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ABSTRACT

**A SEMINAR ON ADVENTISTS,
ADORNMENT, AND JEWELRY**

by

Dennis H. Braun

Adviser: Bruce L. Bauer

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Report

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A SEMINAR ON ADVENTISTS, ADORNMENT,
AND JEWELRY

Name of researcher: Dennis H. Braun

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Bruce L. Bauer, D.Miss.

Date completed: June 1996

Problem

The Seventh-day Adventist church continues to struggle with the issue of jewelry and adornment. Fewer members agree with the standard church teaching on the subject, and pastors and teachers are frustrated with having to continually deal with the subject. A majority of the youth in the Adventist church have rejected the traditional Adventist interpretation advocating the nonusage of jewelry.

Method

This study explores the biblical texts in question, historical Adventist trends, the writings of Ellen White, and other related issues. The research results were

presented in a seminar format to interested members of the College Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Results

The members who attended the seminar were almost unanimous in their expression of gratitude for the information that was shared. Few academy or college students attended, but this was not surprising since this subject is no longer an issue for many of them. Besides providing information on the subject matter as outlined above, considerable time was spent in discussing the conclusions and the necessity for living a principled Christian lifestyle that is inclusive of all facets of life.

Conclusions

At the close of the seminar a number of observations and conclusions were shared and they are briefly outlined. The proof-text methodology does not consider the textual context. Support is lacking for the traditional Adventist teaching on the nonusage of jewelry. The Bible and Ellen White's writings need to be interpreted according to the correct hermeneutical principles. History, culture, and traditions play a significant role in our present understanding of the issue concerning jewelry. We lack a coherent understanding of terms such as: jewelry, adornment, modestly, simplicity, and worldliness. We need to be able to discern the difference between principles and standards, and accept those standards that are relevant and based upon

Christian principles. Women have borne a disproportionate amount of the censure concerning the jewelry issue. Jewelry is a lifestyle issue, not a moral one, and it should not cause us to digress from our real mission of uplifting Christ.

Lifestyle principles were presented which included the principles of: Love and Justice, Personal Freedom, Judgment, Stewardship, Modesty, Simplicity, Balance, and Mission. These principles should be used to determine all lifestyle choices, not just those involving jewelry and adornment.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

A SEMINAR ON ADVENTISTS,
ADORNMENT, AND JEWELRY

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

by
Dennis H. Braun

June 1996

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Project

The purpose of this project was to do a thorough research on the subject of adornment and jewelry, and to develop a seminar that would share this information. The seminar would provide the church members with the knowledge to make informed decisions about Christian lifestyle issues.

Justification of the Project

Contemporary discussions within the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church indicate that the issue of dress, adornment, and jewelry continues to elicit conflicting and sometimes hostile attitudes and opinions.

During the history of the SDA church we have seen an on-going debate on the adornment issue taking place in denominational papers, college campus papers, student handbooks, and in local church boards. Spectrum and a variety of published monographs regularly debate the necessity for complying with these church standards.

Conservative members of the Seventh-day Adventist church agonize over the apparent lax attitude of the

so-called liberal members in the church who are seen as ambivalent about the adornment issue. They have felt, and expressed concern, that the denomination's status as a "peculiar people" is in jeopardy. It is their opinion that the SDA church is in a state of moral decline as evidenced by the increasing use of jewelry and adornment.

Many pastors are verbalizing their own frustrations over the adornment issue, and are anxiously seeking some measures that will ease the turmoil in their churches and bring about a resolution to this conflict.

In recent decades the expression has commonly been heard that the world is becoming smaller. For the church, this has included ethnic migrations and the blending of cultures. Unfortunately, this may have precipitated cultural clashes, disagreements, and misunderstandings. Some have been slow or unwilling to recognize that not all Adventists around the world have the same understanding about specific church standards. Conservative Adventists in North America have felt a definite challenge to their brand of church standards. As a consequence, there is a need to accept and recognize that Adventists around the globe have different ways of expressing their attitudes and practices when it comes to lifestyles issues such as the use of jewelry and adornment.

The challenge to bring some measure of resolution to the adornment issue is paramount in light of the fact that pastors and church members have expended considerable effort

and time in debating their positions. Time is a commodity that cannot be retrieved. The church's mission has been curtailed as energy has been diverted to discussions about adornment.

It is imperative that Seventh-day Adventists understand that individual views on the issue of adornment may be different. We must strive to discover the biblical principles that relate to all lifestyle issues and how every facet of life is impacted, not just jewelry and adornment.

Description of the Project

In preparation for the seminar a number of related subjects had to be researched, thus providing adequate information to share during the presentations.

The SDA church has consistently maintained and taught that the Bible clearly teaches the avoidance of all jewelry and adornment. Chapter 2 presents a study of the five biblical texts commonly upheld in support of this position. They are: Gen 35:2-4; Exod 33:3-6; Isa 3:13-26; 1 Tim 2:8-10; and 1 Pet 3:3-5. Utilizing the biblical principles essential for interpretation, conclusions are drawn from the texts in question.

Since many Seventh-day Adventists are not well versed in the history of their church, Chapter 3 focuses upon the various forces that were at work in the nineteenth century to shape Adventist thought and practice. The writings of Ellen White occupy a prominent place in Seventh-day

Adventist philosophy, and her teachings and practice are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 attempts to clarify and define some of the terminology related to this subject of adornment. Also considered are subjects such as: traditions, standards, principles, adornment and the issue of gender bias, and the transformation of character from the inside out.

Chapter 5 summarizes the key findings of the research materials. These conclusions are not designed to be exhaustive, but highlight the essential components that will be discussed during the seminar.

Chapter 6 describes the process of gathering all the above materials and presenting the information to interested members of the College Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church and students from Canadian Union College. In the actual presentations, the seminar format was utilized. At the completion of the seminar, conclusions and lifestyle principles were discussed.

Limitations of the Project

The presentation of the seminar was limited to the members of the College Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church and the faculty and student population at Canadian Union College. Many in this latter group are also members of the College Church.

Advertising for this program was limited to the local church bulletin and the regularly published college paper

entitled The Weekly. The College Church, generally speaking, is more tolerant in permitting discussions of divisive issues such as jewelry and adornment. This subject certainly would have provoked a strong negative reaction from some of the surrounding churches.

The content of the materials that were presented during the seminar was also taken primarily from the research information presented in chapters 2 through 4.

Expectations

As a result of these studies and presentations I have become more informed about the biblical, historical, and contemporary background relative to the issue of jewelry and adornment. Those church members who were able to attend have also been made aware of the struggles that our church has faced in the past, and the methodology that our forefathers used to develop church standards. It was possible to enter into a meaningful dialogue and share differing views without the usual intense excitement that surrounds discussions pertaining to adornment. A challenge was given that urged our people to be contemporary and relevant when dealing with these lifestyle issues. The members were encouraged to make all lifestyle decisions based upon the biblical principles outlined, and to re-vitalize their sense of mission.

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

Principles of Biblical Interpretation

General Considerations

Seventh-day Adventists have taken great pride in advocating faithful biblical scholarship, and this standard needs to be maintained. Any discussion pertaining to the divisive issue of adornment requires the same professional approach in the study of Scripture.

While there are many principles to keep in mind when one interprets Scripture, several are paramount to this discussion. As Jon Paulien points out, misuse of Scripture can have frightening consequences:

I have learned as a biblical scholar how easy it is to make the Bible say whatever you want it to say. One's interpretation often arises out of the need to protect one's personal failings and shortcomings from coming to the light of Scripture and the Spirit's gentle persuasion.¹

The proper hermeneutical approach should lead to a correct interpretation of the text. However, we need to be aware that we may unknowingly bring a bias to the text.

¹Jon Paulien, Present Truth in the Real World, ed. Marvin Moore (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1993), 196.

Stephen Covey describes this hidden agenda that has the potential to slant our understanding of a Bible passage:

Each of us has many, many maps in our head, which can be divided into two main categories: maps of *the way things are, or realities*, and maps of *the way things should be, or values*. We interpret everything we experience through these mental maps. We seldom question their accuracy; we're usually even unaware that we have them. We simply assume that the way we see things is the way they really are or the way they should be.

And our attitudes and behaviors grow out of those assumptions. The way we see things is the source of the way we think and the way we act.¹

When Bible passages are examined, we need to be cognizant of these "mental maps," and we must be honest about their potential influence upon our interpretations of Scripture. Paramount to everything, "the text must affect our life and make us more loving, not just fill our head with more facts to support favorite doctrines."² Without an awareness of the impact our biases may have, it is conceivable that our motives will determine the interpretation we give the words of a text. To put it another way, we may be looking at biblical texts through denominational glasses.

Historical, Cultural Considerations

How one understands inspiration affects how one interprets Scripture. It should be emphasized that it was

¹Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 24.

²Larry Crabb, M. D., *Inside Out* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1991), 161.

the writers of the Bible, not their words, who were inspired. The challenge is to determine the writer's meaning, and the contemporary issues with which he struggled. Scripture was written to address particular needs. Those needs spanned a historical time period, and were confined to a specific geographic location. Paul Furnish provides a challenging scenario that illustrates the need for considering the time and place of the biblical writings. The apostle Paul wrote to both the Galatians and the Thessalonians. What would have happened, if on mailing the letters, he had switched the labels? The Galatians would have received the counsel for the Thessalonians and vice versa. The Thessalonians, with whom Paul had a strong loving relationship, would have received the angry and sarcastic words that Paul had intended for the members of the church in Galatia. The letters sent to the wrong churches would have been unintelligible and meaningless.¹

Does this then imply that biblical teachings are not relevant for today? As Furnish continues: "The sociopolitical-cultural conditions and problems of Paul's congregations are vastly different from the sociopolitical-cultural conditions and problems confronting modern Christians."² The biblical writers were keenly aware that they were addressing God's Word to particular situations,

¹Victor Paul Furnish, The Moral Teachings of Paul (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), 16.

²Ibid.

applicable for a given time and place. This understanding and these questions do not give license to negate Scripture. The Word is living, and is still applicable today; however, we must consider the primary intent of the writer. Furnish writes:

Just because the general *topics* are the same does not mean that the *issues* are the same. It must be our task to inquire in each case, into the issues as Paul faced them. . . . Paul's instructions were shaped to meet the situations that confronted him and his congregations in their world, and their relevance for Paul's first readers must be distinguished from their relevance for us.:

Scriptural Context

The old adage still rings true: "A text without a context is a pretext"; thus a primary consideration of any exegete is to understand the context of a scriptural passage. Verses lifted out of their context have sometimes been used to misrepresent the original thought. The consideration of the context encompasses not only the immediate verses of the passage in question, but also the immediate chapters.

Exploration of the issues confronting jewelry and adornment demands faithfulness to the context of the passages that mention the subject. The proof-text method so popular in the past often does not consider the context, and may yield unsatisfactory interpretations.

¹Ibid., 28.

In summary, the truth of Scripture will only be recognized as one considers Scripture in light of proper hermeneutical principles. This requires alertness to our biases, as well as allowing Scripture to speak in light of its historical and cultural setting. One needs to recognize the socio-political forces that helped to shape the original intent of the author. Above all, the context of the verses being questioned must be given due consideration.

Old Testament Studies

There is no question that the Israelites practiced the free use of jewelry and adornment in all its varied forms. The Bible speaks of bracelets, earrings, rings, amulets, etc., that were commonly worn by both men and women. Space does not permit an examination of each Bible passage, nor are all verses relative to this study. Many are simply descriptive passages portraying everyday life.

Based on biblical data, we see that believers in God were lavish with their use of adornment. Abraham commissioned his servant to seek a wife for his son and provided a wealth of jewelry for the necessary dowry (Gen 24). Joseph wore rings and necklaces (Gen 41:41-43). By God's command, the children of Israel, in departing the land of slavery, plundered the Egyptians. This treasure provided for the construction of the sanctuary. The high priest's garments were encrusted with gold and jewels (Exod 39). Ezek 16 portrays in magnificent detail the jewelry and

apparel such as embroidered cloth, bracelets, chains, jewels, and earrings that God Himself metaphorically placed upon Israel. This passage, as with many others, describes the special relationship that God maintained with Israel. Oriental understanding of jewelry and adornment in Old Testament times can best be summarized by the following thought:

The prophets use adornment symbolically; it was not banned. Indeed, adornment was clearly in use. This is clear because adornment symbolized a relationship of betrothal, of worth and value. . . . Actually, the removal of women's adornment indicates God's displeasure and lack of acceptance of Judah as His people.¹

Despite this evidence, Seventh-day Adventists have suggested that jewelry and adornment were forbidden articles of dress, and various Old Testament passages have been cited as proof texts to uphold this position. The task at hand is to analyze and re-evaluate passages such as Gen 35:2-4; Exod 33:3-6; and Isa 3:13-26.

Gen 35:2-4

And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel: and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone." So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem. (Gen 35:2-4 NKJV)²

¹Madelyn Jones-Haldeman, "Adorning the Temple of God," Spectrum 20 (1989): 50-51.

²All Scriptural quotations throughout this paper are taken from the New King James Version.

Gen 35:2-4 is frequently used as proof that jewelry should not be worn by believers. The portion of that text in question reads as follows: "So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and all their earrings which were in their ears."

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (hereafter referred to as SDABC) reveals its bias in this comment, and leads us to believe that which is not mentioned in the text.

Not only were the actual idols delivered to Jacob for removal from the household, but also all their jewelry. These things would have been a barrier to acceptance with God at Bethel. Whether the earrings were simply ornaments, or amulets, as some commentators think, is not clear. The wisest procedure . . . is to follow the example of Jacob's wives and servants and put all such ornaments away. (emphasis supplied)

The idea in the SDABC that they removed "all their jewelry" cannot be supported by the biblical passage. As Madelyn Jones-Haldeman asserts, "It is important to note that no other rings or necklaces or bracelets or nose rings are mentioned."² We only read of earrings, and these appear to be linked to what is called "foreign gods." Seeing this connection between the phrases "foreign gods" and "earrings" is crucial to a contextual understanding of this text. Whitelaw feels that the earrings "employed for purposes of idolatrous worship, which were often covered with

¹"Genesis," Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953-1957), 1:416-417.

²Jones-Haldeman, 50.

allegorical figures and mysterious sentences, and supposed to be endowed with talismanic virtue signified heathen worship." The SDABC does concede this to be a possibility. This conclusion is warranted when one realizes that earrings were associated with the idols, and that no other adornment is mentioned.²

Gen 35 does not condemn the use of jewelry, but is merely a descriptive historical event that speaks about the earrings whose design or inscription may have had strong association with heathen worship or deities. One can assume that Jacob sought their destruction for this reason.

Exod 33:3-6

"Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people." And when the people heard these grave tidings, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you.'" So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb. (Exod 33:3-6 NKJV)

Exod 33 provides us with a glimpse of another moment when Israel was confronted by God. The context focuses upon events immediately following the golden calf episode. Israel is cast into a state of mourning, which typically in the Orient demanded the tearing and/or removal of one's

¹Thomas Whitelaw, Genesis, The Pulpit Commentary, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 411.

²Jones-Haldeman, 50.

garments. The removal of the "ornaments" was a sign for expressing sorrow, but has been taken to mean that jewelry should not be worn. However, that argument may not bear much weight when we realize how the Hebrew word should be translated. The following translation and comments bear this out: "When the people heard this dreadful news, they plunged themselves into deep mourning. Not one of them wore his festive dress. . . . Now put off from yourselves your festive dress." The Hebrew word commonly translated "ornaments" "refers to ornamental or fancy dress, any attire that might suggest not just joyful life, but even life as normal; cf. BDB, 725-26."²

One must conclude that these verses cannot be utilized as a proof text advocating the nonuse of jewelry. Israel is in mourning, and custom dictated the removal of their festive garments. It should be emphasized that the passage does not prohibit the usage of jewelry or adornment.

Isa 3:13-26

Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, And walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, Walking and mincing as they go, Making a jingling with their feet, Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will uncover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the finery: the jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, and the veils; the headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands; the perfume boxes, the charms, and the rings; the nose

¹John Durham, Exodus, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publishers, 1987), 434.

²Ibid., 435.

jewels, the festal apparel, and the mantles; the outer garments, the purses, and the mirrors; the fine linen, the turbans, and the robes. (Isa 3:16-23 NKJV)

Of all the passages in the Old Testament used as proof that jewelry and adornment are associated with sinful lifestyles, this selection from Isaiah brings forth the strongest response. A typical comment would be the following:

Nowhere else in the Bible is there so detailed a denunciation of degenerate womanhood as here. The women of Isaiah's time are pictured exactly as they were--vain, haughty, high-minded, proud, interested in themselves rather than in the Lord and the needs of those about them. In striking contrast is the picture Peter gives of the ideal Christian womanhood. (1 Pet 3:1-5).¹

Another writer shares this perspective:

According to the prophet Isaiah, fashion took strong hold of the women of Judah in his day. In a strongly denunciatory passage (Isa 3:16-24), he warns them that the judgments of God were about to overtake them for their slavery to dress and fashionable baubles, which they exploited for sex and other purposes.²

Most expositors of Isa 3 feel this to be a condemnation of the women for their ostentatious dress, but this explanation has been challenged by Elizabeth Platt. The keys to understanding the passage properly are determined by context, and by the meaning of the articles of clothing mentioned.

¹"Isaiah," SDA Bible Commentary, ed. F. D. Nichol, 4:115.

²D. A. Delafield, What's in Your Clothes Closet? (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1974), 41.

Commentators generally agree that obscurity surrounds the meaning of many of the twenty-one words, and almost all have attributed these items to clothing or adornment worn by women. Elizabeth Platt, after extensive research, concluded that of the first nine items, seven were worn by men of high position, and the remaining articles (with more belonging to men than women) were insignias of high office.¹ Her conclusion is that "misrepresentation of these articles of jewelry and clothing can lead to unfortunate consequences in interpretation."²

Contextual studies reveal that the reason for Isaiah's burning rebuke against the aristocracy was their oppression of the poor. (Isa 3:13-15) "The point at issue in Isa 3 is not a criticism of the so-called fickleness of women's fashions but a denouncement of persons of high office for their social injustice."³ The items of clothing and adornment mentioned are nothing more than descriptive symbols that identify those who occupy high office, men and women alike.

The passage context would affirm that the wearing of beautiful apparel such as jewelry is not in itself what is being condemned, but that the lesson is on the misuse of the authority of office for which the apparel stands.⁴

¹Elizabeth Ellen Platt, "Jewelry of Bible Times and the Catalog of Isa 3:18-23 Part I & II," Andrews University Seminary Studies 17 (1979): 71-84, 189-201.

²Ibid., 71.

³Ibid., 189.

⁴Ibid., 200.

By way of summary we note that the Old Testament passages commonly used to defend a "plain dress" code in reality do not teach this at all. Jewelry was worn by all, but when the aristocracy abused their positions of power, the stripping off of their ornaments symbolized their loss of power. Joseph ruled as Prime Minister and wore a seal ring as a sign of authority. Haman misuses that office and his ring is condemned. The Queen in the Song of Solomon is praised for her jewelry; the harlot of Ezekiel misuses her adornment. Rebecca is heralded for her golden ornaments, but the aristocratic women of Samaria are chastised as indolent cows. The high priest proudly wore his turban and breastplate, but Hosea denounced Israel for their sin and said they would be without these things.²

If these conclusions are correct, it is difficult to condemn the use of jewelry and adornment based upon Old Testament teaching.

