levels. The more educated the group members, the less they feel the necessity of participation in the Lord's Supper for their salvation. Individuals who "have attended only or mostly Seventh-day Adventist schools" have the lowest level of appreciation for the sacrament. Chi-square tables reveal that 50 percent of them disagree that participation in the Lord's Supper is necessary for salvation.

It appears that the higher the educational level the greater the potential for disagreement with the statement that participation in the Lord's Supper is
necessary for salvation. Could the second set of figures indicate that the more educated people become, the more uncertain they are about forgiveness? At least forgiveness is not equated with the act of participation in the Lord's Supper. I believe, more observation in this area is needed.

**TABLE 3**

MEMBERS WITHIN EDUCATIONAL LEVELS HOLDING ATTITUDES CONCERNING THE THEOLOGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
(Responses given in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Post Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation necessary for salvation (question 9)</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brings forgiveness (question 6)</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chi-square table reveals that educational level has little to do with one's relationship with Jesus. Both the elementary group (64%) and the post-graduate group (63.5%) are below the general group respondents (76.8%).

The chi-square table dealing with question 12 indicates that the longer the individual has been a member in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the more
unworthy he or she feels. This could be an indication of a need for sound gospel preaching.

This point is further underlined by the answers given to questions 47 and 48. To a statement, "I believe the Lord’s Supper is," the following responses were given as listed below in table 4:

1. "a method or occasion for experiencing the Presence of Christ" (63.4%)
2. "a seal of the Covenant of Promise" (52%)
3. "an offering to God" (43.2%)
4. "a Covenant Feast" (41.9%)
5. "a sacrificial rite" (36.3%).

TABLE 4
MEMBERS ACCORDING TO LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP HOLDING ATTITUDES CONCERNING THE THEOLOGY OF THE LORD’S SUPPER
(Responses given in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>under 1 year</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6-10</th>
<th>11-20</th>
<th>20 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ is more significantly present (question 7)</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel unworthy (question 12)</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When asked in question 48, "What does the Lord's Supper mean to you in your personal life of faith?" the answers were more theologically sound, as there were no "catch" phrases to choose from. For this particular membership the Lord's Supper means:

1. Communion with Christ (81.2%)
2. Memorial of Christ's sacrifice (74.9%)
3. A source of spiritual energy (63.0%)
4. An act of fellowship (61.1%)
5. Worship through self-surrender (56.8%).

More than a quarter of the respondents (28%) stated that they never heard a sermon on the meaning of the Lord's Supper other than on Communion Sabbath, while the majority (58.7%) thought they heard one only occasionally. This brings us to chapter 2 dealing with the practice of the Lord's Supper.
CHAPTER II

PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE PRACTICE
OF THE LORD’S SUPPER INCLUDING
THE ORDINANCE OF HUMILITY

This chapter reports the findings on Seventh-day Adventist perceptions regarding the practice of the Lord’s Supper including the Ordinance of Humility. Questions 1, 8, 14, 23, and 25 are analyzed to shed light on the practice of the Lord’s Supper in general. Then we turn our attention to the practice of foot washing in questions 29 to 33. Answers to questions 37, 38, 44, and 45 are studied to analyze the existing practice of preparation for the Ordinance of Humility. The question of how meaningful the prevailing practice is, is addressed in a multiple choice question 26, (a) to (m), and in answers to questions 39 to 41, looking at: (1) the attitudes of all respondents, (2) attitudes of the subgroups where applicable, and (3) attitudes found in written responses.

General Attitudes

As the figures in table 5 indicate, the church membership feels very positive about the experience of the Lord’s Supper. The mean for the question dealing with the experiential significance of the Lord’s Supper is the highest in the entire survey. Nine out of 10 feel that the celebration of the Lord’s Supper is a
significant worship experience. But one half of all respondents feel that the absence of the Adventist life-style should not bar anyone from participation. A significant third believe that if foot washing were omitted, there would be more members participating.

**TABLE 5**

GENERAL PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE PRACTICE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
(Responses given in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Not Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lord’s Supper is usually a significant worship experience</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. A person should follow the Adventist life-style (Sabbath, tithe, no smoking) before participating in the Lord’s Supper</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. More members will participate in the Lord’s Supper if foot washing was omitted.</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I feel comfortable bringing a visitor to the Ordinance of Humility</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significantly, almost two thirds (62.0%) feel comfortable bringing a visitor to the Ordinance of Humility. In response to question 23, "Do you find the Ordinance of Foot Washing comfortable or uncomfortable to some extent?" a vast majority (73.8%) stated that they feel comfortable themselves. The chi-square tables reveal that the longer they have been members, the more comfortable they feel. Among the new believers, 58 percent feel comfortable participating in foot washing. When they have been members 6-10 years, the percentage increased to 77, and for those who had their names on the books for over twenty years, 80 percent are very comfortable. Among those who skip the celebration of the Lord's Supper only 4.6 percent do so because of foot washing.

Furthermore, 67.1 percent of all respondents find it easy to talk about spiritual subjects during the Ordinance of Foot Washing. Those who find it difficult, numbered only 13.9 percent, and chi-square tables revealed that they belong to the younger age group. The practice of foot washing as such does not prove to be a barrier to participation in the Lord’s Supper for the majority of the respondents.

For half of the general group, an Adventist lifestyle is not a pre-requisite to participation in the Lord’s Supper. The chi-square tables revealed that these respondents came "only or mostly" through the Seventh-day Adventist school system.

The responses in table 6 indicate that three quarters of the respondents make no arrangements prior to the service for a partner with whom to wash feet.
TABLE 6

ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE FOOT WASHING PRACTICE
(Responses given in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Not certain</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29. Do you make arrangements prior to the service for a partner?</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Do you prefer a deacon/deaconess to assist you in finding a partner?</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Do you like to wash your spouse’s feet?</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Do you think we should cater to husband/wife washing each other’s feet?</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Do you approve of a special room near by for the elderly?</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Have you ever wondered why our Church practices the Ordinance of Humility?</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were four and a half times as many members without prior arrangements as those who made arrangements. This could mean that broken relationships are ignored or that little personal preparation for the celebration takes place. Almost 60 percent do not wish any assistance in finding a partner. But half of the responding congregation like to wash their spouse’s feet.
Chi-square tables, comparing answer 31 about washing spouse's feet with marital status, reveal that one in every three single people wished they had a spouse to wash feet with and one out of every two married persons likes to wash his or her spouse's feet. In the written responses, several stated that such a practice brings greater meaning to the ordinance. One out of every third separated and/or divorced individual wishes they could wash their former spouse's feet. "Yes," says half of the total group, "we should cater to husband/wife washing each other's feet," and "have also a special room near by for the elderly." Three quarters of the respondents have never wondered why we practice the Ordinance of Humility. Those who wonder, belong to new believers having been members less than five years.

The following practice is followed in choosing a partner for foot-washing service:

1. 4.5 percent always have the same partner (older members)
2. 18.3 percent usually have the same partner
3. 41.0 percent have a different partner most of the time
4. 24.8 percent always have a different partner
5. 11.4 percent generally do not participate in foot washing.

Of those who participate in the foot washing service, a third seldom or never pray with their partner and 42.6 percent do it only sometimes (responses to question 38). Among those who pray, age is not the factor, but rather the number of years they have been in the church. The longer the individuals have been
members, the easier they find it to pray with their partner. This could be because many of these "long time Adventists" wash feet with the same partner. On the other hand, could it be that for some "recent Adventists," foot washing has become a ritual that is not approached meaningfully?

When visiting a Seventh-day Adventist Church that happens to be celebrating the Lord's Supper that particular Sabbath, almost half (44.2%) of the respondents will either participate only in the Communion (bread and wine), or just act as spectators, or leave after the sermon (question 41).

Having experimented with various forms of the Lord's Supper over the years, and having perfected one model called "Candlelight Celebration," it has been very interesting to study the congregational appraisal of the various component parts of that liturgy. Table 7 displays the ratings of meaningfulness.

**Subgroup Attitudes**

A number of revealing facts were disclosed in answers to questions 44 and 45 dealing with the preparation for a meaningful celebration of the Lord's Supper. It appears, in table 8, that belief does not go hand in hand with practice. The respondents disclosed that they believe one thing about the necessity of spiritual preparation but do not practice what they believe. This is very likely a serious problem that pastors must face. Educating congregations about the necessity of preparation—and modelling that preparation by offering special Friday night services prior to the Communion Sabbath—would go a long way in helping to correct the present state of affairs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 26</th>
<th>Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Partaking of the bread &amp; wine</td>
<td>96.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Fellowship through congregational singing on the themes of Calvary</td>
<td>95.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Strong sense of Christ's presence</td>
<td>94.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Ordinance of Humility</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Short Sermonettes</td>
<td>83.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Specific objectives with which each service is designed</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Choir renditions</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Instrumental numbers that are inspirational</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Outstanding organ music</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Testimonies</td>
<td>77.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. God's Word acted rather than preached only</td>
<td>75.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Family format, sitting as family units</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Candlelight atmosphere</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 8
NECESSARY PREPARATIONS FOR THE MEANINGFUL CELEBRATION OF THE LORD’S SUPPER
(Responses given in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>&quot;Yes&quot; responses (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44. In order to receive a special blessing one should prepare for the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper by:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Reading the passion chapters in the <em>Desire of Ages</em></td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reading the passion chapters in the gospels</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fasting and deep heart searching</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Making things right with others</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Prayer</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Do you follow the practice described in question 44?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Usually</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Seldom</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Always</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Never</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The meaningfulness of the various Lord's Supper services held at different times was rated as shown in Table 9.

### TABLE 9

**SERVICE RATINGS**

(Responses given in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 39</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sabbath morning at Divine Worship hour</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Any type of service is equally meaningful</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Candlelight service on Friday evening in the winter months</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Candlelight service on Sabbath afternoon in the summer months</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other times than Sabbath-morning celebrations chosen were:

(1) summer Sabbaths before sunset (35.6%)
(2) winter Fridays after sunset (35.3%)
(3) Sunday night (3.6%)
(4) Wednesday night (2.0%).

Only a third of the congregation prefers to stay with the Sabbath morning service, despite the time element being a restricting factor. These statistics are
based on answers to question 40.

If the Lord’s Supper services are meaningful, and the Ordinance of Humility is not the source of discomfort, then why do so many members absent themselves from the table of the Lord or go visiting other churches when the Lord’s Supper is scheduled at their home church? What are the reasons for non-attendance?
CHAPTER III

REASONS FOR NOT PARTICIPATING
AND/OR NOT-ATTENDING
COMMUNION SERVICES

This chapter reports the findings about Seventh-day Adventist perceptions regarding the reasons for not attending the Lord's Supper quarterly appointments or not participating when present in church on a given Sabbath when the Lord's Supper is celebrated.

General Reasons

Generally, the respondents do not appear to have a negative attitude towards the Lord's Supper. Ninety percent believe that in their church the Lord's Supper service is usually a significant worship experience. Even among those who have not attended any Communion services, or have a poor attendance record (attending two out of four services), 40 percent agreed that what they attended was special. Thirty-eight percent of the surveyed membership agreed that the services were well planned by the pastors. Eighty-six percent of those who did not attend any services at all in two years believed that the pastors were doing a good job in planning a service that would be a significant worship experience. (They must
have learned this by word of mouth.) Since there are no obvious reasons for poor attendance, one has to look for the hidden ones. These perhaps could be found in the area of attitudes. Chi-square tables are heavily relied on in this chapter to interpret the findings.

Eleven individuals chose not to answer question number 35 dealing with the attendance record. When compared with their former religious affiliation, no insight could be gleaned, because out of a total of 303 respondents, 235 (who belonged to other churches prior to joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church) chose not to indicate what church they belonged to. That kind of attitude baffles this researcher. Could it be, that in general, Canadians feel more private than other nationalities about disclosing their religious affiliation on any government form or survey.

Table 10 tells in percentage figures the frequency with which the Willowdale congregation attended the celebrations of the Lord’s Supper in the last two years prior to the administration of the surveys.

**TABLE 10**

**FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE OF ALL RESPONDENTS**

(Responses given in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>8&gt;</th>
<th>6-8</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>2-4</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>NONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. In the last two years, how many services have you attended?</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who Are the Poor Attenders?

Chi-square tables reveal that new members attend least frequently. Only half of those newly baptized have a good attendance record. This survey revealed that a quarter of new converts never attend. They constitute the majority of those who wonder why the service is conducted at all. These new members must be better indoctrinated before their baptism. People who have been members over twenty years have the best attendance record among all respondents. With the maturity in age also comes the deepening of relationship with Jesus and more regular and faithful attendance.

Relationship with Jesus

The kind of schools attended (whether church or public) has little bearing on people’s relationship with Jesus. The number of years one has been a church member also has little bearing on one’s relationship with Jesus. One member in five feels unworthy to participate, but 68.1 percent of those who feel too unworthy have an intimate relationship with Jesus. It needs to be pointed out that question 27 disclosing ones relationship with Jesus was the one in the entire survey that was most frequently omitted. So the absenteeism could very well be linked to the uncertainty of their relationship with their Savior.

Feeling Unworthy

Feeling unworthy was a concern that surfaced in several places in the questionnaire. Table 11 shows the correlation between feeling unworthy and the
years one has been a member of the Willowdale SDA Church.

The percentage of those feeling unworthy to participate increases with the number of years they have known the Adventist message. Perhaps our preaching and upholding the church standards teaches them that they should feel unworthy. Another factor that surfaced was that there is a greater percentage of people who attended only or mostly public schools who feel unworthy to participate in the Lord's Supper. Respondents who attended SDA schools feel more worthy to participate than their public-school counterparts.

### TABLE 11

FEELING UNWORTHY IN RELATION TO THE YEARS ONE HAS BEEN A MEMBER
(Responses given in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Years as a Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Sometimes I feel unworthy to participate in the Lord's Supper.</td>
<td>1&lt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feeling Uncomfortable

Among the general membership, feeling uncomfortable about foot washing is not the concern expressed or perceived. But among those who do not attend, it is
a concern. Those who feel uncomfortable also do not like looking for a partner, and consider it a valid reason not to attend. They tend to take the route of least resistance. We must go out of our way to make the experience as comfortable as possible.

Fifty percent of those who attended one or no services in two years agreed that they would participate more frequently if the foot washing was omitted. However, the number of people feeling uncomfortable decreases with the maturity in age.

**TABLE 12**

**LACK OF COMFORT ABOUT FOOT WASHING IN RELATION TO AGE**

(Responses given in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>&lt; 19</th>
<th>20-35</th>
<th>36-50</th>
<th>51-65</th>
<th>&gt; 66 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. Do you find the Ordinance of Foot Washing comfortable or uncomfortable?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As expected, the more often a member attends, the more comfortable he or she feels about bringing a non-Seventh-day Adventist visitor to the Ordinance of Humility.
Other General Reasons for Non-Attendance

Since the survey was anonymous the respondents felt at ease to disclose their reasons for skipping church when the Lord's Supper is planned. Out of the total 303 responses, we have 297 valid cases of individuals who returned a completed survey and out of these 43 percent disclosed their reasons for skipping church. Statistically, this is a valid self-disclosure that we must pay attention to.

The reasons enumerated among the 43% who skip were as follows:

1. 4.6 percent feel uncomfortable about the foot washing ceremony
2. 5.3 percent do not like looking for a partner with whom to wash feet
3. 6.6 percent have unresolved differences with someone
4. 19.1 percent feel unworthy
5. 19.7 percent have other specific reasons (see table 13 below).

Subgroup Reasons

To find out about those who skip church because they feel unworthy or for other reasons, they have been compared with other subgroups. The chi-square tables show that those feeling unworthy and skipping church are (1) newer members, having their names on the church lists less than ten years, and (2) members who attended non Seventh-day Adventist schools.

A cross-tabulation between question 42 part 5 (skipping for other reasons) and the age subgroup reveals that over 54 percent are under 35 years old. These are baby boomers who feel indifferent towards one of "the pillars of our faith."
Responses of the Young People

The young people of the Willowdale congregation are served by a youth pastor and have separate youth services three times a month. Their responses to the survey are included in the general data collected, but a word must be added about the personal interaction of the researcher with them. They were quite open to the survey and willing to discuss the issues raised by it.

Generally speaking, young people are open to discuss their faith and reasons for not attending. One sixteen-year-old summed up the spirit of independence by stating: "I only attend the Lord’s Supper to please my mother. Participation in the Ordinance of Humility is not going to make me better. When I need to, I just tell God I am sorry."

Other young people revealed hunger for religious experience, but in ways that are different from their parents. Their images of God, their ways of praying, and their attitudes toward the Lord’s Supper and worship in general, sometimes make them feel like outsiders in the adult congregation. They like to express their faith in ways that are different from the adults. These differences cause some teenagers to look for God in places outside the institutional church, such as nature, youth camps, and small Bible study groups.

The next generation of Seventh-day Adventists will have fewer cultural supports for their religious identity and will have to base their faith less on custom and more on conviction and choice. This more intensely personal relationship with Jesus must be nourished by prayer and religious exercises. Such a
relationship can hardly be imposed, so youth pastors face the challenge of preparing the young people for a freely chosen commitment to a Christian way of living. Parents can offer the kind of example that presents the attendance at the Lord's Supper as a high priority. A total of fifty-nine written responses was given regarding "other reasons" for skipping church when the Lord's Supper is celebrated. These responses fall into ten categories listed in table 13.

TABLE 13
CATEGORIES OF WRITTEN REASONS REGARDING SKIPPING CHURCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't feel like it, or lazy or can't be bothered</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On duty at the hospital</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have to sort out my relationship with Jesus first or not ready</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous engagements</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick or tired</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For no reason, unintentional</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not know the date or forgot it</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermon too long or meaningless</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a big church like ours I don't feel close enough to anyone spiritually to share this experience with</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Even among those respondents who feel comfortable about foot washing, skipping church for other reasons is considerably higher. Moreover, the reasons are often not as justifiable as one would wish them to be. Having to be on duty at the hospital next door or being sick accounts for only a quarter of the revealed cases of absenteeism. These appear to be legitimate reasons. I believe that these are not cases of "skipping church."

But of far greater concern are the revelations like "I don't feel like" or "I am too lazy," and "I cannot be bothered," which were most common. High also on the list of other reasons was the revelation: "I have to sort out my relationship with Jesus first" or "I am not ready." The message needs to go out that the Lord's Supper is for sinners and not for the perfected saints.

"Previous engagements" was the fourth highest on the list. Regularly set dates like the last Sabbath in the quarter could help the members to keep those times as important dates in their personal calendars, and prevent any conflicts with other engagements. Every "previous engagement" at some time is a future possible appointment to be confirmed. It often is a question of priorities.

For those who skip unintentionally or for no apparent reason, more frequent preaching on the importance of various aspects of the celebration may help.

Excursus: Supplementary Data from the Interviews

Reaffirmation of General Attitudes

Considering the fact that 13 percent of the membership present in church on
October 14, 1989, chose either not to return the questionnaire or return one only partially filled out, and their answers could not be taken into account, ten personal interviews were conducted with members who have been known to habitually miss the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In most cases, there has been an initial hesitance to discuss the reasons face to face, but my assurances of keeping confidentiality paved the way for gaining insights into personal reasons in nine cases.

Three of the cases could be grouped with those in the group in the survey who skip church because of unresolved differences with other families in the church. Two have been long-standing, spanning more than ten years. One case dated to a recent disagreement that occurred in one of the choirs. However, careful listening and gentle probing revealed that this has been an ongoing problem that the couple has had with a number of other choir members for some time.

The other six cases could be described as families who practice their beliefs in accordance with the weather. In their opinion, participation is desirable but not a must. Convenience seems to be their way of life. A relationship with Christ as a personal Savior from sin has not been experienced. The essence of Christianity has been perceived as keeping the Ten Commandments. Two individuals believe that the church makes too much fuss about the necessity of attending every Communion Service. "We are there when it fits with our plans," they said. One of the six families actually welcomed my pastoral concerns and expressed interest in the forthcoming series of sermons on the Lord's Supper.
Reaffirmation of Subgroup Attitudes

The interviews did not only reaffirm the general attitudes of the congregation toward the Lord's Supper but also reaffirmed the attitude of the subgroups. Those who skipped church felt unworthy because of unresolved problems in their lives. These individuals were in their late thirties, having been baptized in the last ten years.

All of the six families have confirmed that they have been slipping away from regular church attendance, and four were surprised that the visits did not have a financial objective in mind. Three families promised to attend the next celebration. They claimed that had they been notified in advance they would have made an effort.

These interviews prompted the necessity of two steps in preparation for future celebration. One was the division of the total membership into smaller units with an elder and a deacon/deaconess in charge of each unit. In the organization of the undershepherd plan, elders, deacons, and deaconesses were requested to visit each family in their unit prior to the next Communion. The follow-up meetings with the elders and deacons revealed that the undershepherd plan existed only on paper. The elders and the deacons were willing to visit the sick at the hospital on Sabbath afternoons, but to get them to visit church members in their homes during the week was a task beyond possible expectations.

The other resulting action of the interviews was the printing of written invitations that were initially given to the deacons and elders for house-to-house
distribution, but in the end had to be mailed to infrequent church attenders. There were a number of positive responses. Members who had not attended the Lord’s Supper in years expressed personal gratification for the efforts made in bringing them back to where they felt they belonged. During the following celebrations of the Lord’s Supper, when the time and opportunity were given for personal testimonies, heart-warming praises have been expressed for God’s care and guidance expressed through human instrumentality. Samples of the invitations are enclosed in appendix F.
PART TWO

FOUR STUDIES ON THE LORD'S SUPPER
CHAPTER IV

THE ORDINANCE OF HUMILITY

The Ordinance of Humility practiced in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is in danger of losing its significance and becoming a ritual without meaning. Recent articles in the church papers and letters to editors alert us to that danger. Howard Schoepflin questions the validity of our practice pointing out that in none of the Gospel accounts of the Lord’s Supper is there any mention of the foot washing ceremony. He writes: "The two services are never combined in Scripture."¹ He suggests that foot washing was a service performed for guests, and in the upper room performed by Jesus to teach a lesson. He further expresses an opinion that there is no biblical evidence that it was intended to be practiced throughout the centuries. He calls for re-examination of our observance, if we are to continue to observe the foot washing together with the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.²

²Ibid.
Roy Adams in an editorial refers to another reader who, in his letter to the editor of the *Adventist Review*, questions the whole practice of foot washing, seeing it as "a one-time experience involving the 12 disciples and them only."\(^1\) According to the author of this letter, "No scriptural evidence commends this ceremony to extend through the ages."\(^2\)

In an earlier editorial Roy Adams expressed the idea that the ceremony of foot washing is loaded "with considerable cultural baggage."\(^3\) It is a custom that is alien to church members living in the Western hemisphere. His recommendation is to re-examine the deeper meaning of foot washing and the circumstances that prompted its origin.

**Background to Foot Washing**

Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the annual feast of the Passover. Peter and John were sent ahead of the group to make the arrangements for this special occasion. Jesus led the remaining disciples on the way through the narrow streets of Jerusalem to the "upper room." There were pilgrims from all over coming to Jerusalem for the annual celebration. To all of them, it was simply another Passover celebration. For Jesus, however, this Passover was different. His mind must have been crowded with many serious

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\(^2\)Ibid.

thoughts. For according to prophecy he was the "lamb of God" soon to be delivered as "a lamb for the slaughter." He was about to drink of the cup of God's indignation and give his life for the sins of the world. There were only a few hours left and the Savior desired to spend them with his beloved disciples who were to carry on his mission after his departure. He would spend this time with them for their benefit.

Jesus anticipated the future: his rejection by the Jewish people, the trial, the cruel death on the Roman cross. The disciples, on the other hand, were totally oblivious to what the future had in store. Their hearts were filled with expectations that Jesus would appear as the national hero to establish a powerful Jewish nation. The concept of a suffering Messiah was foreign to their thinking. Their national aspirations had blurred their vision and all that Jesus had taught them during his earthly ministry. Each one of them was concerned about the position in the soon-to-be-established earthly kingdom. This was the subject of their conversation. "And dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest."^1

What might have precipitated this strife was the request of Mrs. Zebedee when she said to Jesus: "'Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.'"^2 Again and again the disciples had hotly debated among themselves who was the greatest. This jealousy

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^2Matt 20:21.
and strife must have filled the heart of Jesus with sadness. He was concerned for their future. He was just about to put the responsibility for the propagation of the gospel upon their shoulders, but they were not ready. There were so many lessons that they still had to learn.

It is interesting to note that in the Gospel of John, 1-12, the disciples are described as a select group who really believe in Christ's messiahship. Unlike Nicodemus, they have openly joined the Jesus band, but as Nicodemus, they continually struggle with misunderstanding. However, as R. A. Culpepper points out: "the lack of understanding does not pose any threat to their discipleship." \(^1\) Their condition requires additional instruction and perception.\(^2\) Being aware of the impending crisis, Jesus said sorrowfully: "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." \(^3\)

Having walked two miles from Bethany, the little group came to the house with the upper room ready for the Passover celebration. Their sandalled feet must have accumulated a certain amount of dust; and it was customary for a servant to perform the service of washing the feet of the guests as they arrived. The basin and a towel were made available, but there was no servant to perform the menial

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\(^3\) Luke 22:15, 16.
task. It would have been the responsibility of one, perhaps the youngest of the disciples, to perform the duty, but none of them was willing to do it. Their hearts were still filled with selfishness and the desire for high rank in the kingdom. None would humble himself to the point of becoming a servant.

As they sat at the table and ate the Passover lamb typifying Jesus in his sacrificial death, Jesus read their proud hearts. "He desired to rebuke their pride and teach them that true greatness is measured by one’s willingness to serve others."\(^1\) A number of times previously Jesus taught them that he who was greatest among them was to be their servant, or that the one that humbled himself would be exalted.\(^2\) How was Christ to impress on the disciples’ minds that a mere profession to be his follower would not ensure them a place in his kingdom? He desired to teach them a lesson about a loving service, true humility—which constitutes real greatness.

The disciples made no attempt to serve one another. They waited in their stubborn pride for their feet to be washed. Jesus waited, too, to see what they would do. Then, as their divine Master, Jesus rose from the Passover table, girded himself with a towel and began to wash the disciples’ feet. The Revised Standard Version reads that "during the supper"\(^3\) Jesus rose from the table taking the servant’s role, poured water into the basin and began to wash the disciples’

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\(^3\)John 13:2, 4.
feet. The washing of their feet "occurred between two sittings at the table--
between the Passover supper and the Lord’s Supper."\(^1\) As R. E. Brown points
out, the Gospel writer seems to emphasize the importance of foot washing by its
unique position when Jesus interrupted the meal to perform it.\(^2\) When he had
completed the task, he returned to the table and said:

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to
wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also
should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is
not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent
him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.\(^3\)

The Meaning of the Ordinance
for Christ’s Mission

The authors of the Biblical Exposition of the 27 Fundamental Doctrines of
the Seventh-day Adventist Church state that the Ordinance of Foot Washing
reveals truths about both Christ’s mission and the participants’ religious
experience.\(^4\)

A Memorial of Christ’s Condescension,
Humility, and Service

Christ interrupted the Passover meal and laid aside his attire. Such an

\(^1\)Robert L. Odom, “The First Celebration of the Ordinance of the Lord’s House,”

\(^2\)R. E. Brown, The Gospel according to John (Garden City, NY: Doubleday,

\(^3\)John 13:14-17 RSV.

\(^4\)Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental
(hereafter referred to as SDABE).
action would befit a servant. L. Morris proposes that Jesus had stripped to the loin cloth.\(^1\) As Christ began to wash the disciples' feet, astonishment and self-condemnation filled their hearts. They had all resisted humbling themselves, but their Master and Lord felt free to perform it. He took upon himself the form of a servant and was "revealing his greatness through his great humility."\(^2\)

Though he held a position in heaven equal to his Father's, he "emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death--even death on the cross."\(^3\) In washing the soiled feet of the Twelve, Christ memorialized his incarnation and life of service. It must have been humiliating for the eternal Son of God to give so abundantly of himself, to stoop so low as to take the role of the lowest servant in washing dirty feet of fishermen, men who would deny him, forsake him, and abandon him when he needed them most. C. K. Barret sees in the act of foot washing a foreshadowing of the ultimate humiliation of Christ when he laid down his life on the cross.\(^4\) It was Satan's plan to humiliate Christ during his earthly life at every turn. Christ taught his disciples verbally about humility: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the

\(^1\) L. Morris, The Gospel according to John (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 615.

\(^2\) Branson, 181.

\(^3\) Phil 2:7-8.

kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the
kingdom of heaven."¹

In his own words, he did not come "to be served, but to serve."² By
condescending to wash the feet of the Twelve, Jesus demonstrated that he would
do any service, no matter what it took, in order to save men. In word and in deed
Christ impressed upon the minds of his followers that his was a life of loving
service. John emphasizes the significance of Christ's actions by referring to the
towel, the water, and the washbasin. All this emphasizes the servant motif.

Christ left, in the memory of his disciples, an unprecedented model of
humility. And that model of his humility benefits all his followers. "All who
keep before them, in the act of feet-washing, the humiliation of Christ, . . . will
never fail to derive benefit from every discourse given, and spiritual strength from
every communion."³

Lessons in Humility, Love and Service
for His Followers

The foot-washing ceremony sheds light not only on Christ's life and
mission, but also on the meaning it had for his disciples.

It was love that made Jesus stoop down and wash the disciples' feet.
Instead of words of censure and condemnation, their Master Teacher gave them an

¹Matt 18:3-4.

²Matt 20:28.

³Ellen G. White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance of Feet-washing--
No. 1," ARSH, May 31, 1898, 574.
example of humility. It was a lesson in true humility that all need to learn repeatedly. "Christ’s lessons, from the beginning to the close of his life, taught humility before God."\textsuperscript{1} In commenting on the attribute of humility, Ellen G. White wrote that Jesus "raised this precious attribute out of the dust in which it has been trodden, and clothed it with the garments of his own righteousness."\textsuperscript{2}

Our human nature has not changed that much. As we prayerfully read this record, we are impressed with the need for meekness and humility of spirit. Here is demonstrated a major aspect of the Gospel, which the Lord’s Supper itself does not express: "‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’\textsuperscript{3}

By refusing to wash the feet of Jesus, the disciples had shown disrespect for the Lord, and selfishness, by not washing each other’s feet. They were not ready for the Passover meal, and even less ready for the participation in the Lord’s Supper that Jesus was about to institute. Jesus could have preached at them, scolded them, or simply rejected them. But in his love for them, Jesus did none of the above. Instead, in his loving devotion, Jesus chose to prepare them for what was coming. He loved them without fail, for he "loved them to the end."\textsuperscript{4} "Those who say, ‘I love God,’ and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; . . . the

\textsuperscript{1}White, "The Lord’s Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, June 21, 1898, 579.
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{3}Matt 25:40.
\textsuperscript{4}John 13:1.
commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their
brothers and sisters also."\(^1\)

By making this preparation ceremony an ordinance of the church, Christ
leads his followers into the state of tenderness and love that moved them to serve
others. Christ's motive in washing the feet of the disciples, penned E. G. White,
was "to bring about . . . a state of feeling where no exaltation of one above
another should find place. This ordinance was to bring a brother to an
understanding of the feelings of his brother."\(^2\) By following Christ in the
example of foot washing, his followers exemplified the spirit of the gospel
expressed by Paul: "Through love become slaves to one another."\(^3\)

It is certain that washing feet is not the thing one does for the sake of any
pleasurable sensation. But one does it in obedience to the example left to us by
Christ. V. Eller commenting on this writes, "Thank God feet washing is still
somewhat distasteful; otherwise we would miss the point entirely."\(^4\) And that
point is that we need to humble our hearts in order to be in the right spirit for the
reception of the elements in the Lord's Supper. But though the participation in the
Ordinance of Humility is humbling, it is far from degrading. Ellen G. White
makes the same point when she writes: "This ordinance is to encourage humility,

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\(^1\) John 4:19-21.


\(^3\) Gal 5:13.

\(^4\) Vernard Eller, *In Place of Sacraments. A Study of Baptism and the Lord's
but it should never be termed humiliating, in the sense of degrading to humanity."

Other Biblical References to Foot Washing

In the Old Testament there are several references to foot washing. It was a prevailing custom of courtesy to wash the feet of visitors as an act of hospitality. In the Mosaic system, priests were required to wash hands and feet before entering the sanctuary or the Temple. Near the entrance, there was placed a laver made of bronze for that purpose. This washing of hands and feet was ceremonial in nature and not intended to remove merely the accumulated dirt.

Moses, in Exod 30:17-21, describes specific commandments received from God concerning ceremonial washing in these words:

The Lord spoke to Moses: You shall make a bronze basin with a bronze stand for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it; with the water Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to make an offering by fire to the Lord, they shall wash with water, so that they may not die. They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die; it shall be a perpetual ordinance for them, for him and for his descendants throughout their generations.

Exod 40:30-32 describes how these instructions were carried out. During the time of the second Temple, even more elaborate requirements were spelled out, where

1White, "The Lord’s Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, May 31, 1898, 573.

2Gen 18:4; 19:2; Judg 19:20, 21; 1 Sam 25:41; the NT equivalents are found in Luke 7:38-46; 1 Tim 5:10.

ten lavers and "the sea" were mentioned.¹

This cleansing from bodily uncleanness was a symbol of putting away of
the filth of sin; the washing of the body therefore was a symbol of spiritual
cleansing, without which no one can draw near to God, and least of all
those who were to perform the duties of reconciliation.²

There are also examples in the Bible of foot washing in domestic settings
for reasons of personal hygiene and comfort.³ David attempts to get rid of the
responsibility for Bathsheba's pregnancy by instructing Uriah: "'Go down to your
house and wash your feet.'"⁴

The pages of the Bible also reveal examples of women washing the feet of
men.⁵ H. Rasmussen suggests that it was "a matter of love and respect," done as
"an act of affection toward their husbands."⁶ The most common references to
foot washing occur in the context of hospitality. Genesis contains the story of
Abram's encounter with God's messengers. "Let a little water be brought, and
wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree."⁷ It is not clear if the guests
are to wash their feet or if Abram's servants are to perform it. As the heavenly

¹1 Kgs 7:38; 2 Chr 4:6.


³2 Sam 11:8-11; 19:24 and in Cant 5:3.

⁴2 Sam 11:8.