New Testament Studies

Although it is less descriptive regarding jewelry and adornment, the New Testament contains two texts regularly cited as proof that Christians should refrain from using outward adornment. The wording in the texts may be similar, but they are dealing with different issues.

²Ibid., 200-201.

1 Tim 2:8-10

Therefore I desire that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. (1 Tim 2:8-10 NKJV)

Paul uses words describing adornment, but the challenge remains to examine the context carefully for the true meaning of the passage.

Several observations are indicative of contextual considerations. One of these is that commentators generally agree that Paul's focus was upon appropriate dress worn in worship settings. The following comment bears this out:

The object of the Apostle is not to enjoin a general rule of life for Christian women, but specifically for their demeanor at the place of prayer. He does not forbid all ornament, but only the excess which is a mark of frivolity and love of display, and awakens impure passions.¹

"Paul was not promoting drabness, which itself can become a matter of display and pride. Nor was Paul absolutely forbidding all jewelry or excellent clothing. . . . He was resisting extravagance and ostentation when substituted for religion."² Paul was not issuing a command for Christian women to adopt an ascetic lifestyle. The nobility were notorious for spending considerable time weaving gold into

¹J. J. Oosterzee, The Two Epistles of Paul to Timothy, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 33.

²Thomas C. Oden, First and Second Timothy and Titus, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1989), 94.

their hair, and Paul is simply encouraging his readers to avoid this extreme. Bercot identifies the extremes to which ladies of the day would indulge themselves:

Roman women adorned the rest of their bodies as much as their faces. When going out, they would array themselves with jewels, often wearing expensive rings on every finger. Fashionable women insisted on wearing gowns made of imported materials such as silk, even though, pound for pound, silk cost as much as gold. Clement commented whimsically, "The body of such ladies wouldn't fetch a thousand drachmas (a coin of little value), but they will pay ten thousand talents (more than the average Roman earned in a lifetime) for a single dress."¹

The Christian life should always be in proper balance. "The true line is passed when more is thought of this external adorning, than of the ornament of the heart. Any external decoration which occupies the mind more than the virtues of the heart . . . is wrong."²

It is evident that Paul was trying to counteract a cultural practice of overindulgence in the worship service. We are quick to recognize that Paul's counsel for women's silence in church was culturally derived. Why then do we not accept the fact that his discussion of adornment also related to cultural practices and excesses?

One other possibility deserves some consideration. Madelyn Jones-Haldeman advocates that the opulent dress and adornment describe the wealthy who, on occasion, retained

¹David W. Bercot, Will the Real Heretics Please Stand Up (Tyler, TX: Scroll Publishing Company, 1989), 29.

²Albert Barnes, I Timothy, Notes on the New Testament, vol. 17 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), 135.

the services of itinerant preachers whose teachings were not always orthodox. 1 Tim 2:12 talks about having "authority over a man," and these words carry the connotation of seduction and murder. It is possible that Paul did not want the women of his day to show in any manner, including extravagant dress, a sense of high-handed power and authority.¹

1 Pet 3:3-5

Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold, or of putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands. (1 Pet 3:3-5 NKJV)

Although the SDABC states "Such 'wearing of gold' was contrary to the principle of Christian modesty and simplicity,"² few commentaries would support this opinion. Therefore one must probe deeper to search out Peter's meaning.

The text is similar to Paul's admonition to young Timothy, "that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works." Although the wording is similar, the passages address different issues.

¹Jones-Haldeman, 52.

²"I Peter," SDA Bible Commentary, ed. F. D. Nichol, 7:469.

For example, Peter's counsel is in the heart of a section referred to as a House Duty Code. In this section of Scripture, Peter is dealing with issues relative to relations between slaves and masters, wives and husbands, and children and fathers. As a consequence,

we must remember that this exhortation was written to women in a monarchistic society, women whose very beings were organized around their husband's wants and desires. The whole philosophical system of the age was predicated on a system of superiors and inferiors--a principle that Christianity did not accept. The real purpose for writing I Peter 3:1-7 was to encourage wives to look and act the part society demanded in order to lessen the criticism against the new church.¹

Dress was significant, and for the wealthy Christians who could afford to dress in a more lavish style, there was a constant danger of being associated with the immoral who participated in cultic festivals. The following comments bear out this thought:

In particular, there is no evidence that Peter is mounting a polemic against the flamboyant dress that characterized women's participation in the Eastern cults of Artemis and Isis. He is simply making sure that Christian women will not be perceived by their husbands--or by society in general--as in any way similar to the female adherents to these cults.²

The emphasis was upon exuding inner character qualities that would be admired by all. "The grand thing which she was to seek, was not that which is merely external, but that which is internal, and which God regards

¹Jones-Haldeman, 54.

²J. Ramsay Michaels, I Peter, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988), 160.

of so great value."¹ Kistemaker in his commentary adds this further insight: "Peter does not say that a woman should refrain from adorning herself. He writes no prohibition against using cosmetics or wearing attractive apparel. Peter's emphasis is not on prohibition but on a proper sense of values."² He is desirous that Christian women not place themselves in a position whereby they will be open to criticism, and encourages them to live a normal life knowing that the Saviour was coming soon.

In fact, "if one were to argue from this passage that ornaments were forbidden, one could also apply the same logic to the next clause about apparel."³ Suffice it to say, Peter was not suggesting that his readers disrobe! "His point was not that women should not braid and bejewel their hair (or whatever they did with it in those days), but that all the hair-arranging in the world is no substitute for inner tranquillity."⁴

While Peter and Paul may have used the words descriptive of jewelry and adornment, the fundamental issues

¹Albert Barnes, 1 Peter, Notes on the New Testament, vol. 19 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953), 158.

²Simon J. Kistemaker, Peter and Jude, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 120.

³Charles Ball, I and II Peter, The Wesleyan Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966), 264.

⁴John White, Flirting with the World (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1982), 82.

they were addressing had no relevance to the present-day situation of wearing jewelry.

Having examined the biblical record, it is now appropriate to consider traditional Seventh-day Adventist thought on the issue. This involves an attempt to briefly probe our historical roots, as well as to consider the writings of E. G. White.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL ADVENTISM AND ADORNMENT

Literature Review

Seventh-day Adventists have been writing about jewelry and adornment for more than a century. Because the literature is so extensive it is impossible to consider all the articles. The thrust of the comments is fairly consistent--jewelry and adornment should be shunned, and as a general rule the references to jewelry and adornment are included in materials that deal with the broader subject of church standards. The widespread use of the wedding ring among Seventh-day Adventists in North America has been, at least for the past few decades, an additional focal point for the subject on adornment.

Recently, well-known Seventh-day Adventist evangelists have preached and written extensively about the subject of adornment. Adventist publications have condemned the use of all forms of adornment. Books on jewelry and adornment by prominent church leaders or pastors have had a

significant impact.¹ It is evident that considerable effort and expense have gone into promoting "plain dress" and "Christian modesty," but despite these efforts the jewelry issue has not been resolved. If it had, the publication of these articles and books would have ceased decades ago.

The one exception to this trend of denouncing the use of all jewelry and adornment is the series of studies published in Spectrum in 1989. These articles re-examine the traditional Adventist interpretation of some of the proof texts mentioned in the previous chapter.

One reason why Adventists are preoccupied with this matter can be found in our historical roots. We next trace the development of Adventist thought in this area.

The Historical Milieu of the Rise of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Plain Dress Movement

Seventh-day Adventists have inherited a tendency towards a plain tradition because they originated from within a number of Christian churches that adhered to and promoted simplicity of dress. This plain tradition had its roots in the Anabaptist fellowships spawned by the Protestant Reformation. Collectively those who embraced the Anabaptist tradition spoke out in opposition to the use of

¹See for example R. E. Francis with George Vandeman, God Believes in Jewelry (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1991); D. A. Delafield, What's in Your Clothes Closet?; Samuele Bacchiocchi, Christian Dress & Adornment (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1995).

jewelry, hair ribbons, and other accessories. Others like the Puritans and Quakers regularly cried out against gold ornaments, silver buckles, feathers, ribbons, and lace.¹ Baptists, Quakers, the Amish, Mennonites, the Holiness Pentecostals, Nazarenes, Methodists, and Seventh-day Adventists are but a sampling of the religious movements that have, at some time in their history, embraced a similar plain dress code. However, "many plain people are not well versed in the Scriptural and moral reasons for wearing plain clothes. They merely have faith that the church has preserved and upheld an appropriate standard of dress for Christians."²

Some students of history have postulated that the plain dress movement is nothing more than the adoption of certain styles that were the fashion of the day, which in some cases may have been the simple peasant clothing worn for every occasion. With the passage of time, various groups who continued to cling to these styles simply froze them into a static religious costume.³ Anabaptists could be recognized by their adherence to this dress code, which included their refusal to wear jewelry, lace, or anything else that may have the appearance of vanity.

¹Gary Land, "Adventists in Plain Dress," Spectrum 20 (1989): 42.

²Stephen Scott, Why Do They Dress That Way? (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1986), 7.

³Ibid., 18.

While Seventh-day Adventists in general did not adopt some of these extremes with clothing, there remains a clear and direct linkage between the Adventist avoidance of jewelry and adornment and the Anabaptist philosophy and teaching of simplicity. The nineteenth century had its vocal proponents for simplicity, and often they ferociously pursued their goal of bringing the plain dress concept to the attention of the members of the various churches. The following statement has several points that should be noted:

The strongly patriarchal character of the more conservative Mennonite groups may also contribute to the emphasis upon controlled costume. The elders and ministers may have such a strong sense of domination as shepherds over their flocks that they consciously or unconsciously seek for outward signs of submission which are most readily furnished by uniform, conservative, distinctive items of costume and drab and dark colors.

It cannot be denied that "paternal mandates" after the fashion of the Mennonites have been in evidence to promote conformity within the Adventist church. While it may be difficult to prove that outward appearance is indicative of submission to the rules set out by the leaders of the Adventist church, it is important to see how these forces were at work within the Anabaptist tradition of plain dress. Further considerations of these points are dealt with in chapter 4.

While great diversity of opinion exists among those adopting this lifestyle of plain dress, Adventists can trace

¹Mennonite Encyclopedia, 1956 ed., s.v. "Dress."

much of their practice and teaching to Methodism and the writings of Ellen G. White.

The Influence of Methodism

A sizeable proportion of the early Adventist pioneers originated from within the Methodist church, and it was only natural that they brought with them their concerns about plain dress. Prominent leaders among the fledgling Adventist believers whose spiritual roots can be traced to this tradition included Josiah Litch, Hiram Edson, Frederick Wheeler, and Ellen White. Thousands of ministers and lay people preached the Advent message, and of 174 known ministers who preached the Millerite message, about one-half were Methodists.¹ It should also be noted that while the Methodist influence was prominent among the early Adventist believers, many of the other Protestant groups held to similar standards. It was from this composite Millerite group that the Seventh-day Adventist church developed.

It is known that the Methodist church "expected its clergy and laymen, whether rich or poor, to dress in plain garb without jewelry, ornamentation, and frills."² Some of the "evils" frowned upon included neckties, studbuttons, pins, puffed shoulders, vice-like corsets, lace curtains, collars, long mustaches, gold-rimmed spectacles, gold,

¹C. Mervyn Maxwell, Moving Out (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1973), 6.

²Emory Stevens Bucke, ed., The History of American Methodism (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 2:340.

pearls, feathers, flowers, ribbons, short sleeves, and ornamental buttons. Their list of sinful activities also included games, fairs, school athletic events, novels, the habitual use of tea and coffee, and not least of all, profaning the Lord's Day with frivolous activities.¹ One Methodist writer sadly concludes that his church paid for this legalistic attitude by suffering years of stagnant growth, and commented that, while some looked back at this era with nostalgia, his church was not particularly spiritual despite all of its rules and standards.²

One indication that Methodist teachings had an impact upon Adventist believers is an article appearing in The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, July 10, 1855, which addresses the issue of dress and adornment. The document was a reprint of a piece entitled "On Dress," which was taken from John Wesley's advice to the people called Methodists. For two lengthy pages Wesley was quoted, and the majority of his comments were addressed to the apparel of the ladies. He implored them to divest themselves of their gold, pearls, precious stones, glaring colors, lace, ruffles, and to use no curling of hair or costly apparel. His counsel to men was little more than advising them not to

¹Wayne R. Kleinsteuber, Coming of Age: The Making of a Canadian Free Methodist Church (N.p.: Light and Life Press Canada, 1980), 36-37.

²Ibid., 38-39.

wear shining stockings and glittering buckles or buttons.¹ Much of Adventist thought about refraining from all adornment and other so-called frivolous practices can be traced to earlier Methodist teaching and practice.

Historical Adventist Trends

In addition to Methodism's contributions, numerous other articles appeared over the decades that consistently took the stand of urging Adventist members to divest themselves of their jewelry and adornment.

We do know that there was a strong feeling on the subject among the church leaders in the nineteenth century. It was their opinion that jewelry and adornment were not appropriate articles of dress for Adventist believers. General practice, however, often seemed to be at odds with this opinion, and the sheer volume of articles written on the subject indicates that the ultimate goal of simplicity had not been attained.

One of the strongest appeals for a simple style of dress was issued in the year 1866. The Battle Creek resolution was printed by the Review and the rationale for dress standards was stated.

In view of the present corrupt and corrupting state of the world, and the shameful extremes to which pride and fashion are leading their votaries, and the danger of some among us, especially the young, being contaminated by the influence and example of the world around them,--

¹"On Dress," Review and Herald, July 10, 1855, 1.

we feel constrained as a church, to express our views on the subject of Dress.¹

During the remainder of the century the discussion about adornment revolved around concerns for inner spirituality. Interestingly enough, many of the writers were women, which is all the more startling when we consider that almost all admonition shunning needless adornment was (and continues to be) directed at women. This was an era when Adventists were struggling with the themes of law and grace. In most of the discussions, jewelry invariably was only one of many different items of adornment under consideration. Even though there appears to be a consensus among the written opinions about jewelry, during the last century it was not an issue that fell under the jurisdiction of church discipline.²

The lifestyle practices among church members in Battle Creek provide an interesting scenario showing the dichotomy between actual practice and perceived expectations. In 1866 the Battle Creek church brought forth a number of resolutions, which among other things urged the members to be scrupulously plain in dress, and not to use gold, coral, pearl, rubber, or hair jewelry. They also held that flounces, loops, braid, embroidery, and buttons in dress trimmings were vanities that the Bible expressly

¹"Resolutions on Dress," Review and Herald, April 30, 1866, 180.

²Land, 44-45.

forbid Christians to use. Shaving and coloring the beard for men constituted vanity, and members greatly erred in growing a moustache or goatee.¹ It is conceivable that even though the members of this church had been admonished to follow these guidelines, their practice does not appear to be in keeping with their counsel. At the very least there is evidence that several decades later they no longer followed this counsel. Twenty years later Ellen White indicated members in this area were wearing rings, gold watches, and chains. Furthermore, during an offering taken in 1893 the collection included gold watches, gold chains, gold rings, gold bracelets, gold sleeve-buttons, diamond studs, and pins.² Consistency between the teaching of the Battle Creek church and actual practice does not appear to be evident.

Further acknowledgment that a diversity of opinion existed at Battle Creek is found in some letters that were written in response to the initial articles on jewelry in Spectrum, 1989. One individual submitted pictures of his great-great-grandparents (Thomas Lewis) and their family who lived in Battle Creek during the late 1800s. The Lewis family included church members who wrote for the Little Friend, sang in the choir, lived next door to the Whites, were denominationally employed, and wore necklaces, as the

¹"Resolutions on Dress," 180-181.

²Land, 46-47.

pictures clearly reveal.¹ It would appear that the counsel given in official church papers was not always adhered to, even by denominationally employed members.

A sampling of different writers throughout the twentieth century shows this trend continuing:

In 1918, Stemple White quoted John Wesley and the 1855 Methodist Discipline in an apparent protest against the increasing acceptance of the wedding ring in Adventist circles. A 1931 writer described "God's professed people wearing rings, bracelets, chains, and almost everything in the line of jewelry," including the wedding ring. And in 1956, R. R. Bietz stated that "today we see more and more fingers, heads, necks, and ears of God's people decorated with ornaments of gold and silver."²

Consistency between the written and spoken counsel from church leaders regarding the avoidance of jewelry and adornment, and actual practice appears to have been at odds throughout the decades. The challenge to adopt a simplistic dress style today is but a reflection of our past.

The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs

Seventh-day Adventists have had a very strong aversion towards the concept of a written creedal statement. However, a statement of fundamental beliefs has developed over the decades. There have been three major written acknowledgments of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs: 1872, 1931, and 1980. Of concern to this discussion is an

¹"Adventist Town Meeting on Jewelry, Abortion, and Creation," Spectrum 20 (1990): 34-35.

²Land, 47.

examination of the church's possible shift in attitude, or understanding, of the jewelry/adornment issue as revealed by the Statements of Fundamental Beliefs.

The 1872 Declaration of Fundamental Principles consisted of a list of twenty-five commonly held beliefs among the Advent people. Throughout the document there is no mention, or hint, about the subject of adornment, jewelry, and related issues. The SDA church did, through other means, try to discourage the usage of such, but apparently did not feel the need to include any mention of jewelry and adornment in its statement of beliefs.

The 1931 Statement of Fundamental Beliefs also did not refer specifically to jewelry. It consisted of a list of twenty-two fundamental beliefs. The only ideas related to dress that are mentioned are the following words as taken from article #17: "That the believer should recognize his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that therefore he should clothe that body in neat, modest, dignified apparel."

The Statement of Beliefs was expanded to twenty-seven articles at the 1980 General Conference session in Dallas, Texas. It is not until this document that we finally have adornment mentioned. In Statement 21 we find these words: "While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit."

While the church may have through the spoken and written word counselled against the use of jewelry and adornment, for more than a century it refused to include this in our fundamental beliefs. Even the 1980 statement does not go so far as to prohibit these items.

The Writings of Ellen G. White Concerning
the Issue of Adornment

No author, writer, or church leader has been more formative in determining Seventh-day Adventist teaching and practice than Ellen G. White. It is vital to the understanding of this divisive issue to give a fair and honest review of her thoughts pertaining to the subject of adornment. There is no question that she forcefully and directly addressed this concern on many occasions, and the following quotation is but a reflection of her general opinion on the subject:

Christians are not to decorate the person with costly array or expensive ornaments. All this display imparts no value to the character. The Lord desires every converted person to put away the idea that dressing as worldlings dress, will give value to his influence. The ornamentation of the person with jewels and luxurious things is a species of idolatry. This needless display reveals a love for those things which are supposed to place a value upon the person. It gives evidence to the world of a heart destitute of the inward adornment. Expensive dress and adornments of jewelry give an incorrect representation of the truth that should always be the highest value. An over-dressed, outwardly adorned person bears the sign of inward poverty.¹

¹Ellen G. White, "Preparation for Baptism," Manuscript Releases from the Files of the Letters and Manuscripts Written by Ellen G. White (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981), 6:159.

No one disputes that certain events helped to shape Ellen White's writings, and that these need to be taken into consideration when considering her comments on adornment. The contextual background is just as important here as it was with the biblical texts of the previous chapter. With that in mind, we will briefly look at some of the circumstances that shaped Ellen White's thoughts and words.

Ellen White's Methodist Background

Previously, we have observed the Methodist influence within Adventism, and seen that the writings of Ellen White echoed this Wesleyan influence. She had been raised as a Methodist, and it comes as no surprise to have her write: "Self denial in dress is a part of our Christian duty. To dress plainly and abstain from displays of jewelry and ornaments of every kind is in keeping with our faith."¹ Wesley spoke frequently of plain dress as did Ellen White, and she also repeated his counsel against lace and other unnecessary trimming. However, she would readily admit that the Methodists did not always have total success in the promulgation of the concept of plain dress. She recalled at the age of twelve, when she was baptized into the Methodist church, another lady who was also being taken into church membership. It was distressing for her to see this lady accepted with all her gold rings, earrings, and a bonnet

¹Ellen G. White, My Life Today (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952), 123.

well-adorned with flowers and bows. The pastor did not seem to take any exception to this lady's dress, but young Ellen vowed she would always be plain in her dress.¹

Subsequently, the teachings of Methodism and the teachings of Ellen White were an influence upon the standards adopted by the Adventist church.

Her Rationale for Opposition

When reading Ellen White's comments on adornment and jewelry, two prominent concerns surface. She was overcome with the fact that Jesus was coming soon and everything in life should be subservient to that glorious event. Parallel to that was her view that all our resources should help hasten that day.

The Urgency of Time

Ellen White had a very strong sense that she was living in a day when Jesus' return was very imminent. That hope still burns in the hearts of Seventh-day Adventists today, but she was faced with the events of 1844, and all of the urgency that that era had generated. Even though that date came and left the believers disappointed, they went forth with renewed vigor in proclaiming the nearness of the second coming of Christ. Everything else was subservient to proclaiming the parousia--the church leadership and Ellen White could find no rationale for occupying one's time with

¹Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945), 2:13-14.

anything but the proclamation of the gospel. Her comments on adornment are infused with this sense of urgency, and with passion she wrote, "Time is too short to adorn the body with gold or silver or costly apparel."¹ On another occasion she penned this thought: "Much money is spent in the adornment of the person that ought to be devoted to the proclamation of the truth for this time."² One could infer that when she addressed the issue of adornment, her thoughts were prefaced by the fact that the Lord's coming would soon occur, and nothing should come in the way of church members giving their all to facilitate that momentous occasion.

The Issue of Stewardship

Related to the issue of urgency is the issue of stewardship. Much of Ellen White's written material on adornment stresses faithfulness with financial matters. Her comments were primarily directed towards the middle class of Seventh-day Adventists, who were subject to following every whim of fashion. Whenever she spoke about not spending foolishly on adornment, she consistently dealt with a broad spectrum of articles that showed church members were not careful in their stewardship to God. Her thoughts do not just single out adornment as a needless expense, but go on to include our homes and even the food with which we

¹E. G. White, "Ellen White on Jewelry," Manuscript Releases, 9:117.

²Ellen G. White, "The Need of Home Religion," Review and Herald, June 29, 1905, 145.

sometimes over-indulge ourselves. Her comments were specific to the issue of extravagance and expense.

If professed Christians would use less of their wealth in adorning the body and in beautifying their own houses, and would consume less in extravagant, health-destroying luxuries upon their tables, they would place much larger sums in the treasury of God.¹

On another occasion she wrote: "Those who invest the Lord's goods in expensive buildings, in extravagant adornment, in furniture, in dress, in needless ornaments of show or display are embezzling our Lord's goods that are only lent us for a time."²

On the other hand, if the cost of an item decreased, she might no longer speak out against it. A case in point is her comment against bicycles--they were not inherently wrong, but it was unwise for Adventists to spend vast sums of money in proportion to their income to purchase this trend-setting status symbol.

It would seem logical to conclude that Ellen White believed that adornment and stewardship were closely linked, and when she spoke or wrote about the issue she included a whole range of items--dress, houses, food, and buildings. For Mrs. White there was no essential difference between spending extravagantly on our homes or on jewelry. All of

¹Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 3:401.

²Ellen G. White, "The Wise and Unwise Use of Money," Manuscript Releases, 16:257.

these things were one and the same, and she did not elevate one concern above the other.

Ellen White's Inclusive Thinking
on the Adornment Issue

Ellen White did not just single out adornment and jewelry, but spoke against a wide assortment of practices. Comprehending this truth is essential because Seventh-day Adventists generally have taken a microscopic view of this issue and focused only upon jewelry as being that which Ellen White denounced. Her views were comprehensive in nature as the following thought illustrates:

The parading of bows and ribbons, ruffles and feathers, and gold and silver ornaments is a species of idolatry and is wholly inappropriate for the sacred service of God, where the eye of every worshipper should be single to His glory. . . . When they see their children inclined to follow worldly fashions, they should like Abraham, resolutely command their household after them.¹

Virtually every time Mrs. White wrote on the subject, jewelry was linked with other items of dress. The following quotations are indicative of her feelings on the subject.

"The arranging of jewelry, sashes and laces, and unnecessary ornaments upon their persons, alone must occupy a large share of their time."² She also comments: "We see ladies professing godliness wear elegant gold chains, necklaces, rings, and other jewels, with a profusion of feathers and ribbons and expensive trimmings, while want stalks the

¹E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 5:68-69.

²Ellen G. White, "Fashionable Dress," The Health Reformer, March 1874, 74.

streets, and the suffering and the destitute are on every side."

The list of things that Ellen White felt indignant about as found in the previous passages included the following items: bows, ribbons, ruffles, feathers, sashes, lace, gold chains, gold and silver ornaments, rings, necklaces, expensive buildings, furniture, and even food. Jewelry and adornment items were only a small part of the list--feathers, ribbons, bows, laces, sashes, and ruffles are adornment. These items make up a large part of the list of things she spoke against. Consistency should demand that Seventh-day Adventists today, who adamantly oppose the use of jewelry, set aside bows, ribbons, lace, ruffles, sashes, feathers, and extravagant household articles mentioned by Ellen White. Little if anything is ever said about the latter (let alone expensive homes or food) today, many are vexed to distraction because some Adventists wear jewelry.

Ellen White's Personal Practice

It is always interesting to compare a writer's counsel to his or her actual practices. Such a comparison either reflects an inconsistency on his/her part, or a misunderstanding on ours. In the case of Ellen White, I believe we have failed to see the total picture and have jumped at some of her thoughts, but have failed to grasp the

¹Ellen G. White, "Holiday Presents," Review and Herald, November 21, 1878, 39.

larger picture. She wrote, for instance, that American ministers who labored in Australia should not use a wedding ring, yet she supported her daughter-in-law's decision to have a ring ceremony.¹ She was aware of the cultural forces at work in this particular case. According to the research of Gerald Wheeler, a primary objection to North American Adventists wearing the wedding ring seems to be influenced by her opposition to the membership adopting the ways of middle-class Americans.²

There is no disputing the fact that on many occasions Ellen White wore articles that would have to be classified as adornment. Photographs have illustrated her use of pins and brooches. An eyewitness account from the General Conference session in Minneapolis described her wearing "a straight dress of black with nothing to break the somberness, save a tiny white collar about her neck and a heavy metallic chain which hung suspended near her waist."³ There is also a report that while Ellen White was in the South Pacific she purchased a shell necklace for her granddaughter⁴ and the granddaughter is seen wearing this

¹Arthur L. White, Ellen G. White: The Australian Years 1891-1900 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1983), 195-196.

²Gerald Wheeler, "The Historical Basis of Adventist Standards," Ministry, October 1989, 10.

³"A Female Oracle," Minneapolis Tribune, Oct. 21, 1888, quoted in Wheeler, 10.

⁴Wheeler, 10.

necklace in a family photograph.¹ While in Hawaii Mrs. White received a number of gifts from the wife of a wealthy merchant, and of that incident she wrote:

Sister Kerr took me into her parlor bedroom, and opened a box of ruches [a strip of lace, net, ribbon, or the like, used in place of a collar or cuff]. . . . She also presented me with three yards and a half of silk, costing three dollars a yard with which I was to make a sack [a short coat or jacket]. I saw that she was very desirous that I should have this, and I could not refuse without greatly disappointing her. It was beautiful silk left from a dress which she had. She also gave me a silk scarf, and a ten dollar pin, composed of white stones, very plain and serviceable. I thought I could not accept this, but she looked so sorry, that I finally did take it, and have worn it ever since, for it is handy and becoming, while it is not showy at all.²

It is obvious that a number of the articles of adornment that Ellen White discouraged Adventists from not using now became part of Ellen White's personal wardrobe. This did not appear to be infringing upon her earlier counsel to seek simplicity and plainness at all times. In her description of the visit to Hawaii she does accept adornment providing it is serviceable, does not give the appearance of vanity, is not showy, and is plain. For Ellen White, varied circumstances could easily dictate what was considered appropriate and what was objectionable.

Ellen White's views on jewelry and adornment were tempered by a number of considerations. She brought with

¹In some of the earlier reproductions of this photograph, the Review and Herald actually had the necklace airbrushed out of the picture.

²Ellen G. White, "Sister Kerr's Gifts," Manuscript Releases, 8:658.

her a strong Methodist leaning towards plainness, and many times echoes that philosophical way of life. She had no hesitation in speaking out against extravagance and needless expense while the needs of people and the church were left destitute. Her counsel also needs to be set in the context of her day, for this was a time when many of the church members wanted to participate in the middle-class lifestyle that so many Americans seemed to enjoy. She did not single out jewelry per se, but considered it among a host of other things that Christians should refrain from using. The Adventist church no longer denounces bows, ribbons, lace, sashes, fine houses, etc., but still opposes the use of certain articles of jewelry. We have also seen how Ellen White herself used and purchased items that have to be labelled as jewelry or adornment.

Having attempted to gain an understanding of the development of Adventist thought concerning jewelry and adornment, we now turn our focus upon a number of integral issues related to the subject. While some of the terminology surrounding these concepts is taken for granted, the concepts have defied rational definition, thus leading to false understanding. Interestingly enough, these issues have been formative in shaping the Adventist view and opinion on the subject of jewelry and adornment.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTEGRAL ISSUES RELATIVE TO THE CHALLENGE OF UNDERSTANDING JEWELRY AND ADORNMENT

The development of any strategy that would lead to a clearer understanding of the issues relating to jewelry and adornment would be incomplete without the examination of several vital subjects. First, it would be helpful to sharpen our definition and clarify the meaning of the following terms: jewelry and adornment, simplicity, Christian modesty, and worldliness. Additional concepts requiring examination are: standards and principles, gender bias, traditions, and developing a balance between building relationships and the enforcement of external behavior.

Definitions and Clarifications

Jewelry and Adornment

For many Seventh-day Adventists, the mere mention of the subject of jewelry and adornment elicits concern. Although the use of jewelry and adornment is a divisive issue, it has, more frequently than not, resisted rational analysis. However, rather than react, it would be more appropriate to deliberate the meaning of the terms. It is

apparent that preconceived ideas have led to a selective and narrow definition of jewelry and adornment, which in turn causes perplexity because there are blatant and obvious inconsistencies. Misunderstanding, confusion and tension are the inevitable consequence of failing to consistently define our terminology.

For centuries jewelry has has been understood to refer to expensive ornaments constructed for personal wear and include in their design gold, silver or precious stones. In modern times the definition has been broadened to include a host of very inexpensive articles that fall under the label of cosmetic jewelry.

The term adornment is very broad and describes virtually everything that people use to embellish or enhance their personal appearance. Jewelry could be considered a type of adornment. Adornment may also be expanded to include such things as the embellishment of our homes.

Ellen White wrote: "To dress plainly, abstaining from display of jewelry and ornaments of every kind, is in keeping with our faith."¹ The question can be raised: Is that statement consistent with, or in harmony with, either of the following two comments. In the 1988 book, Seventh-day Adventists Believe, we read:

In view of these Scriptural teachings and the principles laid out above, we believe that Christians ought not to adorn themselves with jewelry. We understand this to mean that the wearing of rings, earrings, necklaces, and

¹White, Testimonies for the Church, 3:366.

bracelets, and showy tie tacks, cufflinks, and pins--and any other type of jewelry that has as its main function display--is unnecessary and not in harmony with the simplicity of adornment urged by scripture.¹

In the authoritative and widely distributed statement issued following the 1972 Annual Council it was written:

that in the area of personal adornment, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, rings (including engagement rings) should not be worn. Articles such as watches, brooches, cuff links, tie clasps, etc., should be chosen in harmony with the Christian principles of simplicity, modesty, and economy.²

Both pronouncements disapprove of rings, bracelets, earrings and necklaces, and one has a qualifying modifier--"showy"--when discussing cuff links, tie tacks, and pins. The operative word appears to be "showy," and that determines what is acceptable or not. This only opens the door to another problem--how then do we define what is showy or not? In reality, it could be argued that both statements are in violation of Ellen White's counsel as mentioned above, for she forbids the use of any adornment. Dancing around definitions only leads to trouble. This indecisiveness promotes confusion, and has the inevitable potential to cause some to reject this church standard regarding the use of jewelry and adornment. Whether we like it or not, by definition, pins, tie tacks, brooches, cuff

¹Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . : A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1988), 287.

²"Recommendations of General Interest from the Autumn Council--1," Review and Herald, November 30, 1972, 16.

links, even neck ties, etc., can be labeled as articles of personal adornment.

Compounding the problem are the statements by certain writers who adamantly oppose the use of any adornment or jewelry, but reveal a double standard in their works. For example, Samuele Bacchiocchi, who builds a case against the wearing of jewelry, goes on to say: "The wearing of the signet ring is not condemned in the Bible, presumably because it was regarded as an instrument of authority rather than an ornament."¹ Although he previously condemns all jewelry, function now becomes a factor to determine whether or not an article of jewelry is acceptable. In other words, a ring is no longer jewelry if it serves another purpose. This issue concerning function occurs frequently. A tiny pin can hold a necktie in place, but when that same item is placed in the ear, it suddenly becomes jewelry. David Newman comments upon our present quandary:

Seventh-day Adventists have defined jewelry very narrowly. The 1972 Annual Council teaching interprets jewelry as "necklaces, earrings, bracelets, jewelled and other ornamental rings." However, dictionaries and non-Adventists define jewelry as anything used to adorn the person. This would include pins, tie-tacks, cufflinks, brooches, scarves, pocket hand-kerchiefs, etc. If a woman ties a silk scarf around her neck, no one complains, but if she replaces that scarf with a string of pearls, she is immediately condemned. Yet both serve the same purpose--adornment.²

¹Bacchiocchi, 167.

²J. David Newman, "Raising or Lowering Standards?" Ministry, December 1992, 6.

The wedding ring has been a battle issue for decades and is simply another manifestation of the church's inability to come to grips over the issue of defining jewelry and adornment. Perhaps Carl George was correct when he stated: "For your discussion to have more light than heat, you're going to have to develop a new vocabulary so that you can dialogue things without debating."

If we continue to feel convicted that we must promote abstention from the use of all jewelry as a church standard, we are going to have to begin by grappling with the challenge of defining jewelry and adornment. Consistency demands that we cease to be selective in our definitions of jewelry and adornment. It comes as no surprise that the Valuegenesis Report reveals that the majority of Seventh-day Adventist youth have rejected the traditional Adventist stand, which forbids the use of jewelry. With rampant inconsistency in evidence, the debate over jewelry is viewed as unsolvable. Roger Dudley comments further on this when he writes:

If we find that many of our traditional standards (especially on jewelry, dancing, music, and movies) are still important and desirable, we must develop new ways of engaging the youth in their support. We will have to deal with the sticky issue of consistency. . . . Why is a pin or brooch on a dress acceptable but the same design in the ear or on the hand unacceptable?²

¹Carl George, Empty Pews, Empty Streets (Columbia, MD: Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 76.

²Roger L. Dudley, Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance (Riverside, CA: La Sierra University Press, 1992), 276.

There is a corollary issue attached to this matter of defining jewelry, and it must not escape our attention.

George Knight discusses how we trivialize sin--how we strive to make it a quantity, rather than quality.

The nice thing about the quantitative approach, from the human perspective, is that sin (and thus righteousness) is broken into manageable chunks, and one can get the feeling of progress and victory. Meanwhile, once sin is defined in terms of such things as wearing costume jewelry or certain dietary habits, it is essentially "contained" in that definition, and one can go about his or her life without worrying about it. In other words, once "sin" is contained in the concept of wearing jewelry, I can then feel good about driving any kind of car I like or wearing the finest suits. I don't think I will ever get over the physician who was death on wedding bands (because he had a proof text) but drove a gold-colored Cadillac. Truly he had contained sin and made it manageable. Certainly he had a type of righteousness. But both the sin and the righteousness had been trivialised. One is reminded of those Pharisees who strained out the gnats while swallowing the camels.¹

Not only have certain members of the church been selective in what they wish to define as jewelry, many are also in danger of watering down their definition of sin with the resulting consequences that George Knight describes. In the minds of some, sin and wearing jewelry are synonymous. The following sentence from a recent publication only amplifies this thought. "To experience inner spiritual renewal and reconciliation with God, it is necessary to remove all outward besetting objects of idolatry, including

¹George R. Knight, The Pharisee's Guide to Perfect Holiness (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1992), 51.

jewelry and ornaments."¹ Bacchiocchi implies that sin becomes a manageable problem because we have defined it as wearing jewelry. A casual survey of some Seventh-day Adventist households indicates that one might feel justified in living an extravagant lifestyle, yet readily condemn others for wearing costume jewelry that may have cost only a few dollars. There is a sense of false security, which is bound up in faulty definitions of jewelry and sin. Until we come to the realization that much of our problem is compounded by faulty definitions we will simply continue to perpetuate this state of confusion.

Simplicity and Modesty

Simplicity and modesty are words that often have a similar meaning, yet they have functioned in church circles as ever-present guardians to prove that the Bible forbids the use of jewelry as an article of dress. It is imperative that we thoroughly examine the meaning of these terms.

Simplicity

Despite the rhetoric surrounding this concept, the Bible does not define what it means by simplicity. In fact, the word appears only a few times in Scripture (2 Sam 15:11; Prov 1:22; Rom 12:8; 2 Cor 1:12, 11:3), and in those passages it is not linked with dress or adornment. Despite the absence of specific meaning and guidelines, there has

¹Bacchiocchi, 163.

developed among SDAs a generally accepted principle of simplicity. This principle, more frequently than not, has been linked almost exclusively to dress and adornment.

Seventh-day Adventists obviously have not gone to the same extremes in adopting simplicity in dress as have those who acclaim themselves to be plain people (Amish, Hutterites, and some Mennonites), but there is the inherent danger of using plainness as an outward show of religion. One writer says: "What is the point of living a righteous life if no one knows about it?" Thus, "The only thing more important than being humble is to look humble."¹ The following thought could be considered typical of the attitude of some church members toward this subject: "Seventh-day Adventists must not allow themselves to forget that more than any other Bible characters, John the Baptist and Elijah, both men who lived very simply, typify the life the Lord would live out in them today."² However, the members of the Seventh-day Adventist church have not been called to live an ascetic lifestyle.

If we are to uplift simplicity as a principle of lifestyle, and we should, then we must confront this challenge. Simplicity should cover all aspects of our life, including our homes, our cars--in fact all of our possessions. There is no justification in berating those

¹William L. Coleman, Quote in Knight, Pharisee's Guide, 26.