⁷Gen 18:4.
messengers continue their journey, Lot invites them to his home. "Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant’s house and spend the night, wash your feet; then you can rise early and go on your way."\(^1\)

In the New Testament, besides foot washing in John 13, there are two passages\(^2\) where Jesus’ feet are washed by Mary’s tears and dried with her own hair. As a woman, she is a subordinate in role to Jesus, but she washes his feet out of love. Vs. 44 of Luke 7 confirms the fact that foot washing was regarded as a normal procedure expressing hospitality. In the second case a dinner was given in honor of Jesus, when Mary, Lazarus’ sister, took an expensive perfume and anointed the feet of Jesus because she loved him much. This washing/anointing was done in the context of a meal. Judas Iscariot criticized Mary for her extravagance. Jesus defended her, explaining that she had done it in preparation for his burial.

The last passage in the New Testament is found in 1 Tim 5:9,10:

Let a widow be put on the list if she is not less than sixty years old and has been married only once; she must be well attested for her good works, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints’ feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way (emphases supplied).

Here foot washing is described as one of the duties and responsibilities of a widow. "Unusual is the requirement," suggests E. Schuessler Fiorenza, "that she

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\(^1\)Gen 19:2.

\(^2\)Luke 7:36-50 describes a sinful woman who enters the home of a Pharisee and anoints the feet of Jesus. The other passage is John 12:1-8.
must have washed the feet of the saints, a duty usually performed by slaves or servants.1

Before we leave this survey of the Old and New Testaments, it must be pointed out that foot washing serves as a preparation for specific duties, preparation for responsibilities or even relationships. It serves to prepare one for priestly (religious) duties, for participation in a meal, a bed or a close relationship.2 The emphasis on preparation is significant for our understanding of John 13. Among the examples of domestic foot washing, the motif of love is often present. Otherwise, the act of foot washing is performed by servants.

What appears as a common custom, this act of hospitality or family affection, this Temple practice, Jesus took and made into an ordinance of his church.

A Type of Higher Cleansing

Water, as a recurring symbol, has a significant meaning in the Gospel of John. The first chapter gives us the account of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus. In the next chapter, Jesus performs his first miracle, the miracle of changing water into wine. In chap. 3, during a night interview, Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and of the spirit. Chap. 4 finds Jesus talking about the living water with the woman by the well. In chap. 5 a paralytic

1E. Schuessler Fiorenza, In Memory of Her (New York: Crossroad, 1983), 311.

2Cf. 1 Sam 25:41 where Abigail said: "'Your servant is a slave to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.'"
is healed at the pool by the sheep gate. In chap. 9, a man born blind is sent to the pool of Siloam to be healed. The washing of the disciples' feet is in chap. 13.

So we could say that "John's Gospel uses water, as a sign for the cleansing, healing power of God."1 J. R. Shultz concludes that foot washing is certainly not a "coincidence" in John's Gospel, but rather a part of a total design of symbolism to show us, who are slow to notice, "the spiritual, cleansing, forgiving, renewing power of the Holy Spirit, through the symbol of water."2

Several scholars point out that foot washing is a sign which points beyond itself to some deeper spiritual meaning.3 What is that meaning? Or is there more than one teaching intended?

Renewed Cleansing of the Heart

After washing the feet of Judas and other disciples, Jesus came to Peter. Peter, overcome with emotions, perhaps shame and remorse, exclaimed: "'You will never wash my feet.'"4 Obviously, Peter did not understand the meaning of Jesus' actions and protested in a most emphatic way.5 But the Master said to

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2 Ibid., 69.


Peter: "'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'"¹

Peter was conscious that this was a humble act, normally done by a servant. Then why did Jesus say that Peter did not understand what was being done to him? Because "clearly both the foot washing and the humility are incidental. Christ's real meaning lies deeper."²

There was in the act of washing a deeper meaning, according to E. G. White: "Except in the case of one, (Judas), this washing signified the cleansing from sin . . . The renewed heart, cleansed from every defilement, was of far more consequence than the outward application of water to their dusty feet."³ That deeper meaning was the spiritual cleansing of the heart from sin's defilement. But not every one of the disciples was cleansed. "Christ gave his disciples to understand that the washing of their feet did not cleanse away their sin, but that the cleansing of their heart was tested in this humble service."⁴

Christ removes only sins that are confessed. Judas, though he was on the verge of confessing, did not do so. Thus, the mere application of water to his feet had no spiritual effect on him. The experience of Judas points out, writes D. A. Carson, that "no rite, even performed by Jesus himself, ensures spiritual

¹John 13:7.
²Lawrence Maxwell, "Father Forgive My Brother's Sins," Signs of the Times, April 1972, 3.
³White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, July 5, 1898, 587.
⁴Ibid.
cleansing. Washed Judas may have been; cleansed he was not.¹ C. K. Barrett correctly observes that neither baptism nor foot washing works in a mechanical manner in the process of cleansing the heart from sin.² Judas chose "not to be cleansed by repentance, remorse, and confession."³ Repentance and confession are essential to a meaningful experience of foot washing. R. Bultmann highlights this point, when he writes, that one can be outwardly a disciple, like Judas, who was even washed by Jesus himself, and yet not be clean.⁴ Modern-day disciples must be aware not to participate in the Ordinance of Foot Washing in a mechanical manner, without sharing in the reality that the ordinance signifies. Otherwise foot washing becomes a mere ritual, a New Testament equivalent to the Old Testament ceremonial cleansing of the feet. And there are some scholars who have interpreted it that way—that foot washing is not a cleansing of the soul.⁵ No act of man can wash away sin; only Jesus can cleanse us from spiritual defilement.

Christ by the Holy Spirit is there to set the seal to His own ordinance. He is there to convict and soften the heart . . . . For the repentant, brokenhearted one He is waiting. All things are ready for the soul's reception. He who washed the feet of Judas longs to wash every heart from the stain of sin.⁶

¹D. A. Carson, The Gospel according to John (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 466.
²Barrett, The Gospel according to St. John, 442.
⁵Shultz, The Soul of the Symbols, 46-78.
⁶Ellen G. White, DA, (Mountain View, CA: PPRA, 1940), 656.
Preparation for Intimate Communion
with Christ

The importance of the foot-washing service is underlined in the term "preparatory service" to the participation in the Lord's Supper. Before partaking of the emblems of the Lord's body and blood, there is need for preparation in order to commune with Christ. E. G. White can therefore write:

This ordinance is Christ's appointed preparation for the sacramental service. While pride, variance, and strife for supremacy are cherished, the heart cannot enter into fellowship with Christ. . . . Therefore it was that Jesus appointed the memorial of His humiliation to be first observed.¹

As Christ washed away the dissention, jealousy, and pride from the disciples' hearts, only then were they ready and prepared to partake of the Last Supper, with love for their Master and for one another. In the ordinance of humility, God prepares the participant for the encounter with himself. To presume to participate in the Lord's Supper without proper preparation is the height of arrogance. And arrogance is often motivated by ignorance. Like Peter, who did not understand Christ's actions and opposed Jesus in having his feet washed, what present-day disciples do not understand, they may consequently oppose.

A Symbol of Baptism

As Jesus approached Peter to wash his feet, the impulsive disciple questioned the action of Christ. His problem was not in questioning, but in the

¹Ibid., 650.
lack of obedience to Christ. The Master proceeded kindly to inform Peter that his question rested on ignorance. The foot washing is more than a simple act of washing. "You do not know now what I am doing." The reply of Jesus dismayed the impulsive disciple. Peter retorted: "You will never wash my feet." Jesus meets the disobedience of Peter with the final declaration, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me" (vs. 8). From this we can learn that foot washing is exceedingly significant to any follower of Christ. There is more to the sacrament of foot washing than meets the eye. More gets cleansed than the feet.

Peter's firm and constant refusal to participate in foot washing is counteracted by Christ with an eternal condition. "Unless I wash you, you have no share meros (part, KJV) with me." The context of this dialogue deals with washing Peter's feet, and the whole chapter deals with foot washing. The clear truth expressed here is that "the washing that is a prerequisite to having a share in the Kingdom of God, is logically the washing of sins in the blood of Christ that is symbolized in the Christian service of baptism and the Pedilavium." To have meros with Jesus denotes continued fellowship with him, a place in his community, and ultimately a mansion prepared in heaven.

Peter got the point. Unless Jesus washed his feet, Peter would have no

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1Shultz, 58.
2Segovia, 43.
4John 14:1-3.
part with Christ. Peter made a complete change. "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" (vs. 9). K. Munzer has meaningfully concluded that "in wanting to have his head washed, Peter wanted his whole life to be cleansed."1

Christ then proceeded to distinguish between the sacrament of baptism and the Ordinance of Foot Washing. And so Jesus "corrects his immature conception."2 "One who has *leloumenos* (bathed) does not need to *nifasthai* (wash), except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you" (vs. 10). Of utmost importance to correct interpretation of this verse is the understanding of the two verbs describing different types of washing. Jesus has already indicated that foot washing has a deep significance. Now he proceeds to interpret it clearly. The individual who has bathed does not need further washing except to have his feet washed. The "washing" of feet is contrasted with "bathing" of the whole body. The Greek uses two separate words, *leloumenos* for bathing, and *nifasthai* for washing. The two "cleansings" are related but distinct.3

Peter and his brethren had been washed in the water of baptism. All they needed now was to undergo a "mini baptism." C. H. Dodd writes:

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1K. Munzer, 'Head,' *TDNT*, 2:159.


3Shultz, 59.
In John 13:10 to take a bath is contrasted with to wash a part of the body. Baptism is a bath (loutron, Eph. 5:26, Tit. 3:5). The Christian reader is assured that having undergone the bath he is clean yet may need some kind of recurrent washing.¹

Murdoch commenting on the same passage writes:

Jesus explained to Peter at the institution of the Lord’s Supper the significance of the service of preparation. . . . This was to be a symbol of baptism. . . . Unfortunately, after our baptism we do not always live up to the high ideal of the new life. When we fall back, this does not mean we should be re-baptized. The feet washing experience takes the place of this. We might look upon it as a little baptism—not the washing of the whole body, but just of the feet.²

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary confirms this statement. "Baptism symbolizes the soul’s original cleansing from sin. The cleansing from the defilements that have been subsequently accrued are symbolized by the ordinance of foot washing."³

The view that foot washing symbolizes the cleansing of the sins committed after baptism is supported by B. F. Westcott. He points out that the word "bathed" (RSV) is in direct contrast to the word "wash" in vs. 10. "Bathed" refers to baptism, and "wash" refers to foot washing.⁴ O. Cullmann also views

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vss. 9 and 10 as a "clear allusion to Baptism."\(^1\)

One who takes a bath is clean. Former sins are washed away through baptism. But since one lives in a world where temptations lead to sin, the participation in the Ordinance of Foot Washing takes care of the sins committed subsequent to baptism. And it was through foot washing that Christ prepared his disciples to take part in the Lord’s Supper.

Jesus pointed out to Peter that he did not need to be baptized again. Baptism is a sacrament which is once and for all.\(^2\) This understanding is supported by the perfect tense of the verb leloumenos, indicating a past action with abiding results. For post-baptismal sins, what is needed is a periodic foot washing. It is the crucifixion that accomplishes the cleansing, but baptism signifies the initial cleansing of the past life of sin, and the foot washing signifies what C. H. Dodd calls "additional act of cleansing."\(^3\)

We, too, must come to participate in the Ordinance of Foot Washing regularly, because our needs are ever present. Not re-baptism, but regular participation in the Ordinance of Foot Washing is required, for none of us can cleanse ourselves from sin. Only Christ can purify us. And we need to show our total dependence upon the blood of Christ. We must come to him again and again and allow his cleansing grace to wash away our sin.


\(^2\)Ibid., 108-110.

\(^3\)Dodd, 401.
As Calvin stressed, Christ always finds in us something to cleanse. Foot washing is the most sufficient and appropriate symbol of the cleansing process that takes place in the Christian's life after baptism. A. Maynard concludes, "It is clear that footwashing is something that makes it possible for the disciples to have eternal life with Jesus." Sins committed after baptism, need to be removed by mini-baptism in order for one to have *meros* (part) with Jesus. As there is a continual need for confession, so there is also continual need in the church of Christ for the Ordinance of Foot Washing.

A Fellowship of Forgiveness

Baptism signifies the initial belief and fellowship with Jesus and other believers. Foot washing signifies the continuation of that belief and fellowship. It is not sufficient to once believe and accept eternal life. As there is a need for continual dependence on Christ, so there is need for repeated administration of the Ordinance of Foot Washing for that fellowship to continue.

In the Ordinance of Foot Washing, Christ has provided the superb means for the believer to experience and express forgiveness and God's cleansing.

It is not sufficient to go through the motion of applying water to the feet of one's partner. There is nothing miraculous about the act itself. It was instituted

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3Carson, 465-66.
as a corrective to the prevailing attitudes in the upper room. Christ established this ordinance as an expression of love and fellowship among his disciples. It "typifies the spirit of Christian fellowship." W. Specht can therefore write that Christ's followers, by wholehearted participation, indicate willingness to do any service in the spirit of fellowship, in order to see their fellow believers in God's kingdom.

E. G. White affirms that, "Whenever this ordinance is rightly celebrated, the children of God are brought into a holy relationship, to help and bless each other."

What is that right form of celebration? It is one which requires that which human nature tends to resist, namely, self-examination.

A Lesson in Self-Examination

The attitude of the participants is very important in order for the service to be of real value. Christ gave this ordinance to his followers as a test and opportunity for heart searching. E. G. White explicitly admonished her readers:

We need closely to investigate our life and character, and have true contrition of soul, having fellowship with Christ and fellowship with our brethren. . . . [We definitely need] at the ordinance of feet-washing to be softened and subdued, as were the first disciples.

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1\textsuperscript{1}John,' **SDABC**, 5:1029.

2Walter Specht, "What Do You Mean by This Service?" **ARSH**, June 15, 1972, 4-7.

3White, **DA**, 651.

The participants, having examined themselves, must seek forgiveness and grant forgiveness. Jesus said, "If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Avoiding the Ordinance of Humility, as some have, deprives the person from yet another opportunity to experience forgiveness.

Foot Washing Is Our Duty

A number of Bible commentators do not take the command of Jesus literally, as a present-day duty. C. H. Dodd says that this command applied to Christ's disciples. O. Cullmann, commenting on John 13, writes that we have here a model of "fellowship of love with Christ and through it for his disciples fellowship with one another." C. F. Nolloth calls it the "perpetual model of Christian service and devotion." The question is, "Who was that model given to and with what expectation?" These scholars agree with G. Hutchenson who writes that Jesus does not expect a literal foot washing, or G. A. Turner who claims

1Matt 6:14, 15.
2Dodd, 393.
3Cullmann, 107.
4Charles Frederick Nolloth, The Fourth Evangelist (London: John Murray, 1925), 120.
that the actions of Jesus do not need to be copied literally. But the words of our Lord to his disciples are very specific:

You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

These words of Christ form a threefold command: "You also ought to wash one another's feet;" "You also should do as I have done to you;" and "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

R. Schnackenburg correctly emphasizes that the mandate to participate in the Ordinance of Foot Washing is based upon the salvific action of the Lord and Master Teacher. As it was the disciples' duty to wash one another's feet, so it is our God-given privilege and duty to receive renewed cleansing from the hands of Jesus each time we are involved in this distinctly Christian act.

These clear statements by Jesus confirm the fact that he intended his followers to continue the rite of foot washing in the years to come. C. F. Yoder writes:

Let no man say that it was only an example in hospitality, or an object


lesson. The very sentence in which the word is found shows that it means more than an example. . . . Jesus did not say, 'I have given you an example that you should be as I have been' (humble), but he did say, 'do as I have done.'

The practice of foot washing is based not merely on the fact that individuals have a need for cleansing, but on the historic narrative in the Gospel of John. Christ's *hupodeigma* (example) fortifies the clear mandate. We must act in foot washing as Christ did. Our practice is grounded in the action of our Lord. And the Lord is the one who commands. He has left us "a definite prototype." The towel, basin, and water were as much a part of preparation for the observance of the Lord's Supper as were bread and wine. C. R. Holmes correctly observes that these verses indicate that foot washing was "intended to become a part of the Christian community's celebration of the Lord's Supper"—not a separate ordinance, but "an integral part of the communion service."

Furthermore, Jesus said to Peter, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." From this statement it would appear that Jesus had more in mind than just washing of feet. As H. Rasmussen rightly points out, "While foot washing doubtless has an element of symbolism, it is primarily a means to an end."

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4 Ibid., 103.

5 Rasmussen, 37.
The Ordinance of Humility provides the opportunity for personal fellowship, where believers have opportunity to forgive each other and make things right in their community of faith. It is a duty that Christ left us to perform. While the Lord’s Supper finds us as mere recipients, the Ordinance of Foot Washing, in the words of V. Eller, "makes us pledged and active members of the body of Christ."¹

Admittance of Spiritual Help Needed

Because the disciples were concerned only about their preeminence, Christ established a service of "mutual esteem and fellowship designed to stimulate and to develop their love."² C. M. Maxwell makes the point that the Ordinance of Humility is a fellowship of forgiveness, of cleansing, and of mutual regard for one another.³ It is a time of experiencing a close union of hearts and healing of broken friendships. It is a golden opportunity to confess every wrong, every act of injustice. By doing that, one admits the fact that one needs spiritual help. E. G. White perceptively observed that Jesus gave us this simple ordinance "to lead all participating in it, to feel the pulse of their own conscience . . . to revive their memory, to convict of sin, and to receive their penitential repentance."⁴ She

¹Eller, 112.


³Ibid.

⁴White, "The Lord’s Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, June 14, 1898, 578.
sternly warns: "You can neglect, you can leave, these seasons of divine appointment; and of you Christ's words may be appropriately spoken, 'You are not all clean.'"¹

When we engage in the actions of the Ordinance of Humility, our characters are revealed. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit on such occasions that convicts us of sin, touches the hearts, and brings us to contrition. Sins are seen in the light in which God sees them.

**Priesthood of All Believers**

Our Church not only believes in the priesthood of all believers, but also provides opportunity for its members to practice what it teaches. In the Ordinance of Foot Washing, each member has the opportunity to kneel humbly before one's partner in an attitude of forgiving thoughtfulness and take Christ's place in washing the other's feet.

When Christ said to Peter, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me," C. R. Holmes believes that Christ, in saying that, meant more than fellowship. For Holmes that statement included "also participation in the proclamation of His kingdom by means of word and deed."² Properly understood, our participation in the foot-washing ceremony acknowledges the fact that we have a priestly ministry to perform in relation to one another and to the

¹Ibid.

²Holmes, *Sing a New Song*, 103.
world. Professor Holmes makes a passionate appeal to make the proclamation of God's Word an integral part of the practice of foot washing. "If the right word or right action is missing, the consequence is ambiguity. We are left only with a ritual." The author could not be more correct as when he adds:

No assurance of forgiveness is possible unless the Word of the gospel is ministered, for faith comes from hearing this Word. . . . The gospel must be spoken and heard. Unless that happens, ritual is ambiguous and has no meaning. Footwashing is a gracious opportunity provided for the members of the body of Christ to exercise the priesthood of all believers and minister the Word of God personally to one another.

Foot washing in connection with the Lord's Supper is more than a symbol. Properly administered, it makes us active members of the community of faith, who experience fellowship, forgiveness, and cleansing as we minister one to another.

Fellowship with Christ
and Believers

I have been asked several times if participation in foot washing is absolutely necessary for a close fellowship with Christ. Speaking about the ceremony of foot washing, E. G. White declared:

God treats the human agencies connected with himself with heavenly respect. . . . Taking off every oppressive weight that man would lay upon his fellow man, he prescribes only that which is absolutely necessary for his physical, mental, and moral well-being.

1Ibid., 105.
2Ibid., 106.
In another place, she clearly states that though this ordinance does not speak to the intellect, but rather to the heart; one’s "moral and spiritual nature needs it."¹ If the apostles had no need for this ordinance, Christ would not have left it behind. The foot-washing ordinance, while bringing Christ’s followers into a fellowship with him, also serves to disentangle them from the rites and ceremonies of the Old Testament that were binding till Christ fulfilled them by his death on the cross. Those desiring close fellowship with Christ will participate in the ordinance established by him.

**Demonstration of Christ’s Love**

In the same discourse in the upper room Christ said, "I give to you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."² The obvious message of this ordinance is well expressed in the words of Paul: "through love become slaves to one another."³ When that kind of love took control of the disciples’ hearts, they no longer were concerned with who would be the greatest in God’s kingdom. Feelings of superiority or partiality become totally out of place. Our whole lifestyle proves our love for fellow believers. It will be demonstrated in everything, including the obedience to Christ’s command to wash one another’s feet.

¹Ibid., 578.
²John 13:34.
An Integral Part of the Lord's Supper

When the content of John 13 is not taken literally, then there arise many perplexing problems of interpretation. One New Testament commentator who does not accept the teaching of Jesus here as pertaining to the Ordinance of Foot Washing writes: "This is one of the most difficult passages to interpret in the whole New Testament. It is unique—there is nothing comparable to it in other gospels."¹ Another scholar characterizes the passage with its implications as "obscure."²

But when we interpret this chapter literally, the command of foot washing takes on a perpetual character and is more explicit than the command about the bread and wine. For the command to celebrate the Lord's Supper has a form of a simple request, while the command to repeat the Ordinance of Foot Washing is repeated three times as a moral duty.

The drama of feet-washing is grounded in an event in the upper room that has universal relevance to the fulfilment of man's life. For us, it is a symbol, a doorway into life, a kind of altar-stairs upon which the angel of God descends to us and we ascend to God.³

As a perpetual observance and a preparatory service, the Ordinance of Foot Washing is an integral part of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

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²Barrett, 368.

Summary

Several observations may be here stated as a way of summarizing the contribution of this chapter to this study of the Lord’s Supper:

1. The prevailing attitudes among the disciples in the upper room necessitated the institution of foot washing as a preparation for Christ’s departure. John 13, being in the forefront of the Book of Glory, makes foot washing inseparably bound to Christ’s passion and its effects on the twelve disciples.

2. In the Old Testament foot washing was practiced as an act of hospitality or personal hygiene. It sometimes served as a preparation for what was coming: a meal, a relationship, or a religious duty. To undertake something without preparation has come to be expressed as attempting something "with unwashed feet."

3. Jesus took this common practice and made it into a religious ordinance which is perpetually binding on all his followers. It is clear that foot washing is not optional, but necessary for Christ’s followers in order to maintain a part in an identity with Christ.

4. The service of foot washing reminds us of Christ’s condescension, humility, and life of service. This sacramental service has a multifaceted meaning for every believer. It is a lesson in humility, love, and tenderness towards others. Though it is a humbling service, it is not degrading. It typifies a higher cleansing of the heart and as such it is a most meaningful practice in the life of a Christian.
symbolizing the removal of post-baptismal sins. It is a sign of continued fellowship with Jesus.

5. The Ordinance of Humility gives an opportunity for self-examination, repentance, and fellowship with Christ and other believers. The words of Christ command us to observe it in order to have a part "with him." Participation makes us active members of Christ's body. It offers each believer the ideal setting to practice the priesthood of all believers and to administer God's word to each other during the act of foot washing.

6. Having washed the disciples' feet, Jesus in three emphatic commands directs them, and all subsequent followers, to wash each other's feet. These commands cannot be interpreted other than literally. Meaningful foot washing facilitates spiritual cleansing which enables a believer to continue in fellowship with Christ and to have part in his mission.

7. As a preparatory service, the Ordinance of Foot Washing is an integral part of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
CHAPTER V

JOHANNINE TEACHING ABOUT

THE BREAD OF LIFE

The function of the sacraments in the Gospel of John is a sharply debated subject among scholars. R. Brown provides a good summary of various positions.\(^1\) Two extreme positions are held by O. Cullmann and R. Bultmann. According to Cullmann, John gives witness to the beliefs and practices of the early Church. In that community, baptism and Eucharist were the primary means of salvation. Men and women are saved by faith in Christ who is present in the sacraments.\(^2\) That position has been criticized for not doing justice to John’s emphasis on faith in Jesus and his word as the grounds for eternal life. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that Cullmann introduces sacramental symbolism into many passages of the Gospel without very substantial evidence.\(^3\)

Bultmann stresses that men are saved by faith in the word of God alone, and that all sacramental allusions in the Gospel of John are the work of an ecclesiastical redactor, who attempted to bring the gospel into harmony with the


\(^2\) O. Cullmann, 37-38.

\(^3\) Brown’s critique serves as a warning against too symbolic interpretation of John.
later practice of the Church.\textsuperscript{1} This dichotomy between word and sacrament is not
the best way to express the problem. J. T. Forestell perceptively writes,

The Johannine theology of salvation preserves the Christian sacramental
system from all association with magical rites and mystery cults by
insisting upon the primacy of faith in the word of God as the adequate
means of salvation of eternal life. The sacraments, insofar as they appear
in the fourth gospel, are visible expressions of faith in the person and the
word of Jesus.\textsuperscript{2}

He proceeds to substantiate this point of view by examining such passages as John

Having quoted John 6: 54, 56, and 57, including the words of Christ, "Who
so eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life," E. G. White has concluded:

\textit{To the holy Communion this scripture in a special sense applies.} As faith
contemplates our Lord's great sacrifice, the soul assimilates the spiritual
life of Christ. That soul will receive spiritual strength from every
Communion. The service forms a living connection by which the
believer is bound up with Christ, and thus bound up with the Father. \textit{In a special sense it forms a connection between dependent human beings and God}\textsuperscript{3} (emphases mine).

When one surveys contemporary commentaries, one gets the impression
that the majority of scholars belong to the group that sees in John 6 definite
allusions to the Lord's Supper or Eucharist. Many also support the position that

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Johannine thought, and any allusions to the Lord's Supper could not have been put
into the Gospel by John himself, but by an ecclesiastical redactor.

\textsuperscript{2}J. Terence Forestell, \textit{The Word of the Cross: Salvation as Revelation in the

\textsuperscript{3}White, \textit{DA}, 661.
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John is the author of the whole chapter. H. MacGregor postulates the sacramental reading of this chapter for the following reasons: (1) there is a clear reference to the Passover (vs. 4), (2) Jesus himself distributes the bread, (3) the uses of *eucharistesas* for "give thanks" by Jesus (vs. 11), (4) Jesus seems to be stressing the sacredness of the bread (vs. 12), (5) the use of *sarx* for "flesh" (vs. 51), and (6) the reference to eating and drinking (vs. 53).

In view of the fact that we have echoes in the chapter of almost the whole terminology of the sacramental ritual, it can hardly be denied that the identification of the life-giving bread with Christ's flesh, and in particular the use of the double symbolism in vs. 53, is intended to place the Eucharistic seal on the whole discourse.¹

However, when one reads the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* on John 6, there is not a single allusion of applying these words to the celebration of the Lord's Supper.² Even among the fifty some references from the pen of E. G. White at the end of the comments on John 6:51-58, the above reference in the *Desire of Ages* (p. 661) is not included. The editors of *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, in the chapter on the Lord's Supper, refer several times to John 6. Apparently, for them, John 6 contains a teaching concerning the Lord's Supper. They state, "Believers are saved through partaking of his body and his blood."


And again, "These expressions . . . illustrate deeper truths."¹

For H. Rasmussen, Jesus does not speak of the Lord's Supper in John 6, because the Lord's Supper had not been yet instituted.² To eat the flesh of Jesus is to study God's Word, though he admits that "We do not know all the reasons why our Lord used the metaphor about eating his flesh and drinking his blood."³

But for another SDA scholar, R. Rice, the fourth Gospel offers "a more highly developed 'theology of the Eucharist', than anywhere else in the New Testament."⁴

Many scholars like W. Davison call John 6 "the fullest and most instructive teaching"⁵ concerning the Lord's Supper. The words of Christ at Capernaum explain and illustrate the meaning of the Lord's Supper more fully than any other Scriptures. They illustrate deeper truths.

What are these deeper truths? What did John intend to teach in the passage on the Bread of Life?

¹SDABE, 199.


³Rasmussen, 60.


The Setting

John 6 consists of three sections—the multiplication of loaves, Christ walking on the water, and a discourse on the Bread of Life including a pericope on the meaning of the Lord’s Supper. According to C. H. Dodd, the examination of the discourse provides a clue to the meaning of the whole episode. It takes the form of a sustained dialogue between Jesus and the crowd.¹

John, having stated that it was Passover time (vs. 4), begins his chapter with an account of the feeding of the multitude (vss. 1-14). The crowd, having misunderstood Jesus, attempts to make him king (vs. 15), resulting in Jesus' escape into a mountain by himself. The Twelve decide to return to Capernaum, and, during the night crossing of the lake, encounter a storm and Jesus walking on the water. They receive Jesus Christ into their boat and safely reach Capernaum. The crowds meet Jesus on the other side of the lake. Having failed to see the physical bread as a sign of the bread which the Son of Man would give them, they ask for an additional sign. Jesus challenges them that they need faith in him as the Bread of Life. This is too much for them. They respond, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (vs. 52). Jesus responds that unless they eat it, they have no eternal life. The disciples are also offended.

Multiplication of Loaves

John, after remarking that it was Passover time, gives the account of the

¹Dodd, 334.
miraculous feeding of the multitude by Jesus. C. K. Barrett perceptively observes that Jesus "acts as only the Creator can act, turning five loaves into an adequate supply for five thousand."\(^1\) But the miracle "begets misunderstanding among the multitude."\(^2\) The five thousand became so emotional that they were ready to take Jesus by force and make him king. E. G. White suggests that it was the continual work of Judas to bring about the temporal reign of Jesus as king in Jerusalem. "Judas was first to take advantage of the enthusiasm excited by the miracle of the loaves. It was he who set on foot the project to take Christ by force and make him king."\(^3\) Jesus, having read the crowd's intention, departed into a mountain.

The Gift of Understanding

The disciples got back into the boat and headed for Capernaum. A storm developed and in the storm the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water toward them. Jesus spoke to them and said, "Do not be afraid, \textit{ego eimi}, meaning "it is I." D. McGann observes, "This is for John the corrective to the first misunderstanding."\(^4\) John uses these words \textit{ego eimi} "it is I" often in his Gospel. According to R. Brown, the expression "it is I" is either used in (1) an absolute


\(^3\)White, \textit{DA}, 718-9.

sense as in John 8:28, (2) as an explicit predicate, e.g., "I am the bread of life" (6:35) or (3) as an "implied predicate." This would mean that John used the "I am" formulation to alert the readers that he was speaking of Jesus as God. This interpretation forces us to recognize that Jesus is making a claim to divinity. For D. Crossan, ego eimi is an "oblique but obvious statement that Jesus is the revelation of the depths of God, that in him man sees God."²

Christ Issues a Challenge

The very next day, however, the Pharisees discounted this miracle. They suggested that Moses had done even better. The multitudes met Jesus at the synagogue. The text suggests that they sought Him for loaves and fishes. They sought him for what they could get out of him. So Christ issued a challenge to these people. He said to them: "I have fed you loaves and the fishes, now believe on me." And the people, inspired by the Pharisees, said: "Show us a miracle that we might."

The multitude wanted Christ's bread. They asked for it, but it is obvious that again they misunderstood. R. Schnackenburg points out that "the experience of feeding did not lead these people to a deeper vision."³ Their enthusiasm was not based on seeing and understanding a sign, but on satisfaction of their hunger.

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²Crossan, 79.

³Schnackenburg, 2:35.
Only the day before Jesus had fed 5,000 people with only a little boy's lunch. The Pharisees begin to mock now. They said, "Your little performance yesterday was quite impressive, but our fathers ate bread in the wilderness. Moses gave them bread, and he did not even have a little boy's lunch as a primer. You've got to outdo Moses in order to convince us. Moses gave our fathers bread in the wilderness. What can you do?" Then Jesus answered: "'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it was my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.'" And, in vs. 33, he added: "'For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.'"

The problem was that "they had failed to see that the physical bread was a sign of the food which the Son of Man would give."¹

But the crowd, supposing that Jesus referred to temporal bread, answered: "'Sir, give us this bread always,'" vs. 34. Oh, that this "may be the prayer of every communicant, 'Lord, evermore, give us this bread.'"²

G. Yee observes that the Gospel writer draws a striking contrast between Jesus and the Jewish leader Moses, who was of such great importance in the Passover tradition. She sees in the miracle of feeding the five thousand a symbol of a new covenant to be ratified by Jesus. The feeding of the people by Jesus at


²David Thomas, At the Lord's Table (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927), 77.
the time of Passover brings the images of the manna and its associated traditions. The Jewish tradition had it that God would not feed the people again until the messianic age.¹

Although the Lord’s Supper is not the theme of this discourse, the passage "is admirably applicable . . . to the Holy Supper."² And "every word becomes charged with significance, when we read it in the light of the ordinance which Christ appointed later."³

The Discourse on the Bread of Life

In vs. 35, Jesus said unto them: "'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'" This bread enjoys "a double distinction over the manna of the wilderness."⁴ First, it really "comes down from heaven." Second, it satisfies hunger forever. In vs. 41, the Jews murmured because He said: "'I am the bread that came down from heaven.'" In vs. 42 they said: "'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven?'" In the words of C. H. Dodd, "Jesus is a man of known

¹Gale A. Yee, Jewish Feasts and the Gospel of John (Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989), 64.
³Davison, 44.
origin and parentage: how can it be said that he descended from heaven?"1

Jesus responded in vss. 43 and 44: "'Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me.'" And then he repeated what he had to say, in vs. 48: "I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, and they died."

In other words Jesus says that the bread that he gives will not be like the manna, which fed the perishing Jews in the wilderness, but bread like "the tree of life which man missed in Paradise through his own fault and folly. 2

In Jesus' claims, "I am the bread of life," W. Temple sees a double meaning: (1) the living bread (vs. 51), and (2) the bread which gives Life. "It is this Bread--which he himself is--which gives the soul satisfaction that endures eternally."3 What was done in the wilderness is nothing compared with what Jesus can do now. He that eats this bread shall never die. Although the evangelist "records no account of the institution of" the Lord's Supper, he "does provide teaching about it."4

E. G. White points out that when we eat the heavenly bread, "we are, through faith and pardon, raised to the dignity of sons and daughters of God."5

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1Dodd, 338.
2Davison, 40.
3Temple, 87.
4Hook, 88.
The Central Point of John's Teaching

In vs. 51, Jesus continues his claim: "'I am the living bread... and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'" And when he said that, the Jews recoiled because the law of Moses forbade even the tasting of blood. "This is cannibalism, and he is saying, "'unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man... you have no life in you.'" They referred to the law of Moses, and then they asked: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

E. G. White says that they did understand, but that they wanted to lead people astray. It was a wide-spread Jewish tradition that when the true Messiah came, the prophet "like unto Moses," he would give them bread from heaven. The Pharisees understood, but they were trying to increase the ignorance of the crowds that followed them. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" But Christ was speaking symbolically, and he did not soften his claim. When Jesus spoke plainly to the crowd, they no longer desired him. They walked no more with him.