²Delafield, 51.

within the church who have spent several dollars on costume jewelry, when we have spent tens of thousands of dollars on our house or a new car. An editorial comment focuses our attention upon this fact.

The subject of dress and adornment gives rise to glaring inconsistencies. It seems to invite us to point the finger--in a most unchristian way--at someone else. So the person whose eyes have been riveted on someone's simple wedding band may drive away from church in his \$30,000 Mercedes, blissfully unaware of the self-contradictory nature of his position. Thus, if simplicity is to be maintained as a church standard, consistency again requires that we do not limit this requirement to one aspect of lifestyle, but that it be inclusive of everything in the Christian life.¹

Madelyn Jones-Haldeman describes simplicity as an attitude that encompasses our attempts at overcoming greed and extravagance. It focuses on the inner person, not on externals. It is loving others, rather than oneself. The meaning of simplicity constantly changes because the world is constantly changing. Braided hair in Bible times was a sign of haughty ostentation, but that is no longer relevant for today. Jesus upheld simplicity as a principle that all Christians should emulate, but not at the expense of becoming legalistic.²

Modesty

The word "modesty" appears only one time in the King James Version. In 1 Tim 2:9 Paul says, "In like manner

¹William G. Johnsson, "On Behalf of Simplicity," Review and Herald, March 20, 1986, 4.

²Jones-Haldeman, 58-59.

also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation." While this passage was examined in chapter 2, for our present consideration I deal only with that portion of the text that talks about modesty. But note, Paul does not define what he means by "modest apparel."

There are two options with reference to defining modesty. The word can indicate a sense of moderation, or freedom from excess. On the other hand, it can describe a person's behavior, in particular one's apparel with an intent not to be sexually provocative. As one writer says: "Modesty in dress implies that clothing must provide sufficient covering for the body so that others are not embarrassed or tempted."¹

Seventh-day Adventist writers have utilized both definitions to promote the nonusage of jewelry. However, it would appear the latter definition is the one that has received the greatest consideration.² This is evidenced by the following quotation. "The concern of the modern fashion industry is to sell clothes, jewelry, and cosmetics by exploiting the powerful sex drives of the human body, even

¹Delafield, 29.

²Examples of this may be found in the book by Robert H. Pierson, We Still Believe (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1975). Chapter 10 is entitled "Modesty Is God's Policy" and he indicates that dress and jewelry both contribute to modesty. D. A. Delafield used the same approach in What's in Your Clothes Closet? in the chapter entitled "Modest Dress and Hebrew-Christian Teaching."

if it means marketing immodest products that only feed pride and sensuality."¹ The writer ascribes jewelry to the realm of those articles of clothing that contribute to immodesty. Then he adds, "Wearing finger rings is not compatible with the Biblical principles of modesty; historically, they have tempted people to wear all kinds of jewelry."² The preceding quotations show the lengths some writers have gone to promote a distorted meaning of the word modesty.

There is no argument against Christians being modest with a sense of moderation when it comes to lifestyle and possessions. However, as mentioned previously, consistency demands that we be inclusive of all aspects and not just isolate jewelry and adornment to the realm of the forbidden. It is hypocrisy to demand moderation (actually meaning abstention) with reference to wearing jewelry, without applying the same principle to every aspect of our lifestyle.

If we relate this term to modest clothing from the standpoint of decency, we must realize that modesty is seldom, if ever, associated with the wearing of jewelry. The two concepts generally remain mutually exclusive from each other. Jewelry is not thought of as being something we put on to make us modest. Clothing serves that function.

¹Bacchiocchi, 164-165.

²Ibid., 167.

Modesty is primarily determined by culture, and almost every part of the body has been considered immodest.

Different concepts of modesty are found in different cultures as well. The covering of the body or the lack of it is considered improper or immodest because of cultural interpretation. In the Japanese public bath, both sexes bathe together and their nudity is not considered immodest, but for any other social situation, the conventional Japanese apparel for both men and women is body enveloping. . . . The Botocudo of the Amazon are nude except for ear and lower lip plugs. It has been observed that when the plugs were removed for the purposes of trade, these people fled into the jungle in shame. Conventions of modesty change from time to time in the same culture.¹

Laver has further interesting insights into modesty. He describes how Australian Aborigines are indifferent to their nakedness, yet feel deeply ashamed if seen eating. Arab women, if caught without their veils over their faces, may throw their skirts over their heads. In China at one time it was considered shameful for a woman to show her foot, and in Japan the same was true for a woman's neck.²

If modesty by definition means clothing the body in an appropriate and culturally acceptable manner, it is difficult to understand how the use of jewelry, or the absence of it, can contribute to that state. In other words, we cannot argue that jewelry should not be worn by saying it is immodest.

¹Mary Kefgen and Phyllis Touchie-Specht, Individuality in Clothing Selection and Personal Appearance (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1976), 62.

²James Laver, Modesty in Dress (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), 9.

Worldliness

There appears to have been a uniform tendency among members of plain-dress conservative churches to label anyone wearing jewelry or unnecessary adornment as "worldly." This concern over being worldly stems from 1 John 2:15-17, which says in part: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The issue becomes more clouded when we quote John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." This apparent contradiction is reconciled when we discern the meaning of worldliness.

Worldliness means different things to different people, and it is easy to illustrate this diversity of opinion. Those from a plain church background would not permit a mustache to be worn without the beard, as this was considered an expression of worldliness.¹ John White of a Free Methodist background had this to say:

We knew what worldliness was, back then in the fifties. Worldliness meant lipstick and make-up, short skirts and bobbed hair, wedding rings and jewelry, movies and church kitchens. Strangely, many of the issues had to do with how women dressed. Now these things are no longer issues, but the question of who won and who lost is not neatly clear.²

For some Seventh-day Adventists, leaving the truth, or lapsing into a state of worldliness, is defined by the

¹Scott, 108-109.

²J. White, ix.

baubles they wear, their dress, and their lifestyles.¹ Generally speaking, to call someone worldly is a reference to the person's appearance or dress. Over the years articles have appeared in print which lament that one could no longer identify Adventists due to their dress and adornment. Bacchiocchi's recent statement shows that this remains a prevailing attitude.

Peter followed the pattern of Paul in 1 Timothy 2:9-10, contrasting the outward adorning of the body by worldly women with the inward adorning of the heart by Christian women. The negative outward adorning of worldly women consists of "braiding of hair, decoration of gold, and the wearing of fine clothing."²

Even the wearing of a simple wedding band has led church members to conclude that the forces of the world have broken down the walls of separation. Thus one writer observes:

Many Seventh-day Adventists, deeply troubled by the fact that more and more young Adventist women are wearing wedding rings, conclude that the standards of the church are slipping and that the love of many waxeth cold. To them, ring-wearing proves that the influences of the world are creeping in and undermining the purity of the message of the church.³

Steve Miller feels that it is ludicrous to conclude that "the world" in 1 John means everything that finds its origin in a sinful world. After all, these passages of scriptures were coined in Greek, a language developed by pagans. Separateness from the world cannot mean distancing

¹Jack W. Provonsha, A Remnant in Crises (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1993), 33.

²Bacchiocchi, 69.

³Roland Churchman, "That Wedding Ring," Spectrum 6 (1974): 74.

ourselves from everything that originated in this sinful world. If so, Paul and Jesus would certainly be guilty of being involved with the world. Worldliness does not lie in the things we do, the places we go, but is an attitude that comes from the heart. It involves participation in the attitudes and activities that God defines as sin.¹ White supports this understanding, and says:

We are of the world and like the world when we share the world's values--making physical pleasure all too important, collecting beautiful homes, cars, and whatever, and above all by our desire to surpass others and make them admire us. We are worldly when we lust carnally, when we crave and live for possessions and raise our proud heads above others. . . . We are like the world when we compete with either the world or our Christian neighbours in the race for nicer cars and more fashionable clothes. We are of the world when, as Christian organizations, we adopt the world's organizational philosophies and promotional techniques. We are of the world whenever we strain at gnats and swallow camels.²

Simply put, "the heart of worldliness has more to do with carnality, possessiveness, jealousy, pursuit of beautiful material objects, pride, and snobbery than with the more traditional evangelical taboos."³

If we want to be different we must recognize that the real issue is how we treat people. Spirituality does not promote isolation; it initiates qualities that are different. Rebecca Pippert points out that Christians will

¹Steve Miller, The Contemporary Christian Music Debate (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993), 44-46.

²J. White, 125-126.

³Ibid., 12.

be distinct from others by these attributes: their character--having a thirst for righteousness, being peacemakers and pure of heart; their influence; their moral teaching; their piety and sincerity of devotion; their ambitions--seeking God first instead of being self-serving; their relationships--not judging others but serving them; and their commitment to obey Christ as Lord.¹

The concept may be proposed that Seventh-day Adventists lean toward a separatist mentality and this has resulted in a constant struggle to keep the secular and the religious totally apart. Some question if we have come to the point where almost everything can be labelled as worldly. We find our belonging and sense of security by what we find wrong and label as worldly. We have failed to understand that worldliness is more a matter of the heart than outward appearance. As a consequence, we may be wrong by placing the badge of worldliness upon those who wear jewelry or other adornments.

Church Standards

Discussions of jewelry and adornment generally fall under the umbrella of church standards. The church needs standards to function; however, it is preferable that Christians live by principle. By becoming over-anxious about rules and regulations, it is possible to distort God's

¹Rebecca Manley Pippert, Out of the Saltshaker and into the World (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1979), 89.

ideals for mankind. While principles are eternal, standards could possibly change with time, circumstances, and cultural diversity. It is hoped that we will develop a better appreciation for the problems surrounding the jewelry issue when we understand the role that standards have played. As we consider the complications posed by relying on the standards of the past to enforce the removal of all jewelry and adornment, we may be able to develop a more appropriate present-day understanding of the issue.

To highlight this concern over standards we need to consider the gentle warning given by Roger Dudley. When writing about the concerns of the youth, he states:

The church today faces a real dilemma in the area of standards. . . . If standards are perceived as inconsistent and unreasonable--not applicable to life in the late twentieth century--young people leave the church and turn elsewhere. The Valuegenesis study uncovered more problems in this area than any other.¹

Later he adds: "Without doubt, the whole question of church standards is the greatest barrier to the retention of our youth within the Adventist church. If we are serious about saving the next generation, we must give special attention to this area."²

The Source of Standards

Dynamic forces have shaped the standards we adhere to today. In the previous century the influence of Methodist

¹Dudley, 48-49.

²Ibid., 275.

thinking, and that of other like-minded conservative churches, contributed to a rigid lifestyle. Greg Brothers points out that standards are rules of thumb that we have collected over the decades. We might refer to them as tools. While having their place to bring about good, we must remember it is not the tools themselves that should be prominent in our lives, but rather the life that we build with them.¹ We should always remember the source of standards concerning lifestyle issues such as wearing jewelry.

For the Seventh-day Adventist church, George Knight proposes that four dynamic forces have been influential in the shaping of Adventist standards in the past: Local church legislation, articles in the Review and Herald which have brought about consensus, position papers, and the writings and teachings of Ellen White. These forces were at work in the nineteenth century and continue to be at work even today. In addition, we have accumulated tradition for 150 years, which is constantly at work in promoting and maintaining church standards.²

During the eighteenth hundreds there was greater consensus among all classes of people as to what was acceptable, than in the late twentieth century, especially

¹Greg Brothers, "Frogs, Toads, and Church Standards," Review and Herald, July 6, 1989, 18.

²George Knight, The Fat Lady and the Kingdom (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1995), 110-113.

in the area of dress and adornment. It has been noted that "in the nineteenth century Adventists and society were a lot closer to each other than most of us realize. . . . The only problem is that it isn't the nineteenth century anymore."

Standards and Culture

Whether we choose to admit it or not, culture affects human beings. We may confuse its voice with that of the Holy Spirit, or we may even deny that we have been conditioned by our culture, but neither confusion nor denial will alter the fact that standards are a reflection of our cultural conditioning. We must realize that "differences in values, culture, experience, and perceptions may lead parties to disagree about the relative merits of different standards."² Alden Thompson points out that cultural differences separate church members over the interpretation of church standards:

Certain activities are wrong only because of the way that they might be understood in a given culture. There are basic principles in the law which certainly transcend human culture, but those basic principles also suggest that when we are within a particular culture we must avoid those things which would be offensive or which could possibly lead to a dangerous misunderstanding.³

¹Brothers, 17.

²Roger Fisher and William Ury, Getting to Yes, 2d ed., ed. Bruce Patton (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 154.

³Alden Thompson, Who's Afraid of the Old Testament God? (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 83.

We need to recognize the impact that our cultural standards have upon the younger generations in our church. Studies show that many youth consider the standards of the past to be no longer relevant today. Various writers have attempted to draw this to the attention of the church, and the following statement is a good example:

All that has been said about the need to share the message in terms of people's specific cultural conditions, needs, and circumstances applies with equal force also to the communication of the gospel to our own youth. They are part of a culture that in many ways differs radically from the one that shaped the Adventist Church yesteryear. Large--all too large--percentages of Adventist young people are leaving the church. They do not reject the message. To the contrary. Research indicates that the vast majority of them leave because they do not feel at home in this church. It represents to them a culture that no longer exists.¹

Steve Daily who has probed the attitudes and beliefs among Seventh-day Adventist young people concurs with this feeling, and offers this observation: "Religion must be redefined, both individually and corporately by each new generation, if it is to remain dynamic, relevant, and powerful."²

Concerning jewelry and adornment, that which was at one time generally forbidden by some sections of evangelical culture has now become acceptable. Nineteenth-century prohibitions are no longer valid because time, culture, and constant change have erased the original intent or meaning.

¹Gotfried Oosterwal, "Gospel, Culture, and Mission," Ministry, October 1989, 25.

²Steve Daily, Adventism for a New Generation (Portland, OR: Better Living Publishers, 1993), 1.

The decline in economic value has had a major impact in determining the acceptability of many things. Since our culture and our faith tend to be blended into one, we have a difficult time releasing issues that are no longer relevant.

The Transitory Nature of Standards

Standards are transitory in nature, and the approach that makes the most sense is to ensure that they are relevant to the present. Cultural contexts change, and standards that remain insensitive to changing conditions could place the church in peril of joining groups like the Amish who have lapsed into a historical curiosity.¹ That, of course, is a worst case scenario. As one writer says, "The problem is that the church that fails to change, fails to impact the culture of change. It becomes a dinosaur, a memorial to a world that no longer exists."²

The church has little trouble understanding that we must focus upon certain principles when we interpret the Bible. We clearly recognize that the text has to be related to a specific period of time. We also understand that it was limited by geographic considerations, and most important of all, that the passage was infused with the culture of the day. Church standards carry similar baggage. Frequently, many standards were developed to meet the specific concerns

¹Wheeler, 12.

²Aubrey Malphurs, Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 88.

of time, place, and culture. However, as times change, our standards may change. While we need to respect our standards, we should not be bound by them! Our youth, in particular, would be more accepting of our church standards if they could be assured that every effort has been made to be more contemporary and understanding. We recognize that biblical absolutes exist and all church standards should be firmly grounded upon these concepts. However, there remains the option of permitting the freedom to choose. Seeking the appropriate balance among these concerns is the real challenge.

A brief example of the necessity for standards remaining current is shown in the following statement. In the early 1970s Joe Crews wrote: "With this inspired counsel in mind I wonder if those who favor pantsuits realize what a pandora's box would be opened if the church ever approved that fashion?"¹ Pantsuits may have been controversial twenty-five years ago, but the issue is no longer discussed.

A walk through SDA church history reveals that church standards have banned goatees, mustaches, beards, high heels, lipstick, wedding rings, pantsuits, and slacks worn by women in church. We have measured the length of ladies' dresses, the length of hair, and dictated the color of shirts worn in church. It is easy to be out of step with

¹Joe Crews, "Standards," Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, unpublished manuscript, 14.

present issues when our focus is upon maintaining the past.

Greg Brothers's article speaks to this when he says:

Adventists were right in the mainstream of Victorian society. If you have wondered why we take a position against smoking but not apartheid, if you've ever been puzzled as to why we ban dancing but not sexual discrimination, if it has ever puzzled you that the General Conference spells out exactly when and where and why a member may wear a wedding ring, but has left abortion up to the individual's conscience, if any of these things have struck you as odd, you have to remember our roots! Theatre, dancing, and jewelry were all hot topics back in the glory days of our church. Abortion and apartheid weren't.

If we are going to keep the youth of our church, and be attractive to those who are not of our fellowship, our standards are going to have to reflect the test of time and make sense to people today. It is difficult to change because one's reason for being is strongly related to one's standards. Seventh-day Adventists have prided themselves in the past by being identifiable according to dress, and particularly by their avoidance of personal adornment. On the other hand, a general increase in prosperity among North American Adventists has meant that our lifestyles, on the whole, do not vary from that of the general population. We live in a world of constant change that stops for no one. Our standards must continue to be relevant today. Ellen White even hinted at the need for change when she said:

As a people we are certainly in great danger, if we are not constantly guarded, of considering our ideas, because long cherished, to be Bible doctrines and in every point infallible, and measuring everyone by the rule of our interpretation of Bible truth. This is our

¹Brothers, 17.

danger, and this would be the greatest evil that could ever come to us as a people.¹

Standards and Legalism

It is no secret that there are two forces striving to give meaning to our comprehension of church standards-- grace and legalism. It is vital for the church's best interest to strike a balance between grace and law. We can strive to measure up to the standards of the church as did the Pharisees, but that was not the lifestyle that Jesus envisioned for His people. A legalistic approach to life "satisfies rules rather than meeting people's needs."² There are lifestyle issues and circumstances wherein people must be granted the freedom to investigate what God desires of us. By stepping out of bounds "we become rigid moralists who push people to keep God's standards rather than passionate Christians who entice others to know Christ better."³ Striving for moral perfection through compliance with rules is doomed to failure.

In moralistic perfection every human act becomes regulated by laws that become increasingly complex and cover every aspect of diet, recreation, dress and so on. . . . Desperately in earnest, people of this persuasion develop long lists of rules, and the more they read, the longer their lists become. The Pharisees and the monks belonged to this camp of perfection, and Adventists and

¹Ellen G. White, The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estates, 1987), 2:830.

²Daily, 301.

³Crabb, 36.

other conservative Christians in the modern world have joined in.¹

Achieving balance between the forces of law and grace should be our goal because excesses to either side are destructive. As we mature in our understanding, we will become people who learn to live by principle, and we may need less and less the voice of another dictating the rules by which we should live. This is a real challenge especially when dealing with our youth in educational settings. We must constantly be on guard and attempt at all times to lift the high ideal of principle before our youth. At the same time they need help to understand how principled Christian living will affect their choices.

Stressing only the externals can dry up the soul. Carl George warns that our focus on this earth is to worship and obey Christ, not emphasizing or defending Adventist lifestyle.² The capstone that we should place upon our understanding of standards is best expressed in the words of George Knight:

One criterion for every standard and value is its effectiveness in enabling people to internalize Christian principles and the loving character of Christ. Standards and values are not ends in themselves, but a means to an end. Every standard and value must be evaluated in light of the Cross, rather than in the light of Adventist tradition.³

¹Knight, Pharisee's Guide, 152.

²George, 2.

³Knight, Fat Lady, 124.

Christian Principles

While standards tend to address specific issues relative to time and place, and change with the passing of time, principles are universal, absolute and enduring. They transcend all cultures, and essentially do not change. One writer refers to principles as the supracultural content of scripture. His list of these universally recognized ideals includes: truth, justice, love, sin, the existence of God, faith, forgiveness, prayer, honesty, marriage and the historicity of Jesus.¹

The SDA church has been somewhat reticent when it comes to teaching church members, and especially the youth, to live by principle. The question certainly can be asked as to why this has been the case. Young people especially need to be challenged to look for the principles behind lifestyle choices. There is no question that this is hard work, but it is the only way to provide satisfactory answers for some of the lingering questions one is required to face. According to some, the church has opted for the Sanhedrin approach to life. This leadership style provides rules for everything, all aspects of life are monitored, and uniformity becomes the goal. On a more serious note, this process emasculates a person's relationships. The church needs to realize that uniformity and unity are not

¹C. Peter Wagner, "Contextualizing Theology in the American Social Mosaic," in The Word Among Us, ed. Dean S. Gilliland (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989), 219-238.

equivalent ideals. A church can have great strength and unity even in diversity. As the church chooses to live by principle, people will be taken through this process of learning to deal biblically with all aspects of life.

Concerning the issue of adornment and jewelry, several Christian principles should guide us in determining our personal behavior, as well as our behavior towards others.

Principle of Love and Justice

Pertaining to the issue of jewelry and adornment the above principle should constantly be at work in the life of the Christian. It will determine how we will relate to others. Whether it be in the workplace, a school setting, or in a church-related context, our actions must be tempered with love and justice. If we cannot approach the adornment issue with this principle in mind, we will do far more harm than good. Thousands of Adventist youth have chosen to leave the church because they did not sense fairness, nor were they spoken to in love concerning their use of adornment. There are countless horror stories of our youth being turned away at the church door in an unChristlike manner because they were using some item of adornment that the church forbade. The identification label that Jesus gave to His followers was not that they wouldn't be wearing jewelry, but rather "how they love one another." (Jn 13:35) Christians today must live according to the same principle.

Principle of Personal Freedom

From the beginning God has given mankind the freedom to choose but there are some inevitable consequences that follow poor choices. In the New Testament both Jesus and the apostle Paul emphasize the freedom that is inherent in the Christian life. Relative to the issue of jewelry and adornment, it could be argued that the SDA church is going to have to become more flexible in extending to people the opportunity to exercise their personal freedom of choice.

One of the complicating factors of this principle is the oft portrayed scenario of the weaker brother. Paul mentions this several times and advocates that there are some things a Christian should not do because this may cause a weaker member of the faith to stumble in his walk with Jesus. However, this argument may have its limitations because the stronger member may feel that he/she is being held hostage, or subservient, to the views of the weaker member. Somehow the Adventist church needs to be able to promote a balanced approach by allowing for the right of personal choice on the one hand, and still provide the security necessary for those who may be weaker in the faith.

Principle of Judgment

Human nature shows clearly that it is very easy to judge another person for their actions. Seventh-day Adventists in particular, have tended to judge harshly those who wear jewelry. One can readily label such members, or

those not of this faith who wear jewelry, as being worldly. However, mankind has not been given the ability to read another person's mind, nor to always understand another's motives. There are diverse circumstances that shape our individual lives and our understanding of certain issues. Realizing our individual nature, Jesus drew the attention of His listeners to this enduring principle. "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you." (Matt 7:1-2) SDAs must exercise caution in not judging others for what they choose to wear.

Principle of Stewardship

Our status before God is illustrated by our loving acceptance of the fact that we are to be humble stewards. This impacts not only our time, but also our money. Every expenditure we make from God's treasury needs to be held accountable. It is irrational to understand how we could be considered wise stewards if we criticize someone who is wearing plastic earrings which may have cost several dollars, but we live in expensive houses, drive luxury cars, and take exotic vacations. Stewardship is an all-inclusive principle and impacts every lifestyle issue. It covers a much broader spectrum than personal adornment and jewelry.

Principle of Simplicity

The Christian church has over the centuries advocated that the adherents of Jesus duplicate His simple lifestyle.

Indeed, that should be our goal. Simplicity by definition has also changed over the centuries. We live comfortable lives today, and what we might consider simplistic would last century have been extravagant to say the least. However, this principle is all-inclusive of every aspect of life. It is inconsistent to argue that people remove their jewelry and ornaments because we believe in a simple lifestyle, but live extravagantly in every other respect. Simplicity as a Christian principle must be viewed as inclusive of every lifestyle issue or choice.

Principle of Modesty

This principle is very similar to simplicity. When relating this ideal to adornment and jewelry it has been previously mentioned that modesty is not to be understood in the sense of sexually appropriate behavior. Rather, it relates to the act of doing something in moderation. We must not forget that moderation does not mean the lack of or the absence of something. It carries a connotation of not using to excess. Anything we participate in can be overdone, so this principle once again needs to be taken into consideration on all lifestyle issues.

Principle of Balance

There are so many areas, particularly lifestyle issues, where Adventists lose their sense of balance. We promote healthful living, but often our physical well-being and appearance do not illustrate that concept. We promote

the avoidance of personal adornment--especially rings, earrings, and bracelets--but embrace Rolex watches, expensive clothing, and countless other items of adornment that have been approved or, by some mysterious form of logic, become "kosher." Adventists, of all people, should lead and promote a balanced Christian lifestyle. We cannot go through life amassing vast amounts of "kosher" forms of wealth and extravagance, and still cling to the perception that all is well if we do not use jewelry or adornment. Seventh-day Adventists should be people who will exemplify a balanced approach to life.

Principle of Mission

The reason for the existence of the Seventh-day Adventist church is not to promulgate the traditions, ideals, values, and standards that we have inherited or adopted through our century-and-a-half of existence. We are here to proclaim the gospel of Christ and His soon-coming. That is not to say that some of the above are not valid or do not have their place--but that should not be our focus. One almost wonders if we have not spent as much time, in some settings, promoting the avoidance of adornment as we have in proclaiming Christ's coming. The Amish and Hutterites have managed to maintain their standards, but they have lost their sense of mission. We cannot afford to have that happen to us. Whatever our choice, however we understand ourselves, whatever limits we choose, all must be

done in the setting of accomplishing the gospel mission.

Perhaps Steve Daily was correct when he wrote:

It is not the business of the church to prescribe for its members how they should behave on Sabbath, what foods they should eat, in what forms of recreation or entertainment they may participate, what books they should read, how they should dress, if they can wear jewelry, or how they should think. Rather, it is the business of the church to uplift and glorify Christ by calling all people to worship Him, and internalize the principles of His kingdom so that they can individually apply these principles to their own decision making and behavior.²

Even though some Adventists may take issue with that thought, it may be that a kernel of truth is found in those words. The one extreme would be the understanding that the church has no jurisdiction in the life of the Christian. Daily is correct when he talks about internalizing Christian principles, but it can be postulated that the church has a role in teaching these principles to its membership. The focus of the church should be to lift up Christ and avoid being swept up in the minute issues surrounding lifestyle choices. As a bastion of truth and righteousness in a world of immorality, the church certainly needs to promote the highest ideals of Christian lifestyle and Christian mission.

Traditions

Jewelry and adornment must also be viewed from within the context of our traditions. After all, they have been instrumental in shaping our understanding of this issue. Traditions are the time honored ways that we have of doing

²Daily, 20.

certain things within our culture. They have been transmitted to us from the past. Traditions provide stability to life, and thus are indispensable. Almost every aspect of what we do on a daily basis is rooted in tradition. Traditions mean different things to different people, and they retain their value only if they are still relevant to the existing culture. Leith Anderson, a well-known writer on the subject of change and relevancy of the church in present society, agrees with this opinion; he writes, "Contemporary churches are those that relate to people in terms of today's culture rather than in terms of yesterday's traditions."¹

Traditions impact the jewelry and adornment issue. Seventh-day Adventists have been collecting and establishing traditions for 150 years. Part of that cultural baggage has taught us to avoid using adornment and jewelry. The time has come, and perhaps is even past, for us to re-evaluate the previous meaning of those traditions, and discern if they still carry the same value for us today. Unfortunately, many things that made sense to many people in the previous century and the early part of the nineteen hundreds may be of little or no consequence to the vast majority of the population today. Religion has a tendency to make sacred whatever its practitioners think is important. Beliefs become immune to change. To blindly enforce the traditions

¹Leith Anderson, A Church for the 21st Century (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1992), 152.

of another era may lead to what one might call a painful act of "cultural circumcision."

Malphurs describes how forms are confused with principle, and "churches nurture and milk their own 'sacred cows'. In the process of fleshing out various biblical principles, they elevate the forms of those principles with the principle, and the former is valued as highly as the latter."¹ Used in this context, forms would be equivalent to traditions.

There is a fearful tendency to make traditions sacred; in effect, according to Furnish, we "are embalming the tradition rather than receiving it as a vital and revitalized force--free to grow, free to develop, free to adapt itself to 'new occasions and new duties'."² George Knight appears to be addressing a similar issue, when he says, "One of the problems with creeds is that they have tended to firmly set marginal issues of current interest next to the fundamental doctrines of the Bible as landmarks of the faith."³

We need to propose an honest willingness to examine our traditional views about jewelry and adornment. We must examine the cultural relevancy of our opinions and teaching, and, if change is called for, be willing to consider it.

¹Malphurs, 92.

²Furnish, 18.

³George Knight, Angry Saints (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1989), 103.

Change is never easy, for "at the crossroads of the path that leads to the future, tradition has placed against each of us ten thousand men to guard the past."¹ George Knight, in speaking to this same struggle says:

Thus Adventism, like the ancient Jews and Christians of the early church and Reformation, has come full circle. From a people fighting against the bonds of tradition, it has become entangled in its own tradition, with no satisfactory way to resolve many of the serious difficulties that face it.²

Gender Issues and Jewelry

When the issue of jewelry or adornment is discussed the subject is directed almost exclusively towards women and their attire. In the past, token efforts discussing men and their dress have gone no further than levelling criticism at them for shaving or dyeing their beards. Johnsson is more specific when he states,

First, if we are going to say anything on the subject we had better include the men among us as well. It is unfair to single out Adventist women for departure from church standards. Today men will spend \$50 on a visit to a hairstylist; they may even pay \$30 for a necktie; they adorn themselves with cufflinks, expensive watches, and tie pins. Many Adventist men spend more on the person than Adventist women do.³

In essence, little has been directed at the men of the church for their excesses in the matter of dress.

Several examples should suffice to illustrate that there has been a disproportionate attack upon women's dress

¹Miller, 107.

²Knight, Fat Lady, 123.

³Johnsson, 4.

and adornment. A 1941 meeting was convened to discuss church standards, but the only items mentioned were the length of women's skirts, and the wearing of hose and stockings.¹ Again, Delafield describes the General Conference dress code, and the first item is a very casual address to the men encouraging them to be dignified and dress in good taste. For the ladies, however, there is a lengthy delineation of what is considered appropriate, and after the initial comment, eight subheadings of directives appear. The counsel for the men consists of 38 words; for the women 148!² He then concludes, "From this it is clear that the leaders of the church are serious about expediting the practice of the standards they preach."³ What is clear is that the standards to be enforced are those directed at women. Bacchiocchi's recent book, Christian Dress & Adornment, from the cover on, is a diatribe on ladies' dress and adornment. This inequity has not gone unnoticed, and at least one writer has responded by asking "if the rules governing the female dress are yet another example of male oppression of women."⁴

Chastising women for their dress is not unique to the Adventist church, but parallels other churches with

¹E. D. Dick, "Measuring Religion with a Taping," Ministry, May 1941, 3.

²Delafield, 92.

³Ibid., 92-93.

⁴Land, 47.

traditions similar to ours. One Methodist wrote that worldliness meant lipstick, makeup, short skirts, bobbed hair, wedding rings and jewelry; and then wondered why many of the issues had to do with women's dress.¹ Those adopting a more stringent lifestyle state:

In many instances in the past and present, plain women have been required to be much more nonconformed than men. Many plain women have found this to be unfair and inconsistent; in fact, for some, it has become their reason for changing to more fashionable styles.²

Even some of the comments written in the last century by Ellen White appear to be rather harsh in nature, and would certainly not be politically correct today. One example is this oft-quoted statement:

Female loveliness never appears to so good advantage as when set off with simplicity of dress. No artist ever decks his angels with towering feathers and gaudy jewelry; and our dear human angels, if they will make good their title to that name, should carefully avoid ornaments, which properly belong to Indian squaws and African princesses.³

Although it would be too strong to conclude that there has been a deliberate attack upon the attire of women, the above representative statements are sufficient evidence to show that women have received more than their share of censure. While it may have been accepted practice decades ago to disproportionately legislate women's apparel, it is incorrect to do so today.

¹J. White, ix.

²Scott, 42.

³E. G. White, "Words to Christian Mothers," Review and Herald, October 31, 1871, 15.

It might be construed as hypocrisy if men were able to wear certain items of adornment, yet the same article adopted by women, with a slight difference in usage, elicits severe condemnation. A tie pin and an earring, or a tie chain and a necklace, are no different. There is a certain level of irony surrounding the use of the tie pin. It serves a function by holding a tie in place; however, many conclude that the tie is an unnecessary piece of adornment. Today society demands equality between the sexes, and in the jewelry issue, we must admit that we have not been equitable and fair.

Establishing Relationships or Modifying Behavior

Many issues are linked to the study of jewelry and adornment; some have received more attention than others. There is one that has received little attention, yet may be the most important concern--striking a positive balance between developing personal relationships, verses external enforcement of perceived appropriate behavior.

One approach to the issue seems to imply that if you can remove people's jewelry, thus modifying their external behavior, their hearts will be in tune with God. The removal of all adornment becomes a prerequisite for God's acceptance. Two recent statements by Samuele Bacchiocchi illustrate this thought. The first quotation states: "To pretend to come humbly before God while adorned

extravagantly and ostentatiously is hypocrisy." In the second statement we read: "To experience inner spiritual renewal and reconciliation with God, it is necessary to remove all outward besetting objects of idolatry, including jewelry and ornaments."² Certainly, to willfully harbor idolatrous practices or objects, regardless of what they may be, will interfere in our relationship with Christ. To limit that to jewelry and ornaments is far too simplistic. Indeed, for some people the use of jewelry or profuse ornamentation may be an act of idolatry. Nevertheless, we must guard against the error of instilling in the minds of people that our version of Bible truth (i.e., the avoidance of all jewelry and adornment) alone is the route to spirituality. True spirituality comes as a consequence of developing a deeper relationship with Christ. Jesus' method was to establish a relationship and then whatever lifestyle issue that needed to be taken care of externally naturally fell into place. Walking with Christ will help us to understand His principles for living.

While we have understood that point, there has persisted in some circles a lingering perception that outward conformity in appearance is a goal that must be attained. Delafield records, "When Christ lives within there will be no need for us to make the dress question a

¹Bacchiocchi, 59.

²Ibid., 163.

primary point in our religion, for there will be greater things to speak of."¹ Although this is true, his entire book is devoted to how we should dress. The emphasis that should be found in Christian books of this nature is to teach the reader principled Christian living. Itemized lists of "thou shalt nots," does not elevate people to the realms that Christ would have us enjoy.

The hidden danger in forcing external conformity and adherence to a specific behavioral standards is that it jeopardizes existing relationships. In extreme cases this might even be called spiritual abuse. Stephen Covey focuses on the possible results of manipulating external behavior.

In all my experience, I have never seen lasting solutions to problems, lasting happiness and success, come from the outside in. Outside-in approaches result in unhappy people who feel victimized and immobilized, who focus on the weaknesses of other people and the circumstances they feel are responsible for their own stagnant situation.²

Another writer eloquently describes our fruitless efforts at demanding external obedience: "Christianity is something which works from the inside out and cannot be rubbed into a person like a liniment."³ Said another, "We need to expose our faith--not impose it."⁴

¹Delafield, 13.

²Stephen R. Covey, Principle-Centered Leadership (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 63.

³Robert D. Moon, Love's Conquest (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1960), 103.

⁴Pippert, 129.

Our treatment of others mirrors our feelings about God, and people will understand God as they see how He works in our own lives. Imposing our standards upon others without love portrays a God who is stern and severe. Christians need to exhibit an appropriate lifestyle, but the correct responses will be initiated from the inside out, and not the outside in.

Christians will continue to be challenged with the understanding that righteousness and sanctification "must be defined as what people actively do rather than in terms of what they refrain from doing; that is, perfection is positive rather than negative."² Within the church, it appears that we have raised successive generations using a negative model; that is, we have not encouraged positive actions. On the contrary, we have emphasized the things they should not be doing. We need to be more devoted to loving people, rather than removing every little thing we may find offensive.

It is within the context of our institutional or school settings that we face some of the greatest tensions regarding jewelry and adornment. The governing bodies of these institutions often feel the pressure from their respective constituencies to maintain high standards. To strive for a balance between all these entities requires heavenly inspiration. SDA schools do have a right, just as

²Knight, Pharisee's Guide, 217.

any secular place of employment, to establish a code of conduct and dress. However, every effort should be put forth, in a loving and fair manner, to encourage a lifestyle with which Christ would be pleased. SDA places of learning should excel in promoting Christian lifestyle principles.

It should never be forgotten that we can enforce, or practice, all the right behavior we want, but it counts nothing towards a saving relationship with Christ. George Knight says, "Living as a Christian in terms of lifestyle and behavior adds nothing to a person's salvation in Christ. At the very most, such living is a response to having been saved by Christ."¹ To that he adds, "Morris Venden was correct when he wrote that 'Christianity and Salvation are not based on what you do but on whom you know'."²

Larry Crabb touches a vital nerve when he says: "We all long for what God designed us to enjoy: tension-free relationships filled with deep, loving acceptance and with opportunities to make a difference to someone else."³ We will see a difference in the lives of people when Christ works from the inside and establishes a solid loving relationship.

Chapter 5 summarizes the essential conclusions that can be gleaned from chapters 2 through 4. These conclusions

¹Ibid., 106.

²Ibid., 81.

³Crabb, 53-54.

provide some of the core material that was presented during the seminar.

CHAPTER FIVE

SYNOPSIS OF RESEARCH

The challenge of researching the various subjects in the previous chapters has been accomplished. It would seem appropriate by way of review to highlight the essential findings of that task. These conclusions were referred to throughout the seminar presentations, and were also presented at the end of the seminar to provide the basis for a time of discussion. This synopsis is not intended to detail every possible conclusion that may be drawn from the research, but is designed to highlight the key findings of this study.

It was emphasized at the beginning of the paper that truth can be discovered only when we embrace and adhere to the proper principles of interpreting Bible passages. To follow any other course of action will only lead to a distortion of the truth as it is found in the Scriptures. We must be cognizant of the paradigms that shape our thoughts, and at the same time remember that they contain the inherent capacity of perverting our understanding of the text. We have a fearful tendency to collect data that appear to support our personal feelings about certain

issues. In the process we often overlook other points of truth.