C. H. Dodd observes that: "In its Johannine intention, the situation is one in which the utterance of the words of Jesus has effected an act of divine krisis,.. separating those to whom faith is given from the unbelieving mass. The multitude was offended; however, the Twelve confessed that Jesus was not only God's Holy One, but also the One whose words mediate zoe aionios (eternal life).

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\(^1\)Deut 18:15-18.

\(^2\)Dodd, 343.
The Importance of Eating and Drinking

In vs. 53 Jesus said: "'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.'" E. G. White says:

"To the holy Communion this scripture in a special sense applies. As faith contemplates our Lord's great sacrifice, the soul assimilates the spiritual life of Christ. That soul will receive spiritual strength from every Communion" (emphasis mine).1

We have often applied these words of Jesus recorded in vs. 53 to mean that as his followers, we are to feed on the Bible. The Bible is his word, and when we assimilate the teachings of the Scriptures, we feed on Jesus. That is true. E. G. White confirmed that when she wrote:

To eat His flesh and drink His blood means to receive Him as a Heaven-sent teacher. Belief in Him is essential to spiritual life. Those who feast on the Word never hunger, never thirst, never desire any higher or more exalted good (emphasis mine).2

But that is only a general application. In a more specific sense, we fulfill these claims of Jesus when we participate in the Lord's Supper. And again E. G. White may be quoted: "We eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood when by faith we lay hold upon Him as our Savior."3 And this is best accomplished in the participation of the Lord's Supper. As D. Stone concludes, "At any rate a pre-eminent way of eating his flesh and drinking his blood is the reception of the Holy

1White, DA, 661.


3Ibid.
Communion."¹ I agree with E. Oulton, that John suggests in these verses that "feeding on Christ is through the sacrament of the Holy Communion."²

This is extremely important because participation in the Lord's Supper is specifically essential to all who wish to live forever. "The Lord's Supper is backed by the authority of the Messiah. 'Let me assure you . . . He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.'"³ In our pursuit of eternal life, we cannot lean upon one another. The bread of life must be eaten by each one.

"Individually, we must partake of it, that the soul, body, and mind may be revived and strengthened by the transforming power, thus becoming assimilated to the mind and character of Jesus Christ."⁴

The eating of Christ's flesh and the drinking of his blood is necessary in order to have life eternal. "Eating and drinking are the means, life is the goal."⁵ W. Eller makes this statement: "The 'life' that Holy Communion purposes to give is indispensable. The 'living Father' sent the Son, who lives 'because of the


⁵Eller, 31.
Father'; therefore he who eats him will 'live because of the Son.'" This is so important, because here eternity is in the balances.

Our hearts have hunger which no bread except Jesus can satisfy. He alone can speak peace to the guilty conscience, and give assurance and rest to the troubled soul. For he said: "'Anyone who comes to me I will never drive away,'" vs. 37. The failure to "eat" and "drink" is "absolutely fatal to the soul." Jesus declares, in vs. 53, '"unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.'" These words indicate that one who has been in a habit of habitually skipping the celebration of the Lord's Supper could be forfeiting eternity. It is that serious! Describing one who habitually skips the celebration of the Lord's Supper, H. Moule put it this way, he or she is "excluded from life eternal."

The Meaning of Eating and Drinking

The crux of the teaching of John 6 is found in the teaching of Jesus recorded in vss. 51c to 59. What does it mean "to eat Christ's body and drink his blood?" Three views have been propounded.

1. W. Howard seems to 'spiritualize' the language of Christ and equates it with the ministry of the Word, when he writes:

The disciples will find that the spirit of the risen Christ will give them

1Ibid.

2Moule, 33.

3Ibid.
life as they do his will. It is his words, as they fall into the hearts of his followers who believe in him, and spring up and fructify, that alone can bring them spiritual fellowship with God, and into the enjoyment of eternal life.¹

This would mean that there is no distinct theology of the Lord's Supper in John. What is conveyed in the sacrament is conveyed by the ministry of the Word.

C. H. Dodd suggests that "eating the flesh and drinking the blood" means "union with Christ by mutual indwelling."² W. F. Howard points out that "it is the spiritual Christ who gives Himself. It is His words that are charged with pneuma and zoe."³

C. K. Barrett, on the other hand points out that John made use of the language of the Mysteries. John's use of the word 'flesh' is formal and is consistent with his use throughout the Gospel.

The flesh of Jesus is the vehicle of the Spirit, and therefore gives life. . . . There is no opposition between the life-giving flesh and the life-giving words. Each has its life-giving quality not in itself, but in its witness to the historic act of revelation and redemption in Jesus.⁴

2. G. H. C. MacGregor also recognizes a similarity between John's language and the language of the Greek Mystery religions, but postulates that John's purpose was "to combat purely material notion of the Christian

²Dodd, 379.
³Howard, 211.
⁴Barrett, The Gospel according to St. John, 30-1.
MacGregor represents the Roman Catholic understanding of the words of John, where the elements of the Eucharist do really represent the flesh and blood of Christ, who "is present in them, not merely by way of symbol but actually."2

3. A third view stresses the realism of John's language in vss. 52-56 but repudiates any conflict with vss. 62-3. E. C. Hoskyns is intolerant with any 'spiritualizing' of vss. 62-3. For Hoskyns, the contrast is between dead flesh and matter, and living flesh and matter. In itself flesh is flesh and profiteth nothing for life or salvation, but if penetrated by the Spirit of God, it becomes vivified and vivifying. . . . The words of the Son of God give life to what is otherwise dead and pointless. They are therefore spirit and they are life.3

W. L. Knox views John's teaching as wholly Hellenistic. He points out that John insists emphatically on the necessity of the actual eating and drinking. Knox's conclusions represents an extreme position,4 which faces one with the dilemma of two eucharistic traditions in the New Testament, a theory propounded by O. Cullmann.

N. Hook suggests that John uses language in a Hellenistic milieu like a modern missionary would use today to convince his audience of the correctness of the Christian teaching. In John's day there were some Christians who denied that

1MacGregor, The Gospel of John, 158.
2Ibid., 161.
4Wilfred L. Knox, Some Hellenistic Elements in Primitive Christianity (London: Published for the British Academy by H. Milford, 1944), 67.
Jesus came in the flesh. They saw Jesus united with flesh at his baptism, but separated by his death. As they intended to establish a 'spiritual' religion, they abstained from Eucharist. In the light of the Docetic heresy, John uses his language carefully because he is "concerned to insist on the reality of the Incarnation, and on the reality of the Eucharist as a real medium whereby Christ dwells in us and we in him."¹

Symbolic Meaning

For a twentieth-century Christian to "eat the flesh and to drink the blood" is to receive his power, that is a living power, "power of the Risen and Triumphant Lord, Victor over sin and death."² But when we speak of "eating Christ's body", do we literally mean, as some Christians teach, that the element of bread after the prayer of consecration becomes the literal "body of Christ"? Of course not. These words must be taken symbolically. According to E. G. White, this statement "is to be taken in a spiritual sense. We eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood when by faith we lay hold upon him as our Savior."³

Just as the Lord Jesus Christ bade the Galileans look away from the meal . . . and care chiefly for spiritual food, so he bids us look away from the material elements, or look from them to himself. All concentration of attention upon the material vehicle tends to superstition.⁴

¹Hook, 100.
³White, "John," SDABC, 7-A: 255.
⁴Davison, 45.
W. Temple insightfully observes that John places his teaching about the bread of life in a context which guards against the danger of "attributing to physical reception of the Sacrament any magical efficacy."¹ "To eat of this bread," in other words, is to receive the Living Lord into the soul so that he becomes its life.

One can read the New Testament from cover to cover, and one will not find anywhere the idea that the bread is changed into Christ's flesh or the wine into his blood. Such an idea is "absent in the teaching of the New Testament."² The words of Jesus must be taken symbolically. To cling to the literal meaning of these words would be "like Mary Magdalene clinging to the not yet ascended form of her Master."³

The Gospel of John helps us to avoid the danger of making the reception of the emblems as having any magical power. W. Temple is correct in observing that John in attempting to avoid the above danger: (1) keeps the teaching about the bread and our reception of it detached from the words of the institution, (2) elaborates on the Communion rite when he relates Jesus' teaching about the true wine, and (3) closes the teaching about the bread with insistence that the flesh and blood mean spirit and life (vs. 63).⁴

¹Temple, 81.
²Rasmussen, 60.
³Oulton, 91.
⁴Temple, 82.
In our practice of the Communion, Jesus bids us to look away "from the material elements . . . to Himself. All concentration upon the material vehicle tends to superstition."¹

W. Temple differentiates between the phrase "to eat the flesh," and "to drink the blood." To him they are not the same.

The former is to receive the power of self-giving and self-sacrifice to the uttermost. The latter is to receive, in and through that self-giving and self-sacrifice, the life that is triumphant over death and united to God. Both 'elements' are needed for the full 'communion'--which suggests that to receive the Holy Communion in one kind only is grievously detrimental to the full reality of the sacrament.²

He perceives the sacrament as necessary, but it is the communion that is vital. Because of that distinction, John keeps the teaching about the bread of life separate from the Last Supper. We must "take" and "eat." Participation is an indispensable aid in our devotional life. No one should omit it as a Christian discipline. But we must feed upon Christ in a spiritual sense when we participate. Those who would, in the words of Jesus: "work the works of God," must be in a living relation with him.³

Union with Christ

What Jesus offered to the people was not food itself, but the gift of himself which would bring life and nourishment to them. D. McGann observes a change and development that is hinted at in the following verses:

¹Davison, 45.
²Temple, 95.
³Ibid.
No one who comes to me shall be hungry (vs. 35).

No one who comes to me will I ever reject (vs. 37).

No one can come to me unless the Father draw him (vs. 44).

Anyone who eats this bread shall live for ever (vs. 51).

If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you will not have life in yourselves (vs. 53).

He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal (vs. 54).

The man who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him (vs. 56).

The man who feeds on me will live because of me (vs. 57).

D. McGann sees in this story growth and development from fear toward union. The idea is started with the central statement that unless there is a union between a believer and Christ, there can be no life.

Initially the discourse talks about a living 'from' and 'for' and then a 'living because of.' As it is further projected out in the gospel it grows even deeper and richer. It becomes an 'abiding in' and a 'remaining in' until in chapter 15 it finds a new expression in the metaphor of the vine and the branches.¹

When one is baptized, one is baptized into "a union with Christ." How does one stay in that union? The answer is, of course, through the daily reading of God's word, prayer, and regular participation in the Lord's Supper. "To eat the flesh and drink the blood means a union with Christ by mutual indwelling."²

Baptism is the initial formation of that union, but the Lord's Supper is

¹McGann, 81.

²Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, 379.
"pre-eminently the means by which Christ dwells in us and we in Him."\(^1\) For this reason many scholars consider the Lord's Supper as "necessary to salvation"\(^2\) as baptism.

In our pilgrimage to the Heavenly Kingdom, we need every advantage that this union affords, because "a soul united with Christ, eating His flesh and drinking his blood . . . will war against all transgression and every approach of sin."\(^3\) There is nothing else in our Christian life that better symbolizes and pledges our union with Christ than participation in this ordinance. "'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

In John 6: 54, 56, and 58, "life" is described in two tenses, in the present and in the future. In vs. 54, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life," that is present. In vs. 56, "He abides in me and I in him," that also is present. In vs. 58, "He who eats this bread will live forever," that is the future consummation. The present "having" of life through the reception of Christ's body symbolized by the communion bread assures the resurrection, because he says in vs. 54: "I will raise him up at the last day." Commenting on this verse, W. Elert writes: "the reception of Christ's body and blood is death's antidote, because it guarantees the resurrection."\(^4\)

\(^1\)Hook, 96.

\(^2\)Oulton, 75.

\(^3\)White, TM, 441.

\(^4\)Elert, 31.
The Necessity of Action

Jesus declares himself as the food that one must partake of, if he is to live spiritually. He said, "The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh," vs. 51. And again in vs. 54, "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life." The life of true relationship to Christ is made by the assimilation. H. Clark points out that what is needed is definite effort on our part. "There must be activity, deliberate and earnest on our side of relationship.

... Bread must be seized upon, or we die."1 As in the physical realm bread does nothing for a man unless it is eaten, so in the spiritual life, Christ as the bread of life, must be deliberately seized upon. That spiritual bread must be constantly obtained in fresh supplies. As one cannot take bread today and expect to be sustained till the end, so one has to repeat the acts of uniting faith and love. Since our salvation is altogether God's gift and in no sense our achievement, there is a constant need for faith.

The Necessity of Faith

It is John who helps us to understand the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as, in the words of G. M. Burce, "a concrete expression of faith in Jesus Christ."2 Faith is a very important ingredient in the process of participation in

\[\text{1\ Henry W. Clark, The Christ from without and Within (London: Andrew Melrose, 1904), 134-5.}\]

the Lord's Supper. As we meditate on the sacrifice of Christ, our faith is strengthened. J. Oulton states that in the Lord's Supper "we have a specially appointed means of appropriating the benefits of Christ's passion."\(^\text{1}\)

J. Forestell concludes that the way John alludes to sacraments does not necessarily mean that the sacraments have no role to play in John's theology of salvation. Rather, Forestell points out that:

the role of the sacraments is entirely subordinate to the primary role of faith in the word of God revealed in Christ. . . . The sacraments do not have any efficacy apart from this faith. . . . [Participation in the Lord's Supper] is the place where the Christian now gives external expression to his faith in Christ and receives from him the gift of eternal life.\(^\text{2}\)

Lack of appetite means lack of nourishment, and continued lack of nourishment could mean spiritual death. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."\(^\text{3}\)

Summary

The following points summarize the contribution of this chapter to the overall understanding of the Lord's Supper.

1. Though the Gospel of John does not contain the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper, his sixth chapter provides valuable teachings that in the words of E. G. White "apply in a specific sense" to the Holy Communion.

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\(^\text{1}\)Oulton, 92.


\(^\text{3}\)Matt 5:6.
The discourse on the bread of life (vss. 51c-58), in particular, proves to be the fullest and most instructive teaching concerning the Lord's Supper.

2. In the miracle of feeding the 5000, the multitude failed to see the physical bread was a sign of the food the Son of Man would give as the bread of life.

3. "To eat his flesh and to drink his blood" is to feast on the Word of God generally, but that symbolism in a specific sense is completely fulfilled when we participate in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

4. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a visible expression of our faith in the person and the word of Jesus. Only in the reception of the Holy Communion do we symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. He is the Bread of Life that must be eaten by every committed Christian. Failure to "eat" and to "drink" is fatal to one's spiritual life.

5. John carefully avoids the Docetic heresy as well as the materialistic approach to the elements as the "food of immortality" but at the same time confirms the reality of Christ's Incarnation. He presents a balanced view of the emblems of Christ's suffering.

6. As Christ bade the Galileans to look away from the meal he provided, so he bids us to look away from the material elements to himself. Participation in

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the Lord’s Supper expresses our union with Christ by mutual indwelling and as such is an indispensable aid in our devotional life. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." The reception of Christ’s body and blood is death’s antidote, because it guarantees the resurrection.

7. In John’s theology, the role of the sacraments is subordinate to the primary role of faith in the Word, but at the same time the regular participation in the sacrament gives expression to one’s faith in Christ.

John’s language seems to be strange and the reasons could be at least threefold: (1) to guard the celebration of the Lord’s Supper as purely "spiritual" dependence on Christ; (2) to protect against materialism or magic in the understanding of the significance of the elements; and (3) to secure an understanding that our sense of dependence on Christ is inseparably associated with the redeeming sacrifice once and for all on the cross of Calvary.

There is no sacrament without the word, no benefit in the sacrament without faith, and nothing at all apart from the descent and ascent of the Son of man, who once for all in history gave his flesh and blood for the life of the world.1

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1Barrett, The Gospel according to St. John, 97.
CHAPTER VI

PAUL'S THEOLOGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Paul's description of the Lord's Supper is considered to be the oldest account. In it, Paul states that he "received it from the Lord."¹ Since Paul did not participate in the Last Supper, nor had he learned about it from the twelve apostles or by tradition, the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary states that Paul had learned it "directly from the Savior himself, during one of the revelations given to him by the Lord."² Although the passage says nothing about the manner in which the report of the sacrament's institution was made known to him, because it is the earliest report, it is of particular importance. Had Paul invented the words attributed to Christ, "This do in remembrance of me," the "primitive Christians and apostles visiting Corinth would have protested and exposed the innovation."³

Hans Lietzmann put forward an interpretation that there were two types

¹1 Cor 11:23.

²"1 Corinthians," SDABC, 6:762. cf. 2 Cor 12:7; Gal 1:12.

³Thomas, 44.
of celebration of the Lord’s Supper: a Jerusalem type and Pauline type.¹ The Eucharist celebrated in Jerusalem consisted of breaking of bread, but there was no wine in use. It was a continuation of the fellowship meals which Jesus had had with his disciples after his resurrection. The Jerusalem-type eucharistic celebration was distinct from the Lord’s Supper, as it did not have the element of remembering Christ’s death, but was instead marked by a joyous, unrestrained euphoria over the presence of the risen Lord and the hope of the coming glory. There was no idea of a sacrifice present.

The other type of celebration, according to Lietzmann, was the type characterized by Hellenistic sacrificial concepts. In his revelation, Paul received new insight into the meaning of the Supper as a memorial of the sacrificial death of Christ. Having received that revelation, Paul radically transformed the meaning of the Eucharist.

A. Higgins opposes Lietzmann’s theses on grounds that (1) the "breaking of bread" meals in the book of Acts may have not been Eucharistic in nature as discussed elsewhere in this project, and (2) Paul’s statement, "I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you," can also mean that Paul is handing down the church tradition originally received "from the Lord." If the Lord "is the direct source of information," argues Higgins, "the preposition in the phrase 'from the


Lord' would more naturally be not 'apo, but para'." Paul's words *paralambanein* and *paradidonai* are similar to the Rabbinical terms *qibbel* and *masar*, used to describe the reception and transmission of tradition.¹

E. Schweizer postulates that from the beginning, the celebration of the Lord's Supper had two elements of eschatological joy, and a sense of the presence of the Lord at the table combined with the hope of his soon return and proclamation of his death as the only means of salvation. Schweizer's conclusion states: "It is impossible to establish the existence of two wholly distinct and independent types of the Lord's Supper."²

Paul combines both of these types in a single statement: "You proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."³ Paul's understanding of the meaning of the Lord's Supper is, therefore, in essence, analogous to the traditional comprehension of it. But certain distortions of the celebration of the Lord's Supper in Corinth have given Paul an opportunity to provide a teaching that is unique to him, though not entirely.

**The Lord's Supper as a Memorial Feast**

The distinctive teaching of Paul (and Luke) which is not found in Mark

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¹Ibid., 26.


³1 Cor 11:26.
or Matthew is, "Do this in remembrance of me."⁰¹ Paul perceived the purpose of the Lord's Supper to be a memorial of the death of Jesus.⁰² It is Christ himself, who is commemorated. E. G. White states: "In instituting the sacramental service to take the place of the Passover, Christ left for the church a memorial of his great sacrifice for man."³ The Lord's Supper is a memorial of the one and the same Christ, who has come, and who is to come. Ellen White calls it, "a sacred thing to call to mind the Lord Jesus."⁴ J. Jeremias understands the words, 'eis tein emein anamneisin' as 'damit Gott meiner gedenke' meaning, "that God may remember me," by bringing in his kingdom through the Parousia. D. R. Jones is of an opinion that such an understanding would place the church in the dogmatically unthinkable position of mediating between Christ and the Father.⁵ Rather, "it is the means by which His [Christ's] great work for us is to be kept fresh in our minds."⁶

The notion of remembrance played an important part in the Old Testament. There is a parallel between the Lord's Supper feast and the Passover

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⁰¹ 1 Cor 11:24, 25.
⁰³ White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, June 22, 1897, 475.
⁰⁴ White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, May 31, 1898, 574.
⁰⁶ White, DA, 653.
feast. In the Old Testament, the Passover was a remembrance celebration, calling to mind the mighty acts of God in delivering Israel from the Egyptian bondage. The Lord's Supper is intended to remind the Christian about God's greatest act, the deliverance from the power of sin.¹

The Hebrew use of the word "remember" is more inclusive than our English equivalent. B. Childs defines it "as calling to mind, recalling past events, conditions or persons that one has once experienced."² He further clarifies that it means "to recall something, which is already known, to keep in mind."³ It often involves action, a physical response to the process of recollection. Memory is never divorced from action. When the Jew celebrated the Passover, he did more than just recollect what happened to his forefathers. She, in a sense, reenacted that event and therefore herself "participated" in the Exodus. The Passover festival aroused and incited the memory because memory provided the link between past and present.

So to engage "in remembrance of Christ" means to respond in active faith, which links the redemptive action of God in Christ with the present experience of a Christian. One who truly "remembers Christ" in the celebration will want to respond by an active involvement in the mission of Christ's Church. Every communicant encounters again, through the medium of memory, the saving

³Ibid.
act of God through Christ. To remember is to grasp after, to meditate upon, to pray to God.¹ Each memorial feast should be an opportunity to reaffirm one's relationship with Christ.

"Do This in Remembrance of Me"

The act of remembrance is not a simple inner reflection, but it involves an action, an encounter with the author of our salvation. The New English Bible expresses it this way, "Do this, as a memorial of me." This is a command of the Lord to perform an action. Since in the words of the Lord, the imperative is used four times, J. Blenkinsopp considers it, therefore, "a commandment like one of the Ten Commandments, not just an exhortation to perform a devotional exercise . . . but of the essence of Church life"² (emphasis mine).

The Lord's Supper as a Proclamation

As a proclamation the celebration of the Lord's Supper heralds the gospel, makes known the believer's faith in Jesus and in reality becomes "a visible gospel."

Heralding the Gospel

For Paul, the action in the Lord's Supper is a proclamation: "For as

¹Ibid., 65.

often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death."¹

The verb *kataggellein* (to proclaim) is used in other New Testament passages, where it means "herald the Gospel"² or "to make known one's faith."³ This would indicate that this action is intended to be an outreach. That being the case, the officiating minister proclaims to all gathered the death of Christ as the ultimate victory over the powers of evil.

**Making Known One's Faith**

The sacrament is another form of the gospel as S. Glen called it: "the gospel as koinonia and therefore actualized in the lives of the people."⁴ The celebration of the Lord's Supper becomes the acted out word, the visible gospel:

The administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is for the purpose of making a forcible illustration of the infinite sacrifice made for a sinful world, and for us individually, as a part of that great whole of fallen humanity, before whose eyes Christ has evidently been set forth crucified among them.⁵

Proper understanding of the Lord's Supper, as a proclamation, helps us to understand how Christ is present in the Lord's Supper. In the New Testament, proclamation has the character of an event. E. Schweizer correctly observes that

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¹1 Cor 11:26.

²1 Cor 9:14.

³Rom 1:8.


⁵White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," *ARSH*, June 28, 1898, 585.
the preached word is never merely something intended for the intellect. E. G.

White concurs:

In this ordinance is presented the necessity of economizing all the thoughts, all the energies, all the affections and faculties, to wear Christ's yoke, to come into partnership with him in seeking to save the souls that are perishing without hope in the world.¹

Jesus declared: "Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."²

The question often asked is, how is Christ present in the sacrament? Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Lord's Supper "proclaims that Christ is present through the Spirit till he comes visibly."³

The real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is exactly the same as his presence in the word - nothing more, nothing less. It is an event, not an object; an encounter, not a phenomenon of nature; it is Christ's encounter with his church, not the distribution of a substance . . . for the elements are just as much bearers of the gospel as the words are bearers of the proclamation.⁴

The Lord's Supper brings every participant into direct relationship with the very core and center of Christianity. It proclaims the reconciling work of Christ on the cross. It is a witness, a visible sign, proclaiming to the participants the truth about Christ's suffering and death. For a committed Christian who has and wants a living relationship with Christ to be expressed, that is extremely

¹White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, June 21, 1898, 579.
³SDABE, 201.
⁴Eduard Schweizer, The Lord's Supper, 37-38.
important. "That, is the supreme function of the Lord's Supper."¹

The Lord's Supper as Communion

Another purpose of the celebration of the Lord's Supper is to bring about communion. Paul describes it in words that are difficult to translate: "sharing in the blood of Christ" and "sharing in the body of Christ."² The Greek word koinonia may also be translated "fellowship," describing a group of people having "an intimate fellowship and reciprocal affection."³ They are bound by what they have in common with each other. In the original, the preposition "of" is missing, but in the English translation it is an interpretation of the genitive case. Another interpretation could be expressed by words, "brought about by" or "based upon." If we follow that translation, Paul is then saying, "This cup of blessing which we bless, is it not or does it not represent the fellowship which is brought about by the body of Christ?" The Lord's Supper, then, attests to the fact that Christians belong together to one family that is characterized by unity and love.

This communion or fellowship around the Lord's table is brought about by the death of Christ, which makes all believers one body: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."⁴

¹W. M. Clow, The Church and the Sacraments (London: James Clarke & Co., 1923), 244.

²1 Cor 10:16. KJV uses the word "communion" to describe that sharing.

³Clow, 246.

⁴1 Cor 10:17.
The Lord’s Supper is not a private meal, but a public partaking of bread and wine around one table. This feature of the fellowship is so prominent that it has found expression in the commonly used title of the sacrament, the Holy Communion. It is not just ordinary fellowship. It can be best described as holy or sacred fellowship that one enters at the deepest level. As John describes it, it is a fellowship with the Lord himself. For the Lord himself is the true Host at the table. It is Christ whom we come to meet in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Regular attendance fosters a living relationship with him.

In order to maintain spiritual life and health, we must feed on Jesus Christ, which is studying his word, and doing those things that he has commanded in that word. This will constitute a close union with Christ. . . . This is living by faith upon the Son of God.

When we participate in the sacrament, by partaking of the bread and wine at the Lord’s invitation, we become spiritual members of his body and are one spirit with him.

Koinonia as a Fellowship and as Participation

But the Bible teaches that we also have fellowship one with another.

1 Cor 10:16.

21 John 1:3.

3White, "The Lord’s Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, June 22, 1897, 476.

41 Cor 6:15, 17.

51 John 1:3.
The sacrament is an affair of the whole church.

It would be inconceivable to speak of the Lord's Supper as "my supper." Though in the celebration each person receives the elements, it is something which we do together. We do it as a family of faith who confess Jesus to be our personal Savior from sin. Thus, we have fellowship with Christ and with one another. That fellowship is based on the fact that we take the same bread and drink of the same cup.\(^1\) As we are members of one body, we are fundamentally and inescapably members of one another. But what prompted Paul to express such a teaching?

**The Corinthian Problem**

The offense of the Christians in Corinth is described by Paul as "not discerning the body."\(^2\) The new converts failed to understand the oneness of the body, of which each person was a part.

It was a common practice in Corinth, as in other Greek cities, for people to organize themselves into associations, clubs, or guilds, and such societies would share a common meal once a week or once a month.\(^3\)

This custom was adopted by the early church and became known as Agape or love feast. When the Christians in Corinth got together, they would

\(^1\) Cor 10:14.
\(^2\) Cor 11:29.
\(^3\) Marcus Dods, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896), 261.
share a common meal. That meal was regarded as a social activity of the church fellowship followed by the Lord's Supper itself.

These love feasts were desecrated by "drunkenness and gluttony . . . and uncharitable conduct."¹ The richer classes, in whose homes the church met, congregated together, leaving the poorer members to sit and sup by themselves. They displayed *schismata* (divisions, vs. 18) and *aireseis* (factions, vs. 19) among themselves.

Those who arrived first did not wait for the others to come (vs. 33), and some were left to go hungry (vs. 21). For the rich to "humiliate those who have nothing" was to "despise the church of God" (vs. 22).

Their problem was both ecclesiological and christological. The ecclesiological dimension of the offense lends support to the interpretation by A. Higgins, who sees in the phrase "not discerning the body of Christ" in vs. 29 a clear reference to the churchly body.²

However, since the church is the body of Christ, the Corinthians' sin had a christological dimension. Their selfish conduct meant that they were turning the Lord's Supper into their own supper (vss. 20-22). The bread and the cup were "of the Lord" (vs. 27), and to eat it in an unworthy manner meant becoming guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

Though many commentaries name the love feasts as the meals where the

¹Glen, 142.

²Higgins, 72-77.
irregularities occurred, and that that spirit of divisiveness was carried into the celebration of the Lord's Supper, Ellen White clearly writes that it was the Lord's Supper itself that was perverted. Those Christians in Corinth were departing from the simplicity of the faith. "They perverted the true meaning of the Lord's Supper, patterning it in a great degree after idolatrous feasts."¹ The celebration of the suffering and death of Christ was turned into an occasion of feasting and selfish enjoyment. "The holy institution of the Lord's Supper was, for the wealthy, turned into a gluttonous feast."²

Paul shows no desire to abolish the practice altogether. Instead, he proceeds to correct the abuses.

Eating and Drinking 'Unworthily'

"Eating and drinking unworthily"³ may have meant for Paul partaking of the Lord's Supper, while holding each other in contempt. F. Bruce explains that a certain worth or value is connected with the bread and the cup. "He who uses them without counting their value, uses them in an unworthy manner."⁴ J. Blenkinsopp interprets "unworthily" as eating "carelessly, out of habit, even in

¹White, "1 Corinthians," SDABC, 7-A: 314.
²Ibid.
³AV has 'unworthy' but ERV, ASV, and RSV do not have this word at all.
a disorderly fashion."¹ A. Robertson understands the expression to "cover all that is incompatible with the intention of Christ in instituting the rite."²

**The Meaning of ‘Soma’**

Some interpreters understand the word *soma* (body) in vs. 29 as mystical body, that is the church.³ The exegetical controversy over the question of whether *soma* means the Lord’s body or is associated with the elements on the table or with the church arises only as a false alternative dictated by the interpretation of "pure presence" of Christ.⁴

**Undue Concern**

This passage has caused "undue concern"⁵ for some Christians. It needs to be pointed out that *anaxios* (unworthily) is an adverb, which means "in an unworthy or careless manner." It does not refer to the partaking person, but to the "manner of his partaking."⁶ Paul’s converts came with bitter contentions

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¹Blenkinsopp, 125.


⁴Glen, 147.


among themselves and in quarrelling factions,¹ and some even came in a drunken condition, methuo.² Such an attendance at the Lord’s table demonstrates the superficiality of a Christian’s experience that is a mere profession. Such a person who participates in an unworthy manner is "guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord." The Greek word here translated "guilty of profaning the body" is enochos, which is a legal term, meaning "proven guilty, culpable, responsible for." Therefore, the Corinthians had to examine themselves. And that is what the Ordinance of Humility is all about. It serves as a corrective to prevent such an unworthy participation.

Eating and Drinking Together

Paul is explaining here the true nature of a Christian community. It is best reflected in their form of worship. "It is one in which brother has a concern for a brother . . . where brother waits for brother," and "in the common participation . . . the brethren proclaim the meaning of the Lord’s death."³ "A life stained by quarrelling and selfishness is an insult to the Lord, if it dares to approach his table."⁴

As a sacrament of fellowship, the Lord’s Supper is a call to individual

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¹ 1 Cor 1:11; 1 Cor 3:3.
² 1 Cor 11:21.
Christians that they should be present at the celebration in brotherly love and
harmony. "Every man in whose heart there is hatred, bitterness, contempt against
his brother eats and drinks unworthily if with that spirit in his heart he comes to
the Table of our Lord."¹ The followers of Christ are not warned that if things
are not right, they should stay away or attend the Lord's Supper at another
church, where they have no disagreements with anyone. God is "not mocked by
evasion."²

Basic Expression of Unity

G. Bromiley further points out that the Lord's Supper is a call to confess
that we are all sinners who need the benefits of the Lord's house. It is only at
the table of the Lord that we find "a continuing opportunity for the lesser
reconciliation" with our brother and sister "on the basis and within the context of
the great reconciliation, accomplished on our behalf in Jesus Christ."³ The
Lord's Supper is a call for all Christians to express and realize their unity. There
is no better place to express our basic unity in Christ than in the sacrament of the
Lord's house, starting with the Ordinance of Humility. E. G. White says that
this ordinance "is to make tender our hearts toward one another."⁴

¹William Barclay, The Letters to the Corinthians (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew
Press, 1965), 117.

²G. W. Bromiley, Sacramental Teaching and Practice in the Reformed Churches

³Ibid., 64.

⁴White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, May 31, 1898, 574.
The Lord's Supper as Anticipation of the Second Advent

There is one final aspect about the Lord's Supper that needs emphasis. The celebration of the Lord's Supper needs to be seen in the perspective of the Second Advent. Paul teaches the Christians in Corinth that the celebration proclaims the Lord's death "till he come."¹

G. Wainwright suggests that the Pauline phrase 'till he come' was "probably an echo of the primitive church's cry Maranatha."²

The discovery of the Didache helped us in the process of the recovery of the linguistic interpretation of the Aramaic expression "maranatha," which occurs in 1 Cor 16:22.

H. Lietzmann suggests, that in 1 Cor 16 "maranatha" forms part of the eucharistic liturgy, which Paul knew would follow the reading of his letter. In Aramaic, the imperative mode of the verb 'maranatha' means "Our Lord, come!" If the form is a present perfect tense, it means: "Our Lord has come." Thus the celebration of the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the one and the same Christ who has come and who is to come.³

O. Cullmann suggests the imperative form. Maranatha is a prayer for the Advent of Christ: Our Lord, come! So the phrase _erxou Kurie Iesou_ in Rev 22:20

¹Cor 11:26
³Ibid., 69.
was a prayer which, when uttered during the celebration of the Lord’s Supper in Corinth, had a double reference. It requested both the Parousia and also the immediate coming of Christ in the eucharist.1

In the Gospel of Luke we hear Jesus saying that he "will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come."2 The same Gospel writer shares the promise given by Jesus, that the disciples shall "eat and drink at my table in my kingdom."3

These verses indicate that from its inception the Lord’s Supper had a forward look to the parousia as well as a backward look to the cross. Each celebration is a reminder that the crucified Lord is also a risen Savior, who will return in glory to receive his children.

"'Till He Come"

The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is to be celebrated as an action of the community of faith between the time of the resurrection and the Second Advent. "Till he shall come the second time in power and glory, this ordinance is to be celebrated."4

Speaking of the Lord’s Supper, Ellen White states that "the second appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven is ever to be kept before us," and again, "the

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1Cullmann, Early Christian Worship, 16-25.