We must recognize that there is a cultural, historical, and geographical context for every biblical passage. The proof-text approach, so methodically used to convince another about a specific doctrinal issue, frequently does not take into account the immediate context of the passage. When these essential elements are taken into consideration, and a careful exegesis of the texts is undertaken, a different interpretation may be forthcoming. As a consequence of following those hermeneutical principles, a strong argument can be generated which shows that the biblical evidence to support the nonusage of jewelry is tenuous at best. The verses that were detailed in chapter 2 as commonly cited in Adventist writings opposing the use of adornment simply do not support that position.

It is also paramount for the church to understand the various forces that have molded and shaped our present-day thinking on the issue of adornment. The Adventist church did not develop in a vacuum, but inherited much of its teaching about a plain lifestyle from nineteenth century religious movements. Those who can trace their spiritual roots back to the Anabaptist tradition would certainly be included among this group. Also of particular note are the Methodists, for they were a religious body whose influence was greatly felt in the early Adventist church. In addition

to these spiritual entities, the general cultural milieu of the previous century was very much in keeping with Adventist teaching on dress and adornment. When confronted with these realizations, we are left to face the challenge of redefining some of our traditions and practices. The cry to be relevant to the times in which we live cannot be ignored. Many of the issues considered important during the last century are no longer of any concern to the general population today.

In chapter 3 the influence of Ellen White was also outlined. Attention was drawn to the fact that she, just like the Bible writers, was influenced by her cultural and geographic heritage. Ellen White was reared in a Methodist environment, embraced Methodist teaching, and continued to promote those ideals. She encouraged a simple lifestyle. It should not be forgotten that her counsel was not just limited to the nonuse of jewelry and adornment, but was inclusive of all aspects of life. The great hurdle that many Adventists need to overcome is to accept the concept that the same principles which apply to the interpretation of the Bible apply to the writings of Ellen White. (For some that is hard because many cling more tenaciously to the Spirit of Prophecy than they do to the Bible.) This may mean that some of the specific issues she addressed in the previous century are no longer of the same concern today.

Chapter 4 dealt with several issues that have often been pushed to the sidelines, but they form an essential

basis to help clarify and understand the complexities surrounding the subject of adornment.

It was determined that there is a need to redefine and re-evaluate some of the terminology that we use. We need to admit that Seventh-day Adventists have adopted a very selective and narrow definition of what constitutes jewelry and adornment. There are times when our approach may appear to some to be inconsistent and confusing. The youth of the church are especially observant in pointing out and drawing our attention to these inconsistencies.

There have been times when we have misunderstood the meaning of modesty, simplicity, and worldliness. It is easy to use these words to try to prove a point, but again, careful scrutiny of these terms is essential, lest we be forced into embarrassing and faulty conclusions. While Christians must uphold modesty (moderation) and simplicity as Christian lifestyle principles, these characteristics should embrace every aspect of life. They should never be limited only to one's choice of external personal adornment.

Traditions, standards, and culture should also be understood for the role that they have played in developing our understanding about jewelry and adornment. These forces are essential and vital, but they should not be looked upon as being the final authority. Just as life constantly changes, so do our traditions, culture, and standards. They are simply helpful concepts that define who we are as a people, and help us to focus more clearly upon the task that

has been given to us as a church. These vibrant elements need to be relevant for today's society and constantly re-evaluated lest their meaning be lost.

One of the vital conclusions of this study about adornment centers around the need for Seventh-day Adventists to broaden their concern over the need to promote Christian lifestyle principles. All aspects of life should be questioned in light of our stewardship to God. Every decision we make should be done in harmony with the ideal of simplicity and moderation. Love and justice should characterize our life, and will influence our relationships with others. It cannot be emphasized too much that these principles should not be restricted only to our actions and choices relative to the use of adornment. These principles encompass the totality of our being and the totality of all lifestyle choices. For some, there has developed a tendency towards a microscopic view of jewelry and adornment, and other issues fade into insignificance. This has opened the door to every imaginable form of excess. Christians who live in accord with biblical principles will not be selective in life's choices, but the totality of all lifestyle decisions will be made in keeping with those principles. We lose all sense of balance in our lives when we can condemn someone for wearing several dollars worth of plastic earrings, but justify extravagant expenditures in articles of pleasure and household goods.

One might almost conclude that Seventh-day Adventists have been partially turned aside from accomplishing their mission because a disproportionate amount of our time is spent in trying to maintain this jewelry-free tradition. We started out right, but by some accounts have fallen into the trap of spending too much time debating and enforcing rules and standards. Even our motivation for mission has been allowed to erode. The Amish have successfully been able to maintain their teachings on simplicity, but their sense of mission has been lost to the ages. A proper sense of balance should characterize our actions. The gospel commission has always encouraged us to uplift Christ. In our effort to control the use of adornment we have run the risk of losing sight of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ should always be our primary focus, not the avoidance of personal adornment.

Another conclusion advanced by this study underscores the fact that women have borne a disproportionate amount of censure over the issue of jewelry and adornment. It was seen that almost all of the written and verbal condemnation on jewelry and adornment was aimed directly at women. Few would dispute the notion that the previous centuries have been times of male domination. However, that practice is no longer accepted in much of Western society. In all fairness, should the church continue with its practice of promoting abstention from the use of adornment, men will

have to be addressed for their excesses. This inconsistency is glaring back at us.

Finally, some Seventh-day Adventists have had a real struggle in differentiating the importance of promoting a relationship with Jesus as opposed to urging "appropriate" external behavior. While the intent may have been laudable, in many cases the result was disastrous. The understanding has persisted that when the inside is changed (spiritual renewal), there will be external transformation. This may be true, but many have falsely concluded that this automatically means the removal of all jewelry and adornment. Granted, there are many cases where people have taken that course of action. Our paradigm has simply assumed that this will always be the case. What remains essential is the need to have people establish a lasting relationship with Christ. That should always be first and foremost. Our mission is to build convictions, not compliance. When we uplift Christ, external transformation of some fashion likely will occur. However, it may not necessarily pursue a course of action with which we are in total agreement. There must be a willingness on our part to allow for opposing views on certain lifestyle issues. Our task never changes--we are here on earth to present Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

CHAPTER SIX

DESCRIPTION OF THE SEMINAR

Seminar Preparation

Collation of Seminar Notes

The information that was presented in the seminar relied heavily upon the research materials detailed in chapters 2 through 4. In addition to the documentation and discussion provided in those theoretical sections, the opportunity was now open to incorporate into the class notes numerous other articles and pieces of information. These were data that had surfaced during the lengthy process of researching the subject of jewelry and adornment. Space constraints simply did not allow for publication of all this material in the previous chapters. Because many of these notes did provide excellent content for the class materials, they were incorporated into the lecture presentations.

In order to make the content palatable to the seminar participants it was necessary to prepare class notes that were both interesting and informative. It was felt that the simple reading of theological and historical information would not be adequate to hold the interest of the average listener. The last thing that I wanted to see was the

seminar degenerate into a dry series of lifeless lectures. Consequently, a primary consideration was to present the seminar material in an informative yet interesting fashion. The class notes were prepared in such a way as to keep that concern in mind.

Many discussions involving the issue of jewelry and adornment have degenerated into shouting matches. It was crucial to defuse any potential outbursts that might disrupt the class atmosphere. This was an initial fear, and so it was determined that the generous and appropriate use of illustrations and humor might help to defuse any tension being felt by those in attendance. These tools were also helpful in maintaining the interest level of those in attendance.

The frequent use of overhead transparencies also guaranteed that the people could visibly note the important thoughts or quotations being shared. Although much thought had been given to providing a selected group of handouts, this course of action was not followed for several reasons. First of all, there was the cost factor. Second, there was a level of uncertainty surrounding the number of those who might be in attendance. There was also the concern that providing sketchy outlines might lead to unwarranted conclusions on the part of those who may have obtained the information but were not present during the actual seminar presentations. Aside from the overhead transparencies, no other teaching aids were utilized.

Advertising

The target audience for potential seminar participants was confined primarily to the church congregation of the College Heights Church. The close proximity of the students and staff at Canadian Union College also made them likely participants.

For word to reach this population about the impending series of studies, two avenues of communication were available. The first option was the local church bulletin. It generates the primary source of news for the local church population. It was determined that two successive announcements would be sufficient. One week prior to the scheduled seminar commencement, an announcement was placed in the bulletin. The membership was informed of the general subject material to be presented during the course of the seminar. The announcement in the church bulletin read:

To fulfill the Doctor of Ministry requirements, Pastor Dennis will be sharing some interesting research on the jewellery/adornment issue. We will be exploring the biblical texts in question, historical SDA trends, and the influences that have shaped Adventist thought, as well as other related subjects. **WARNING: This seminar may be hazardous to your traditional understanding of jewellery!** This will be held in the amphitheatre of the MacKibbin Education Centre on Sabbath, March 16, from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. and Monday through Wednesday, March 18 to 20, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

The second source provided notice of the seminar to the student population and staff members. Some of them may not have had access to the information in the church bulletin because they attend some of the surrounding Adventist churches. Two successive announcements, similar

to those placed in the church bulletin, were printed in the regularly scheduled paper called The Weekly. True to its name, this communique, which is released every Friday, highlights all the upcoming events that will be taking place on the campus. These two news carriers had the greatest potential to reach a large segment of the Adventist church population and would provide sufficient notice for those who would be interested in attending the seminar. Although several people from the surrounding churches did attend, there was no effort made to reach out beyond the local church and school area.

Selection of Location

Considering the sensitive nature of the subject material, it was determined that the best course of action in selecting an adequate location was to choose one that had a strong association with an academic setting. Utilizing any space within the church building for a discussion on such a hot topic as jewelry and adornment would undoubtedly have left some church members feeling uncomfortable. That certainly was not the intent of the seminar. Clearly, some of the content in the presentations would be viewed as controversial in nature and not in keeping with traditional Adventist thought. It was hoped that a neutral location would minimize any potential criticism. It was also felt that an academic environment might help the members to realize that this should be looked upon as a time for study

and exploration of the issues on an intellectual, rather than emotional, level. Confrontational and explosive issues of this type have provided some Adventists with the opportunity to react, rather than calmly deal with the issue in a logical fashion. Consequently, the appropriate authorities were approached in the Department of Education and permission was granted for use of the MacKibbin Education Amphitheatre. The dates for the seminar were set for Sabbath, March 16, 4:00-5:30 P.M. and Monday through Wednesday, March 18 to 20, 7:00-8:30 P.M.

An Effort to Prevent the Seminar

The event that proved to be the most interesting, unexpected, and challenging occurred on Friday, March 15. This was one day prior to the first presentation. That afternoon I was requested to attend an urgent meeting with the senior pastor of the College Heights Church. Although he had recently moved into the district and assumed that position, he was knowledgeable of my intention to have a public seminar on jewelry and adornment.

The fact was shared that he and the conference secretary had discussed some concerns about the seminar the previous evening. He proceeded to relay the results of that telephone conversation. Both seemed to be of the opinion that under no circumstance should I be allowed to proceed with the public presentations. Complicating the issue somewhat was the fact that the conference secretary was the

acting president, since our former conference president had relocated to a new area.

One of the main reasons given for this decision was that the timing was very inopportune due to a major disciplinary action that had recently occurred at the academy. The secretary apparently was also feeling uneasy about the whole situation because he had not understood that there was to be a public presentation concerning jewelry and adornment. I was then informed by the senior pastor that if I proceeded with the seminar, the material presented could be considered to be in opposition to the counsel in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual. The net result of this could lead to disciplinary action in the form of removing my ministerial credentials.

This was a crushing blow, especially in light of the fact that the advertising had already taken place twice in The Weekly, and once in the church bulletin. The local church population was well informed of the seminar, and many had expressed their personal wish to attend. At no time had I received even the slightest hint that these presentations would cause a problem. I was finally informed that something could be worked out in the future to resolve this problem, and with that the meeting ended.

Following that encounter, I went directly to the principal at the academy to ascertain his feelings and those of the faculty. Since it had been communicated to me that they apparently had strong reservations about the project,

they would be the obvious place to start. I was almost shocked when the principal informed me that he had absolutely no misgivings about my project. His intention had been to attend. Furthermore, he did not feel this would have any bearing on the disciplinary actions that had taken place. He also revealed that he had not received a single note of concern from any of the staff members. This revelation was amazing considering the fact that the concern of the academy was presented as a fundamental reason why the seminar should be terminated.

My next step was to phone the conference secretary and to hear firsthand his concerns about the seminar.¹ He repeated some of the concerns that had been voiced by the senior pastor, and again issued the warning that I would be in violation of the instruction in the Church Manual, and could face disciplinary action. I was asked several times: "What was my bottom line?" and I tried to briefly share some of the subjects that I was planning to discuss. I shared my concerns relative to the fact that the advertising had already taken place and many people were planning to come. I mentioned that the previous president was aware of my

¹It may be helpful to note that the secretary had been present earlier in the week at a ministerial meeting which included the Adventist pastors of the local region. During the devotional time, I shared my research material on Isa 3:13-26. At no time during that discussion did I receive any negative feedback from my presentation--rather the comments were all positive. If memory serves correctly, those who were in attendance, including the secretary, were aware that I was going to have a public seminar to discuss the whole issue of jewelry and adornment.

project, but I was simply told: "He is no longer here." A concern was also expressed that this was an act of removing my freedom of speech concerning this issue. Finally, I informed the secretary that the principal and staff at the academy had no reservations whatsoever about the seminar, despite the fact that this had been presented as a primary concern to halt the project. After a lengthy discussion it was finally agreed that I should write a letter of disclaimer, which would in effect disassociate my presentations from the conference. This was completely agreeable, and in fact was expanded to include the church and the college. A copy of the letter appears in the appendix. In the letter of disclaimer the local church, the academy, the college, and the Alberta Conference were absolved from any association with the seminar presentations. Copies were circulated to the conference secretary, the senior pastor, the college president, and the academy principal.

Since the church secretary had not been able to complete the bulletin, the following words were added to the second announcement promoting the seminar:

Please note that the material to be presented does not represent the philosophy or policy of the Alberta Conference of Seventh-day Adventists or the College Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is the compilation of personal research done in fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry program of Andrews University.

This disclaimer was read to the entire congregation by the senior pastor. As one might expect, this had the effect of

raising questions in the minds of many people. Although one cannot be certain, it may have had the effect of attracting people to the seminar who previously had decided not to come. Those who were aware of these events were shocked that this would ever happen. For those who did not know about these proceedings, various theories of the event were shared at a later time. In one final effort to make sure that the church and conference would not be blamed, I repeated the essence of the disclaimer at the first session.

Seminar Presentations

It is always difficult in an academic setting to select a suitable time for any gathering that will be agreeable to the largest number of people. It was also felt that the best results would be obtained by having the meetings as close as possible to one another. The best option seemed to favor the commencement of the seminar on a Sabbath afternoon. This was to be followed by meetings on Monday through Wednesday evening. After securing the use and availability of the MacKibbin Amphitheatre, the dates were set.

Sensing uncertainty as to the length of time that would be needed for the presentations, I felt the best option was to divide the seminar into four sections of study. Those areas would focus on: an examination of the biblical passages; a study of historical Adventism and Ellen White; an examination of the other integral issues

surrounding adornment; and a final session for discussion, conclusions, and questions. It was hoped that there would be sufficient time for questions following each session.

Many expressed a deep desire to attend, but prior commitments excluded them from being able to be present. I had been repeatedly approached about the feasibility of recording the meetings and thus accommodating those who could not come. After a lengthy consideration of this proposal, I felt the best option was to decline that request.

The first presentation drew an attendance that was greater than expected. More than one hundred people came to discover what the Bible has to say about jewelry and adornment. During the three evening meetings that followed, the attendance remained fairly consistent with between forty to fifty people present.

While some students were able to come, the majority of those in attendance provided an excellent cross section of the church membership. One of the disappointments was that more of the student population were not able to attend. Their lack of involvement may have been due to the realization that this is simply no longer an issue for many of them. Several retired pastors and their spouses were in regular attendance, as was the college president. At various times during the seminar, other pastors and teachers were able to attend.

What Was Learned

Perhaps the greatest benefit and learning experience of this entire endeavor was an enhancement of my personal understanding about the subject of jewelry and adornment. It is impossible to study in detail a subject like this and not be influenced. Many of the people who attended the seminar expressed their personal gratitude for the information shared that revealed some of the complexities surrounding this subject. It is also hoped that they developed a better understanding of the process we need to follow when interpreting the Bible and the writings of Ellen White. I feel that many who attended also learned the importance of understanding the historical influences that have helped to shape the Seventh-day Adventist church. There was a sincere attempt to help teach church members how to be more responsible when examining the writings of Ellen White. One observation that surfaced from this study was the fact that Adventists can understand and accept the principles undergirding proper biblical interpretation. However, they struggle when it comes to applying these same principles to Ellen White's counsel. I discovered that some feel that we are destroying Mrs. White's influence when we begin to talk about culture, historical times, and circumstances as having any bearing on the interpretation of her writings. There still persists this tendency to grab a quotation that appears to fit a particular issue and pull it completely out of context.

Another interesting piece of information that surfaced during the seminar was that retired pastors, their spouses, and many of the elderly long-time members were in agreement with the information presented. Quite a number of this group voiced their opinion that much of this information was long overdue. Normally one comes to expect that elderly church members are the strongest to express their opinion about maintaining the old standards. Many who came agreed that we need to take a new look at this issue and relate it to the age in which we presently find ourselves.

Of equal interest, I discovered that there are still some youth in the church who have strong feelings over the issue and feel that we should persevere and not allow the use of any jewelry or personal adornment. As always, it seems the whole spectrum of opinion can be found among Seventh-day Adventists. In general, I believe that those who attended were provided with some badly needed information that will help make for better decisions and generate a better understanding of the intricate details surrounding the issue of jewelry and adornment.

Seminar Difficulties

One of the things that continued to plague my mind throughout the seminar was the question: "What am I actually trying to do or accomplish by presenting this material?" I believe that despite my efforts to answer that question

publicly, some people may have left confused and uncertain as to "the bottom line." I feel that I could have focused more specifically upon that question, and tried to develop a one-sentence statement about the intent and focus of the seminar. Certainly the people were presented with a great deal of information, and one of the basic elements required for people to draw accurate conclusions is to be well informed. The successful resolution of any issue demands an adequate and thorough knowledge of the subject material. One of the opportunities that presents itself to the church is to inform the people about the dynamic forces that have been influential in the development of present-day church standards.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Results

The seminar had a definite impact on my personal experience and understanding about jewelry and adornment. The process of researching the subject reinforced some of the concepts that I have cherished for many years, and provided the knowledge and detail to confirm those opinions.

Judging from numerous conversations following the seminar, those who had attended expressed sincere gratitude for the information that was shared. In essence, the presentation of the seminar fulfilled the expectations that were outlined at the beginning.

It was shown that it is possible to present materials on a delicate subject such as jewelry and adornment in a public church setting and not have this time disintegrate into a vocal shouting match. Many of the people who came did so with open hearts and minds and were eager for help in understanding this controversial issue.

As a result of that experience I believe that those who attended the seminar were given some tools and knowledge

that will assist them in determining their own personal choices when confronted with lifestyle issues. This information may also guide their actions towards others who may harbor conflicting views on the subject. I sincerely hope that in their dealings with friends and family they will have their actions and words tempered with Christian love.