4White, DA, 653.
communion is to be a constant reminder of this [second coming]."¹

Though Christ is not present in the flesh during the celebration of the Lord's Supper, he is present by the Holy Spirit in the spoken word and "the acted word." Each time his disciples gather in obedience to his explicit command, such a gathering is a reminder of the future Supper of the Lamb in the age to come, when the redeemed of all ages will sit at the table and Christ shall serve them. It is a perpetual "pointer to the Messianic banquet, when the Lord will be host at his heavenly table."²

The Lord's Supper sets the life of a Christian in an eschatological perspective. It keeps fresh before us the goal of our pilgrimage. It is spiritual food for the remnant believer who is on the march, and not a meal for a settled inhabitant.³ Each celebration of the Lord's Supper should remind us that our life ought not to be oriented to this age, which was condemned and destroyed on the cross. Rather, it ought to summon us to look forward to the blessed hope. "The purpose of Holy Communion is not merely, that we should be strengthened in faith and deepened in love; it is also that we should be nurtured in hope."⁴

Each celebration is an opportunity to reconsecrate ourselves to God's cause, being reminded that every secret thing will be disclosed when our Lord

¹White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, June 22, 1897, 476.
²Wainwright, 68.
⁴Wainwright, 69.
returns.\textsuperscript{1} Orienting our life in the frame of the second coming, the sacrament gives us a melody not only of praise and thanksgiving, but also one of "triumphant expectation."\textsuperscript{2} Together with the saints of all ages, we should respond with vibrant expectancy, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."\textsuperscript{3}

Summary

The contribution of this chapter to this study of the Lord's Supper and its importance can be summarized under five points:

1. Paul's understanding of the Lord's Supper is similar to that of the Gospel writers, but certain disorders in Corinth gave him an opportunity to provide additional teaching.

2. "Do this in remembrance of Christ," commands Paul. To 'remember' for Paul who was a Hebrew meant more than to recall something. It involved an action. To truly 'remember Christ' in a meaningful celebration requires a response, an active faith being involved in the mission of Christ's Church.

3. The supreme function of the Lord's Supper is to be a witness, a visible sign about Christ's suffering and death. The Lord's Supper is a visible gospel creating a sacred fellowship between believers and Christ whom we meet in the celebration.

4. Paul recommends self-examination, repentance, and participation in the

\textsuperscript{1}1 Cor 4:5.  
\textsuperscript{3}Rev 22:20.
Sacrament. He does not warn Christians that if things are not right, they should stay away or attend the Lord’s Supper at another church. God is not mocked by evasion. The Lord’s Supper is a call to unity for all Christians.

5. Early Christians used the expression, Maranatha. It could have a double reference: (1) 'Our Lord, come!' or (2) "Our Lord has come," requesting the parousia and also the imminent coming of Christ in the Eucharist. From its implementation, the Lord’s Supper had a forward look. This needs reemphasizing. The Lord’s Supper is to be a constant reminder about the second coming of Christ. It sets the life of a Christian in an eschatological perspective. It keeps fresh the goal of our pilgrimage. It is spiritual food for the remnant believer who is on the march and not a meal for a settled inhabitant in this world.
CHAPTER VII

THEOLOGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The Lord’s Supper had its beginning with the Last Supper Jesus had with his disciples before his death. But what kind of supper was it? The nature of the Last Supper is the subject of much scholarly debate. Was it a Passover meal or some other kind of friendly get together? There seem to be good arguments for answering the above questions both in the affirmative and the negative. Strong arguments can be advanced on both sides. It is not merely an academic question because our interpretation of Jesus’ sayings depends on the answer we give to this question. That answer is the basis for our understanding of the Lord’s Supper.

The problem seems to be based on the differences between the Synoptic description of the Last Supper and the dating of Christ’s crucifixion provided by the Gospel of John. Therefore, we must go to the New Testament narratives themselves.

Biblical Evidence

It would appear that the Synoptic Gospels affirm that Jesus celebrated the Passover with the Twelve on the evening of Thursday, which would be, according
to Jewish time reckoning, the beginning of Nisan 15th. That would make the Last Supper a development of that Passover meal.\(^1\) According to the beloved disciple, John, Jesus was crucified on the afternoon of Nisan 14th, when the paschal lambs were being killed on the Temple mount. The Last Supper took place "before the festival of the Passover."\(^2\) According to John, when the Jews brought Jesus to Pilate, they had not yet eaten the Passover lamb, since they refused to enter the praetorium "so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover."\(^3\)

Those scholars who assume the correctness of John’s account look at the Last Supper of the Synoptic description as an ordinary meal or a special meal that was shared commonly among the friends of a religious association called haburah, but never as a Passover meal. They postulate that the Synoptic Gospels, in error, described the Last Supper as a Passover. Jesus died before the Passover was celebrated on the evening of Nisan 15. For this group of scholars, the words of Jesus, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer,"\(^4\) are an expression of an earnest longing, but not something that was actually realized. They point out that the Synoptics never use the technical term for the unleavened bread, nor do they mention the lamb nor the bitter herbs in their description of the Last Supper. Further, the Gospels speak about the common cup, while it was

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\(^2\) John 13:1, 2, 21-30.


customary to use individual cups at the Passover celebration. The Gospels mention only one or two cups instead of the four that were used in the Passover.

One other objection to the Last Supper being a Passover are the circumstances surrounding the festival on the day of Nisan 15, such as the gathering of the council of Sanhedrin, and the sentencing of Jesus on the day of Passover.1

An opposing group of scholars who assume the correctness of the Synoptic Gospels points out that because John was theologically motivated he may not always have been historically accurate. It was John's intention to show Jesus as the Passover lamb put to death at the time when all the animals were slaughtered. Certainly, Luke tried to portray the Last Supper as a Passover meal. Luke even mentions that the preparations for the supper were done at the time of the feast of the unleavened bread when to pasxa (the Passover lamb) was to be sacrificed.2

Mark points out that the Last Supper took place in the evening,3 and Matthew denotes that Jesus and the Twelve reclined at a dinner,4 when it was customary for the Jewish people to sit at a table for an ordinary meal,5 and were

3Mark 14:17.
4Matt 26:20.
5Matt 26:20.
engaged in a dipping ceremony.¹ From Mark we learn that the Last Supper ended with the singing of a hymn.² J. Jeremias contends that the above characteristics are important details describing the Passover service.³ The result of all these observations is a number of hypotheses which have little or nothing in their favor.

A number of attempts have been made to harmonize the Synoptic accounts with the Gospel of John in order to allow them to be historically accurate and at the same time preserve their theological emphasis. According to J. van Goudoever,⁴ there were two dates for celebrating the Passover. There was the unofficial calendar date which indicated Nisan 14/15 as the time to kill the Passover lambs and to eat the supper, and the official calendar (also Nisan 14/15) requiring that the sacrificial lambs be offered that day. All this depended on sighting the new moon by the naked eye on the 1st of Nisan. If Jesus celebrated the Passover with his friends according to the unofficial calendar such as that one followed at Qumran, it could have been on Tuesday, and it would have been in opposition to the establishment in Jerusalem.⁵ This explanation gives time for the events that took place between the supper and the crucifixion. Annie Jaubert

¹Matt 26:23.
²Mark 14:26.
⁵In the Didascalia chap. 21, XIV, 18 Jesus is reported saying, "Tuesday evening, I ate my Pascha with you, and, during the night they took me."
concludes that "the theses that the Supper was held on Tuesday evening, though it might appear revolutionary, reveals itself in fact as eminently conservative."¹

The Words of Institution

If Jesus' words spoken at the Last Supper were spoken in a context of a Passover ritual, what were the details surrounding that celebration? Each Passover began with the presiding person pronouncing the kiddush (a prayer of sanctification) over the first cup of red wine. Upon this has been built the sabbath kiddush theory. That theory postulates that Jesus and the Twelve disciples formed a haburah (a religious fellowship) like the so-called haburoth which held meals on specific days.²

In the Passover ritual, after the kiddush over the first cup was pronounced, this cup was drunk by all present, and followed by a dish of bitter herbs dipped in haroseth (a fruit sauce). Celebrated in a family setting, the Passover would give an opportunity for each Jewish son to ask his father why this night differed from other nights. In response to that question he would be told³ that the Passover lamb is eaten because the angel of the Lord passed over each house of their fathers in Egypt. The unleavened bread was eaten because the Jews


³Exod 12:26, 27.
were redeemed from Egypt, and the bitter herbs were a reminder of the bitter experience of slavery. This would be followed by the singing of the first part of Hallel (Ps 113). Then came the drinking of the second cup and another prayer of thanksgiving for the unleavened bread, followed by the meal proper. Then came another prayer over the third cup of wine "the cup of blessing." After the supper came the second part of Hallel, singing of which ended with Ps 118. The liturgy was completed with a fourth cup of wine to celebrate God's kingdom.

Another hypothesis is the Passover kiddush theory postulated by G. H. MacGregor. It was a gathering like the haburoth. It was a regular weekly meal that was interrupted for the sanctification ceremony, "and as it was the eve of the Passover feast, it took the usual form of the combined commemoration of the Sabbath and the redemption from the Egyptian bondage." The problem with this theory rests in the fact that the Last Supper was held on a Thursday, and not a Friday night.

Another idea advanced by H. Lietzmann and others is that Jesus and his

1Exod 12:39.

2Cf. 1 Cor 10:16.


5Some support for this theory is based on the order cup-bread in the short text of Luke 22:15-19.

6Lietzmann, 202; Dix, 50; Oulton, 9.
apostles formed a religious association. In the understanding of these scholars, the Last Supper was an ordinary meal. This idea has an advantage in the fact that the meal did not have to be antedated by twenty-four hours.

J. Jeremias has attempted to solve the problem by harmonizing John and the Synoptic Gospels. He states that Jesus and his disciples followed the Pharisees in eating the Passover a day earlier than the Sadducees. The Fourth Gospel follows the Sadducaic time reckoning, the Synoptics follow the Pharisaic.¹

It appears from this brief survey that various attempts of explaining the chronology of the Synoptic Gospels and making the Last Supper something possibly other than a celebration of Passover are "all attended by grave difficulties."²

A. Higgins concludes, "There is thus nothing in the Synoptics accounts which really invalidates their representation of the Last Supper as a Passover meal and of the crucifixion as having taken place on the first day of the festival, Nisan 15th."³

Then he proceeds to enumerate more positive indications that the Last Supper was a Passover:

1. The Last Supper took place in the evening and extended into the night.
2. Jesus and the disciples reclined at their last meal together, whereas it

¹Jeremias, 15.
²Higgins, 16.
³Ibid., 20.
was customary to sit at ordinary meals.¹

3. A dish precedes the breaking of bread only at the Passover.²

4. Wine was drunk at the Last Supper, and drinking of wine was obligatory at the Passover.

5. The Last Supper concluded with everyone singing a hymn before they went into the Mount of Olives.³

6. After the meal Jesus did not return, according to his custom, to Bethany, but went to the mount of Olives. Gethsemane was closer to the walls of Jerusalem, Bethany was far.

7. Most importantly, Jesus spoke of his body and blood in connection with bread and wine; this is an indication of the Passover character of the Last Supper.⁴

One ought to remember that what is given in the Synoptic Gospels is "not a description of the last earthly meal of Jesus with his disciples, but an account of the first Eucharist . . as it first began to be celebrated after the resurrection."⁵

Ellen White positively supports the idea that the Last Supper was a Passover celebration. She writes that Jesus and his disciples "had gathered to


²Mark 14:20; Matt 26:23.

³Mark 14:26; Matt 26:30.

⁴These seven points appear in Higgins, 20-21.

⁵Higgins, 23.
celebrate the Passover . . . and on the day the Passover was eaten he was to be sacrificed."\(^1\)

In another place she writes,

Christ is still at the table on which the paschal supper has been spread. The unleavened cakes used at the Passover season are before him. The Passover wine, untouched by fermentation, is on the table. These emblems Christ employs to represent his own unblemished sacrifice.\(^2\)

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**The Meaning of the Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper replaces the Passover ritual of the old covenant dispensation. The Passover was fulfilled for a Christian when Christ, the paschal lamb, gave his life on the cross. The day before, Christ had instituted the replacement, the Lord's Supper of the new covenant. One must remember that the roots of the symbolic meaning of the Lord's Supper extend back to the Passover celebration.

**Commemoration of the Deliverance from Sin**

In the old dispensation, the Passover commemorated Israel's deliverance from the oppressive slavery in the land of Egypt. In the new dispensation, the Lord's Supper commemorates the deliverance from the bondage of sin. Ellen G. White calls it descriptively as "the great memorial."\(^3\)

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\(^1\) White, *DA*, 642.

\(^2\) Ibid., 653.

\(^3\) White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," *ARSH*, June 14, 1898, 577.
The blood of the lambs that were slain at Passover time in Egypt was applied to the lintel and doorposts, thus protecting the inhabitants of a given household from death. The flesh of the lambs was roasted in the fire and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, providing the strength to escape from Egypt. In the same vain, the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross provides emancipation from death.

In instituting the sacramental service to take the place of the Passover, Christ left for his church a memorial of his great sacrifice for man. . . . This was the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. The one was to close forever; the other, which he had just established, was to take its place, and to continue through all time as the memorial of his death.

According to John, believing Christians are saved through partaking of Christ's body and blood. Through our participation in the Lord's Supper we publicly declare that the death of Christ on Golgotha's cross provided our forgiveness and salvation and secured our eternal life. According to E. G. White: "The administration of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is for the purpose of making a forcible illustration of the infinite sacrifice made for a sinful world."

Substitutionary Death

The service of the Lord’s Supper emphasizes the substitutionary

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1Exod 12:3-8.


3John 6:54.

4White, "The Lord’s Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, June 28, 1898, 585.
dimension of the atonement by Christ. Writing about Christ, E. G. White says:

He has instituted this service, that it may speak constantly to our senses of the love of God, that has been expressed in our behalf. He gave us all that it was possible for him to give—he gave his life for the life of the world.¹

At the cross, the innocent Savior was suffering for guilty humanity, the righteous for the unrighteous. This benevolent act on the part of Christ satisfied the demands of the law which required the death of the sinner, provided forgiveness, and the assurance of eternal life to all repentant sinners. Christ’s death on the cross took care of our condemnation, providing us with a robe of Christ’s perfect righteousness, as well as guaranteeing the availability of God’s power to overcome temptations and all evil.

The Word about the Bread

Christ used many different metaphors to teach different truths about himself. He said, "I am the door,"² "I am the way,"³ "I am the true vine,"⁴ and "I am the bread of life."⁵ These metaphors describe his salvific functions.

None of these expressions can be taken literally, for he is none of these things. These are simply expressions illustrating deeper truths. In the Synoptic

¹White, "The Lord’s Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, June 7, 1898, 575.
²John 10:7.
⁴John 15:1.
⁵John 6:35.
Gospels, when Jesus said, "This is my body,"¹ he pronounced these words in the Aramaic language. Scholars are of the opinion that these words did not have the copula "is." A better rendering in the English language would be, "This represents or signifies my body." "The idea that the bread is changed into his flesh . . . is absent in the teaching of the New Testament."² "This is a special service," wrote E. G. White. Then she continued:

Inasmuch as this service, in the bread and wine, represents the body the Lord gave for the sin of the world, the ministration of the sacrament is commemorative of Christ's humiliation, betrayal, and sufferings. . . . In symbol, Christ is set forth crucified among us (emphasis mine).³

The Word about the Cup

Similarly, speaking about the wine in the cup, Jesus said, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured for many."⁴ Matthew adds to this, "for the forgiveness of sins."⁵ Luke states similarly to Paul, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."⁶ Scholars cannot agree which form of the words is the original. Some, like A. Higgins, attribute the idea

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¹Matt 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19 (Luke adds the words: "which is given for you").
²Rasmussen, 60.
³White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, June 28, 1898, 585.
⁴Mark 14:24.
⁵Matt 26:28.
of a covenant to Paul. In Paul, the covenant idea becomes the dominant idea. The death of Jesus is looked on as the inauguration of that new covenant and the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

In Matthew and Mark the covenant theme was added, according to these scholars, to the simple statement, "This is my blood." Thus Higgins writes that we have "no evidence that at his last meal with his disciples Jesus spoke of a new covenant, or, indeed, that he spoke of a covenant at all." Mark's phrase, "This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many," brings to mind Isaiah's description of the Servant: "he poured out himself to death." So we see that the Old Testament pictured the Messiah as the Suffering Servant who would undergo the suffering and death for the sake of others.

In the Greek, ekchunnomeon (which is poured out) is a present participle, and as such could be translated, "which is being poured out for many." This, however, does not teach a repeated sacrifice in each successive celebration of the Lord's Supper, like the teaching about the Mass advocates. J. Jeremias correctly observes that in the Aramaic language, the participial forms do not distinguish

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1Higgins, 34.
2Cf. Jer 31:31-34.
3Higgins, 34.
4Isa 53:12.
time. "The participle is atemporal. Its time sphere is determined by the context." This participle is used with the view of the event that is soon to take place. Based on the linguistics, the correct meaning thus would be "which is soon to be shed for you."

The blood of Christ was to be shed for many. This almost sounds exclusive. Jeremias points out that in Hebrew the term is inclusive, meaning "for all." But it is for all who accept him. Paul, in a similar vain, writes, "For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous." And in another place he asserts, "For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ." John states that the Lamb of God takes the sin of the world. Mark similarly confirms that the Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many. The blood of Jesus was poured out for many, meaning in this case that it was poured for all.

The Blood of the Covenant

The term "my blood of the covenant" is another way of saying "the covenant blood." According to the Old Testament, the covenant requires blood

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1 Jeremias, 178.

2 Rom 5:19.

3 1 Cor 15:22.

4 John 1:29.

5 Mark 10:45.

6 Cf. Eph 2:2; Col 3:6. In Greek the genitive of a noun is used as an adjective.
to ratify it. Each celebration of the Lord's Supper reminds us that the new covenant was signed and sealed in blood. Specifically, the new covenant is made possible because of the blood, which represents the life and death of Jesus.

E. G. White highlighted that when she wrote,

In this last act of Christ in partaking with his disciples of the bread and wine, he pledged himself to them as their Redeemer by a new covenant, in which it was written and sealed . . . all the blessings that heaven can supply. . . . This covenant deed was to be ratified with Christ's own blood.2

A covenant is an agreement between two parties, a pledge of fidelity. In the old covenant between Jehovah and the children of God, Israel agreed to keep the law.3 This is the essence of a covenant. To break the law meant to break the covenant. As the Lord's Supper is a covenant, it may be very appropriate to include a covenantal agreement between a celebrating congregation and God expressing the terms of that agreement, or a reaffirmation of one's faith in Christ's salvific act on the cross. Human nature requires periodic renewal of the covenantal agreement. The reason many SDA congregations in North America have one-third or half of the membership inactive could perhaps be traced to the lack of such a periodic renewal of faith.

Luke writes about "the new covenant in my (Christ's) blood." What is the meaning of a covenant in the blood? W. Barclay suggests that "in my blood"

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3Exod 24:7.
means "at the price of my blood." Accordingly, "this cup stands for a relationship with God made possible at the price of my blood." The covenant blood is the ground for the new covenantal agreement. With his blood Jesus paid the price of this new relationship.

The Old Testament forbade drinking of blood. Anyone breaking that prohibition was to be cut off from among God's people, because the life of the flesh is in the blood. Blood was to be used for the purpose of atonement. With this background, it is understandable that the words of Jesus about the cup would be difficult for the Jews to accept. C. Montefiore correctly observes, when he writes in his commentary on Mark, how difficult it would be: "that a Palestinian or Galilean Jew could have suggested that in drinking wine his disciples were, even symbolically, drinking blood. For the horror with which the drinking of blood was regarded by the Jews is well known."

Even for a disciple of Christ in the Upper Room, the words of Christ must have sounded strange and must have required additional explanation. Based on the prophecy about the Suffering Servant, a relationship with God is expressed in terms of a covenant. If his disciples did not quite comprehend, Jesus

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1Barclay, The Lord's Supper, 46.

2Ibid.

3Lev 17:10-12.


5Isa 53:12.
must have thought about his death as a sacrificial act inaugurating a new covenant.

Therefore, when an ancient or a modern disciple is asked to drink Christ's blood, he is asked to remember how Christ's sacrificial death once and for all changed a relationship between man and God. What Jesus must have explained was that this cup stands for a new relationship between God and man, made possible by the covenant blood. Jesus was not at all asking his followers to drink his blood, but to have part in the new covenant.

**Means of Remembrance**

In the Synoptic Gospels, there appears to be a very definite difference in the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper among Luke (and Paul for that matter), Matthew, and Mark. Luke reports Jesus saying: "Do this in remembrance of me."

1 This command appears only once.2 H. Lietzmann suggested that these words were added by Paul as he changed the character of the Lord's Supper from a fellowship meal to a commemorative meal for the dead according to the pagan custom of funeral banquets.3 There are a number of problems with this suggestion. Jesus was requesting his disciples to repeat the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the future in order to aid them in remembering

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2Paul admonishes the Corinthians twice, once after bread and once after the saying about the cup, quoting Jesus as saying, "Do this in Remembrance of me." 1 Cor 11:24f.

him and never forgetting him. That is how Ellen White understood the words of Jesus when she penned, "Christ designed that this supper should be often commemorated, in order to bring to our remembrance his sacrifice in giving his life for the remission of the sins of all who will believe on and receive him."  

Commemoration of Israel's Deliverance

J. Jeremias understands Jesus as saying, "Do this that God may remember me."  

Jeremias' contention is that when something is done in the Old Testament with the intention of remembering, the person who does the remembering is, no doubt, none other than God. Linguistically, that is possibly a correct understanding. 

But since the context of these words of Jesus is the celebration of the Passover, it would be better to interpret the words of Jesus using the passage describing the Passover in Egypt. "This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance."  

In that passage, the Israelites were given instruction about teaching their children about the background of what happened in Egypt at Passover time. Moses instructed them that the unleavened bread was to be a memorial of how God brought them out of Egypt. 

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1 White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, May 31, 1898, 573.
2 Jeremias, 252.
3 Cf. Lev 24:7; Num 10:10; Isa 62:6ff; Exod 28:29; 30:16.
was a memorial feast given to keep in memory the miraculous deliverance from Egypt.

Jesus used the feast of Passover to attach the importance of the new covenant in the memory of his disciples. The Lord's Supper was given to the Church to remember Christ and what he did for mankind. As a memorial, the celebration of the Lord's Supper makes effective in the present an event of the historic past. Commenting on the Lord's Supper, E. G. White wrote, "These ordinances are regarded too much as a form, and not as a sacred thing to call to mind the Lord Jesus."¹

The background of the Passover helps us understand that the memory of man is in question.² Jesus thus re-oriented the ancient memorial of the Passover to commemorate what he as our Savior has done for us.

Christ does indeed manifest himself unto the believers who thus reveal their faith by coming together at the communion table with the simplicity of children to remember Jesus, his words, and his requirements, determined to exclude from the heart all selfishness and love of supremacy.³

Expression of Christian Assurance

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is an assurance to the committed Christian. Each celebration proclaims the Lord's death until he comes. In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus says that he will not drink of the fruit of the vine until he

¹White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, May 1898, 574.
²Barclay, The Lord's Supper, 51.
³White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, June 7, 1898, 575.
drinks it in his Father’s Kingdom. These verses emphatically express the eschatological hope of the Christian. The celebration not only brings to remembrance what Jesus accomplished on the cross as a past sacrifice once and for all, but it also affirms the certainty of his second coming in glory and triumph. "There is nothing in Christian worship which so looks to the past, the present and the future, as the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper does."  

Lord’s Supper Requires Renewed Dedication

With all the correct theological understanding in place, the celebration of the Lord’s Supper is still incomplete without the act of renewed dedication. Each service ought to end with a commitment to Christian service. Each meaningful participation in the Lord’s Supper nurtures and deepens our relationship with Christ. That relationship expresses itself in a life of faith and loving service. The partaking of one loaf not only illustrates commitment to Christ and one another, but also to the mission of the Church in the world. Again E. G. White has had a correct perception of the Lord’s Supper:

In this ordinance is presented the necessity of economizing all the thoughts, all the energies, all the affections and faculties, to wear Christ’s yoke, to come into partnership with him in seeking to save the souls that are perishing without God and without hope in the world.  

Originally the word sacramentum meant a soldier’s oath of loyalty to his

2Barclay, The Lord's Supper, 110.
3White, "The Lord’s Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, June 21, 1898, 579.
emperor. Each meaningful participation for a committed Christian ought to include an opportunity to make a pledge of loyalty to God’s service in the world. The object of every worship is to bring about a change in the worshipper and to lead to the act of dedication. To encounter God at the Lord’s table is to experience deeper devotion to our Savior who meets with us there through the ministry of his personal representative, the Holy Ghost.

Anticipation of the Second Coming

All three Synoptic Gospels record strong eschatological words in which Jesus refers to the future. Both Matthew and Mark put this emphasis at the end of the words about the institution of the Lord’s Supper, which Luke places at the beginning. "Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."¹

To participate in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper is what Jesus expects his followers to do between the cross and the kingdom. This is what saved people will want to do. Not in order to be saved, but because they are already in a saved relationship with Jesus. The Communion Service stretches the interval between Calvary and the second coming. It connects the "already" and the "not yet"² of the perspective of the New Testament world view. It declares, in symbolic terms, that Christ is present through the power of the Holy Spirit until

²Wainwright, 40, 42, 44-46.
he will come bodily in the Parousia. Christ's second appearing, "in the clouds of heaven, is ever to be kept before us. . . . And the communion is to be a constant reminder of this."

Christ's promise that he "will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I [Christ] drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" guides our faith to a future celebration of the Lord's Supper described in the Bible as the "marriage supper of the Lamb."

One of the common understandings about the future in the Jewish thinking is the idea about the Messianic banquet which God will prepare for his people when he breaks into history. The prophet Zephaniah announced, "For the day of the Lord is at hand; the Lord has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests." This Messianic banquet has its echoes in the New Testament teaching of Christ that many will come from the east and the west and recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God. In the parable of the Great Supper Jesus declared, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the

1White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, June 7, 1898, 576.
2Matt 26:29.
5Zeph 1:7.
6To recline was the original posture at the Lord's table in the Upper Room.
kingdom of God.¹ Jesus described himself as a master who will gird himself and have the guests sit down and he will serve them.²

The Last Supper on earth in the Upper Room will be followed, in Christ’s experience, with the Supper of the Lamb celebrated in the kingdom of God. He will rise from his throne and step forward to serve. M. L. Andreasen comments:

Never was Christ truly greater on earth than on the memorable occasion of the Lord’s Supper, when he took the place of a servant and humbled himself. Never is Christ greater in heaven than when he ministers to his saints.³

To this climactic expectation the celebration of the Lord’s Supper points us. The Synoptic Gospels show us Jesus’ Messianic consciousness and his confidence about the outcome of his mission.

In the celebration of the Lord’s Supper the Lord receives his followers in fellowship at his table. Yet, I cannot agree with E. Kilmartin, when he writes that “The Eucharist is the Messianic Banquet of the Kingdom.”⁴ Rather, the Lord’s Supper in my understanding is a sign pointing towards the meal in the Kingdom of God. When the mystery of God has been completed,⁵ sacraments will cease.

¹Luke 14:15.
³Andreasen, 46.
⁵Rev 10:7.
They are "to continue to the close of time."\(^1\) Then the Lord's Supper will give way to the vision of God in his eternal kingdom. "The Lord's Supper reminds us of the joy of personal fellowship with Christ that awaits us when the kingdom of God is fully established. It identifies our desire to participate in that experience."\(^2\)

**Summary**

The contribution of this chapter to the overall research on the theology of the Lord's Supper can be summarized under six points:

1. The Last Supper that Jesus ate with his Twelve disciples was a Passover meal. That must be taken into account as the basis for our understanding of the Lord's Supper.

2. The Passover celebration was replaced with the Lord's Supper by Jesus, who made it a commemoration of the deliverance from sin. The service of the Lord's Supper emphasizes the substitutionary dimension of the atonement of Christ.

3. The words "This is my body" were spoken in the Aramaic and therefore must be translated, "This represents my body."

4. The words "This is my blood poured out for many" can be best explained as "This cup stands for a relationship between man and God made

\(^1\)White, "The Lord's Supper and the Ordinance," ARSH, May 31, 1898, 574.

\(^2\)Rice, 302.
possible by the covenant blood" (Christ's life and death).

5. The Lord's Supper provides means of remembrance of all that Christ has done for humanity, leading to an act of renewed dedication of all believers to Christ and his mission.

6. The Synoptic Gospels convey strong eschatological emphasis. The Communion Service connects the "already" with the "not yet" of the world to come. The Lord's Supper declares in symbolic language that Christ is present in each celebration through the Holy Spirit till he comes bodily in the Parousia. Then the celebration of the Lord's Supper will give way to the vision of God in his eternal kingdom.

Based on these four theological essays I have preached four sermons at the Willowdale SDA Church in Toronto, Canada. As an outgrowth of this study they appear in the appendix H.

In Part Three of this project we will look at the suggested recommendations for improving the attendance of the Lord's Supper that are based on the two surveys conducted, one before the sermons were preached and the other after the series of sermons was delivered.
PART THREE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING
THE ATTENDANCE BASED ON
SURVEY ONE AND
SURVEY TWO
CHAPTER VIII

REASONS WHY PEOPLE ATTEND

THE LORD’S SUPPER

Having considered in chapter one the reasons for non-attendance, one
must not overlook the reasons that bring the faithful to the Lord’s table regularly.
Here is a list of reasons for attendance as revealed by the Willowdale
congregation. People come for a variety of reasons. Their importance has been
listed according to the frequency these reasons were marked in answer to question
43:

1. To gain blessings and a refreshing experience, 77.2 percent
2. For fellowship, 68.0 percent
3. To worship as a congregation, 52.8 percent
4. Because the Bible admonishes us to attend, 50.0 percent
5. To feel good, 39.3 percent
6. To receive spiritual help, 33.3 percent
7. Out of duty, 14.2 percent
8. For other reasons (unspecified), 8.8 percent
9. To dress up and look good, 8.6 percent.

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The survey served to stimulate the thinking of those who were attending out of habit, and to wet the appetite of those who have been lethargic. A creative pastor could use the above reasons for attendance and build meaningful Communion Services that incorporate these insights to increase the attendance at a given church. These services could reflect on the blessings of being in a saving relationship with Christ, experiencing deeper fellowship, and belonging to the most worshipful moments for each believer.

**Recommendations for Improving Attendance**

Good attendance does not happen by itself. It is a result of careful planning, concerted efforts, and a great deal of skillful promotion.

**Careful Planning**

Careful planning for the next quarter's celebration should start with the careful evaluation of the last service while it is still fresh in the memory. After each celebration detailed notes should be taken and filed for future reference. This should be done by the pastor or pastoral staff and by a group of lay observers who have been instructed about what to look for in the process of evaluating a given celebration of the Lord's Supper. These careful observations need to be evaluated and filed with all the pertinent material like program, music notes, attendance records, and objectives aimed for and reached. Attention must be paid to the conduct of members during the foot washing, atmosphere, availability of hymn books, and all the details that would make people comfortable.
Four Weeks Prior to the Celebration

At least four weeks before the next celebration, the pastor should put down on paper the objectives he has in mind for the next Communion Service, even the extent to which the effectiveness of the music could be utilized. It is best to arrange for a meeting with the music committee to plan the details in advance, giving ample time to the ministers of music to research and contribute to the specific objectives. With the choirs, one has to plan at least three months in advance. It is best to let the choir directors know the communion themes for the year. These themes should also be made known to the choristers who plan the congregational singing on the Sabbath when the Lord’s Supper is celebrated.

Two Weeks Prior to the Celebration

On Sabbath morning, two weeks prior to the celebration, it is recommended that the pastor preach a sermon dealing with a particular aspect of the Lord’s Supper. It is at this time that the awareness is cultivated and the teaching ministry takes place. It ought to be a full-length sermon that the congregation is accustomed to. If sermon notes can be included as an insert in the church bulletin, then greater impact can be created, and true teaching ministry can be effected. People listen better and absorb more if partial notes are provided, where they can fill in the key words and main concepts. The sermon on the communion day should be inspirational in nature and very short. Celebration day is not the time to sermonize and wear the saints out by a lengthy service.

Two weeks before the celebration, the written and oral emphasis should
be made to make people aware of the forthcoming Communion Service. A meeting with the elders and deacons should be arranged to check on the progress of the undershepherd plan. At this meeting, printed invitations can be shared with elders and deacons to be delivered in person, or mailed with personal handwritten notes and followed up by a telephone invitation.

Since every member of a given congregation should receive a home visit at least once a year, it is highly recommended to inaugurate a parish or undershepherd plan. The entire membership of a given congregation can be organized into parish zones on a geographical basis. Elders, deacons, and deaconesses should be encouraged to visit members in the locality for which they are responsible. It is easier to get their cooperation when they are given choices as to which zone they are to visit in. Printed materials include both an official invitation to the next Communion and a "call slip" for reporting the results of the visit. A samples are provided in appendix F. Meetings for elders, deacons, and deaconesses are kept to a minimum, but accountability is encouraged. These "call slips" can be collected together with Sabbath morning offerings. When elders, deacons, and deaconesses accept church offices, they ought to be told what is expected of them and encouraged to function in their respective positions.

One Week Prior to the Celebration

One week before the celebration, the parishioners needs to be encouraged to make things right between God and other human beings. They can be given an assignment to read in the Gospels or the Desire of Ages, and choose a partner
before they return next Sabbath for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.

Meaningful experiences of participation in the Lord’s Supper do not happen automatically. The members need to be taught that there is need for preparation on their part too.

One week before, a meeting with the worship committee should be arranged to finalize all the plans pertaining to the choice of music, readings, participants, and the discussion of the planned congregational involvement.

Personal experimentation has taught me that it is best to have a specific liturgy for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper adopted, different from the regular Sabbath morning liturgy, yet consistent with each celebration of the Lord’s Supper. There is need for a variation within established form to keep it fresh, but at the same time there is need to make people comfortable, most of whom resist change for change’s sake.

Creating a Feeling of Fellowship

The best way to create a feeling of fellowship is through the use of congregational singing on the themes of Calvary, resurrection, and Christian community. Family seating adds to that feeling. Presentation of new members baptized since the last celebration is also a welcomed feature. The call to worship could be done by a twelve-year-old member of the congregation (a custom borrowed from the Bar Mitzvah). Congregational participation and involvement in the various parts of the celebration must not be overlooked. The Lord’s Supper is not a service that is put on by the pastor or a few lay leaders. It is a "fellowship
of the community of faith" who come together to celebrate God's goodness and actively remember all that God through Christ has done for them.

Creating a Celebration

If one wants to make the Lord's Supper a joyous celebration, it is important to choose the themes carefully, such as texts which express the joys of belonging to God's kingdom and festivity. What is needed are ways of expressing the genuine gladness of thanksgiving. The members of a congregation need to be made aware of each other's presence, of seeing one another, sensing one another, and enjoying and sharing Christ's presence together.

Each service offers some opportunities for the exercise of choices: the time of gathering, the singing of hymns and anthems, the prayers of the people, the manner of receiving of bread and wine, and the blessing at the close of the celebration.

The gathering of the congregation is an opportunity for festivity: in the music played or sung, the manner of greeting, the passing of flowers (as some congregations do), and the reading of suitably selected texts. All these elements of the Lord's Supper celebration need to be intentionally selected to reflect the appropriate mood of the celebration.

Special Services

It is profitable, at least a couple of times a year, to hold the celebration of the Lord's Supper at times other than the regular hour of the divine service on
Sabbath morning. When people make the effort to come to a special service, they are there by choice and they often remark that they have sensed the presence of Christ more explicitly than in any other church service. If the service is held in the evening or late afternoon in winter, the lighting of candles can add to the festive atmosphere of the entire service. Such occasions afford more time and a less-hurried atmosphere under which the service can be more appreciated.

 Holmes' recommendations\(^1\) on highlighting the meaning and significance of the foot washing and the Lord's Supper has been followed with increased appreciation. "The foot washing service should have a sombre mood of sorrow for sin and repentance."\(^2\) This can be accomplished by turning down the main lights and using a menorah with soft burning candles on the communion table and in the rooms where the foot washing is attended to. Upon the return of the congregation to the sanctuary, bright spotlights could be directed on the communion table. In this way the mood of the participants will shift from somber repentance to the brilliance of the new life offered in Christ and the assurance of forgiveness and truth of the resurrection.

**Meditation and Congregational Involvement**

Teaching people how to meditate can also be very rewarding. Meditation in a worship setting of a Seventh-day Adventist Church is a lost art. But how

\(^1\) Holmes, *Sing a New Song*, 85.

\(^2\) Ibid.
rewarding are the results when appropriate materials are provided, and the entire
congregation enters the spiritual exercise wholeheartedly!

Rightly used, the silence of a great congregation whilst communicating
may be one of the most uplifting and inspiring influences that flow from
the observance of the Sacrament. It has the inestimable advantage of
providing a time when the voice of man being hushed, Christ is left free
to speak his own word to the soul that waits upon him.1

The emphasis needs to be laid on congregational involvement. Hymns
and Scripture readings need to be carefully selected in order to add up to the
overall purpose that should be succinctly stated in the bulletin in what can be
called "From Parson to Person."

If the Lord’s Supper is celebrated at the regular worship hour, it should
never be "an add on" section to the regular liturgy, after all the "preliminaries"
are done. It must be the central and only focus of the entire worship.

Music

It is the tradition in many churches for the organist to choose soft and
grave music during the distribution of the bread and wine. Such a practice will
not support a spirit of festivity. The music will need to be lively, and the
congregation can participate in singing during this time. Here again the selection
ought to be intentional, and not left to a popular choice.2

1Oswald Milligan, The Ministry of Worship (London: Oxford University Press,
1941), 113.

2There are a number of good studies available to instruct pastors in selection of
hymns with particular purposes in mind: Robert G. Rayburn, O Come, Let Us
Worship (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982), 243-269; James R. Sydnor,
Choral numbers are often preferable to vocal solo numbers. Instrumentalists, as well as soloists if used out of necessity, need to be carefully instructed that the performance should draw people to the point of celebration, repentance, forgiveness, and God’s love and not to the performing abilities of the artist, be it an accomplished soloist or instrumentalist.

**Sermon**

The sermon should be replaced with a sermonnette, short but meaningful, and inspirational in nature. The Communion Service is not the time to expound at length on the meaning of Calvary. It is not the time so much for "the spoken word" but rather for "the acted out word." The greater the opportunities for participation, the more the congregation will love to attend.

**Foot Washing**

Before the parting for foot washing, the participants should be encouraged to see themselves as servants of God, acting out the Bible teaching of "the priesthood of all believers" as they wash each other’s feet. From time to time, appropriate Bible promises can be listed in the bulletin that can be used in a one-on-one setting as the individuals minister one to another and apply God’s Word personally. There is power in God’s Word. Each participant should be encouraged to pray for his or her partner.

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To encourage the congregation to take along the hymn books to the area where the foot washing is carried out, sing a hymn as a parting hymn of devotion, as the congregation leaves the sanctuary. It is expedient to have choristers appointed in each room to lead out in the singing. The partner whose feet are being washed can hold the hymnal and sing the congregational hymn. Singing is the best way of creating the spirit of unity.

Of course, everything needs to be ready as the people arrive at their appointed place. All supplies should be laid out, and appointed deacons should wait at their post of duty looking out for those who may need help in finding a partner.

Prayers over the Elements

In the Protestant churches, the first prayer over the bread is called a prayer of consecration, while the prayer over the wine is called the prayer of thanksgiving. Thanks is the opening note of the service, but in this prayer, the element of thanksgiving can be stressed. The person who verbally pronounces this prayer needs to be instructed to make the quality of thanks a dominant theme in this supplication. There are good studies available to instruct church elders in the tradition and character of thanksgiving.¹

Other Recommendations

The overall objective of the service is a renewal of the congregation. If it does not leave the sanctuary changed, renewed, and invigorated to serve God better, the whole exercise has been in vain. There is need to have a component that in one way or another calls for a new commitment: commitment to service, commitment to renewed baptismal vows, commitment to witness. Testimonies should be brief and structured.

The March 1974 issue of The Ministry carried an article by "a concerned parent" entitled, "Enhancing the Communion Service." The main concern is the length of the Lord’s Supper celebrated on Sabbath morning. The author shares eleven suggestions for making the service more meaningful and appreciated by the whole family:

1. Allow no other "special events" like baptism or ordination take place on the same Sabbath. Let Communion have its rightful place. Give it sole priority.

2. Begin the church service on time. Rehearsals must take place on other days.

3. Keep the announcements to bare minimum.

4. Choose short hymns, or select only two stanzas of a long hymn.

5. Instruct the organist to play a short introduction to each hymn.

6. Choose an appropriate but brief Scripture reading.

7. Keep the sermonnette down to ten minutes or less.
8. Put visitors at ease by explaining that the "Ordinance of Humility" means foot washing, and assure them that we practice an open communion where they can participate, observe, or remain in the sanctuary.

9. For small children have a story read or a dramatized recording such as "The Bible in Living Sound" about the crucifixion or Last Supper played.

**Eating and Drinking**

The concerned parent in the above article also makes a valid point that it is extremely difficult for a mother to handle a small glass of wine and a toddler for three minutes. He recommends that the juice be partaken as soon as it is served. In my mind this gives the opportunity for a personal appropriation of the symbol of Jesus' blood to the individual needs. The drinking of the juice at the same time could be seen as more reminiscent of a cocktail party than of communion. In the Upper Room they drank wine from one chalice. The bread could be eaten together signifying the unity of the Christian body.

In many churches the manner of distributing the elements is a matter of tradition. Having studied the best ways of conducting the Lord's Supper with the worship committee, a pastor can introduce an alternative way that brings vitality and a new spirit to the service.

For example, always being seated and passively waiting for the distribution of the elements seems hardly a manner of participation for a festive celebration of the Lord's Supper. Occasionally, the elements could be given, not offered for the taking. "We go to receive, and the rhythm of exertion to go and
humility to receive is the natural movement of our communion together with Christ."¹

Browning points out that human movement in itself has a festive dimension. It stresses participation and can vitalize the service when appropriately introduced. "A festive communion needs some holy hustle,"² writes Browning.

The handling of the bread and wine by the deacons should be done with dignity and poise. Rehearsals are a prescribed "must." Nothing should be left to chance. The closing hymn should be one that inspires service and commitment. For the service to have an impact, the congregation may be asked to leave the sanctuary in silence, refraining from the regular chatter that is carried on after regular Sabbath morning services. See the appendix G for samples of services conducted.

**Frequency of Celebration**

The question of frequency is seldom considered in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ellen White states that we ought to celebrate the Lord’s Supper more frequently. However, that runs against the grain of our Protestant tradition of the primacy of preaching. "We have always celebrated the Lord’s Supper on a quarterly basis," colleague of mine told me. Having taken the time to


²Ibid., 183.
get to know him better, by being involved in the practice of spiritual direction, I learned from this colleague that he had a need to control the congregation.

Regular preaching lends itself much better to accomplish this objective, than the administration of the Lord’s Supper. "Sacrament is probably too much beyond the need of most ministers to control." The Lord’s Supper needs to be conceived as something that the congregation does together with their pastors. When the Lord’s Supper is planned, thoroughly thought out, and then celebrated as a sequence of involving events climaxing in the people’s commitment, then no church board will object to having the Lord’s Supper more frequently than once a quarter.

1Browning, 188.

2Those who are unable to attend the Lord’s Supper, like the shut-ins, could receive on the Communion Sabbath a visit from the elders, deacons, and deaconesses who come to their homes to share Communion with them.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the final analysis one comes to a conclusion that those who frequently absent themselves from attendance at the Lord’s Supper do so for a variety of reasons. They could be summarized as follows: not understanding the theological significance of the Lord’s Supper, feeling unworthy, having unresolved differences with fellow believers, and feeling uncomfortable about foot washing or unwilling to look for a partner with whom to wash feet together in the Ordinance of Humility.

For many of those who give a cold shoulder to attending the Lord’s Supper, the underlying factor seems to be the loss of first love. Many seem to be uncertain about their relationship with Jesus. Most if not all Seventh-day Adventists believe in the correctness of the teaching of their Church, but in their lives, there is an apparent lack of fervor for the activities and the mission of the Church. When some members come to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, it is without inner joy, merely out of duty. The "agape" love is missing.

These individuals who seldom come to the Lord’s table, when they come, they do so as individuals devoid of the most elemental fellowship. Some have indicated that they do not have any close friends in the congregation. Sometimes,
it is merely accidental that they are in the same building, attending the same service, receiving the elements from one and the same table. If such parishioners participate in foot washing, unfortunately, it is only as a formality. Many of them believe one should prepare for the celebration of the Sacrament by making things right, but few ever do it. Confessing collectively in worship or on a personal level is seldom practiced in the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church. The individuals who skip Church when the Lord’s Supper is celebrated are fragmented into lonely individuals, for whom the fellowship of the Lord’s table, is merely a ceremony. Personal interviews revealed that they are not prepared to take responsibility for other Christians in the Willowdale community of faith.

A few have some close friends in the church. Among those who skip the Communion Service, their association with other church members is carried on a very superficial level. This association is of the kind one would expect in a club or a civil organization. Their indifference toward other fellow believers seems to affect their attitude toward the Sacrament. They see the attendance as optional, having no effect on their salvation. Some display a very secular attitude to the sacred ordinance of the Lord’s house.

For some of them, it is the unresolved problems with other fellow believers that make them feel unworthy of communicating. Paul’s admonitions to the Christians in Corinth are frequently misunderstood. The fact that Christ died on the cross for them is accepted on the intellectual level but not on the existential one. What they believe and what they practice are two different things that have
been allowed to co-exist to the detriment of their spirituality.

Prayer is sometimes motivated by fear. Love for God is an empty phrase for some and love for God's commandments is often perceived as a burden. A question about relationship with Christ was avoided in written responses, as well as in the personal interviews. One person interviewed frankly stated, "I wish, pastor, you would not ask that question" (about personal relationship with Christ). A number of other individuals, when confronted with the same question, had similar facial expressions, displaying uncertainty.

There is a need for pastors to take the preparation of baptismal candidates more seriously. Especially those baptized in city-wide evangelistic efforts are poorly taught. The only instructions they received about the sacraments had to do with baptism. Consequently, they continue to display the same level of understanding about the Lord's Supper that other nominal Christians in the Protestant churches hold. Former Roman Catholics have a higher regard for the sacraments, but they also continue to believe that the communion bread is in reality the literal body of Christ. Here again, education is very necessary.

The sequel of the four sermons proved that preaching does have an effect on those in attendance. However, changes in attitude are a slow process. (See illustration 10 on page 209.) For those on the fringes of the church fellowship, there is great need to do a lot of personal labor in their homes. The pastoral staff of two or three will have to be assisted by a committed board of elders and deacons, functioning in their
respective positions, doing house-to-house work for the salvation of souls whose names are on the church roll.

It is insufficient for pastors to have office hours; they ought to be available to minister individually to their parishioners at home. Neither does the pastoral visit, once a year to each home, even begin to unearth some of the deep-rooted problems. Local church elders, deacons, and deaconesses could also assist in home visitation. Organization of the church into active small groups would help to prevent some of the problems that surfaced in the personal interviews. Churches with membership larger than one thousand ought to have a pastor on their staff who has specialized skills in the area of counselling. This recommendation may not go well with the evangelism council of the local conference, but in the long run it will pay its dividends.

In conclusion, I firmly believe that the solution to the problem of low attendance on the Sabbaths when the Lord’s Supper is celebrated lies in better preparation of baptismal candidates, education, home visitation, and more education through the spoken and written word, and in the local union and world Church papers.

Evaluation of the Process

Survey two (summary of which is listed in the appendix C) has been conducted on May 18, 1990, some eight months later after survey one. There were a total of 209 forms completed. Those who filled out these forms of survey two were not a control group as they were simply the church members present in
church on that Sabbath. The second survey, however had one question modified allowing people to identify themselves as to the ethnic backgrounds. They could choose as being: Asian, Black, Hispanic, White or other ethnic minority.

Conducting the same survey twice gave me insights into the congregation that I wished I had had when I started my ministry there some six years earlier. Comparing the results of the two surveys reveals the fact that attitudes are not easy to change in a short period of time. The majority of the answers reveal a moderate change of 5 percent in the "right" direction. In several cases only, the change in attitude amounted to 10-11 percent.

Some of these changes are as follows:

1. The communion bread is still regarded by a third of the respondents as the literal body of Christ, though the number of those who hold this view dropped by 5 percent. Comparing who those individuals are who still hold this erroeous view I discovered most of them are Asians (45.8%) who came to Canada from Philippines. Blacks constitute the other major group of 35.7 percent.

2. The number of members who feel unworthy has dropped by 12 percent. Among those who heard all four sermons 49.4 percent feel unworthy to participate in the Lord's Supper. But among those who heard one or none of the sermons, 60.7 percent feel unworthy. As to their ethnic background, 49.7 percent among Asians feel unworthy, 55.4 percent among the Whites, 57.9 percent among the Blacks, and 78.6 percent feel that way among other minorities. (The Hispanic percentage was insignificant.)
3. Those who believe that repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus, and baptism as indispensable terms of approach to the Lord's table increased by 5 percent.

4. In response to question 20, the perception that the Communion Services are well attended, has increased by 11 percent.

5. Responses to questions 21, 23, and 25 all increased by 5 percent. That means that the respondents feel that people in the Willowdale Church take the Lord's Supper seriously, they find the Ordinance of Foot Washing comfortable, and they feel at ease to talk about spiritual subjects during the Ordinance of Humility.

**Personal and Congregational Benefits of the Project**

The most rewarding fact was that those reporting an intimate relationship with Christ was up by 11 percent. This was even more gratifying to me than the substantial numerical increase in attendance.

Those who reported still "skipping church" was also down. Fifty-seven percent emphatically reported that they do not skip church. The number of those who still do skip because they feel unworthy was down by 3 percent. The number of those who skip because they feel uncomfortable about foot washing was also down, but by only 1.5 percent.

The numbers of those with valid reasons for attending increased from 7 to
11 percent. The number of those with poor reasons for attending decreased proportionately.

In response to question 47 one learns that the number of those who experience a special Presence of Christ increased by 11 percent. Fourteen percent more of the respondents expressed belief in the Lord’s Supper as a Covenant Feast. The number of those believing the Lord’s Supper to be a seal of the Covenant of Promise also increased by 11.2 percent.

And lastly, the number of those for whom in their personal life of faith the Lord’s Supper means a memorial of Christ’s sacrifice also increased by 11 percent. These are all significant gains both in the understanding of the meaning as well as in the actual practice of this central part of our faith.

The most gratifying factor was that the numerical increase in attendance from the average of 150 out of 1026 in 1988 and the first half of 1989 to 490 out of 1065 in 1990, continued to grow to an average of 561 out of 1099 in 1991. The attendance is graphically portrayed in illustration 7. The reasons why there was an increase in the Communion attendance even before the series of four sermon are as follows:

1. The church board was informed about the study to be conducted and encouraged to influence the membership to cooperate.

2. A select group was used in a pilot testing of the survey form.

3. The researcher became an acting senior pastor of the Willowdale congregation.
4. The undershepherd program was tempting to be put in operation.
5. A new senior pastor was brought in.

All these factors combined had some influence on the increased interest in the subject of the entire study and early growth in attendance, even before the first sermon was preached. Two years later on June 5, 1993 there were 366 members in attendance at the celebration of the Lord’s Supper which represents 242 percent of the average attendance in 1988. The continuing growth and lasting effects confirms the fact that the experiment was a successful venture.
APPENDIXES
APPENDIX A

SURVEY FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE WILLOWDALE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The following anonymous survey will help us all by identifying important aspects of strength and weakness in our Celebration of the Lord’s Supper, and will thus help us plan more meaningful services.

Please take a few minutes now and answer the following EASY questions in a frank and spontaneous manner. In most cases there are no wrong or right answers. We need to know how you feel, so we can be of better service to you.

On the scale from 1 to 5 circle the number on the left hand side that most closely represents your thinking. (If you disagree strongly circle #1, if you agree strongly circle #5.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1. In our Church the Lord’s Supper service is usually a significant worship experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>2. The Lord’s Supper and Baptism are the two Ordinances established by Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>3. The Lord’s Supper is a Sacrament. (By a sacrament we mean that the Holy Spirit is present to impart spiritual life to those taking part.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>4. The Lord’s Supper is merely a symbol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>5. A believing person can experience regeneration at the time of partaking in the Lord’s Supper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>6. The Lord’s Supper brings forgiveness of sins to a sincere participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>7. Christ is present in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper in a more significant manner than in any other worship service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>8. A person should follow the Adventist life-style such as keeping Sabbath, returning tithe, not smoking, before being allowed to participate in the Lord’s Supper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>9. Participation in the Lord’s Supper is necessary for Salvation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>10. Adventists should practice &quot;Open Communion&quot;. (Open means that Christians of other denominations who happen to be visiting our Church are invited to take part.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>11. Communion bread is the literal body of Christ. (Christ while instituting the Lord’s Supper and pointing to the bread said: “This is my body.” He meant it literally.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>12. Sometimes I feel unworthy to participate in the Lord’s Supper.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Lord's Supper is so important that its Celebration should not be constricted by time element.  

There are members at Willowdale who would participate in the Lord's Supper if the Foot Washing was omitted.  

Repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are indispensable terms of approach to the Lord's table.  

The Ordinance of Humility is a "mini-baptism".  

My immediate family members help my relationship with Christ to grow.  

I would feel comfortable bringing a visitor to the Ordinance of Humility (the foot washing ceremony).  

Communion Services are very helpful in my Christian pilgrimage.  

Communion Services are well attended in our Church.  

People in our Church take the Lord's Supper seriously.  

Communion Services are well planned by our pastors.  

Do you find the Ordinance of Foot Washing comfortable or uncomfortable to some extent?  

How comfortable do you feel to invite your non-Adventist Christian friends to join you at your Church to participate in the Lord's Supper?  

During the Foot Washing Ordinance do you find it difficult or easy to talk about spiritual subjects?  

Rate the meaningfulness of the following aspects of our Lord's Supper Celebration:

- fellowship through congregational singing on the theme of Calvary choir renditions
- instrumental numbers that are inspirational
- testimonies
- outstanding organ music
MEANING-LESS
1 2 3 4 5  f. short sermonettes
MEANING-FUL
1 2 3 4 5  g. family format, sitting as family units

h. God's Word acted rather than preached only

i. strong sense of Christ's presence

j. the specific objectives with which each service is designed

k. candlelight atmosphere

l. the Ordinance of Humility

m. partaking of the bread & wine

NONE

INTIMATE
1 2 3 4 5 27. Circle the number indicating the relationship you have with Jesus.

In the following questions Y=yes, U=uncertain, N=no. Please circle ONE letter that most closely represents your thinking.

Y U N 28. Should unbaptized children of believing parents be allowed to take part in the Lord's Supper?

Y U N 29. Do you generally make arrangements prior to the service for a partner with whom to wash feet?

Y U N 30. Do you prefer a deacon or deaconess to assist you in finding a partner with whom to wash your feet?

Y U N 31. Do you like to wash your spouse's feet?

Y U N 32. Do you think we should cater to husband/wife washing each other's feet, providing a separate room for them?

Y U N 33. Do you approve our practice of having a special room for foot washing close by the main sanctuary for the elderly who find it difficult to climb the steps on the way to CAA?

Y U N 34. Have you ever wondered why our Church practices the Ordinance of Humility?

The questions below are provided with several answers. Check ONE that best describes your thinking, unless otherwise directed.

35. In the last two years, how many celebrations of the Lord's Supper have you attended?
   a.( ) more than 8   d.( ) between 2-4
   b.( ) between 6-8   e.( ) one
   c.( ) between 4-6   f.( ) none

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36. In the last two years how often has the Lord's Supper been the topic of the Sabbath morning sermon? (other than Communion Sabbath)
   a. ( ) often
   b. ( ) occasionally
   c. ( ) never

37. What is your practice in choosing a partner for foot washing service?
   a. ( ) always have the same partner
   b. ( ) usually have the same partner
   c. ( ) most of the time have a different partner
   d. ( ) always have a different partner
   e. ( ) generally do not participate

38. Before or after washing your partner's feet, do you pray with him/her?
   a. ( ) always
   b. ( ) sometimes
   c. ( ) seldom
   d. ( ) never

39. Which of the Lord's Supper services do you find most meaningful?
   a. ( ) Sabbath morning at Divine Worship hour
   b. ( ) Candlelight service on Sabbath afternoon in the summer months
   c. ( ) Candlelight service on Friday evening in the winter months
   d. ( ) any type of service is equally meaningful

40. On Sabbath morning the time element is a restricting factor. If we were to have two services per year at another time than Sabbath morning, which would you favor?
   a. ( ) winter Friday after sunset
   b. ( ) summer Sabbath before sunset
   c. ( ) Wednesday night
   d. ( ) Sunday night
   e. ( ) other __________________________
   f. ( ) none of the above (rather stay with the Sabbath morning service)

41. When you visit other SDA Churches and they happen to celebrate the Lord's Supper that Sabbath morning, do you usually:
   a. ( ) participate in both Foot Washing and Communion
   b. ( ) participate only in the Communion (bread & wine)
   c. ( ) just observe
   d. ( ) leave after the sermon

42. If you "skip Church" when the Lord's Supper is celebrated, what are the reasons?
   a. ( ) feel unworthy
   b. ( ) feel uncomfortable about Foot Washing ceremony
   c. ( ) don't like looking for a partner with whom to wash feet
   d. ( ) have unresolved difference with someone
   e. ( ) other __________________________
43. People attend the Lord's Supper for a variety of reasons. Mark ALL the important ones to you.

   a. ( ) to fellowship
   b. ( ) out of duty
   c. ( ) to receive help
   d. ( ) to feel good
   e. ( ) to gain blessings and refreshing experience
   f. ( ) to worship as a congregation
   g. ( ) to dress up and look good
   h. ( ) because the Bible admonishes us to
   i. ( ) other __________________________

44. In order to receive a special blessing one should prepare for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper by: (mark as MANY as apply)

   a. ( ) fasting and deep heart searching
   b. ( ) prayer
   c. ( ) reading the passion chapters in the gospels
   d. ( ) reading the passion chapters in the Desire of Ages
   e. ( ) making things right with others
   f. ( ) other __________________________

45. Do you follow the practice described in question #44? (choose ONE only)

   a. ( ) always
   b. ( ) usually
   c. ( ) seldom
   d. ( ) never

46. In my opinion the total length of the Lord's Supper ideally should be: (choose ONE only)

   a. ( ) not more than 1 hour
   b. ( ) more than 1 hour but less than 1 hr. 15 min.
   c. ( ) more than 1 hr. 15 min. but less than 1 hr. 30 min.
   d. ( ) more than 1 1/2 hrs. but less than 2 hrs.
   e. ( ) no time limit within reason

47. I believe that the Lord's Supper is: (mark as MANY as apply)

   a. ( ) a sacrificial rite
   b. ( ) an offering to God
   c. ( ) a method or occasion for experiencing the special Presence of Christ
   d. ( ) a Covenant Feast
   e. ( ) a seal of the Covenant of Promise
   f. ( ) other __________________________

48. What does the Lord's Supper mean to you in your personal life of faith? (mark as MANY as apply)

   a. ( ) worship through self-surrender
   b. ( ) communion with Christ
   c. ( ) memorial of Christ's sacrifice
d.()  a source of spiritual energy  
e.()  an act of fellowship  
f.()  other ______________________________

The following information will greatly assist us in interpreting & classifying this Survey.

49.  a.()  male     b.()  female

50.  a.()  single     c.()  widow/er 
b.()  married     d.()  divorced/seperated

51.  Do you have children under 10?  
      a.()  yes     b.()  no

52.  Do you drive?  
      a.()  yes     b.()  no

53.  What is your age group?  
      a.()  19 years or younger  
      b.()  20-35 years  
      c.()  36-50 years  
      d.()  51-65 years  
      e.()  66 years or older

54.  At what level did you last attend school?  
      a.()  elementary  
      b.()  high school  
      c.()  college  
      d.()  post graduate

55.  What schools did you attend?  
      a.()  only SDA  
      b.()  only non SDA  
      c.()  mostly SDA  
      d.()  mostly non SDA  
      e.()  both SDA & non SDA equally

56.  Mark the number showing how long you have been a baptized Adventist.  
      a.()  less than a year  
      b.()  1-5 years  
      c.()  6-10 years  
      d.()  11-20 years  
      e.()  over 20 years

57.  If you have not always been a Seventh-day Adventist, what was your previous Church affiliation?  

58.  When the Lord’s Supper is celebrated on Sabbath morning, which service do you usually attend?  
      a.()  first     b.()  second     c.()  none  

--- THANK YOU ---

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Survey two had one additional question number 59

59. Circle the letter that shows your ethnic background.

a. ( ) Asian
b. ( ) Black
c. ( ) Hispanic
d. ( ) White
e. ( ) Other
APPENDIX B

SUMMARY "A"

SURVEY FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE WILLOWDALE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The following anonymous survey will help us all by identifying important aspects of strength and weakness in our Celebration of the Lord's Supper, and will thus help us plan more meaningful services.

Please take a few minutes now and answer the following EASY questions in a frank and spontaneous manner. In most cases there are no wrong or right answers. We need to know how you feel, so we can be of better service to you.

On the scale from 1 to 5 circle the number on the left hand side that most closely represents your thinking. (If you disagree strongly circle #1, if you agree strongly circle #5.)

Disagree Agree
1  2  3  4  5  

1. In our Church the Lord's Supper service is usually a significant worship experience.
   
   d=3.0%   u=7.3%   a=89.6%

2. The Lord's Supper and Baptism are the two Ordinances established by Christ.

   d=2.0%   u=2.7%   a=95.3%

3. The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament. (By a sacrament we mean that the Holy Spirit is present to impart spiritual life to those taking part.)

   d=1.3%   u=2.0%   a=96.6%

4. The Lord's Supper is merely a symbol.

   d=47.7%   u=16.4%   a=35.8%

5. A believing person can experience regeneration at the time of partaking in the Lord's Supper.

   d=2.4%   u=6.6%   a=91.0%

6. The Lord's Supper brings forgiveness of sins to a sincere participant.

   d=11.2%   u=10.5%   a=78.2%
1 2 3 4 5 7. Christ is present in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper in a more significant manner than in any other worship service.
\[d = 16.9\% \quad u = 20.5\% \quad a = 62.6\%\]

1 2 3 4 5 8. A person should follow the Adventist life-style such as keeping Sabbath, returning tithe, not smoking, before being allowed to participate in the Lord’s Supper.
\[d = 50.7\% \quad u = 14.2\% \quad a = 35.1\%\]

1 2 3 4 5 9. Participation in the Lord’s Supper is necessary for Salvation.
\[d = 38.1\% \quad u = 13.8\% \quad a = 48.1\%\]

1 2 3 4 5 10. Adventists should practice "Open Communion". (Open means that Christians of other denominations are invited to take part.)
\[d = 10.1\% \quad u = 8.1\% \quad a = 81.8\%\]

1 2 3 4 5 11. Communion bread is the literal body of Christ. (Christ while instituting the Lord’s Supper and pointing to the bread said: "This is my body." He meant it literally.)
\[d = 51.5\% \quad u = 10.9\% \quad a = 37.6\%\]

1 2 3 4 5 12. Sometimes I feel unworthy to participate in the Lord’s Supper.
\[d = 17.7\% \quad u = 15.0\% \quad a = 67.3\%\]

1 2 3 4 5 13. The Lord’s Supper is so important that its Celebration should not be constricted by time element.
\[d = 13.9\% \quad u = 17.6\% \quad a = 68.6\%\]

1 2 3 4 5 14. There are members at Willowdale who would participate in the Lord’s Supper if the Foot Washing was omitted.
\[d = 36.3\% \quad u = 30.0\% \quad a = 33.7\%\]

1 2 3 4 5 15. Repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are indispensable terms of approach to the Lord’s table.
\[d = 15.2\% \quad u = 14.5\% \quad a = 70.3\%\]
182

1 2 3 4 5 16. The Ordinance of Humility is a "mini-baptism".
d = 16.7% u = 17.1% a = 66.2%

1 2 3 4 5 17. My intimate family members help my relationship with Christ.
d = 14.3% u = 16.5% a = 69.1%

1 2 3 4 5 18. I would feel comfortable bringing a visitor to the Ordinance of Humility.
d = 15.8% u = 22.3% a = 62.0%

1 2 3 4 5 19. Communion Services are very helpful in my Christian pilgrimage.
d = 5.8% u = 9.6% a = 84.6%

1 2 3 4 5 20. Communion Services are well attended in our Church.
d = 18.4% u = 27.1% a = 54.5%

1 2 3 4 5 21. People in our Church take the Lord’s Supper seriously.
d = 11.2% u = 22.8% a = 66.0%

1 2 3 4 5 22. Communion Services are well planned by our pastors.
d = 4.4% u = 8.8% a = 86.8%

uncom- comfor- fortable table
1 2 3 4 5 23. Do you find the Ordinance of Foot Washing comfortable or uncomfortable to some extent?
un = 14.1% u = 12.1% c = 73.8%

1 2 3 4 5 24. How comfortable do you feel to invite your non-Adventist Christian friends to join you at your Church to participate in the Lord’s Supper?
un = 17.4% u = 20.5% c = 62.1%

difficult easy
1 2 3 4 5 25. During the Foot Washing Ordinance do you find it difficult or easy to talk about spiritual subjects?
d = 13.9% u = 19.0% e = 67.1%
meaningful
less
ful

26. Rate the meaningfulness of the following aspects of our Lord’s Supper Celebration:

1 2 3 4 5 a. fellowship through congregational singing on the theme of Calvary
ml=.4% u=27.1% mf=95.4%

1 2 3 4 5 b. choir renditions
ml=4.3% u=13.4% mf=82.3%

1 2 3 4 5 c. instrumental numbers that are inspirational
ml=7.0% u=13.0% mf=80.0%

1 2 3 4 5 d. testimonies
ml=11.2% u=11.6% mf=77.3%

1 2 3 4 5 e. outstanding organ music
ml=6.9% u=13.9% mf=79.2%

1 2 3 4 5 f. short sermonettes
ml=6.5% u=10.4% mf=83.1%

1 2 3 4 5 g. family format, sitting as family units
ml=10.8% u=19.2% mf=70.0%

1 2 3 4 5 h. God’s Word acted rather than preached only
ml=10.3% u=14.7% mf=75.1%

1 2 3 4 5 i. strong sense of Christ’s presence
ml=0% u=5.6% mf=94.4%

1 2 3 4 5 j. the specific objectives with which each service is designed
ml=1.5% u=14.2% mf=84.3%
1  2  3  4  5  k. candlelight atmosphere
ml=15.7%  u=21.4%  mf=62.9%

1  2  3  4  5  l. the Ordinance of Humility
ml=2.1%  u=10.1%  mf=87.9%

1  2  3  4  5  m. partaking of the bread & wine
ml=.3%  u=3.1%  mf=96.6%

none  intimate
1  2  3  4  5  27. Circle the number indicating the relationship you have
with Jesus.
1=.4%  2=1.2%  3=21.2%  4=36.9%
5(intimate)=40.4%  34 missing answers=15.8%

In the following questions Y=yes, N=no, U=uncertain or not sure. Circle one
answer that most closely represents your thinking.

Y  U  N  28. Should unbaptized children of believing parents be allowed to
take part in the Lord's Supper?
y=34.1%  u=27.8%  n=38.1%

Y  U  N  29. Do you generally make arrangements prior to the service for
a partner with whom to wash feet?
y=15.9%  u=10.8%  n=73.2%

Y  U  N  30. Do you prefer a deacon or deaconess to assist you in finding
a partner with whom to wash your feet?
y=17.7%  u=23.8%  n=56.5%

Y  U  N  31. Do you like to wash your spouse's feet?
y=47.0%  u=30.0%  n=22.9%

Y  U  N  32. Do you think we should cater to husband/wife washing each
other's feet, providing a separate room for them?
y=48.1%  u=21.3%  n=30.7%

Y  U  N  33. Do you approve our practice of having a special room for
foot washing close by the main sanctuary for the elderly who
find it difficult to walk the steps to CAA?
y=90.1%  u=6.8%  n=3.1%
Y U N 34. Have you ever wondered why our Church practices the Ordinance of Humility?