Recommendations

The SDA church has several avenues through which it can address some of the concerns relating to jewelry and adornment. To begin with, the church will need to continue to dialogue on the issue. There have been occasions when the church membership and the youth have been talked down to, and not been seen as equals when discussing this issue. Nor have they been encouraged to openly share their opinions. The SDA church developed a climate wherein people were able to sit down together, open their Bibles, and eventually hammer out a consensus. But most dialogue relating to adornment has expressed one view--thou shalt not! Many youth in our church have simply stopped talking and pursued their own ways. Informed discussion is willing to consider all the ramifications, and is anxious to listen. Talking and dialoging about the issue is one positive step that we need to take.

Second, we must strive towards a level of honesty that will be apparent to all. The act of airbrushing out

necklaces from family photographs does not encourage a high level of confidence or honesty. We also need to be truthful in our interpretation of the Bible texts. Although we have not generally been dishonest in our understanding of these texts, we have not exercised our full potential when doing a thorough exegesis of these passages. We have simply relied upon a particular interpretation that has seemingly concurred with the traditions that we have inherited. We need to be honest about our history and the forces that made us who we are today. We must uplift the good in them but be willing to share their shortcomings.

I believe a detailed process of education on the subject will help to clarify in the minds of God's people some of the struggles we have wrestled with throughout our history. Education above all appears to provide men and women with the tools that they need to be set free. We can educate people about our history, about traditions, principles and standards, culture, interpersonal relationships, and above all, a personal dynamic relationship with Christ. This has to be part of the process to help us move beyond our present difficulties.

Finally, we need to help Seventh-day Adventists be a people who choose to live according to Christian principles. This is one of the best gifts that can be given to them. We must encourage them to judge every personal lifestyle issue in accordance with those principles. In this fast-moving world of ours, we face decisions unparalleled with any other

era throughout history. It is unconscionable to cry out against the use of inexpensive plastic ornamentation or jewelry, and yet think nothing of squandering the stewardship God has entrusted us with on countless materialistic pursuits. Until our people can grasp a sense of the bigger issues of life, we will continue to be dragged down by the insignificant. Teaching eternal principles is the only answer. Perhaps then we will be more in earnest about our mission, which proclaims Christ as the answer to all of life's problems.

Conclusions

When the findings of this study and the presentations of the seminar are taken into consideration, a number of conclusions can be drawn. They are outlined as follows:

1. We can conclude that when we follow the biblical principles of interpretation, the proof-texts that have generally been cited to encourage the nonusage of jewelry do not stand the test. The issues that the Bible writers were dealing with are not the same as the issue of jewelry and adornment today. The passages that were discussed in chapter 2 alluded to a specific concern of that day. Even though the words jewelry and adornment may have been part of the text, the concern being dealt with was entirely different.

2. Everyone is influenced by paradigms and through these "maps" we filter our understanding about life. An

example of this would be looking at many biblical passages through denominational glasses. Consequently, our interpretation may be distorted or even wrong. There are times when we need to re-evaluate or re-examine our paradigms. At the very least, we need to be aware that paradigms are at work in our life and they may affect our lifestyle choices.

3. Just as we promote the use of proper hermeneutical principles for biblical interpretation, we need to apply the same rules to the writings of Ellen White. There is a fearful tendency among some Seventh-day Adventists to place her writings and their interpretation above the Bible. Her quotations have a context just as every Bible passage has a context. No passage can be properly understood by glossing over that particular context. To overlook that consideration is a blatant disregard for due process, and an invitation to faulty interpretation.

4. It was also concluded that our historical roots have influenced and shaped our present understanding about church standards and lifestyle issues. We have inherited certain traditions and concepts from those who founded the Adventist movement. This includes those from the Anabaptist tradition as well as church members who were reared under a Methodist influence. Equally as important, Adventists brought into the church many of the general cultural norms of the nineteenth century. The church simply absorbed many

of the realities and accepted practices of the nineteenth century. The present will make more sense to us as we come to understand our past.

5. The writings and teachings of Ellen White must also be considered in light of her own cultural and personal heritage. Her teachings on jewelry and adornment reflected her religious background. Not only that, they were in keeping with the cultural norms and social actions in vogue during her day. Methodist thought and teaching played a significant role in her life, and her writings reflected this early influence. We concluded that Ellen White promoted a simple lifestyle and upheld stewardship principles that were inclusive of every aspect of life, not just jewelry. Most important of all, we discovered that she tried to encourage Seventh-day Adventists to be totally balanced when it came to making choices about lifestyle issues.

6. Another conclusion focuses our attention upon the need to expend greater effort to remove the confusion and uncertainty surrounding our use of terminology. Many of the references that we use in connection with jewelry and adornment are faulty, or lacking in definition. While we should never become obsessed with this, we do need to be clear about our word usage. There has been a fearful tendency (although it has not been intentional) to misuse words such as jewelry, simplicity, modesty, and worldliness.

Consistency is required in this area just as it is in the realm of personal practice.

7. The Seventh-day Adventist church is also going to have to re-evaluate the role that standards, culture, and traditions have played in determining our understanding about jewelry and adornment. To begin with, our standards have to be based upon biblical principles. The church also needs to recognize that certain rules that once fit and made sense to people may not be applicable today. Constant change has the effect of eroding the meaning and value of those standards. Everyone needs standards to function; life would be chaos without them. However, they constantly need to be re-evaluated so they make sense today. Our standards and values function primarily to help us internalize Christian principles. Adventist Christians need to be constantly asking themselves, "What picture of God am I portraying to people through my standards and values?"

We must ponder the necessity of re-examining our traditions and culture. Present-day realities are also constantly changing. If our traditions do not make sense and have lost their meaning like some church standards, then we need to consider establishing new traditions that will be meaningful.

8. Another conclusion that was presented in this study revealed that women in the church have carried the greatest burden and have been subjected to far more criticism than the male population of the church when it

comes to wearing jewelry. We pointed out that this approach to life is no longer acceptable and regardless of how we continue to deal with the subject we need to be fair and honest. Because we have focused upon several items of jewelry worn more frequently by women, men have virtually been free to wear all kinds of adornment without fear of condemnation. Those outside our church circles cannot understand how one item may be wrong for one person, but when changed slightly, it suddenly becomes acceptable.

9. Seventh-day Adventists of all people must be transformed to the extent that they will become people who can live by principle rather than be molded into conformity by rules. The principles which were discussed as relating to the issue of jewelry and adornment are: Love and Justice, Personal Freedom, Judgment, Stewardship, Simplicity, Modesty, Balance, and Mission. The Sanhedrin approach to life whereby rules are dictated to followers is not acceptable. Principled Christian living is the only real answer.

10. One conclusion that could be drawn from the study, which was not addressed specifically but was referred to frequently, is that the use of jewelry and adornment is a lifestyle issue--not a moral issue. Unfortunately, in the minds of some Adventists the wearing of jewelry is a determination or expression of one's religious status. I prefer to think of jewelry as a convenient scapegoat. By labelling the wearing of jewelry as a sin many have felt

justified in living an extravagant lifestyle in every other area. As long as we keep harping about wearing jewelry we have free license concerning other lifestyle choices.

11. We also concluded that our lives need to be set in proper balance. Many of the inconsistencies surrounding this issue were pointed out and Adventists will have to come to grips with this challenge. We are totally out of balance when we condemn a young member of the church for wearing several dollars worth of cosmetic jewelry, but allow church board members to drive luxury cars and live in extravagant homes filled with all the latest and most expensive frills. Little thought is given to the notion that they need to examine their practices in the light of Christian principles.

12. The church's mission is not to have everyone remove their jewelry. We are here to lift up and worship Jesus, and encourage meaningful relationships with fellow human beings. Change occurs from the inside out and modification of outward behavior will not save a person.

13. Stewardship and accountability must characterize all our choices and decisions. God holds us accountable for the totality of life's choices, not just our decisions relative to the use of jewelry and adornment. We have almost become paralyzed by the sight of a tiny earring, and refuse to see the bigger picture. We still attempt to "strain out a gnat and swallow a camel" (Matt 23:24).

14. We need to build convictions and not be overly concerned about compliance. God has not asked us to enforce what we perceive to be His will; rather we are to uphold it. "Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used."¹ Essentially, the SDA church has taught abstinence rather than responsibility.

15. The paramount conclusion of this entire project is the need for the church membership to become people who understand that Jesus has the answer to all lifestyle issues. His answer to each of us may be different depending upon our circumstances. We have been asked to love and serve Him and proclaim His character to all nations. When we adhere to and love the principles that He has given, less will be said about jewelry and adornment. More will be spoken about God's love. The principles that Jesus gave affect every decision about life that we make. Jewelry and adornment are not the only subjects that should be weighed in the balance.

We have become an affluent people who delight in our possessions. As we go through life making choices about what we wear and what we buy, the Christian principles discussed earlier should be used to help decide those

¹Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1940), 759.

questions of choice. We stand individually before God, and if we let Him, He will help to make those decisions for us. Perhaps some day we will come to the point where our discussions revolve around Christ and not around the things we choose to wear.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

LETTER OF DISCLAIMER

March 15, 1996

To Whom It May Concern:

Concerning the Seminar Presentation "Adventists and Adornment," by Dennis Braun.

This is to state that the materials that will be presented during the seminar, March 16, 18-20, represents the personal research of Dennis Braun. This seminar is considered to be part of the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry Program of Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

I HEREBY STATE THAT IN THESE PRESENTATIONS I DO NOT SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE ALBERTA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS, CANADIAN UNION COLLEGE, PARKVIEW ADVENTIST ACADEMY, OR THE COLLEGE HEIGHTS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH. THEY ARE NOT TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR ANY OF THE MATERIALS THAT MAY BE CONTROVERSIAL IN NATURE. I AM SIMPLY SHARING MY OWN PERSONAL RESEARCH.

Sincerely Yours,

Dennis Braun.

Copies to:

Don King, Secretary, Alberta Conference.

Victor Fitch, CUC President

John Janes, PAA Principal

Lee Gugliotto, Senior Pastor, College Heights, SDA Church.

APPENDIX II

SEMINAR NOTES

COURSE OUTLINE

I. BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

A. Historical, Cultural Considerations

1. Inspiration
2. Scripture Addressing Particular Needs
3. Place and Time of Writing
4. Scriptural Context

B. Paradigms and Perceptions

II. TEXTUAL STUDIES

A. Old Testament Studies

1. Genesis 35:2-4
2. Exodus 33:3-6
3. Isaiah 3:13-26

B. New Testament Studies

1. 1 Timothy 2:8-10
2. 1 Peter 3:3-5
3. Revelation 19:4

III. HISTORICAL ADVENTISM AND ADORNMENT

A. Literature Review

B. Historical Influences on the SDA Church

1. Plain Dress Movement
2. Influence of Methodism
3. Historical Adventist Trends

C. Development of Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs

D. Ellen G. White and Adornment

1. Ellen White's Background
2. Her Sense of Urgency
3. The Issue of Stewardship
4. Inclusive Thinking on Adornment Issues
5. Ellen White's Personal Practice

IV. INTEGRAL ISSUES CONCERNING ADORNMENT

A. Definitions and Clarifications

1. Jewelry
2. Simplicity and Modesty
3. Worldliness

B. Standards and Principles

1. Source of Standards
2. Standards and Culture
3. Transitory Nature of Standards
4. Standards and Legalism

C. Traditions

D. Jewelry and the Issue of Gender

E. Relationships or Behavior Modification

V. CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

INTRODUCTION

My desire to research the question about jewelry and adornment is a result of the following concerns.

a. Personal Background. It is necessary to give you just a short glimpse of my background and where I am coming from. I grew up within the traditions of the Mennonite church, and had the opportunity to experience first hand the meaning of a simplistic lifestyle. My grandparents adopted the plain dress code, and plain lifestyle as taught by their church. Jewelry, high fashion, extravagance in the home were out of the question. Even though their children did not follow these dictates, their style of living was obvious to all within the family. Despite the reluctance on the part of many of the family members to follow the same degree, the simple lifestyle of all would have far exceeded the simplicity of lifestyle adopted by Adventists today.

b. First Adventist Contact. The first question my wife and I asked the Adventist pastor was, "Why are you against wedding rings?" After 25 years in the church, I have still not received a satisfactory answer. Even though we used some articles of jewelry, and took them off at our baptism, it has always been hard to understand why such a disproportionate amount of time is spent in the Adventist church debating endlessly, and without resolution, this issue.

c. Pastoral Frustrations. As a new pastor one of the first concerns that I brought to a Conference President was over the wedding ring issue. I saw one faithful family after the next either driven out of the church, or leave, because of their desire to wear a simple wedding band. These were people who had been leaders in their churches and had faithfully discharged their duties, but new pastors, or new leaders forced them out of office because they wore a wedding ring or some other small article of jewelry.

d. Membership Experiences. After almost 25 years of listening to stories from present and former members about "spiritual abuse," I have concluded that our efforts to maintain the standard of not using jewelry, at any cost, has created more hurt and distrust than we can even imagine. Many, many times elderly ladies, long-time members of the church have come and said: "The thing that bothers me the most is that I had to give up my wedding ring to become a member of the church."

The abuse our young people have suffered from the hands of well-meaning saints exceeds that experience.

illustration. Often the little things in life trip us up. A tragic example is an Eastern Airlines jumbo jet that crashed in the Everglades of Florida. The plane was the now famous Flight-401, bound from New York to Miami with a heavy load of holiday passengers. As the plane approached the Miami airport for landing, a light indicating proper deployment of the landing gear failed to light. The plane flew in a large, looping circle while the crew tried to check on the landing gear to see if it had deployed, or if the light was defective.

When the flight engineer tried to remove the bulb it wouldn't budge, and the other crew members tried to help. As they struggled with the bulb, no one noticed the plane was losing altitude, and it flew right into the swamp. Dozens of people were killed. While an experienced crew of high-priced pilots fiddled with a seventy-five cent light bulb, the plane with its passengers flew right into the ground.

We need to make sure the issue over jewelry is not doing the same thing to the church.

(overhead)

Every day in America...

7,742 teens become sexually active
2,795 teens get pregnant
623 teens get a sexually transmitted disease
372 teens miscarry
1,106 teens have abortions
135,000 children bring guns to school
10 children are killed by guns
6 teens commit suicide
211 teens are arrested for drugs
1,151 teens drop out of school
3,288 children run from home
2,989 children see parents divorce

For some, the wearing of jewelry has become the "spiritual thermometer" by which a person's spiritual condition is measured.

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Jon Paulien: "I have learned as a biblical scholar how easy it is to make the Bible say whatever you want it to say. One's interpretation often arises out of the need to protect one's personal failings and shortcomings from coming to the light of Scripture and the Spirit's gentle persuasion."

A. HISTORICAL, CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS.

1. Inspiration.

☒ Bible writers were inspired, not their words.

☒ We need to determine their meaning, and the contemporary issues with which they were struggling.

2. Scripture addresses particular needs.

☒ They span a specific historical time period.

☒ They are confined to a specific geographic location.

☒ "The more specifically relevant any given moral teaching is to a particular situation, the less specifically relevant it is to other particular situations."

3. Always consider the time and place of the writing.

illustration

The apostle Paul wrote to both the Galatians and the Thessalonians. What would have happened, if on mailing the letters, he had switched the labels? The Galatians would have received the counsel for the Thessalonians and vice versa. The Thessalonians, with whom Paul had a strong loving relationship, would have received the angry and sarcastic words that Paul had intended for the members of the church in Galatia. The letters sent to the wrong churches would have been unintelligible and meaningless.

☒ Timeless Biblical principles are still relevant.

☒ The social, political, and cultural conditions of Paul's congregations were different from today.

☒ The biblical writers were addressing God's Word to particular situations, applicable for a given time and place.

⌘ This does not give license to negate Scripture.

⌘ We must consider the primary intent of the writer.

(overhead)

"Just because the general topics are the same does not mean that the issues are the same. It must be our task to inquire in each case, into the issues as Paul faced them. . . . Paul's instructions were shaped to meet the situations that confronted him and his congregations in their world, and their relevance for Paul's first readers must be distinguished from their relevance for us."

4. Scriptural Context.

⌘ "A text without a context is a pretext." Verses lifted out of their context misrepresent the original thought.

⌘ The context encompasses not only the immediate verses of the passage in question, but also the immediate chapters.

⌘ The proof--text method does not consider the context, and so cannot yield satisfactory interpretations.

⌘ Need to ask every text: WHAT IS THE ISSUE HERE?

B. PARADIGMS AND PERCEPTIONS

1. These are the unconscious attitudes and ideas that we constantly carry about with us. We hardly know they are present, yet they influence our thinking on every level.

2. As we probe into scripture we need to understand that we may approach the Bible with this hidden agenda.

3. Whether right or wrong--they are the sources of our values, attitudes, behavior, and relations in the church. They are the filters through which people see their world.

4. These filters may have a sense of distortion.

(overhead)

"Each of us has many, many maps in our head, which can be divided into two main categories: maps of the way things are, or realities, and maps of the way things should be, or values. We interpret everything we experience through these mental maps. We seldom question their accuracy; we're usually even unaware that we have them. We simply assume that the way we see things is the way they really are or the way they should be. And our attitudes and behaviors grow out of those

assumptions. The way we see things is the source of the way we think and act."

"We do not see things as they are. We see things as we are."

(overhead)

"How you see the world depends on where you sit. People tend to see what they want to see. Out of a mass of detailed information, they tend to pick out and focus on those facts that confirm their prior perceptions and to disregard or misinterpret those that call their perceptions into question." (Getting to Yes, 23)

"We are creatures of strong emotions who often have radically different perceptions and have difficulty communicating clearly. Emotions typically become entangled with the objective merits of the problem. Taking positions just makes this worse because people's egos become identified with their positions." (Getting to Yes, 11)

Seventh-day Adventist Paradigm of Jewelry:

1. If you wear jewelry you have a spiritual problem.
2. This frees us to do anything else we want because it is not mentioned in the Bible. We can have a large car, house, clothes, fine china, all the electronic toys etc.
3. Our paradigm of jewelry and adornment does not solve the problems. The issue is unresolved.

Adventist Identity

The issue of jewelry and our Adventist identity are related. Moving from a "simple" lifestyle is felt to be an erosion of the church's identity.

(overhead)

"To raise questions about your way of life. . . is the same as destroying your faith, because a cultural fundamentalists's faith and way of life are inextricably tied together. The average Adventist who has been in the church a generation cannot sort these things out without fearing that he or she will lose favor with God and lose his religion." "Cultural fundamentalists think that every element of their lifeway is that which keeps them in favor of God." (Empty Pews, 59-61)

Conclusion:

⌘ These verses cannot be utilized as a proof text advocating the non-use of jewelry.

⌘ Israel is in mourning, and custom dictated the removal of their festive garments.

⌘ The passage does not prohibit the usage of jewelry or adornment.

⌘ AT BEST, THE PEOPLE WERE TOLD TO REMOVE THEIR "ORNAMENTS" DUE TO THE SOLEMNNESS OF THE OCCASION.

3. ISAIAH 3:13-26

(overhead)

"Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, And walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, Walking and mincing as they go, Making a jingling with their feet, Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will uncover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the finery: the jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, and the veils; the headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands; the perfume boxes, the charms, and the rings; the nose jewels, the festal apparel, and the mantles; the outer garments, the purses, and the mirrors; the fine linen, the turbans, and the robes." (Isa 3:16-23 NKJV)

Typical Adventist Interpretation: The passage is proof that jewelry and adornment are associated with sinful lifestyles.