35. In the last two years, how many celebrations of the Lord’s Supper have you attended?
   a.() more than 8 d.() between 2-4
   b.() between 6-8 e.() one
   c.() between 4-6 f.() none

36. In the last two years how often has the Lord’s Supper been the topic of the Sabbath morning sermon?
   a.() often 13.3%
   b.() occasionally 58.7%
   c.() never 28.0%

37. What is your practice in choosing a partner for foot washing service?
   a.() always have the same partner 4.5%
   b.() usually have the same partner 18.3%
   c.() most of the time have a different one 41.0%
   d.() always have a different partner 24.8%
   e.() generally do not participate 11.4%

38. Before or after washing your partner’s feet, do you pray with him/her?
   a.() always c.() seldom
   b.() sometimes d.() never

39. Which of the Lord’s Supper services do you find most meaningful?
   a.() Sabbath morning at Divine Worship hour 36.0%
   b.() Candlelight service on Sabbath afternoon in the summer months 12.2%
   c.() Candlelight service on Friday evening in the winter months 22.8%
   d.() any type of service is equally meaningful 34.9%

40. On Sabbath morning, the time element is a restricting factor. If we were to have twice a year a service at other time than Sabbath morning, which would you favor?
   a.() winter Friday after sunset 35.3%
186

186

b.() summer Sabbath before sunset 35.6%
c.() Wednesday night 2.0%
d.() Sunday night 3.6%
e.() other 3.0% __________________________________
f.() none of the above (stay w/Sabbath morning) 28.0%

41. When you visit another SDA Church and they happen to celebrate the Lord’s Supper that Sabbath morning, do you usually?
a.() participate in both Foot Washing and Communion 55.8%
b.() participate only in the Communion (bread & wine) 12.5%
c.() just observe 11.9%
d.() leave after the sermon 11.1%

42. If you "skip Church" when the Lord’s Supper is celebrated, what are the reasons?
a.() feel unworthy 19.1%
b.() feel uncomfortable about Foot Washing ceremony 4.6%
c.() don’t like looking for a partner with whom to wash feet 5.3%
d.() have unresolved difference with someone 6.6%
e.() other ____________________________ 19.7%
f.() I do not skip 57.3%

43. People attend the Lord’s Supper for a variety of reasons. Mark all the important ones to you.
a.() to fellowship 68.0%
b.() out of duty 14.2%
c.() to receive help 33.3%
d.() to feel good 39.3%
e.() to gain blessings and refreshing experience 77.2%
f.() to worship as a congregation 52.8%
g.() to dress up and look good 8.6%
h.() because the Bible admonishes us to 50.0%
i.() other ____________________________ 8.8%

44. In order to receive a special blessing one should prepare for the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper by: (mark as many as apply)
a.() fasting and deep heart searching 44.2%
b.() prayer 86.5%
c. () reading of the passion chapters in the gospels 33.7%
d. () reading of the passion chapters in the Desire of Ages 25.1%
e. () making things right with others 72.2%
f. () other ____________________________ 7.8%

45. Do you follow the practice described in question #44? (choose one only)
a. () always 16.8%
b. () usually 48.5%
c. () seldom 23.1%
d. () never 7.9%

46. In my opinion the length of the Lord’s Supper ideally should be (choose one only)
a. () not more than 1 hour 26.4%
b. () more than 1 hour but not more than 1 hr. 15 min. 11.6%
c. () more than 1 hr. 15 min. but less than 1 hr. 30 min. 13.2%
d. () more than 1 1/2 hrs. but less than 2 hrs. 7.9%
e. () no time limit within reason 40.0%

47. In your belief, the Lord’s Supper is: (mark as many as apply)
a. () a sacrificial rite 36.3%
b. () an offering to God 43.2%
c. () a method or occasion for experiencing a special Presence of Christ 63.4%
d. () a Covenant Feast 41.9%
e. () a seal of the Covenant of Promise 52.0%
f. () other ____________________________________ 6.0%

48. In your personal life of faith what does the Lord’s Supper mean? (mark as many as apply)
a. () worship through self-surrender 56.8%
b. () communion with Christ 81.2%
c. () memorial of Christ’s sacrifice 74.9%
d. () a source of spiritual energy 63.0%
e. () an act of fellowship 61.1%
f. () other ____________________________ 6.0%

The following questions will greatly assist us in interpreting & classifying the information in the survey.

49. a. () male 39.4% b. () female 60.6%

50. a. () single 41.1% b. () married 50.6%
c.() widow/er 3.8%   d.() divorced 4.6%

51. Do you have children under 10?
   a.() yes 19.1%   b.() no 80.9%

52. Do you drive?
   a.() yes 71.2%   b.() no 28.8%

53. What is your age group?
   a.() 19 years or younger 13.9%
   b.() 20-35 years 27.4%
   c.() 36-50 years 37.5%
   d.() 51-65 years 16.6%
   e.() 66 years or older 4.7%

54. At what level did you last attend school?
   a.() elementary 10.3%
   b.() high school 32.4%
   c.() college 39.0%
   d.() post graduate 18.3%

55. What schools did you attend?
   a.() only SDA 10.6%
   b.() only non SDA 39.0%
   c.() mostly SDA 20.6%
   d.() mostly non SDA 14.9%
   e.() both SDA & non SDA equally 14.9%

56. Mark the number showing how long you have been a baptized Adventist.
   a.() less than a year 6.3%
   b.() 1-5 years 18.0%
   c.() 6-10 years 17.3%
   d.() 11-20 years 22.2%
   e.() over 20 years 36.3%

57. If you have not always been a Seventh-day Adventist, what was your previous
    Church affiliation?
    majority-RC with a sprinkle of all other Protestant Churches.

58. When the Lord's Supper is celebrated on Sabbath morning, which service do you
    usually attend?
    a.() first 54.1%   b.() second 41.9%   c.() none 5.0%

--- THANK YOU ---
The following anonymous survey will help us all by identifying important aspects of strength and weakness in our Celebration of the Lord’s Supper, and will thus help us plan more meaningful services.

Please take a few minutes now and answer the following EASY questions in a frank and spontaneous manner. In most cases there are no wrong or right answers. We need to know how you feel, so we can be of better service to you.

On the scale from 1 to 5 circle the number on the left hand side that most closely represents your thinking. (If you disagree strongly circle #1, if you agree strongly circle #5.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1. In our Church the Lord’s Supper service is usually a significant worship experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d=2.7%</td>
<td>u=8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>2. The Lord’s Supper and Baptism are the two Ordinances established by Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d=1.3%</td>
<td>u=3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>3. The Lord’s Supper is a Sacrament.(By a sacrament we mean that the Holy Spirit is present to impart spiritual life to those taking part.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d=1.8%</td>
<td>u=4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>4. The Lord’s Supper is merely a symbol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d=41.0%</td>
<td>u=14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>5. A believing person can experience regeneration at the time of partaking in the Lord’s Supper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d=2.3%</td>
<td>u=6.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. The Lord's Supper brings forgiveness of sins to a sincere participant.

2. Christ is present in the celebration of the Lord's Supper in a more significant manner than in any other worship service.

3. A person should follow the Adventist life-style such as keeping Sabbath, returning tithe, not smoking, before being allowed to participate in the Lord's Supper.

4. Participation in the Lord's Supper is necessary for Salvation.

5. Adventists should practice "Open Communion". (Open means that Christians of other denominations are invited to take part.)

6. Communion bread is the literal body of Christ. (Christ while instituting the Lord's Supper and pointing to the bread said: "This is my body." He meant it literally.)

7. Sometimes I feel unworthy to participate in the Lord's Supper.

8. The Lord's Supper is so important that its Celebration should not be constricted by time element.

9. There are members at Willowdale who would participate in the Lord's Supper if the Foot Washing was omitted.
15. Repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are indispensable terms of approach to the Lord's table.
\[d=10.7\% \quad u=14.4\% \quad a=75\% \%\]

16. The Ordinance of Humility is a "mini-baptism".
\[d=14.3\% \quad u=16.7\% \quad a=69\%\]

17. My intimate family members help my relationship with Christ.
\[d=9.9\% \quad u=15.5\% \quad a=74.7\%\]

18. I would feel comfortable bringing a visitor to the Ordinance of Humility.
\[d=13.0\% \quad u=18.8\% \quad a=68.7\%\]

19. Communion Services are very helpful in my Christian pilgrimage.
\[d=3.5\% \quad u=8.0\% \quad a=88.5\%\]

20. Communion Services are well attended in our Church.
\[d=10.7\% \quad u=22.4\% \quad a=66.8\%\]

21. People in our Church take the Lord's Supper seriously.
\[d=8.2\% \quad u=20.4\% \quad a=71.5\%\]

22. Communion Services are well planned by our pastors.
\[d=3.9\% \quad u=6.1\% \quad a=89.9\%\]

23. Do you find the Ordinance of Foot Washing comfortable or uncomfortable to some extent?
\[un=8.8\% \quad u=12.8\% \quad c=78.3\%\]

24. How comfortable do you feel to invite your non-Adventist Christian friends to join you at your Church to participate in the Lord's Supper?
\[un=18.5\% \quad u=16.2\% \quad c=65.3\%\]
25. During the Foot Washing Ordinance do you find it difficult or easy to talk about spiritual subjects?

d = 10.2%  u = 16.9%  e = 72.8%

26. Rate the meaningfulness of the following aspects of our Lord's Supper Celebration:

a. fellowship through congregational singing on the theme of Calvary

ml = 2.4%  u = 4.2%  mf = 93.4%

b. choir renditions

ml = 3.2%  u = 11.9%  mf = 84.9%

c. instrumental numbers that are inspirational

ml = 2.4%  u = 14.1%  mf = 83.6%

d. testimonies

ml = 10.6%  u = 12.9%  mf = 76.5%

e. outstanding organ music

ml = 4.7%  u = 14.6%  mf = 80.7%

f. short sermonettes

ml = 6.7%  u = 10.8%  mf = 82.5%

g. family format, sitting as family units

ml = 6.4%  u = 17.4%  mf = 76.3%

h. God's Word acted rather than preached only

ml = 9.3%  u = 15.6%  mf = 75.0%

i. strong sense of Christ's presence

ml = 1.3%  u = 3.5%  mf = 94.1%

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1 2 3 4 5 j. the specific objectives with which each service is designed
ml=4.6% u=13.1% mf=82.2%

1 2 3 4 5 k. candlelight atmosphere
ml=13.5% u=24.4% mf=62.0%

1 2 3 4 5 l. the Ordinance of Humility
ml=4.0% u=7.6% mf=88.3%

1 2 3 4 5 m. partaking of the bread & wine
ml=0% u=2.2% mf=97.8%

none intimate
1 2 3 4 5 27. Circle the number indicating the relationship you have with Jesus.
1=4.1% 2=3.6% 3=15.7% 4=39.5%
5(intimate)=36.9% 34 missing answers=14.8%

In the following questions Y=yes, N=no, U=uncertain or not sure. Circle one answer that most closely represents your thinking.

Y U N 28. Should unbaptized children of believing parents be allowed to take part in the Lord's Supper?
y=34.5% u=23.5% n=41.6%

Y U N 29. Do you generally make arrangements prior to the service for a partner with whom to wash feet?
y=21.0% u=6.6% n=72.5%

Y U N 30. Do you prefer a deacon or deaconess to assist you in finding a partner with whom to wash your feet?
y=17.3% u=12.8% n=69.9%

Y U N 31. Do you like to wash your spouse's feet?
y=49.0% u=28.5% n=22.5%

Y U N 32. Do you think we should cater to husband/wife washing each other's feet, providing a separate room for them?
y=53.8% u=16.7% n=29.4%
Y U N 33. Do you approve our practice of having a special room for foot washing close by the main sanctuary for the elderly who find it difficult to walk the steps to CAA?
y = 88.1% u = 2.2% n = 9.7%

Y U N 34. Have you ever wondered why our Church practices the Ordinance of Humility?
y = 18.9% u = 4.8% n = 75.8%

The questions below are provided with several answers. Check ONE that best describes your thinking, unless otherwise directed.

35. In the last two years, how many celebrations of the Lord’s Supper have you attended?
a. ( ) more than 8 d. ( ) between 2-4
b. ( ) between 6-8 e. ( ) one
c. ( ) between 4-6 f. ( ) none
a = 18.4% b = 25.1% c = 24.2% d = 20.6% e = 4.9% f = 6.7% 6 missing ans = 2.6%

36. In the last two years how often has the Lord’s Supper been the topic of the Sabbath morning sermon?
a. ( ) often 44.2%
b. ( ) occasionally 42.4%
c. ( ) never 12.5%

37. What is your practice in choosing a partner for foot washing service?
a. ( ) always have the same partner 8.8%
b. ( ) usually have the same partner 22.4%
c. ( ) most of the time have a different one 37.7%
d. ( ) always have a different partner 25.0%
e. ( ) generally do not participate 6.1%

38. Before or after washing your partner’s feet, do you pray with him/her?
a. ( ) always c. ( ) seldom
b. ( ) sometimes d. ( ) never
a = 31.6% b = 37.7% c = 15.8% d = 14.5%

39. Which of the Lord’s Supper services do you find most meaningful?
a. ( ) Sabbath morning at Divine Worship hour 42%
b. ( ) Candlelight service on Sabbath afternoon in the summer months 11.9%
c. ( ) Candlelight service on Friday evening in the winter months 11.1%
d. ( ) any type of service is equally meaningful 34.5%
40. On Sabbath morning, the time element is a restricting factor. If we were to have twice a year a service at other time than Sabbath morning, which would you favor?
   a.() winter Friday after sunset 32.7%
   b.() summer Sabbath before sunset 27.4%
   c.() Wednesday night 0.9%
   d.() Sunday night 1.3%
   e.() other 3.1%
   f.() none of the above (stay w/Sabbath morning) 34.5%

41. When you visit another SDA Church and they happen to celebrate the Lord’s Supper that Sabbath morning, do you usually?
   a.() participate in both Foot Washing and Communion 63.5%
   b.() participate only in the Communion (bread & wine) 13.7%
   c.() just observe 12.8%
   d.() leave after the sermon 9.5%

42. If you "skip Church" when the Lord’s Supper is celebrated, what are the reasons?
   a.() feel unworthy 16.3%
   b.() feel uncomfortable about Foot Washing ceremony 3.1%
   c.() don’t like looking for a partner with whom to wash feet 4.0%
   d.() have unresolved difference with someone 7.0%
   e.() other ____________________________________11.9%
   f.() I do not skip 57.3%

43. People attend the Lord’s Supper for a variety of reasons. Mark all the important ones to you.
   a.() to fellowship 75.8%
   b.() out of duty 21.6%
   c.() to receive help 40.5%
   d.() to feel good 37.4%
   e.() to gain blessings and refreshing experience 85.5%
   f.() to worship as a congregation 63.9%
   g.() to dress up and look good 7.5%
   h.() because the Bible admonishes us to 58.1%
   i.() other ____________________________________8.8%
44. In order to receive a special blessing one should prepare for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper by: (mark as many as apply)
   a. ( ) fasting and deep heart searching 49.6%
   b. ( ) prayer 89.9%
   c. ( ) reading of the passion chapters in the gospels 42.5%
   d. ( ) reading of the passion chapters in the Desire of Ages 34.6%
   e. ( ) making things right with others 68%
   f. ( ) other ___________________________ 7.5%

45. Do you follow the practice described in question #44? (choose one only)
   a. ( ) always 16.4%
   b. ( ) usually 48.7%
   c. ( ) seldom 26.5%
   d. ( ) never 7.1%

46. In my opinion the length of the Lord's Supper ideally should be (choose one only)
   a. ( ) not more than 1 hour 21.8%
   b. ( ) more than 1 hour but not more than 1 hr. 15 min. 15.1%
   c. ( ) more than 1 hr. 15 min. but less than 1 hr. 30 min. 14.7%
   d. ( ) more than 1 1/2 hrs. but less than 2 hrs. 4.0%
   e. ( ) no time limit within reason 43.1%

47. In your belief, the Lord's Supper is: (mark as many as apply)
   a. ( ) a sacrificial rite 36.0%
   b. ( ) an offering to God 40.4%
   c. ( ) a method or occasion for experiencing a special Presence of Christ 74.6%
   d. ( ) a Covenant Feast 55.3%
   e. ( ) a seal of the Covenant of Promise 63.2%
   f. ( ) other ___________________________ 6.6%

48. In your personal life of faith what does the Lord's Supper mean? (mark as many as apply)
   a. ( ) worship through self-surrender 56.8%
   b. ( ) communion with Christ 86.3%
   c. ( ) memorial of Christ's sacrifice 85.0%
   d. ( ) a source of spiritual energy 66.5%
   e. ( ) an act of fellowship 67.8%
   f. ( ) other ___________________________ 4.8%
The following questions will greatly assist us in interpreting & classifying the information in the survey.

49. a. () male 34.2%  
    b. () female 64.9%

50. a. () single 38.2%  
    b. () married 47.9%  
    c. () widow/er 3.7%  
    d. () divorced 10.1%

51. Do you have children under 10?  
    a. () yes 18.7%  
    b. () no 80.4%

52. Do you drive?  
    a. () yes 68.1%  
    b. () no 31.9%

53. What is your age group?  
    a. () 19 years or younger 11.4%  
    b. () 20-35 years 26.2%  
    c. () 36-50 years 34.5%  
    d. () 51-65 years 21.0%  
    e. () 66 years or older 7.0%

54. At what level did you last attend school?  
    a. () elementary 8.8%  
    b. () high school 26.0%  
    c. () college 44.5%  
    d. () post graduate 20.7%

55. What schools did you attend?  
    a. () only SDA 10.7%  
    b. () only non SDA 36.0%  
    c. () mostly SDA 16.4%  
    d. () mostly non SDA 20.9%  
    e. () both SDA & non SDA equally 16.0%

56. Mark the number showing how long you have been a baptized Adventist.  
    a. () less than a year 5.8%  
    b. () 1-5 years 12.1%  
    c. () 6-10 years 12.5%  
    d. () 11-20 years 29.0%  
    e. () over 20 years 40.6%
57. Did you fill out the first Survey on the Lord’s Supper conducted in October 1989
   a. ( ) yes 64.3%
   b. ( ) no 35.7%

58. When the Lord’s Supper is celebrated on Sabbath morning, which service do you usually attend?
   a. ( ) first 50.4%
   b. ( ) second 46.9%
   c. ( ) none 2.6%

59. Circle the letter that shows your ethnic background.
   a. ( ) Asian 26.8%
   b. ( ) Black 25.4%
   c. ( ) Hispanic 4.4%
   d. ( ) White 37.3%
   e. ( ) Other 6.1%

--- THANK YOU ---
APPENDIX D

ATTENDANCE RECORD*
COMMUNION SERVICES
WILLOWDALE SDA CHURCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>1st Service</th>
<th>2nd Service</th>
<th>totals</th>
<th>Information supplied by:</th>
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<tr>
<td>24.06.89</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>321P</td>
<td>Ellen Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>182</td>
<td>410B</td>
<td>Josephine DiCiccio</td>
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<tr>
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<td>232</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>480B</td>
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<td>270</td>
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<td>Ellen Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.07.90</td>
<td>244</td>
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<td>488P</td>
<td>Ellen Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.12.90</td>
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<td>481P</td>
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<td>30.03.91</td>
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<td>570R</td>
<td>Esther Rosetti</td>
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<td>06.07.91</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>Ellen Williams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NB The Attendance Record represents the number of empty glasses returned or empty spaces in the Communion Glass Tray. Since we have changed to disposable glasses, though we collect them, a few disappear each time. The numbers represent all the glasses and empty spaces. The letters behind the total attendance represent sermons preached by: P=Potgieter, B=Bujak, R=Rochford
The information has been supplied by the present head deaconess at that time.

TWO YEARS LATER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>1st Service</th>
<th>2nd Service</th>
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<th>Information supplied by:</th>
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<tr>
<td>05.06.93</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>Ellen Williams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

199
Question 35: "In the last two years, how many services of the Lord's Supper have you attended?"
CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE 1
School Level
Survey Two

- high school 26.0%
- elementary 8.8%
- post graduate 20.7%
- college 44.5%

Question 54: "At what level did you last attend school?"
CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE 2
Type of Schools Attended
Survey Two

only non SDA 36.0%
mostly SDA 16.4%
SDA/non SDA equally 16.0%
mostly non SDA 20.9%
only SDA 10.7%

Question 55: "What schools did you attend?"
CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE 3

How Long Held SDA Beliefs?
Survey Two

- 11-20 years: 29.0%
- 6-10 years: 12.5%
- 1-5 years: 12.1%
- Less than a year: 5.8%
- Over 20 years: 40.6%

Question 56: "Mark the number showing how long you have been a baptized Adventist."
CONGREGATIONAL PROFILES 4a
by Age Group

Question 53: "What is your age group?"

Survey One:
- 27.4% 19 years or younger
- 34.5% 20-35 years
- 13.9% 36-50 years
- 11.4% 51-65 years
- 7.0% 66 years or older
- 4.7% 66 years or older

Survey Two:
- 26.2% 19 years or younger
- 37.5% 20-35 years
- 16.6% 36-50 years
- 11.4% 51-65 years
- 7.0% 66 years or older
Question 59: "Circle the letter that shows your ethnic background."
ILLUSTRATION 7

The Lord’s Supper Attendance
At Willowdale S.D.A. Church

1st Survey 410
2nd Survey 450
3rd Survey 121
4th Survey 810
5th Survey 670
6th Survey 550
### ATTENDANCE RECORD*

COMMUNION SERVICES

WILLOWDALE SDA CHURCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>552</td>
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CHANGE OF ATTITUDES

Yes answer in %

Question number

survey 2

survey 1
The front of this invitation shows the actual four main entrance doors leading into the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church. The inside photograph illustrates the interior of the sanctuary prepared for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Below, is the back side of the invitation.
He freed us from our sins with His life's blood
INVITATION TO THE LORD'S SUPPER
(SAMPLES)

WILLOWDALE
Seventh-day Adventist
Church
555 Finch Avenue West
North York, Ontario
M2R 1N5
636-2471

MINISTERS: Leslie Neal, Adam Bujak, Bill Frazer

TO: ____________________________________________________

You are cordially invited to
THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

DATE: ____________________________________________________

Feel free to call if you would like a visit

ELDER:__________________________________________________

DIST. NO. __________ PHONE: _______________________

The Lord's Intention: "This do ye, as oft ..." 1 Cor. 11:25

COMMUNION SERVICE
Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church
555 Finch Ave. West
March 30, 1985 at 5:00 p.m.
SURVEY FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE WILLOWDALE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The following anonymous survey will help us in better understanding the spiritual needs of our congregation. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions truthfully. There are no right or wrong answers. We are not trying to judge your opinion, but to understand your thoughts and feelings. Please circle the number on the left hand side that most closely represents your thinking. (If you disagree strongly, circle #1; if you agree strongly circle #5.)

DIRECTIONS

1. Do you attend the Adventist Church? Circle Yes or No: Yes No

2. How often do you attend church? Circle 1-5
   1. Nearly every Sunday
   2. Most Sundays
   3. Occasionally
   4. Rarely
   5. Never

3. How often do you read the Bible? Circle 1-5
   1. Nearly every day
   2. Most days
   3. Occasionally
   4. Rarely
   5. Never

4. How often do you attend quiet hour programs? Circle 1-5
   1. Nearly every week
   2. Most weeks
   3. Occasionally
   4. Rarely
   5. Never

5. How often do you participate in prayer meetings? Circle 1-5
   1. Nearly every week
   2. Most weeks
   3. Occasionally
   4. Rarely
   5. Never

6. How often do you attend church activities? Circle 1-5
   1. Nearly every week
   2. Most weeks
   3. Occasionally
   4. Rarely
   5. Never

7. How often do you participate in church committees? Circle 1-5
   1. Nearly every week
   2. Most weeks
   3. Occasionally
   4. Rarely
   5. Never

8. How often do you participate in community service? Circle 1-5
   1. Nearly every week
   2. Most weeks
   3. Occasionally
   4. Rarely
   5. Never

9. How often do you attend church social events? Circle 1-5
   1. Nearly every week
   2. Most weeks
   3. Occasionally
   4. Rarely
   5. Never

10. How satisfied are you with the church? Circle 1-5
    1. Very satisfied
    2. Satisfied
    3. Neutral
    4. Dissatisfied
    5. Very dissatisfied

11. How frequently do you pray for others? Circle 1-5
    1. Nearly every day
    2. Most days
    3. Occasionally
    4. Rarely
    5. Never

12. How frequently do you give to the church? Circle 1-5
    1. Nearly every week
    2. Most weeks
    3. Occasionally
    4. Rarely
    5. Never

    1. Nearly every week
    2. Most weeks
    3. Occasionally
    4. Rarely
    5. Never

    1. Nearly every week
    2. Most weeks
    3. Occasionally
    4. Rarely
    5. Never

15. How frequently do you attend Sunday school? Circle 1-5
    1. Nearly every week
    2. Most weeks
    3. Occasionally
    4. Rarely
    5. Never

16. How frequently do you attend Bible study? Circle 1-5
    1. Nearly every week
    2. Most weeks
    3. Occasionally
    4. Rarely
    5. Never

17. How frequently do you attend prayer groups? Circle 1-5
    1. Nearly every week
    2. Most weeks
    3. Occasionally
    4. Rarely
    5. Never

18. How frequently do you attend Bible conferences? Circle 1-5
    1. Nearly every week
    2. Most weeks
    3. Occasionally
    4. Rarely
    5. Never

    1. Nearly every week
    2. Most weeks
    3. Occasionally
    4. Rarely
    5. Never

20. How frequently do you attend seminars? Circle 1-5
    1. Nearly every week
    2. Most weeks
    3. Occasionally
    4. Rarely
    5. Never

21. How frequently do you attend study groups? Circle 1-5
    1. Nearly every week
    2. Most weeks
    3. Occasionally
    4. Rarely
    5. Never

22. How frequently do you attend workshops? Circle 1-5
    1. Nearly every week
    2. Most weeks
    3. Occasionally
    4. Rarely
    5. Never
APPENDIX H

FOUR SERMONS BASED ON THE STUDIES
SERMON 1

THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

OR A MEANINGLESS RITUAL?

Introduction

A group of Chinese pastors was once asked what it was that impressed them most about Christ. Strangely enough, the miracles were not mentioned. Chinese mythology could outdo the miracles of our Lord. Younger men gave various answers. Then an experienced, elderly man said, "Christ washing His disciple's feet." As the one who asked the question looked around, there was a general consensus showing that this upper room incident was peculiarly appealing to them. That the Creator of the universe would stoop down and take a slave's place was an impressive, moral miracle. The bending down of God to man, in the Suffering Saviour, is the signal truth of Christianity.¹ I would propose to you that this incident, recorded by the beloved disciple, constitutes the essence of Christianity. But I wonder how many of us believe that?

My favorite author states that: "Upon these ordinances," including the foot washing, "Christ has inscribed the name of the true God."\(^1\) The foot washing ordinance is one of the fundamental, testing truths of our Church. It is a historical fact: "Adventists adopted foot washing before they discovered the Sabbath doctrine."\(^2\) Foot washing was a "distinguishing mark of the faithful Adventist band."\(^3\) It appeared even "before the Great Disappointment."\(^4\)

History aside, today we have a problem on our hands— at least some think so. The practice of foot washing, writes Roy Adams in one of his recent editorials, "comes to us with considerable cultural baggage."\(^5\) In the ancient Middle East it was a normal, common day practice, widely used. In those days one travelled on dusty roads, wearing sandals, and the feet needed washing every day. But today, as one brother observed: "We wear closed shoes and not sandals. Our feet don't get dusty. Our social customs have changed. Do Florsheim-shod disciples need foot washing? No. Our feet do not need washing. This is a meaningless ritual!"\(^6\) Is it really? Do not our feet need washing?

\(^{1}\)White, Ev, 273.


\(^{4}\)Ibid., 11.


\(^{6}\)These comments came in one of the surveys conducted at the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church located in Toronto, Canada. Similar sentiments were expressed orally to me by several other members.
It may be true that the custom is foreign to us living in North America. Since our contemporary culture does not expect guests to have their feet washed, some may feel uncomfortable participating in the foot-washing ordinance. But thank God that foot washing is still somewhat distasteful, otherwise we would miss the point of it entirely. But what if there is a deeper meaning to this ceremony than the removal of dust?

And if that is the case, then "our churches need to be educated to a higher order of reverence and respect for the sacred Service of God," service that foot washing represents. If the Ordinance of Foot Washing is considered only an Ordinance of Humility, then the danger exists that it "may easily lose its significance, unless enriched by the meanings that prompted its origin." We can, however, be grateful for the ministry of the Holy Spirit who will help us "to see the beauty of the ordinance," and we will be able to "cherish it as sacrcely and as enthusiastically" as we do baptism and the Lord's Supper.

From the pen of inspiration we receive this promise, that when we participate in foot washing "the mind will be energized, and springing into activity and life, will break down every barrier that has caused disunion and alienation."

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1White, Ev, 277.


4White, Ev, 274, 275.
Do you see, my friend, how much we need this ordinance?

**Upper Room Incident**

It is noteworthy that the first resistance to the foot washing practice came on the very night of its inception. Do you remember how Peter reacted? "You shall never wash my feet." To us living twenty centuries later, the response of Jesus to Peter is "just as pertinent: 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with me.'" Now, that is a serious statement, and it comes from the lips of none other than that of our Saviour.

The last surviving disciple of our Lord, the beloved John, shares with us this intriguing incident from the Upper Room. It is an incident pregnant with meaning, especially for us today, when good people question the validity of our practice. Properly understood, the foot-washing ceremony can be a "continuing source of comfort and encouragement."

According to the law of Moses, the disciples of Jesus, before coming together to eat the Passover lamb, had taken a full bath. However, travelling with open sandals on their bare feet, over dusty paths, they were in need of having their feet washed. This would normally be done by a servant upon their arrival. But in the Upper Room, no servant was available. In such a case, it would have been the duty of one of the disciples to perform that act. But none of them was

---

2 Ibid.
willing to do it. Their hearts were filled with selfishness and ambition, as to who would be the greatest in the new kingdom that they expected Jesus to establish.

So they all sat down, to eat the Pascal lamb with their dirty feet outstretched to the outside, as was their Oriental custom. No doubt Jesus read their selfish, proud hearts. He might have desired to rebuke their pride and remind them what he had taught them on previous occasions: "He that is greatest among you, shall be your servant," or, "He that shall humble himself, shall be exalted."

Jesus must have also been aware that the Twelve were not "in a proper spiritual condition to partake of the holy emblems of bread and wine, and that there was need for deep heart searching on their part"\(^1\) in order to make a proper preparation for this new and significant service.

Instead of saying anything, Jesus rose from the table and began to wash the disciples' feet. He began with Judas and finished with John, who wanted to be the first and the most important in Christ's new kingdom. I can imagine that their hearts must have been filled with self-condemnation. Why had not any one of them jumped to do it, before their Master had performed it? Jesus had taken upon himself "the form of a servant, and was revealing his greatness through his great humility."\(^2\) What a tremendous lesson for all of us today.

---


\(^2\)Ibid., 181.
Prerequisite to Communion

We can learn from this that foot washing is a prerequisite to Communion with God. "It prepares my mind to enjoy the meal,"¹ one of my teachers used to say. An adequate preparation is needed "for a communion service, to be inspiring."² If you wonder how you can grow more receptive, one reader of our world Church paper makes these suggestions: "by smoothing out poor relationships through forgiveness, prayer, and fasting."³ A good passage to meditate upon is found in the book of Ps 24: 3-5 NIV:

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?  
Who may stand in his holy place?  
He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.  
He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his Saviour.

A Lesson about Service

We all have been taught that baptism symbolizes death to sin. It also symbolizes resurrection to a union with Christ in spiritual oneness. And so does the Ordinance of Humility. It symbolizes "the two great, cardinal principles of Christianity . . . humility and love." Love "that is expressed in service."⁴


³Ibid.

⁴"The Ordinances of the Church," Good News Series No.22, 3.
But we, too, are the sons and daughters of Zebedee, when it comes to choosing a position in the Church. We, too, are not too eager to do the menial acts of service. "We too, are not always overready to act, to be the servants for the sake of others." Why should we teach other members' children in Sabbath School, while they enjoy the stimulation of an adult class discussion? Why should we have to give up Sabbath afternoons bringing our children to the choir practices, while other families can enjoy the "lay activities"? Why should we go ingathering, when other members have more spare time than we have, yet they never help? Foot washing teaches us the need for service.

The Symbol of Water

Water, as a symbol, plays an important role in the Gospel of John. To John, water is a visible sign, a sign for the invisible power of God. The first chapter gives us the account of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus. In the next chapter, Jesus performs his first miracle—the miracle of changing water into wine. In chap 3 during a night interview, Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and the spirit. Chap 4 finds Jesus talking about the living water with the woman by the well. In chap 5 a paralytic is healed at the pool by the sheep gate. In chap 9 a man born blind waits at the pool of Siloam to be healed. And in chap 13, there is the washing of the disciples' feet.

So we could conclude that "John's Gospel uses water, as a sign for the

---

cleansing, healing power of God.\textsuperscript{1} One author states that foot washing is certainly not a "coincidence" in John's Gospel, but rather a part of a total design of symbolism to show us, who are slow to notice, "the spiritual, cleansing, forgiving, renewing power of the Holy Spirit, through the symbol of water."\textsuperscript{2}

\textbf{A Spiritual Cleansing}

Living in a world full of sin, it is so easy to allow our love to grow cold. And if we allow sin to be expressed, time after time, our conscience in due season becomes burdened and eventually seared. What our spiritual health needs is a spiritual cleansing. Can you say Amen?

When Jesus came to wash Peter's feet, the disciple felt that he could not allow his Master to perform such a menial task. In response to Peter's earnest opposition, Jesus said: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." "This declaration from Jesus, revealed the fact, that there was in this act, a hidden meaning."\textsuperscript{3} That hidden meaning, is the provision to experience cleansing. The ordinance of foot washing, represents "the most adequate and accurate symbol of the cleansing process that goes on in the life of the believer, after baptism."\textsuperscript{4}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{1} Joseph R. Shultz, \textit{The Soul of the Symbols} (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966), 68. \\
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., 69. \\
\textsuperscript{3} Branson, 181. \\
\textsuperscript{4} Shultz, 53.
\end{flushright}
You remember how rashly Peter said: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus kindly responded: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." John 13:6-8. Let me ask you. In order for Peter to have a part with Jesus, did Peter have to have the dust removed from his feet? No! His salvation depended upon the removal of sin from his heart. And that was done by the blood of the Lamb of God. What Jesus was really saying was, "Peter, I'm not just washing dust off your feet . . . You need the cleansing from heaven that changes the heart."¹

When the significance of Jesus' words dawned on the impulsive Peter, he exclaimed: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head," vs. 9. To this the Saviour answered: "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit," vs. 10. Here Jesus makes a distinction between the sacrament of baptism and the sacrament of foot washing. The "washing of the feet" is contrasted to taking a bath of the whole body. In the original language, there are two distinct terms being used.² The two "cleansings" are related but distinct. When you were baptized, you were made clean. However, you are still human and prone to sinning as long as you "live in the flesh." Therefore, you and I "need some kind of recurrent washing."³

The need for the continuous cleansing from sin after the experience of

¹Paulsen, 12.

²Apostle John uses two distinct Greek words, leloumenos for bathing, and nipsosthai for washing.

baptism is well explained in 1 John:

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. . . . My dear Children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 1 John 1:8-2:1 NIV.

At the time of baptism, we have been made spiritually clean. Our past sins were washed away by the blood of Jesus. But we have not been removed from the environment of sin. We are still surrounded by evil influences. So we all need this "minor cleansing, when we move about in this sinful world with its impure contacts."¹ Unless one completely turns his back on God, renounces his faith in Jesus, there is no need for rebaptism. However, sins committed after conversion do require the "lesser cleansing" that foot washing represents. It is sometimes called "a mini baptism." And it is the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from these additional sins. This "lesser cleansing" or "mini baptism" is symbolized by the ordinance of foot washing.

The Ordinance of Humility

We also refer to the ordinance of foot washing as an "Ordinance of Humility." But I wonder if humility is really the main purpose of the service. The significance of foot washing lies in our need to be symbolically cleansed. On that momentous occasion Jesus declared to his disciples: "For I have given you an

¹R. C. Lenski, St. John's Gospel (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1942), 921.
example," vs. 15. You can read the New Testament from cover to cover, and nowhere else will you find Jesus telling us that he has given us an example. Allow me to point it out to you, that here, we have a distinct command with a special meaning.

Please note that Christ did not say, "I have given you an example to be as I have been" (humble), but he did stress, "to do as I have done." Humility in my estimation, is the result of the spirit of humbleness. I do not become automatically humble after performing the act of washing feet. "A person cannot 'do humility.' He can only be humble through the spirit of Christ."¹ I know that Ellen White refers to it, as the ordinance of humility. It is the ordinance of his humility. To me, foot washing demonstrates, that "Jesus was willing, to make himself a slave out of love for his brethren."² She also says, that this ordinance, is to encourage humility, but it must not be termed "humiliating, in the sense of being degrading to humanity."³ Its purpose is to make our hearts tender toward one another.

Many non Seventh-day Adventist Christians refuse to practice this ordinance, calling it "a parable in humility." They not only miss the point of it all, but they also miss a tremendous spiritual blessing. Jesus, anticipating the reaction of such "disciples" toward his command to wash each others feet, did

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¹Shultz, 73.


³White, ARSH, May 31, 1898, 574.
stress his serious intention, by the use of these words: "Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his lord; nor one sent than the one that sent him," vs. 15.

**Practice and Not Knowledge**

I want you to notice, if you have not done so yet, that though Jesus was facing death the very next day, he pointed to the way of a happy life. True happiness in life, does not depend on knowing the truth, or knowing all the twenty-seven basic Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. Beloved, happiness depends on doing the truth. Jesus said: "Blessed are you," if you do what? Teach them to others? No! If you hit others on their heads with true statements from the pen of inspiration? No! "Blessed are you, if you do them." There is a great need in our circles for spiritual happiness. It only comes from taking Jesus at his word.

**Illustration**

One of the most gifted preachers in England, once took his parishioners on an imaginary tour through the museum of the New Jerusalem. And he described what he saw there: a widow's mite, some swaddling clothes, a hammer and three nails, a few thorns, a sponge that was once dipped in vinegar, and a small silver coin. Then he asked the caretaker: "Do you have a towel and a basin in your collection?" What answer do you think the caretaker gave? "No, not
Fellowship of Forgiveness

When it dawns on us that the "nature of this service is a step towards fellowship with Christ and his brethren," then I believe, we too, like Peter, will desire to have it more frequently. It will be an occasion to show each other, our mutual appreciation, and a time to enjoy the fellowship that develops our love. Do you remember, how the early Christians were known among the pagans, for their mutual love?

As each one of us takes part in the foot washing service, we kneel before our brother, "in an attitude of forgiving thoughtfulness." We become channels of God's grace. For it is only God who can wash away the sins from our hearts. We are only the instruments or the administrators of God's mercy. "In Christ's name, you kneel and assure me that Jesus has forgiven my sins. You kneel in Christ's stead at my feet, and I love you for it." Then it is my turn, to the same to you. When we do this, we live out the New Testament teaching of the priesthood of all believers.

1 Alexander Gammie, Preachers I Have Heard (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1945), 120.

2 Rasmussen, 35.


4 Ibid.
Each Man a Priest

One man told me that there are members who would attend the Lord's Supper if the pastoral staff did not insist on each participant praying with his or her partner. I ask: Is it an impossible expectation? Is it not imperative that we rather offer a prayer instead of carrying on a small conversation during the foot washing? Or talk about the weather, sports, fashions or cars.

"Whenever this ordinance is rightly celebrated, the children of God are brought into a holy relationship to help and bless each other."

The "right celebration" has to do with the form of the celebration. If our actions say one thing, and our words something else, then the "consequence is ambiguity" and "we are left with only a ritual." And against that we must be on guard, constantly.

Beloved, a proper conduct at the foot washing time would include a promise from God's Word about divine mercy and grace. "It is the passing of the Gospel, from one believer to another," that gives us the assurance of forgiveness, because faith comes from hearing God's word.

"The Gospel must be spoken and it must be heard. Unless that happens, the ritual is ambiguous and has no meaning. Foot washing is a gracious opportunity "provided for the members of the body of Christ, to exercise the

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1White, DA, 651.

priesthood of all believers, and to minister the Word of God personally to one another."1

Professor Holmes suggests kneeling at the feet of your partner and asking: "What are your spiritual needs today?" Your partner's answer might be, "I have been struggling with a sin, that has been bothering me for some time." Your proper response would be: "Would you like me to pray that the Lord grant you victory over that sin?"2 If there is a positive response then you pray for him. You might also quote a passage such as: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."3 If we would only follow this recommendation, what a blessing the foot washing ceremony would prove to be. Each member ministering in such a manner would become a personal representative of Jesus. As you apply the symbolic cleansing water to your brother's feet, you proclaim in that act, the old story that "only through the application of the blood of Christ can the guilt of sin be removed from the soul."4

If we would thus function as priests one to another, we would graphically demonstrate the expression, "my body broken for you." For to wash your brothers feet, you must "break at the knee, break at the waist, break at the neck,

1Ibid., 106.
2Ibid., 107.
31 John 1:9 NIV.
4Branson, 185.
break at the elbow."\textsuperscript{1} The ordinance of foot washing "harmonizes with, supports, reinforces even corrects the breaking of bread."\textsuperscript{2}

**Conclusion**

In closing, please note that the foot washing comes to us by the authority of Jesus Christ. It was God in Christ who washed the disciples' feet. And commanded us to do likewise. This passage has a divine dimension. The compelling reason for practising foot washing lies in the fact that the Lord deliberately set forth a pattern for us to copy, with a promise of happiness to all who fulfil it.

The command to eat the bread was spoken only once. The directions to drink wine were given also only once. But the foot-washing command was spoken in three different ways:

1. "Ye ought also to wash one another's feet."
2. "I have given you an example, that ye should do, as I have done to you."
3. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

The word "ought" denotes, a simple, moral sense of duty. And the whole episode of foot washing is grounded in an event in the Upper Room that has a universal relevance because it constitutes the essence of Christianity.

\textsuperscript{1}Eller, 111.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid.
Jon Dybdahl in his book *Missions: A Two-Way Street*,¹ tells of his experience in Thailand. One day, he received a visit from his close friend, a devout, former Buddhist monk whose friend was creating a special hall of world religions on his monastery grounds. It was his intention to create plaster murals, depicting scenes from the world's major religions. There would be an appropriate explanation under each mural taken from various holy writings. Our missionary Jon, was expected to suggest possible scenes and scriptures that would illustrate the religion of Jesus.

In the bright tropical sun, Jon made his way on his motorcycle to the monastery. On his way he prayed for wisdom. What should he say? What kind of picture should he suggest? He had an idea. An idea that grew to a conviction. Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet, as recorded in our scripture reading, that would be his recommendation.

In the quietness and timeless atmosphere of the monastery, the Adventist missionary and the Buddhist monk had a leisurely visit. Jon was shown the animals that found protection in the monastery. They toured numerous buildings on the sacred grounds. Jon expressed admiration for the already created murals.

As they sat down, the Buddhist monk took a Bible and shared with Jon several of his ideas as to what the essence of Christianity was. Jon listened,

commented and smiled and waited. He writes: "In Asia, one who is young and a
guest, should never rush to propound his ideas too quickly."¹

Finally, the host turned to Jon and said, "What do you think the essence
of Christianity is?" Jon referred him to John 13, and then slowly read the words
aloud in Thai. The Buddhist said nothing, but there was felt a strange, awesome
quietness and power as the passage described Jesus' act of washing the disciples'
feet. When the reading was done, there was a moment of silence. The Buddhist
looking at the missionary said: "Do you mean to say, that the Founder of your
religion, washed His students' feet?"

"Yes," Jon replied, as he swallowed very hard several times. Both men
were caught in the drama of the scene. Jesus, the Founder of Christianity, had
touched and washed dirty fishermen's feet! The look of incredulity on the monk's
face, changed to reverent awe. After a few moments, he gained control of himself
and rose to his feet. "I see now the essence of Christianity. "How about us?

Do we?

¹Ibid.
SERMON 2

OUR LORD'S CLAIM

Have you walked, my friend, where Jesus walked in days of long ago? Have you felt his presence there? Did you kneel at Gethsemane during our last Communion Celebration and feel his presence there? Or climb, in your imagination, the hill of Calvary? How is it with your soul today? Hasn't our choir's rendition of "I Walked Today where Jesus Walked" entreated you to be reconciled to God? As I listened, there were awakened in me high emotions and deep affections for my Saviour and a renewed eagerness to respond to his claim.

Introduction

It was a beautiful, crisp morning just like today. As I drove to my first "It Is Written" interest for that day, I was looking forward to studying God's Word with Scott and his wife. Both of them had inquisitive minds, and it was a pleasure to see them grow and develop. Scott always had a list of good questions to ask and a receptive mind. As a soul winner, I looked forward to having him join my church. He would make an excellent Sabbath School teacher some day, I thought. I was hoping to baptize him and his wife soon. That day we were going to study the subject of the sacraments in the church. As we finished the subject of
baptism, Scott asked, "In the sacrament of the Eucharist, what is the meaning of Christ's words 'This is my body'?"

I explained that the bread and wine in the Communion Service were symbols of Christ's body and blood given for the salvation of mankind. In the statement 'This is my body,' the word 'is' does not appear in the original text. It is a supplied word in our English translations. What Jesus was saying, was: 'This, my body,' meaning, 'This represents my body.'

I thought that I had given a good explanation of "the faith that was within me," but I could see that Scott was very unhappy with my explanation. "Why can't you take my Lord's words literally, as they stand? I believe that when I communicate, I eat the very body of Christ," he said. Then he referred me to the words of Jesus recorded in John 6: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

Scott insisted that Christ gives us his body in the Lord's Supper. These words had to be taken literally, he insisted. He backed up his statement with the words of Paul who accused the Corinthian Christians that they "did not discern the body of Christ." Looking at me Scott said, "You are guilty of the same crime."

For over forty years Scott had been taught the wrong doctrine. Each time he had received the wafer he had been told: "The body of Christ, the body of Christ."

I was very sad that he refused to join the remnant Church because he could not accept that it was not Christ's literal body. I prayed for Scott and his
wife earnestly and made several subsequent visits, but to no avail. Scott would not join my church.

Since that time I discovered that there are many within my own church who are confused about the meaning of these particular words of Christ. In our recent survey, 37.6% of all the respondents agreed that the "communion bread is the literal body of Christ." Another 10.9% were undecided. When asked whether the Lord's Supper is a mere symbol, 35.8% agreed. Only 47.7% of the congregation considered the Lord's Supper as more than symbol, and 16.4% were uncertain. But when asked whether the participation in the Lord's Supper was necessary for salvation, as many as 38% responded negatively. Another 13.8% could not decide. For these reasons we all need to address ourselves to the teaching of John 6.

Old Testament Background

Before we get to John, we may wish to note that in the Old Testament there were several types and signs anticipating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The offerings of Abel and Noah are suggestive of the offering of Christ. When Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God, met Abraham, he offered him the gifts of bread and wine.¹ These gifts have been seen by Bible commentators as pointing forward to the Communion of bread and wine. The

¹Gen 14:18.
shewbread in the Temple\textsuperscript{1} expressed the truth that God is the source of man's bread.

The Manna, or "angels' food," is a type of spiritual bread that is found in him who is the bread of life. It is a type of man's spiritual nourishment. Turn with me to Deut 8:3.

\begin{quote}
And He fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.
\end{quote}

It was a Rabbinical tradition\textsuperscript{1} that when the Messiah came, he would give them the gift of Manna. This was inferred from one of David's Psalms which promises: "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth on the top of the mountains."\textsuperscript{2} We know that this been fulfilled in Christ.

\textbf{Feeding the Five Thousand}

On a Friday long ago, Jesus fed 5,000 people. And after he had, they were so emotional that they were ready to take him by force and make him king. The very next day, however, the Pharisees discounted this miracle. They suggested that Moses had done even better. Jesus was standing in the shadow of the cross, when that storm swept Friday night, and so he sailed across Galilee to his headquarters in Capernaum. The multitudes followed him. They met Jesus at

\textsuperscript{1}Exod 25:30.


\textsuperscript{2}Ps 72:16.
the synagogue. The Bible suggests, that they sought him for loaves and fishes. They sought him for what they could get out of him. Today we would call them "rice Christians."

So Christ issued a challenge to these people. He said to them: "I have fed you loaves and the fishes, now believe on Me." And the people, inspired by the Pharisees, said: "Show us a miracle that we might." Only the day before he had fed 5,000 people with only a little boy's lunch. The Pharisees begin to mock now. "Your little performance yesterday was quite impressive, but our fathers ate bread in the wilderness. Moses gave them bread, and he did not even have a little boy's lunch as a primer. You've got to outdo Moses in order to convince us. Moses gave our fathers bread in the wilderness. What can you do?"

Then Jesus answered: "Moses gave you not that bread from Heaven, but my Father giveth the true bread from Heaven." And, in vs. 33, he added: "For the bread of God is He, which cometh down from Heaven and giveth life unto the world." The problem with these Pharisees was that "they had failed to see that the physical bread was a sign of the food which the Son of Man would give."1

But the crowd, supposing that Jesus referred to temporal bread, answered: "Lord, ever more give us this bread." Oh, how I wish that this "may be the prayer of every communicant, 'Lord, evermore, give us this bread.'"2 For

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2David Thomas, At the Lord's Table (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927), 77.
you see, although the Lord's Supper is not the theme of that discourse, the
passage "is admirably applicable . . . to the Holy Supper."1 And "every word
becomes charged with significance, when we read it in the light of the ordinance
which Christ appointed later."2

But back to the gospel. In vs. 35, Jesus said to them: "I am the bread of
life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger." Please note that this bread
enjoys "a double distinction over the manna of the wilderness."3 First, it really
"comes down from heaven." Second, it appeases hunger forever. In vs. 41, the
Jews murmured because he said: "I am the bread which came down from
Heaven." In vs. 42 they said: "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father
and mother we know. How is it then, that he saith, I came down from heaven?"

When you read The Desire of Ages, you begin to see the motives behind
their statement. This isn't all they said. They were speaking with contempt
because much was at stake. They said things like this: "Isn't this fellow the son
of Joseph and the son of Mary? Don't we know his folks?" By implication, they
were saying: "This is that poor guy, isn't it? From the other side of town? This
carpenter, hewing out a living with a saw and a blade? Isn't this Jesus, son of
these poor folks, who couldn't even bring a lamb when he was dedicated? Is he

1H. C. G. Moule, The Supper of the Lord (London: Religious Track Society,
1926), 35.

2W. T. Davison, The Lord's Supper (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1895), 44.

3Werner Elert, The Lord's Supper Today (London: Concordia Publishing House,
really saying, he came down from heaven?"

    Jesus responded, in vs. 43: "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." And then he repeated what he had to say, in vs. 48: "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead." In other words Jesus says that the bread that he gives will not be like the manna, which fed the perishing Jews in the wilderness, but bread like "the tree of life which man missed in Paradise through his own fault and folly."\(^1\)

    What was done in the wilderness is nothing compared with what I can do now. He that eats this bread shall never die. Do you see my friend, that although the Gospel writer John "records no account of the institution of" the Lord's Supper, he "does provide teaching about it."\(^2\) When we eat the heavenly bread, "we are, through faith and pardon, raised to the dignity of sons and daughters of God."\(^3\)

    **The Importance of Eating and Drinking**

    In vs. 51, Jesus continues his claim: "I am the living bread . . . and the bread that I will give is my flesh." And when he said that, the Jews recoiled because the law of Moses forbade even the tasting of blood. "This is cannibalism,\(^4\)

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\(^1\)Davison, 40.


\(^3\)White, *TT*, 226.
and he is saying, 'except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye can't have life,'" they thought. They referred to the law of Moses, and then they asked: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat? What's wrong with him? Has he gone crazy?"

Ellen White says that they did understand, but that they wanted to lead people astray.

As I mentioned, it was a Rabbinical tradition that when the true Messiah came, he would give them bread from Heaven. The Pharisees understood, but they were trying to increase the ignorance of the crowds that followed them. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" But Christ was speaking symbolically; he did not soften his claim.

In vs. 53 he said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Ellen White says: "To the holy Communion this scripture in a special sense applies. As faith contemplates our Lord's great sacrifice, the soul assimilates the spiritual life of Christ. That soul will receive spiritual strength from every Communion,"[1] (emphasis mine).

We have often applied these words of Jesus recorded in vs. 53 to mean that as his followers, we are to feed on the Bible. The Bible is his word, and when we assimilate the teachings of the Scriptures, we feed on Jesus. That is true. But please note that this is only a general application. But in the specific sense, we fulfil these claims of Jesus when we participate in the Lord's Supper.

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1White, DA, 661.
In these verses, John suggests that "feeding on Christ is through the sacrament of the Holy Communion."¹

This is extremely important because participation in the Lord's Supper is specifically essential to all who wish to live forever. That includes all of us. "The Lord's Supper is backed by the authority of the Messiah. 'Let me assure you . . . He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life."² In our pursuit of eternal life, we cannot lean upon one another. The bread of life must be eaten by each one. "Individually, we must partake of it, that the soul, body, and mind may be revived and strengthened by the transforming power, thus becoming assimilated to the mind and character of Jesus Christ."³

Allow me to re-emphasize that the eating of Christ's flesh and the drinking of his blood is necessary in order to have life eternal. "Eating and drinking are the means, life is the goal."⁴ Elert makes this statement: "The 'life' that Holy Communion purposes to give is indispensable. The 'living Father' sent the Son, who lives 'because of the Father'; therefore he who eats him will 'live because of the Son.'"⁵ This is so important, because here eternity is in the


³White, TM, 385.

⁴Elert, 31.

⁵Ibid.
balances. Are things of eternity not important to you?

Illustration

If you were to enter the triple doorway of the cathedral of Millan, you would find there three inscriptions under its arches. The first one has a beautiful wreath of roses with these words: "All that pleases us is but for a moment." The second arch has a cross and the words: "All that troubles us is but for a moment." But the main entrance that leads to the main aisle bears the inscription: "That only is important which is eternal."¹

My dear friend, our hearts have hunger which no bread can satisfy except Jesus. He alone can speak peace to the guilty conscience, and give assurance and rest to the troubled soul. For he said: "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise", which means never, "cast out."

Please note that the failure to "eat" and "drink" is "absolutely fatal to the soul."² Jesus declares, in vs. 53, "If you do not eat the Flesh of the Son of man, and drink his Blood, ye have no life in yourselves." These words indicate that if you have been in a habit of skipping the celebration of the Lord's Supper you could be forfeiting eternity. It is that serious. Dare I say it as one author put it: "you are excluded from life eternal."³

¹N. Beck, Out of this World (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1989), 52
²Moule, 33.
³Ibid.
The Meaning of Eating and Drinking

For you and me to "eat the flesh and to drink the blood" is to receive his power, that is a living power, "power of the Risen and Triumphant Lord, Victor over sin and death." But when we speak of "eating Christ's body," do we literally mean, as some Christians teach, that the element of bread after the prayer of consecration, becomes the literal "body of Christ?" Of course not. These words must be taken symbolically.

Illustration

Alfred Gibbs tells a story about his friend who was travelling by train. He was seated next to an episcopal bishop, and as they journeyed they talked about the Lord’s Supper. The bishop was very emphatic in his stand, that the bread and wine are actually the body and blood of Christ. He repeatedly stated: "But Jesus said: ‘This is my body.’ He did not say, ‘This represents My body.’" The layman suddenly gripped the bishop’s thigh and exclaimed: "Well, this is the first time I knew you were made of grass!"

"What do you mean?" asked the surprised prelate! The layman replied: "The Bible says, ‘All flesh is grass.’ Of course you believe that to be a literal statement, don’t you? It doesn’t say ‘All flesh is like grass,’ but ‘All flesh is grass.’"\(^2\) The bishop had no more to say on the subject!\(^3\)


\(^2\)Isa 40:6-8.
You can read the New Testament from cover to cover, and you will not find anywhere the idea that the bread is changed into Christ’s flesh or the wine into His blood. Such an idea is "absent in the teaching of the New Testament."¹ The words of Jesus must be taken symbolically. To cling to the literal meaning of these words would be "like Mary Magdalene clinging to the not yet ascended form of her Master."²

In our practice of the Communion, Jesus bids us to look away "from the material elements . . . to himself. All concentration upon the material vehicle tends to superstition."³ But the look alone is not enough. Those who would, in the words of Jesus "work the works of God" must be in a living relation with Him.⁴

Union with Christ

When you and I were baptized, we were baptized into "a union with Christ." How do we stay in that union? The answer is, of course, through the participation in the Lord’s Supper. "To eat the flesh and drink the blood means a

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¹Rasmussen, 60.
²Oulton, 91.
³Davidson, 45.
⁴Ibid.

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union with Christ by mutual indwelling.1 Baptism is the initial formation of that union, but the Lord's Supper is "pre-eminently the means by which Christ dwells in us and we in Him."2 For this reason many authors consider the Lord's Supper as "necessary to salvation"3 as much as baptism.

In our pilgrimage to the Heavenly Kingdom, we need every advantage that this union affords, because "a soul united with Christ, eating his flesh and drinking his blood . . . will war against all transgression and every approach of sin."4 But there is more to it.

There is nothing else in our Christian life that better symbolizes and pledges our union with Christ than participation in this ordinance.

Illustration

A magazine article told of a couple who sought to cross the Atlantic in a sailboat. They sailed into a great storm. One night the young husband went aloft to take in a sail. His wife was below with her baby. She heard the sound of the wind and felt the tossing of the boat, and finally when her husband did not come back, she decided he had been thrown into the sea. She was helpless and alone. Minutes seemed like hours. There was nothing at all she could do about it except to hope and pray. At last he returned and they weathered the storm. The magazine article made that experience live. I am sure this couple found out what the ocean is like, but to stand on the shore and look at it you wouldn't know—not unless you had been in a storm and had some contact with the ocean in its

1C. H. Dodd, The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, 379.

2Hook, 96.

3Oulton, 75.

4White, TM, 441.
You'll never really know the ocean until you live with it.\(^1\)

The same is true of the Lord's Supper. You will never know what the union with Christ means by standing at a distance, or by hearing somebody else talk about it. "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and . . . ye have no life in you."

There is something I wish you to notice. Please take up your Bibles and look at vss. 54, 56, 58 of John 6. "Life" is described here in two tenses, in the present and in the future. Vs. 54, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life."--that is present. Vs. 56, "He abides in Me and I in him"--that also is present. Vs. 58, "He who eats this bread will live forever--that is the future consummation. The present "having" of life through the reception of Christ's body assures the resurrection, because he says in vs. 54, "I will raise him up at the last day." "The reception of Christ's body and blood is death's antidote, because it guarantees the resurrection."\(^1\)

The Necessity of Faith

Our loving Saviour invites us to be present at his table. When we accept the invitation, we do symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. But there is something else that we must receive by faith. And that is his spiritual attributes.\(^2\)


\(^2\)White, 6T, 52.
Faith is a very important ingredient in the whole process. As we meditate on the sacrifice of Christ, our faith is strengthened.

One author stated that in the Lord's Supper "we have a specially appointed means of appropriating the benefits of Christ's passion."1

Illustration

One experienced Christian tells about meeting people to whom life had been cruel. People who experienced such bitter disappointments, they feel they are no longer capable of love. To such people, he highly recommends a regular communion attendance. He stresses that, in this way, "the battered garden of their lives will be replanted."2 There is hardened ground not only in our public parks and side walks or outside our homes, but also inside in our marriages and families. "There are so many gardens of life, in which no flower blooms and no bird sings, and in which the fruit of charity will never ripen again."3 I join the author in saying, "Come to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and let your barren garden be replanted. My Saviour wants flowers to bloom and birds to sing and the fruits of brotherly love to thrive. Come and let your faith be strengthened.'

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1 Oulton, 92.
2 Shultz, 65.
Our Lord's claim stands: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Could language more clearly teach that salvation comes to us through the communication of his own life? Each one of you has an appointment with the Saviour. Let nothing, my friend, prevent you from meeting that appointment.

Sometimes the arrival of an unexpected relative or friend is allowed to interfere with one's attendance at the Supper. Let us suppose that a Christian couple, living in Ottawa has received an invitation from the Prime Minister to have a supper with him at his house. The invitation is accepted and all preparations are made for that great event. I am sure the lady will want to have a new dress for the occasion. The evening meal is to start at 7 P.M.

Just as the couple are about to leave for the supper, the doorbell rings. As they open the door, there stands Uncle Joe and Aunt Mary from Toronto, who have decided to pay their favourite nephew a surprise visit. Tell me, what should the couple do under these circumstances? Should they call up the Prime Minister and ask to be excused from attending the supper? Or should they simply forget about the supper this time. There might be another invitation in three months' time.

Or should they explain the situation to their relatives and ask them to make themselves at home until they return from the supper with the Prime Minister? The answer will surely be that, while they are very glad to see their
relatives, they will not allow this to interfere with their attendance at the supper.

Even now Jesus ministers on our behalf in the Heavenly Sanctuary. He is our High Priest. We could call him our Minister. Paul called him the First Fruit of the Resurrection. If anyone has a right to be called a Prime Minister, Jesus does. He is our Prime Minister "par excellence." And we have an appointment with him for Supper. As the couple in our story, neither should we allow anything to interfere with our appointment at the Supper. Remember our Lord's claim. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."
I would like to thank your Senior Pastor, Pastor Evert Potgieter, for giving me the opportunity to stand before you twice in February, today, and the last Sabbath in March. Some of you may wonder why do I continue to preach here although you have bid me farewell. These four sermons are a part of a project that I began here at Willowdale. You see, there is a reciprocal relationship between a minister and the congregation. You are both receivers and givers of service. For the past six years I have served you, and now I need you to help me. And so I would like to thank you, as a congregation, for your patience in hearing me out, and for your valuable input in the survey. I would also like to thank the choir and the musicians for their support in choosing appropriate numbers for each occasion.

Introduction

About the year 110 A.D., Pliny, a Roman governor in Asia Minor, wrote to the Emperor Trojan describing a new religious sect called "Christian." They were apparently multiplying rapidly in his province. He wanted to know about their beliefs and customs, and this is what he elicited:

The sum of their error consisted in this: on an appointed day, before dawn,
they were accustomed to assemble and repeat in alternate parts a hymn to Christ as God; they then bound themselves by an oath (sacramentum) not to commit any crime, but to abstain from robbery, theft, or adultery; to avoid every breach of faith; and never to refuse, when called upon, a deposit which had been entrusted to them; and when these rites had been performed, it was their custom to disperse, and again to assemble for the purpose of partaking in common a meal of an entirely harmless nature.¹

This information was extracted through the torture of two young deaconesses, who had joined a little company of Christian slaves. They worshipped their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. They ate a common meal and bound themselves by a sacramental promise to "faithfully fulfil the ordinary duties of life, to be true and honest and pure and kind, and live, as far as might be, like him whose passion and death on their behalf they had been sacredly commemorating together."² These early Christians lived with an intense desire to meet their returning Lord. Both history, as quoted above, and the New Testament testify to it. Don’t we have the same intense desire for Christ’s soon return?

**New Testament Witness**

In my study, I have discovered that there is more in the pages of the New Testament that discloses the character of the Lord’s Supper than the well--known accounts of the Last Supper in the Upper Room. There seem to be two distinct types of the Lord’s Supper in the early Church, "one dominated by the death of Christ and inspired by the words of the institution... and one dominated by themes of the

¹Davison, 63, 64.
²Ibid., 65.
return of Christ"¹ Isn't that an interesting discovery for us Seventh-day Adventists?

The early Christians used to pray: "Maranatha, come Lord Jesus." That prayer should assume the central position in our celebration of the Lord's Supper, as it originally had. "And it should express the double desire . . . of seeing Christ descent into the midst of the faithful, gathered in his name, and of discovering for themselves, in that coming, an anticipation of his final messianic return."² The Second Coming with full glory.

There are two passages in the Gospel of Luke which emphasize this very point. In chap. 14:7-24 Jesus sitting at a table, tells two parables about banquets. These parables describe who will be sitting at the place of honour, who will be invited and who will come. Jesus states, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God" (vs. 15). Jesus ends the second parable with these words, "None of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet" (vs. 24).

Two chapters earlier, Jesus had illustrated the kingdom of God using the imagery of a meal. Turn with me to Luke 12:35-37. Notice that this feast, is a meal where Jesus serves at the tables.

For the early Christians, meal imagery was very important. It represented the messianic banquet. They believed that Jesus was present in the meal, not as a host but as one who served.


²Cullmann, Essays on the Lord's Supper, 23.
Resurrection Appearances

Not only did the early Christians have the memory of Christ's teaching about the nature of the kingdom of God represented by a messianic banquet, but they also had the memory of actually eating and drinking with him meals which made great impression on their minds. Turn with me to John 21:10-14.

Another episode of a post resurrection appearance is recorded in Luke chap. 24:30-35. Remember how Jesus joined two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Look at vs. 30. Later Peter would testify in the book of Acts 10:41 that God did raise Jesus and showed him "to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead." The disciples of Jesus were a group of followers, who enjoyed eating and fellowshiping together. The Pharisees accused Jesus on this very issue, "Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinner!"1

The Love-Feast

As Adventist, we can learn a great deal from other Christians, like the Mennonites about the Love-feasts. One of their authors states that the Lord's Supper was from the beginning, a fellowship meal, both between a Christian and his God and the believer and his brother.1

It is the nature of faith to create fellowship of love. We as twentieth-century

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Christians need that fellowship as much, as the early Christians did.

When we study the life of our Lord, we have to agree that it was filled with fellowship. It has been described as a "table fellowship." You will remember that Jesus began his ministry at a wedding feast in Canna. Shultz believes that Jesus "ordained that love-feast . . . connected . . . with his death and resurrection, should be instituted for Holy Communion."¹ In other words, he suggests that the Love-feast should precede the Lord's Supper.

In Acts 17:6 we read that the Christians turned the world upside down in less than twenty years. The conquest of the then-known world was largely attributed to the "fellowship of love." Men and women were glad to become a part of the family of God as they were embraced by this agape of God. The Roman society that was falling apart, became welded together, as men and God met together in the love-feast at the deepest level.

As we study the New Testament, we do not find too many references to the love-feast. But what we have seems to indicate that the love-feast has been part of the Lord's Supper. Let's look at a couple of these references in the book of Acts 2: 42, 46, 47. Please note that there are four distinct parts in the practice of the Lord's Supper: the teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers. The expression, "breaking of bread," is closely related to "fellowship." Bible scholars believe that "fellowship (koinonia) is the Love-feast, and the breaking of bread is the

¹Ibid., 80.
Eucharist of Communion.¹ Because Luke uses the expression, "the breaking of bread", rather than "eating bread," it is considered a reference to a special religious act. And so the expression, "the breaking of bread," has been accepted by some Christians, as a title for the Lord's Supper.

In the book of Acts, Christians would gather in private homes around a suppertable, which must have reminded them, of the table of the Lord in the Upper Room. In the setting of a love-feast, a brother would know his brother, and be known as a brother. The fellowship of those early Christians could be best expressed today by celebrating the Love-feast as a apart of the Lord’s Supper. This is what some Bible scholars suggest. It is in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper that we feel united to Christ, but true communion among brothers would be best expressed in the Love-feast. Oh how much we need this all-embracing love. Love that accepts everyone. How much we need to feel accepted.

The fullness of the communion-fellowship of the Apostolic period is hardly realized by twentieth century Christians. We debase the experience of Christian fellowship by formal Church worship and traditions. The Church generally speaks of this 'Christian fellowship,' but fails to provide the means for its realization. The Love-feast of the Holy Communion is the realization of the bonded fellowship of the Christian faith.²

Some Statistics

In the light of what I have just said, let me share with you some statistics from our recent survey. One statement read like this, "A person should follow the

¹Ibid., 83.

²Ibid., 86-87.
Adventist life-style such as keeping Sabbath, returning tithe, not smoking, before being allowed to participate in the Lord’s Supper" (Question # 8). Would you like to know the responses? Here they are: 50.7% of all respondents disagreed with this statement, while 35.1% agreed. When asked whether they: "Sometimes feel worthy to participate in the Lord’s Supper" (# 12), an overwhelming two-thirds said "yes" (67.3%). That isn’t bad in itself. But among reasons for skipping the Lord’s Supper (# 42), "feeling unworthy" had the highest number of responses, 19.1% which represents almost every fifth person. I am very grateful for the 80% of those surveyed who answered that they never skip. They need to be commended for their faithfulness. But my pastoral heart goes out to the 20% of respondents that skip and to those that never turned in the survey answers and also skip. But back to the survey. It indicated that one in five skips the Lord’s Supper, because they feel unworthy. Other reasons indicated in descending order were:

1. "Have unresolved difference with someone"--6.6 percent
2. "Don’t like looking for a partner with whom to wash feet"--5.3 percent
3. "Feel uncomfortable about Foot Washing ceremony"--4.6 percent
4. "Other"--19.7 percent.

The most common reasons listed here were such as work, sickness, previous appointments which are understandable. There were other reason such as: "don’t feel like it," "sermon too long," "can’t be bothered," "no reason," "lazy to attend," "boring," "have to sort out my relationship with Jesus," "In a big church like ours I don’t feel close enough to anyone spiritually to share this experience."
In personal interviews, I have discovered that many are concerned, and not a few confused, as to what Paul teaches in his letter to Corinthians, the eleventh chapter. "I am not quite sure what is meant by an unworthy manner," goes the common reasoning, "but I surely don't want to suffer judgement, so I will play it safe and refrain from the Communion Service."

The Church in Corinth

So I invite you to turn with me to the eleventh chapter of the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians. In this chapter Paul deals with disorders in public worship. We are accustomed to the fact that the Lord's Supper is the most solemn and the most dignified of all services. And so vss. 17-22 dealing with the offenses, come to us somewhat as a surprise. Their service was far from being edifying or dignified. Therefore, it is an important passage because it throws light on the manner in which the service was conducted. It also gives us an important teaching concerning the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Paul says, that to partake of the bread and of the cup, "is to proclaim the Lord's death."

Paul, having written about the divisions among the Corinthian Christians, continues with a reminder of the words of the institution (vss. 23-26). In vss. 27-34, Paul describes how the service should be conducted. They must observe the service with due care, "never carelessly,"1 that is, devoid of a proper sense, of what the elements represent.

1James Moffat, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1945), 170.
Misunderstood Term

In vs. 27 we find the often misunderstood term "unworthily." Let's read the whole verse. Please note, that the word, "unworthily," is an adverb, and as such, is not given a definition in this verse. Neither can we borrow a definition from another passage in the New Testament. It is not used anywhere else. 1 The expression covers all, that is incompatible with the intention of Christ, in instituting this celebration.

It needs to be pointed out, that there is a certain "worth" or "value" connected with this service. He who eats the bread and drinks the cup without counting their value, uses these elements "in an unworthy manner." 2 It is the conduct that Paul says is unworthy, and not the participant. This point is very often missed and therefore needs to be re-emphasized. "Unworthily does not refer to the person of the one partaking, but to the manner of his partaking." 3 When we recognize the bread and wine as emblems of Jesus' body and spilled blood, we are safe from this error.

The Problem

As many commentators point out, the Lord's Supper at Corinth was


3 Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison, The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, 1249.
preceded by a Love-feast. And it was here during the Love-feast that serious problems developed. These agape-feasts were held in the homes of the rich, who did not wait for the poor members to arrive at their homes in order to start the meal. So Paul disapproved of the factions and divisions in the midst of the fellowshipping or worshipping congregation. The poor, arriving late because of work, found insufficient amounts of food. Therefore, they tried to elevate their hunger in what followed, namely the Lord’s Supper.

The two parties that formed, are referred to by the Bible expositors, as "the Haves," and "the Have nots."1 They may not necessarily be the same as the parties mentioned in 1 Cor 1:12. Rather they may be based on rank or wealth. These gatherings of the wealthy were dangerous in threatening the unity of the Christian community. Paul pointed out that "they despise the church . . . and humiliate those who have nothing" (vs. 22).

As the Love-feast was immediately followed by the Lord’s Supper, the spirit of divisiveness, jealousy and exclusiveness was carried over. The mere gesture of eating bread, was not sufficient, as vss. 27-30 indicate.

Paul was concerned with the attitude of the Corinthians. They were to imitate Christ.2 If they did not do that, no matter how carefully the ritual gestures were performed, they were not eating the Lord’s Supper. Only as they had truly put

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1Cf. Peake’s Commentary, 961.

2See 1 Cor 11:1.
on Christ,\(^1\) which is equivalent to putting on love,\(^2\) were they effectively proclaiming
the death of Christ. "Love gave the substance to the Eucharistic words, and only
love could continue to do so."\(^3\) So Paul tried to convince the Corinthians, that their
personal involvement with one another in love, was necessary for the Communion to
have effective meaning. And this can be accomplished if everyone examines himself.

**Self-examination**

Vs. 28 literally reads: "In order to avoid all this profanity, let a man prove
himself."\(^4\) In other words, let him see, whether he is in a proper state of mind for
commemorating and proclaiming the death of Christ. I want you all to notice that
"Paul enjoins us not to refrain from eating and drinking the emblems, but to examine
ourselves. The emphasis is not on exclusion, but on preparation."\(^5\)

Interestingly, Paul uses in this verse the word "bread." After the self-
examination took place, "then and not till then, let him come and partake"\(^6\) of the
bread. Eating involves, eating of bread and not the real body of Christ. The bread
symbolizes his broken body. "As we receive the bread and wine symbolizing

\(^1\)Gal 3:27.

\(^2\)Col 3:14.

\(^3\)Jerome Murphy O'Connor, *First Corinthians* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael
Glazier, 1979), 113.

\(^4\)Cf. 1 Cor 4:1; Gal 6:1; 1 Thess 5:21.

\(^5\)Raymond H. Woolsey, *Joy in the Morning* (Washington, D.C.: Review and

\(^6\)Robertson, 251.
Christ's broken body and spilled blood, we in imagination join in the scene of Communion in the upper chamber.\textsuperscript{1}

Illustration

When Admiral Nelson was buried, his body was draped with a magnificent Union Jack. The sailors carried his body into the cathedral and later to the grave. When the Admiral's body was lowered into the grave, the sailors grabbed the flag, as if someone had given them a command and ripped it apart. "I've got a piece of him," they said, "and I'll never forget him."\textsuperscript{1} Jesus anticipated our need for this kind of identification. When he broke the bread he said, "Do this in remembrance of me."

But back to Corinth. The word "prove" implies the purpose of detecting the good. Paul demanded that every member in Corinth, should so prove himself that he would sift out the evil, and would arrive at the table. "This act of proving cannot have, as its result, staying away from the Lord's Table, for its result is always good."\textsuperscript{2}

Discerning the Lord's Body

In vss. 27 and 28, the expression "to discern the body of Christ," does not mean to see in the bread the literal body of Jesus that hung on the cross. "The

\textsuperscript{1}White, DA, 661.

\textsuperscript{1}Oglivie, 132.

\textsuperscript{2}Bruce, 275.
discerning of the Lord's body" is a matter of exercising faith, recognizing that the emblems are not an ordinary meal. When you stretch out your hand to receive them, you accept them as reminders of the sacrifice of the Son of God. "Not to partake of the service the Lord enjoined, is to show a lack of appreciation for his sacrifice."¹

In vs. 29, Paul stresses the necessity of proving oneself. He who eats and drinks without "discerning the body of Christ," invites judgement on himself. Please notice that I have used the word "judgement." The word "damnation" (AV) is far too strong. Without self examination it is an insult to the Lord if one dares to participate in the Lord's Supper. That quarrel, with a fellow-Christian, must be settled first. It is all summed up in a single command, "You must love your neighbour, as yourself."²

In this vs. 29, Paul uses the word "body" in "the corporate sense of the word."³ Worship must always take into account others, who together with us take part in the service. "When a partaker does not discern, that the community of faith, is the body of Christ, he is condemned."⁴ In the next chapter, chap. 12 "the body of Christ" stands again and again for the Church. The man who eats and drinks "unworthily" has never realized that the Church is the body of Christ. We must keep in mind, the connection that Paul has already established in 1 Cor 10: 17, between

¹Woolsey, 147.
³Moffatt, 173.
⁴The Interpreter's Bible, 10: 142.

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the Eucharistic body (bread), and the church body. "We eat one in order to become more fully the other." The judgement that follows, an unworthy reception, is described in vs. 30, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" [in death].

The Solution

The solution to the problem is found in vss. 31 and 32. These Christians must sincerely evaluate their relationship with each other in the light of the love shown by Christ before partaking in the Lord's Supper. "All they have to do are simple, ordinary things, like waiting for one another (vs. 33) and having a snack before the liturgical assembly, if the pangs of hunger are too sharp" (vs. 34). The purpose of the Lord's Supper is not to satisfy physical hunger at all.

The passage we have been discussing is of great importance because this is the oldest account of the Lord's Supper, preceded by a Love-feat. In the words of Jesus, quoted here by Paul, the imperative "to do this," that is, to eat and to drink, that imperative is given four times. It is not just an exhortation to personal devotional exercise. "It is a commandment like one of the Ten Commandments . . . it must be of the essence, of church life."3

Ellen White exhorts us: "None should exclude themselves from the

2 Murphy, 10, 114, 115.
Communion. . . . It is at these, his own appointments, that Christ meets his people, and energizes them by his presence. . . . Christ is there to minister to his Children.1

The Mode of Christ’s Presence

How is Christ present at the Lord’s Supper? Ellen White does not explain how Christ is present, except perhaps in one or two places. Most of the time she simply declares that He is present.

On these occasions the Lord manifests himself in a special manner to soften and subdue the soul, to expel selfishness, to imbue with His Holy Spirit, and to bring love and grace and peace into hearts that are contrite2 (emphasis mine).

It is at these (foot washing and the Lord’s Supper), his own appointments, that Christ meets his people, and energizes them by his presence. Hearts and hands that are unworthy may even administer the ordinance, yet Christ is there to minister to his children3 (emphasis mine).

Though Ellen White believes in a real presence of Christ, she does not try to explain how he is present. Certainly it is not a bodily presence. It is enough for her that he is present. There are two statements that may throw light on this matter.

By the example of our Lord and Master, this humiliating ceremony has been made a sacred ordinance. Whenever it is celebrated Christ is present by his Holy Spirit. It is this Spirit that brings conviction to hearts4 (emphasis mine).

Christ by the Holy Spirit is there to set the seal to his own ordinance. He is here to convict and soften the hearts5 (emphasis mine).

1White, DA, 656.

2White, EV, 278.

3White, DA, 656.


5White, DA, 656.
If these last two statements can be applied to the occasions that she describes as special, then we would say that Christ is present, "through the Holy Spirit."¹ He is truly present in the Lord's Supper in the same way He is present in a prayer meeting, in which only three persons are present. The only difference may lie in the fact that when we prepare ourselves, when we examine ourselves, we are more aware of his presence. But his presence is the same. Brother Lawrence would be as aware of Christ's presence, when he was doing the dishes in the kitchen, as when he would be attending the Communion Service.

**Our Part**

While any abuse of the celebration needs to be corrected, the commandment "to do it in remembrance of Jesus" is still binding. God wants us to exercise faith in his broken body. In our imagination we must see that body. Our forgetful hearts need to be reminded of the price paid, so that his love, melts our hearts, and we fall down in worship and praise, exclaiming, "He did it for me." For you see, "the communion table is a touchstone of faith and obedience: faith in his sacrifice and obedience to the living Saviour."²

**Two Views of the Communion**

As a Church, we practice an "open Communion" with free admission to all

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²Rassumusen, 113-114.
professed Christians. From the example of Christ we learn that he not only washed the feet of Judas, but also shared bread with him. Remember Christ's words, "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." If this is true, why should anyone be excluded? None of us should judge the motives of other members. Paul gave clear instruction for each individual to examine himself. It is not left to ministers or church boards to do the examining. If the participation in the Lord's Supper is the continuation of the relationship with Jesus, and baptism the initiation of that relationship, then it would be logical, that baptism is a minimum qualification. It would also need to be stressed that the participants must understand the meaning of the celebration. They ought to know God as their personal Saviour. They should understand the plan of salvation. Otherwise, such participants would truly eat and drink "unworthily." 

Who Is Worthy?

If only worthy individuals were invited and admitted to the Lord's table, the Church would be empty. Our admission to the Lord's Supper is like the journey that the prodigal son took, when he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." For such, Jesus waits at the table.

1John 13:18.

2The other view is a "closed Communion" which has been practiced by our Church in the past. But I am glad it is not the official position any more.

The qualifications that make a person worthy are not goodness per se, not a baptismal certificate as such, not even membership in good standing in the right church. The things that count with God are deeper than these. They are faith, repentance, sorrow for sin, a forgiving spirit, a hunger and thirst for righteousness, a desire to obey God, and a desire to commune with the Lord.\(^1\)

### Appeal

A story from old Scotland tells of an elderly Christian gentleman who sat through the Communion Service one day feeling too unworthy to partake. He sat there miserably in the front seat, wanting to join in, but feeling at the moment, that because of some unresolved problem, he dare not participate in this memorial of his Lord's death. And then he saw a teenage girl pass along in line. She reached out to take the cup, then broke down and withdrew her hand, passing the cup untasted. Suddenly his fears were gone. And he called out to her in a coarse whisper, "Take it, Bonny, take it. It's for sinners." And then leaving his own seat, he too reached out with eager hands to take it for himself. Take it friend, take it. It's for sinners!

Of ourselves none of us is worthy to meet him. Interestingly enough, the survey revealed that those who have an intimate relationship with Jesus, do not feel unworthy. For it is Jesus who makes us worthy by his righteousness. What we need to do is to come to him, as the words of hymn of response say, "Just as we are."

\(^1\)Rassmusen, 112.
SERMON 4

"WHY SHOULD I BE THERE?"

Introduction

How important do you think it is, to be present in your family Church to celebrate the Lord's Supper? I invite you today to join me in your imagination here on the platform. It is the fifth of May 1990. It's the early service and the church is two thirds full. You have joined the Cherubics and so you are with me on the platform. Our organist, Danny Araujo has been playing a beautiful organ prelude. The choir begins to sing the introit as the congregation waits in hushed expectation for the platform party to arrive. The music leads you heavenward while a candid video camera pans the congregation. A child drops a hymnbook. Two youngsters in the row behind giggle. Several seniors frown. All are unaware of a drama being played out in the balcony. The camera zooms towards the upper level.

A 17-year-old wearing a fashionable suit, his white shirt collar unbuttoned, his hair cut short in the front but with a pigtail hanging in the back, stands with one hand as it were on the door nob, ready to leave. He looks at the white communion cloth at the front, then he scans the backs of the congregation as if undecided. He has his reasons for not wanting to participate. Will anyone give
him a reason to stay?

The candid camera pans the congregation again. The introit masterfully rendered by the choir ends. All knees are bowed awaiting the invocation. All heads are bowed too. Completing a sweep of the congregation, the camera zooms in on a young woman in her early twenties. She too has come to Church not knowing that this is the Sabbath for the quarterly Communion. The camera crew momentarily captures her facial expression, sweet, innocent—yes, Adventist! Her eyes are moist, hurt; a tiny diamond glints from her earlobe. She too has her reasons for leaving. Will anyone give her a reason to stay? Unfortunately, there is no deacon at the door attending to late worshippers going up to the balcony or coming down. Even if there were one, would he be concerned enough to engage her in a conversation as to her reasons for leaving? And what about those who chose not to come at all that day? Who will show enough concern to visit them and talk about their reasons for skipping Church? 1 Ellen White states: "If the lost sheep is not brought back to the fold, it wanders until it perishes. And many souls go down to ruin for want of a hand stretched out to save." 2

The Value of Church Attendance

How important is Church attendance to you? Does the Bible counsel us on this issue? The author of the book of Hebrews writes in chap. 10 vs. 25,

1Adopted from Noeline Johnsson’s article, "How Important Is Worshipping Together?" Adventist Review, September 21, 1989, 12.

2White, COL, 191.
"Let us not neglect our church meetings, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near" (LB).

When it comes to the attendance of the Lord’s Supper, people come for a variety of reasons. Our survey indicated the following reasons for attending the Lord’s Supper in descending order of importance as indicated by the percentages:

1. 77.2% come to gain blessings and a refreshing experience
2. 68.05% come to fellowship
3. 52.8% are here to worship as a congregation
4. 50.0% are here because the Bible admonishes us to
5. 39.3% attend to feel good
6. 33.3% join the congregation to receive spiritual help
7. 14.2% enter these portals out of duty
8. 8.6% get out of bed on Sabbath morning to dress up and look good.

Noelene Johnsson in a recent *Adventist Review* article adds these additional reasons for church attendance in general: "to visit, to pay their dues to the subculture, because they have a part in the program or feel needed, because they hurt."1 As you can see some of these reasons are more important than others, but they are all valid. Whatever your reasons are, I believe you should be here. Our present conditions, circumstances and former experiences often influence our reasons for church attendance. Noelene continues, "For the lonely,

1Ibid.
social reasons rate high; those feeling hurt value the comfort and acceptance found among believing friends.¹

When I examined my own values for attending the communion services, I realized that regular attendance at the Lord's Supper confirms my saving relationship with Christ. For me, eating the communion bread is a response of a saving faith. It assures me that I abide in Christ and He abides in me. The acceptance of the cup assures me that my sins have been forgiven. By faith, I apply the cleansing power of his blood to my Christian life. My presence there strengthens the bonds connecting me with my God and with my fellow believers.

The Passover Supper

The three synoptic Gospels agree that the Last Supper that Jesus held with his disciples in the Upper Room was the Passover supper. An understanding of the Passover is helpful to us in order to have a clearer understanding of the Lord's Supper. For Jews, the Passover signified deliverance from the bondage in Egypt. By this feast, the memory of the great exodus was kept alive.

It was through Moses that God instructed the Israelites to choose a perfect lamb to be sacrificed. It had to be a perfect animal because it prefigured Christ himself, the perfect "Lamb of God"; the Lamb that was "slain from the foundation of the world."

The Israelites were to catch some of the blood, and with a bunch of

¹Ibid.
hyssop, to smear the lintel and the door posts of their dwelling places. This was a
sign for the angel of death to pass over the house so marked. That is the reason
for the name Passover. Please note that it took faith on the part of each family to
follow the specific instructions God gave. The lamb was baked in one piece. No
bone was to be broken. In every family, all members were to eat of the lamb and
the rest was to be destroyed.

   Centuries later apostle Paul wrote, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for
us."¹ When you accept Christ's sacrifice on Calvary as your Passover Lamb, the
second death cannot harm you.

   That memorable Thursday night before his betrayal, during the
celebration of the Passover, Jesus made the transition from the Passover to a
memorial of his sacrifice to be accomplished next day.

   The Passover meal pointed back to the deliverance from the house of
bondage in Egypt. It also pointed forward to a greater sacrifice when the
Lamb of God should be slain. The Lord's Supper was to be a memorial
of that sacrifice and to point forward to the great deliverance from the
bondage of sin and death.²

**The Meaning of the Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is a celebration that is rich in meaning and experience
that reach beyond a mere symbol. It is a memorial of Christ's death. It is a
testimony of our dependence on Christ for our salvation. It expresses our

¹ 1 Cor 5:7.

² Rasmussen, 23, 24.
communion and fellowship with Christ and fellow believers. It strengthens our hope and anticipation of the Second Advent. It keeps vivid before us the mission, the ministry, and the death of Jesus.

The Memorial of Christ’s Death

Memory is the most central dimension of the Lord’s Supper. According to Luke and Paul, Jesus said, "This is my body, which is given for you: this do for my memorial."¹ When we are there, at the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, we are vividly reminded of Jesus and all He did for us. Our sanctified attention is focused specifically on his death. The emblems of the broken bread and poured wine bring to mind his sacrifice on the cross. The object of the celebration is to visualize the scenes of Calvary and to relive that experience. It is through the repeated celebrations of the Lord’s Supper that the love of God is more fully impressed upon our slow hearts.

Illustration

David Thomas tells of an old horizontal marble tombstone in Nevern’s Churchyard in Pembrokeshire. It was a flat stone that had eroded into a donut with a hole in the centre as a result of the rain falling from the trunk of a tree, drop by drop, day after day, falling upon the same spot. The author concludes, "It is only repeated communions that can penetrate the hardness of our hearts to

reach our deepest emotions.  

Jesus calls us to his table lest we forget his sacrifice.

**Dependence on Christ**

The problem of sin and suffering is beyond us mortals to solve. We are born into the sinful world, and all the scrubbing cannot take it away. All the human inventions cannot eradicate its ugly stains. We are powerless to free ourselves from its bondage. Only Jesus can help us. He alone provides the remedy and deliverance, by giving his life, "by shedding his blood for many." The solution was provided by God. By coming to the table of the Lord, I express my dependence on Christ for my gift of salvation. We are as dependent on Christ for spiritual life as we are dependent on food and drink for physical nourishment.

**Communion and Fellowship with Christ and Others**

Every day in the news we are reminded that the world is filled with strife and divisiveness. When we come to the Lord's table, we experience communion and a sense of fellowship with the members of God's remnant Church. The Lord's Supper is a communal meal. It is an ordinance that we share together. Our corporate participation contributes to the unity and stability of the Church. One author states: "Our presence is as important as Christ's presence because if

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1David O. Thomas, *At the Lord's Table* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927), 23.

2Mark 14:24.
we are not both present, there is no communion.\(^1\) Then he adds that we ought to be present "not just physically, but spiritually and symbolically."\(^2\)

Speaking about this communion Paul wrote: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation (or communion) in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation (or communion) in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."\(^3\)

This is an allusion to the fact that the communion bread is broken into many pieces, which are eaten by the believers, and as all the pieces come from the same loaf, so all the believers who partake of the communion service are united in him whose broken body is thus typified by the broken bread. By partaking together of this ordinance, Christians show publicly that they are united and belong to one great family, whose head is Christ.\(^4\)

**Covenant**

We should be there at the celebration of the Lord's Supper because in no other place do we experience a stronger sense of community of the New Covenant. We meet here with all the barriers broken down. Jesus, while offering the cup to his disciples, offered the New Covenant saying: "Drink from it, all of you. For this My blood of the new covenant which is shed for the remission of


\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)1 Cor 10:16, 17, RSV.

sins."¹ You remember that the old covenant was ratified by the blood of animal sacrifices,² so the new covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ. When we are there as practising believers, we renew our pledge of loyalty to our Lord. By our presence, we recognize that we are a part of this covenant which we come to celebrate together. Christ pledged himself to be our redeemer and we must pledge by publicly participating and saying: "I accept Christ as my personal Saviour. He gave his life for me, that I might be rescued from death."³ "While receiving the Supper in faith, we claim the benefits of the Covenant, and especially the pardon of our sins."⁴

**Expectation of the Second Coming**

Through our participation in the Lord’s Supper, we proclaim the central truths of the gospel: the sacrificial death of Jesus, and our belief in his Second Coming. For the Lord’s Supper points to the second coming. "It was designed to keep this hope vivid in the minds of the disciples."⁵ The Communion service places us between Christ’s death and his coming, keeping both of these central truths of the gospel in sharp focus.


²Exod 24:8.

³White, *ARSH*, June 22, 1897. 475.

⁴Joseph Beet, *The Church, the Churches and the Sacraments* (London: Hodden and Stoughton, 1907), 92.

⁵White, *DA*, 659.
Illustration

The Lord’s Supper has been likened to a suspension bridge, spanning this present age, carrying the sheep of the Great Shepherd from the cross to heaven, and through "the sufferings of this present time." It is like the beautiful Twenty-third Psalm, connecting the agonies of the Twenty-second with the triumphs of the Twenty-fourth. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come."¹

Christ’s covenantal promise, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s Kingdom,"² directs our minds to a future celebration of the Lord’s Supper in the Kingdom of our Lord. That will be the great festival of the "marriage supper of the Lamb."³ Each time we come to participate in the Lord’s Supper, we are reminded of the joy that the personal fellowship with Christ will give us when God’s kingdom is fully established. The Lord’s Supper "intensifies our desire to participate in that experience."⁴

The Nature of Religious Symbols

As the results of our survey indicate, because we live in a secular

¹1 Cor 11:26.
²Matt 26:29 NEB.
society, it is so easy for us to participate in the Lord's Supper out of a sense of duty, by rote, with little consideration to its meaning. If a non-believer walked into our Church, and pointing to the bread on the Communion table asked, "What is it?", what would you say? "Something to eat." Would that be a sufficient answer? The bread is food indeed, but its purpose is not to satisfy the physical hunger. The Lord's Supper does not replace a Sabbath dinner, does it? Here lies the first characteristic of the religious symbols. "They point to something beyond themselves; their significance lies in something else."¹ The purpose of the bread is not to offer nutrition to the body but to direct our attention to Jesus Christ.

Illustration

One day a courtier found Henry V attending the celebration of the Eucharist at an almost deserted side altar in Westminster Abbey, while a great crowd filled the nave, and hung upon the lips of a popular preacher. When the courtier inquired why he was not with the larger congregation in the nave, the King replied, "I would rather meet my Friend than merely to hear him talked about."²

The Lord's Supper reminds us in the most forceful and permanent way possible, that Christ laid down his life that we might have life eternal. It is a visible and symbolic embodiment of the doctrine of our salvation.

¹Rice, 303.

Furthermore, religious symbols have the ability to illuminate our Christian experience. Because the bread is used to symbolize Christ’s sacrifice, "every meal can remind us of our dependence on God."¹

To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of his broken body. The water we drink is bought by his spilled blood ... The light shining from that Communion Service in the upper chamber makes sacred the provisions for our daily life. The family board becomes as the table of the Lord, and every meal a sacrament.²

More than a Symbol

However, the experience of the Lord’s Supper reaches beyond the symbolic level. Mere symbolism impoverishes the meaning of the Lord’s Supper. When I come to the Lord’s table I receive assurance. God’s promises are vindicated. The Gospel is proclaimed. At the Lord’s table I am aware of Christ’s presence more than on any other occasion. These symbols of bread and wine become the divine language by which God expresses his revelation. To me, these symbols are also seals. A seal is a substitute for a signature. It authenticates the transaction. The seal gives the documents their royal authority.

Paul frequently uses the word seal. Speaking about circumcision he calls it a seal. Abraham, says Paul, "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision; that he

¹Rice, 305.
²White, DA, 660.
might be the father of all them that believe."¹ One commentator says:

The true idea of a Sacrament is here suggested: it is a sign, seal, and means of grace, but not grace itself. Circumcision is not the covenant. The sign and seal is not itself the ground of confidence, but it testifies and openly ratifies a Divine covenant or blessing. If Abraham needed a seal of the righteousness reckoned to him, some such outward sign and seal may be expected in the Christian church.²

In other words, the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is God’s seal "vindicating, ratifying, authenticating the covenant of grace to Christian believers."³ The grace imparted by the celebration of the Lord’s Supper is the grace of our Lord’s presence.

Why Should I Be There?

After our last celebration of the Lord’s Supper, I met a couple at the hospital, who have skipped the Lord’s Supper celebration from time to time. During our little visit I extended an invitation to them for the next Communion. In response to my invitation, the gentleman asked me, "Pastor, give me some reasons why I should be there." I wish to share my answer with you.

1. You will want to be there, because the Lord’s table is the place where we show our obedience to the command of Jesus: "This do for a remembrance of Me." That command is only "satisfied when you and I are present."⁴

¹Rom 4:11.


³Ibid.

⁴Holmes, 5.
2. You will want to be there as an expression of unity. Our gathering together, our fellowship, testify that we are members of Christ's mystical body, the Church. We manifest that unity as we adore our Saviour and his sacrifice for us. Unity was so important to Jesus, that after instituting the Supper, he entreated his heavenly Father at least five times that "they may be one."^1

3. You will want to be there to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. There is no better place to express the fact that we follow the directives and commands of our Lord. The Lord is one who directs. We follow and do what he says.

4. You will want to be there participating in the Ordinance of Humility, examining yourself in the light of Christ's presence. When you decide to keep that appointment with Jesus, you will be honest in self-judgment, in confession of all known sins and in turning away from them. After the heart preparation, worshipping in spirit and in truth follows naturally.

5. You will want to be there, to express your humble dependence on the Lord. Since we still live in the flesh, we long for self-expression and self-exaltation. Our greatest need, however, is to be dependent on the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is He, who communicates the benefits of Christ's sacrifice to the humble believer.

6. You will want to be there to express the New Testament teaching of the priesthood of all believers. There is no better place to express that than in a

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^1John 17:11, 21 22, 23.
meaningful celebration of the Ordinance of Humility, praying one for another, sharing promises from God’s Word and living out the Gospel.

7. You will want to be there to express your glad submission to the Word of God. It is our only authority for faith and practice. The Lord clearly commanded us to follow his example. Submission to his will brings blessings in its train.

The number seven is a perfect number, so I thought that I gave him a good answer. But as I studied the subject further I realized that number twelve is a complete number. Here are five additional reasons to be there.

8. I like to be there because the Lord’s Supper is the place of grateful remembrance. The main purpose of the Lord’s Supper is to remember the Person of the Lord Jesus, his life, death and resurrection. As we come to Church and see the emblems, they focus our attention on the Son of God, who loved us to the utmost.

**Illustration**

A young man was about to go abroad on a long journey. His parents bought him a new watch, and had their portraits put upon the dial, so that every time he looked to see the hour he would be reminded of the loved ones at home, and of the prayers ever ascending for him, and also of his own duty of loyal love and fidelity.

The Lord’s Supper shows us a picture of Jesus Christ, and every time we observe it, we should think of what he Has done for us, and of what we are under
solemn pledge to do for him. As we meditate on that love, there flows from our hearts, true gratitude for the salvation accomplished on the Cross on our behalf.

9. I like to be there to join my brothers and sisters in expressing deepest adoration possible in the context of worship. When we pray, often our minds are occupied with our needs. When we sing praises in Christian fellowship, our minds are occupied with our blessings. But when we worship in the context of the Lord's Supper, our entire being is occupied with the Lord Jesus himself. That adoring worship is best expressed in our fellowship, through congregational singing on the theme of Calvary. I just love when brother George conducts those congregational hymns in our celebrations of the Lord's Supper. They are very special.

10. I like to be there because the Lord's table is the place of spiritual discernment. As I take the bread and drink the cup, I spiritually discern the Lord's body and his precious blood. Of course, they are symbols, but they are also seals through which my eternal redemption has been secured.

11. I like to be there as a part of the observance of the Lord's Supper to proclaim and to hear the proclamation of the Lord's death. That was the greatest event in the history of the universe. It was the event to which eternal past looked forward, and to which eternal future shall look back. That confident proclamation produces assurance of my salvation and yours.

12. We all need to be there, because the Lord's Supper is to be observed only "till he come." Each time we drink that wine and eat that bread, we are
reminded of the promise of our Lord to return and take us, his blood-bought people, to the home he has prepared for us. As we participate in the supper we are energized to proclaim the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Appeal**

Attending the celebration of the Lord's Supper is like coming home. Dora left home where she was loved for reasons she herself could not tell. She gradually established relationships that pulled her away from home. She began to feel attracted to the ways of the world. When her father wrote letters of love, she found it difficult to relate to him. Since there were things in her life that she felt guilty about, she decided not to be there when the family got together to celebrate her birthday.

Dora had an aunt Maggie who cared for her no matter what. She wrote Dora a letter that melted her heart. At the conclusion of her letter were the words that are the most appealing, most magnificent invitation to the Lord's Supper that I ever read. "Dora, your Daddy is a grievin' ye. Come home for your own sake. Come home for your dear Daddy's sake. But, Dora, come home most of all for your dear Lord's sake!"¹

The invitation to the Lord's Supper is simply the invitation to come home.

¹Oglivie, 126.
Conclusion

Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the Moravian Church, was travelling on one occasion on a missionary tour, and stopped at an inn to get his dinner. While his meal was being prepared, he remained alone in a room, and observed on the wall a picture of Christ on the cross. He wrote under the picture these words: "This I have done for thee; What wilt thou do for me?"

After he had gone, the family saw the words written under the picture of the crucified Christ. They had been careless on the subject of religion, but these words made such a deep impression that it resulted in the conversion of the family, and when Zinzendorf came there again, they thanked him for these words which he had written, and which had proved such a blessing to them.

As Christians, we stand beneath the cross of Christ. By faith we see him, with outstretched arms, with pierced hands and feet, and he says to each of us, "See! This I have done for thee; What wilt thou do for me?"

And the language of our hearts is, "O Lord, what can we do for thee?"

We can never repay that debt of love we owe to thee. All that we can do is to consecrate ourselves to thy service; all the energies of our bodies, all the faculties of our minds, we dedicate them anew to thy service and thy praise. Yes, we know we should be there and we will be there at each celebration of the Lord's Supper.

May the sequel of these four sermons be used by the Lord to impress each one of you with the importance of the Lord's Supper. May he lead you to
the sacrament as your privilege and responsibility, so that all of us will gather in scriptural simplicity, to fulfil the command of our Lord Jesus: "This do for a remembrance of Me."
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Senior pastor with more than 18 years of experience in Canada, recently served successfully for six and a half years as an associate pastor of the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church in Toronto, 1200 member multi-cultural congregation, the biggest in all of Canada.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Hamilton Mountain and Heritgage Green Seventh-day Adventist Churches 1992 - 1993
Senior pastor of a 440 member congregation and a 100 member Retirement Centre Church.

Filipino-Canadian/Bramalea Seventh-day Adventist Churches 1991 - 1992
Responsible for the ministry of reconciliation to a 500 member congregation that split.

Brampton/Orangeville Seventh-day Adventist Churches 1989 - 1991
Responsible for fund raising campaign for 1.5 million dollar church complex

Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church 1983 - 1989
Responsible for all operations of this main SDA Church in Toronto

- Stewardship emphasis brought for the first time over 1 million in tithe in 1989.
- Successfully directed $20,000 Ingathering campaigns four times.
- Developed hospital lay-visititation program.
- Was directly involved in 3 building projects and in the end directed 12,000 sq. ft. church addition built mainly by volunteer labour.
- Organized and oversaw the operation of the Metro-Toronto Street Blood Pressure Testing Program in mobile vans.
- Chaired the Metro-Toronto Community Services Executive Board for two years.
- Planned the activities of the Metro Ministerium with a membership of 35 pastors.
- Served as the Liaison Minister to the Metro-Toronto Church Musicians’ Guild.
- Negotiated the sale of the Ukrainian SDA Church building that netted the church $740,000.00 (original investment of $24,000.00)
- Acted as the senior pastor for the first half of 1989, during this half a year the church addition was completed and 46 souls were baptized.

SKILLS

- Familiar with the IBM PC and several data and word processing packages.
- Three year training in professional photography.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Published yearbooks, wall calendars, postcards, church magazine covers and numerous articles with accompanying photographs.
- Served as a Canvassing Club president at Newbold College, canvassed 6 summers in Scandinavia, graduating class pastor, member of the college orchestra.

OBJECTIVES

To serve as a college or academy church pastor or in a multi-staff setting. I would welcome a position of a senior pastor or an associate where I can contribute to the growth of the church. High on my list of interests is teaching in the Christian Ministry Department at one of our colleges. I am also interested in Stewardship, Communications and Trust Services departmental work.

PERSONAL DATA

Born 04/04/50, married. My wife presently manages the ABC store in Toronto. We have two children at Crawford Adventist Academy, grades 11 & 9.