(1) "Nowhere else in the Bible is there so detailed a denunciation of degenerate womanhood as here. The women of Isaiah's time are pictured exactly as they were--vain, haughty, high-minded, proud, interested in themselves rather than in the Lord and the needs of those about them. (SDABC, 4:115)

(2) "According to the prophet Isaiah, fashion took strong hold of the women of Judah in his day. In a strongly denunciatory passage (Isa 3:16-24), he warns them that the judgments of God were about to overtake them for their slavery to dress and fashionable baubles, which they exploited for sex and other purposes." Delafield, 41.

(3) "Another revealing example of how extravagant clothes and adornments fostered pride and self-glorification rather than the worship of God. is found in Isaiah 3:16-26.

This passage is most significant because it contains not only the most detailed descriptions of the various articles of jewelry and fine clothing worn by wealthy women in Jerusalem, but also the most scathing denunciation of the pride and haughtiness displayed through such articles." Bacchiocchi, 36.

QUESTION: WHAT WAS THE ISSUE?
WHO WAS BEING ADDRESSED? Women?

Meaning of Biblical Terms: "It is important for understanding the prophetic message to see what hints the Bible gives as to who wears this apparel and for what purposes."

(overhead)

RSV

(suggestive meanings)

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Isa 3: In that day the Lord will take away <u>the finery of</u> | insignia of office |
| (1) anklets | ankle bangles |
| (2) headbands | sun or star-disks |
| (3) crescents | crescents |
| (4) pendants | drop pendants |
| (5) bracelets | necklace cords |
| (6) scarfs | beads |
| (7) headdresses | garland crowns |
| (8) armlets | armlets (foot jewelry) |
| (9) sashes | sashes (or girdles) |
| (10) perfume boxes | tubular "soul" cases |
| (11) amulets | snake charms |
| (12) signet rings | signet rings |
| (13) nose rings | nose rings |
| (14) festal robes | loin cloths |
| (15) mantels | enveloping capes |
| (16) cloaks | mantles |

| | | |
|------|-------------------|-----------------|
| (17) | handbags | wallets |
| (18) | garments of gauze | thin garments |
| (19) | linen garments | warrior's belts |
| (20) | turbans | turbans |
| (21) | veils | outer cloaks |

Isaiah 3

"finery of " "bravery of" (KJV)

1. Strong's Concordance: "beauty, bravery, honor, majesty, ornament, fair."

2. Collective term that indicates honor of an exalted position of office. Usually designated by a crown.

⌘ Zion is a crown of glory (Isa 28:1,4;52:1)

⌘ High priest's apparel is glorious (Exod 28:2,40)

⌘ Queen's jewelry designating her rank is beautiful (Ezek 16:17,39)

⌘ King's crown (Prov 4:9; Jer 13:18)

⌘ God's signs of dominion are majestic (Isa 28:5; 63:12,14,15)

3. Symbols of office: beautiful jewelry, metal work and apparel.

(1) "anklets"

Heavy round anklets or bangles worn in pairs.
foot ornaments, feminine association: Josh 15: 16,17.

(2) "headbands"

Uncertainty as to meaning. Only appears once in Bible.
Star-disks, crescents and rosettes appear to have been used in various cultures, by Kings, during Isaiah's time.
Suggested this was a sun-disk pendant worn on a necklace.

(3) "crescents"

Root word has to do with "moon."

Insignia of office worn by Midian kings and their camels. Judg 8:21, 26.

Likely worn about the neck.

(4) "pendants"

Mentioned with the crescents of Judg 8.

Could be neck jewelry.

Beads in turquoise or other semiprecious stones.

Archaeology: Pendants and beads are found with crescents.

"Crescents and pendants" are paired in keeping with Judg 8 as royal insignia.

(5) "bracelets"

May be necklace cords.

A related word in Exod 28:14 is designated " two chains of pure gold twisted like cords."

Items (3), (4), and (5) appear to be associated with insignia of office for the High Priest and the Midianite kings.

(6) "scarfs"

(7) "headdresses"

A special head ornament, possible reference to crown.

Isa 61:3, 10--headdress is a sign of honor.

Ezek 44 Levitical priests wear these "turbans" as do Aaron and his sons.

May be a "frontlet" made of a strip of metal with holes for ties to place it across the forehead. Elaborate and fancy designed ones have been found.

(8) "armlets"

Rare term.

2 Sam 1:10 Armlet on king Saul has the same linguistic root word.

Numb 31:50 Booty from battle at Midian included arm jewelry, but this is a different Heb word.

Strong suggestion this was foot jewelry, or ankle chains.

(9) "sashes"

Article usually worn in the middle of the body.

In other passages is something a bride binds on.

Could be an outer garment characteristic of the queenly wedding dress. Jer 2:32 "Can a maiden forget her ornaments or a bride her attire."

(7), (8), and (9) appear to be a group of related items. They cover the head, feet and middle of the body.

Only items (1) and (9) are associated exclusively with women.

(10) "perfume boxes"

Obscure term. Linked with tubular amulets.

(11) "amulets"

Root meaning of "charm" and is associated with snakes.
Isa 3:3 A man of high office has an "expert in charms."

Jer 8:17 "adders which cannot be charmed."

(12) "signet rings"

Jewelry used as insignia of high office.

Gen 41:42 Joseph received one from Pharaoh.

Esth 8:2 Mordecai accepted one from the Persian king.

(13) "nose rings"

Part of the Queen-bride's jewelry. Ezek 16:12

(14) "festal robes"

Zech 3:4, and Isa 3 only place where the word appears. Associated with High Priest.

Possibilities of the word are : "festal robes of the priest, or warriors loin cloths."

(15) "mantles"

May have the idea of enveloping cape. Obscure term.

(16) "cloaks"

Associated with women. Ruth 3:15

(17) "handbags"

2 Kings 5:1,23 Naaman was an owner of this item.

(18) "garments of gauze"

Could be related to the verb "reveal"

Favors idea of garments or apparel as fitting context.

(19) "linen garments"

Has a military association
 Prov 31:24; 2 Sam 20:8
 Judg 14:12,13
 Special garments Samson wears.
 Preferred association is "warriors' belts."

(20) "turbans"

Exod 28; 29:6; 39:28,31; Lev 8:9; 16:4. Mentioned with reference to High Priest's garb.

(21) "veils"

Song of Solomon 5:7 Associated with women.

Conclusions

a. Of the 16 more readily identifiable articles :

- ◆ 12 have connections with important men of office.
- ◆ 15 are associated with insignias of honorable office.
- ◆ 4 relate to women of high rank.
- ◆ Both men and women are discussed in the text.

b. "the finery of"--It is a collective term to speak of all the paraphernalia that indicates the honor of an exalted position of office, usually a crown. Isa 28:1,4; 52:1; Jer 13:20; Exod 28:2,40; Ezek 16:17,39 etc. **The condemnation is not directed to women's clothing, but to people of power.**

c. The reason for Isaiah's rebuke against the aristocracy was their oppression of the poor (Isa 3:13-15). Something more serious than jewelry has caught Isaiah's attention--there was an inner pride and corruption of the heart.

"The point at issue in Isa 3 is not a criticism of the so-called fickleness of women's fashions but a denouncement of persons of high office for their social injustice."

d. The 21 items mentioned are descriptive symbols that identify those who occupy high office, men and women alike.

The wearing of beautiful apparel or jewelry is not what is being condemned, but that the lesson is on the misuse of the authority of office for which the apparel stands.

e. None of the articles are forbidden, God will in a certain time take these things away, that's all!

f. If, the items in the list are forbidden, why have we not forbidden all of the items mentioned. 14 of the 21 articles are not jewelry, just articles of clothing.

Summary

The Old Testament passages teach:

⌘ Jewelry was worn by all, but when the aristocracy abused their positions of power, the stripping off of their ornaments symbolized their loss of power.

⌘ Joseph ruled as Prime Minister and wore a seal ring as a sign of authority.

⌘ Haman misuses his office; his ring is condemned.

⌘ The Queen in the Song of Solomon is praised for her jewelry; the harlot of Ezekiel misuses her adornment.

⌘ Rebecca is heralded for her golden ornaments; the aristocratic women of Samaria are chastised as indolent cows.

⌘ The high priest proudly wore his turban and breastplate, but Hosea denounced Israel for their sin and said they would be without these things.

NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES1. 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-10

(overhead)

"Therefore I desire that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works."

The Context. Paul uses words describing adornment, but the questions remain: what is the issue, and the passage's meaning?

a. **Worship Setting:** Paul's focus was upon appropriate dress worn in worship settings. He was trying to counteract a cultural practice of overindulgence in the worship service.

"The object of the Apostle is not to enjoin a general rule of life for Christian women, but specifically for their demeanor at the place of prayer. He does not forbid all ornament, but only the excess which is a mark of frivolity and love of display, and awakens impure passions."

b. **Consider:** Paul was not promoting drabness, which itself can become a matter of display and pride.

c. **Consider:** Paul did not forbid all jewelry or excellent clothing. He was resisting extravagance when substituted for religion.

d. **Nobility Excesses:** Paul was not issuing a command for Christian women to adopt an ascetic lifestyle. The nobility were notorious for spending considerable time weaving gold into their hair, and Paul is simply encouraging his readers to avoid this extreme.

e. (overhead)

Roman women adorned the rest of their bodies as much as their faces. When going out, they would array themselves with jewels, often wearing expensive rings on every finger. Fashionable women insisted on wearing gowns made of imported materials such as silk, even though, pound for pound, silk cost as much as gold. Clement commented whimsically, 'The body of such ladies wouldn't fetch a thousand drachmas (a coin of little value), but they will pay ten thousand

talents (more than the average Roman earned in a lifetime) for a single dress.

f. Balanced life. The Christian life should always be in proper balance. "The true line is passed when more is thought of external adorning than of the ornament of the heart. Any external decoration which occupies the mind more than the virtues of the heart is wrong."

g. Cultural Concerns: Paul's counsel for women's silence in church was culturally derived just as much as his discussion of adornment. Men do not raise their hands in the SDA church as commands in vs 8, nor do we command women to be silent. These were all cultural issues.

h. Unscrupulous Tactics of the Wealthy: Opulent dress and adornment describe the wealthy who often used itinerant preachers whose teachings were not always orthodox. 1 Tim 2:12 talks about having "authority over a man," and these words carry the connotation of seduction and murder. It is possible that Paul did not want the women of his day to show in any manner, including extravagant dress, a sense of high-handed power and authority.

2. 1 PETER 3:3-5

(overhead)

"Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold, or of putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands."

"Such 'wearing of gold' was contrary to the principle of Christian modesty and simplicity," SDABC

Context

a. Paul and Timothy Put both NT texts on overhead. Although the wording is similar, the passages address different issues.

b. Note: In Peter's text there are three concerns: the adorning of hair, wearing of gold, fine apparel.

c. House Code: Peter's counsel is in the heart of a section referred to as a House Duty Code. He is dealing with

issues concerned about slaves and masters, wives and husbands, and children and fathers.

(overhead)

"We must remember that this exhortation was written to women in a monarchistic society, women whose very beings were organized around their husband's wants and desires. The real purpose for writing I Peter 3:1-7 was to encourage wives to look and act the part society demanded in order to lessen the criticism against the new church."

d. **Cultic Association:** For the wealthy Christians who could afford to dress in a more lavish style, there was a constant danger of being associated with the immoral who participated in cultic festivals. He is making sure that Christian women will not be perceived by their husbands--or by society in general--as in any way similar to the female adherents to the cults of Artemis and Isis.

e. **Inner Character:** The emphasis was upon exuding inner character qualities that would be admired by all.

(overhead)

"Peter does not say that a woman should refrain from adorning herself. He writes no prohibition against using cosmetics or wearing attractive apparel. 'Peter's emphasis is not on prohibition but on a proper sense of values.'" He is desirous that Christian women not place themselves in a position whereby they will be open to criticism.

f. **Fine Apparel:** To argue from this text that ornaments were forbidden, one could also apply the same logic to the next clause about apparel. Peter was not promoting that his readers disrobe! "His point was not that women should not braid and bejewel their hair (or whatever they did with it in those days), but that all the hair-arranging in the world is no substitute for inner tranquillity."

g. **Message Bible:** "Be good wives to your husbands, responsive to their needs. There are husbands who, indifferent as they are to any words about God, will be captivated by your appearance of holy beauty. What matters is not your outer appearance--the styling of your hair, the jewelry you wear, the cut of your clothes--but your inner disposition."

3. REVELATION 17:4

(overhead)

"The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in

her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication."

Traditional Interpretation: "The imagery of simplicity and purity verses extravagant display in dress should not be ignored. . . God saw fit to represent their characters by their dress. Is not this a lesson for us?" What's in Your Clothes Closet? 53.

"In the book of Revelation John offers us a contrast between two types of outward adorning through the symbolism of two women, one pure and the other a 'great harlot.'" (Bacchiocchi, 55)

Context

a. The text deals with the final battle between Christ and Satan It is not a proof text to show that God does not approve us wearing jewelry!

b. The text is not dealing with women's attire! The jewelry & clothing symbolize this as a spiritual war.

c. Depiction of the OT High Priest:

The purple, scarlet, gold, stones, pearls identify in detail the dress of the high priest. **"Of the blue and purple and scarlet thread they made garments of ministry, for ministering in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron, as the LORD had commanded Moses. He made the ephod of gold and blue and purple and scarlet thread, and of fine linen thread. And he made the breastplate . . . and they set in it four rows of stones." Exod 39:1-2, 8, 10.**

HISTORICAL ADVENTISM AND ADORNMENT

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

The thrust of the comments is fairly consistent--jewelry and adornment should be shunned.

Despite the effort and expense to promote "plain dress" and "Christian modesty," the jewelry issue has not been resolved.

Spectrum, 1989. The one exception to traditional view. These articles re-examine the traditional interpretation of some of the proof-texts, and historical background.

B. HISTORICAL INFLUENCES ON THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

1. The Plain Dress Movement

a. Anabaptist Influence:

1. SDA's have inherited a tendency towards a plain tradition because they originated from a number of Christian churches that adhered to, and promoted, simplicity of dress.

2. This plain tradition had its roots in the Anabaptist fellowships spawned by the Protestant Reformation.

3. They opposed using jewelry, hair ribbons, gold ornaments, silver buckles, feathers, ribbons, and lace.

b. Plain Dress Adherents:

1. Baptists, Quakers, the Amish, Mennonites, the Holiness Pentecostals, Nazarenes, Methodists, and SDAs.

2. "Many plain people are not well versed in the Scriptural and moral reasons for wearing plain clothes. They merely have faith that the church has preserved and upheld an appropriate standard of dress for Christians."

3. 1651 Massachusettes Bay Colony
(overhead)

Declared their utter detestation & dislike that men or women of meane condition, educations, & callinges should take upon them the garbe of gentlemen, by the wearing of gold or silver lace, or buttons, or poynts at their knees, to walke in greate bootes; or women of the same ranke to weare silke or tiffany hoodes or scarfes. Fines were instituted for violators who exceeded their rankes & abilitie in the costlynes or fashion of their apparrill in any respect.

c. Adoption of Daily Fashion:

1. The plain dress movement adopted certain styles, the fashion of the day. May have been the simple peasant clothing worn for every occasion.

2. With the passage of time these styles were frozen into a static religious costume.

3. Anabaptists could be recognized by adhering to this dress code, including their refusal to wear jewelry, lace, or anything else having the appearance of vanity.

d. SDA link to Anabaptists

SDAs did not adopt these clothing extremes, but follow the avoidance of jewelry and adornment, and simplicity.

e. Paternal Mandates: During the nineteenth century the proponents for simplicity pursued their goal of bringing the plain dress concept to the attention of their members.

(overhead)

"The strongly patriarchal character of the more conservative Mennonite groups may also contribute to the emphasis upon controlled costume. The elders and ministers may have such a strong sense of domination as shepherds over their flocks that they consciously or unconsciously seek for outward signs of submission which are most readily furnished by uniform, conservative, distinctive items of costume and drab and dark colors." (Mennonite encyclopedia)

We may be able to show a general trend of "Paternal mandates" have been in evidence to promote conformity within the Adventist church.

2. The Influence of Methodism

a. SDA Methodist Background:

1. Many Adventist pioneers had been Methodists. Naturally, they carried on their concerns about plain dress.

2. J. Litch, H. Edson, Frederick Wheeler, E.G. White.

3. Of the 174 known ministers who preached the Millerite message, about 1/2 were Methodists. It was from this Millerite group that the SDA Church developed.

b. Methodist Teaching on Simplicity:

1. Clergy and laymen, rich or poor, were to dress in plain garb without jewelry, ornamentation, or frills.

2. They frowned upon: neckties, studbuttons, pins, puffed shoulders, vice-like corsets, lace curtains, collars, long mustaches, gold-rimmed spectacles, gold, pearls, flowers feathers, ribbons, short sleeves, and ornamental buttons.

3. Sinful activities included games, fairs, school athletic events, novels, the habitual use of tea and coffee, profaning the Lord's Day with frivolous activities.

One Methodist writer sadly concludes that his church paid for this legalistic attitude by suffering years of stagnant growth, and commented that, while some looked back at this era with nostalgia, his church was not particularly spiritual despite all of its rules and standards.

c. Influence of Methodist Literature:

1. (overhead) RH July 10, 1855, "On Dress." Mr. Wesley's advice to the people called Methodists. The majority of his comments were addressed to the apparel of the ladies. He implored them to divest themselves of their gold, pearls, precious stones, glaring colors, lace, ruffles, and to use no curling of hair or costly apparel. His counsel to men was little more than advising them not to not wear shining stockings and glittering buckles or buttons.

Adventist thought on adornment and other so-called frivolous practices can be traced to earlier Methodist teaching and practice.

d. John Wesley's Approach to Life:

(overhead)
He drafted a code of rules for his school at Kingswood near Bristol. He was 45 years old at the time and ought to have had sense, yet he laid down that no games were to be allowed in the school or the grounds, and he sagely added that "he who plays when he is a child will play when he is a man." No holidays were given, and a child once admitted to the school stayed there until he left for good. The household, old and young, had to rise at four in the morning, and spend the first hour in private reading and meditation, in prayer and singing, and on Friday they all fasted until three in the afternoon. In 1783 he still recorded in his journal, "The children ought never to play, but they do every day, and even in the school. They run about in the wood and mix and even fight with the colliers children."

3. Historical Adventist Trends

a. Questions to consider:

1. Did they represent Adventist thinking as a whole?
2. Was the adornment issue a matter for church discipline, or was it simply counsel from church leaders?
4. What was the general practice among SDA's?

b. Nineteenth Century Thought and Practice:

1. Church leaders in the nineteenth century felt strong on the subject. Jewelry and adornment were not appropriate articles of dress for Adventist believers.

2. General practice, however, often seemed to be at odds with this opinion, and the sheer volume of articles written on the subject would tell us that the ultimate goal of conformity had not been attained.

3. In the 1850s and through the 1870s, The main attack against jewelry was articles presented in 1866.

4. This was an era when Adventists were struggling with the themes of law and grace.

5. Jewelry was only one of the items of adornment being considered.

c. The Example of Battle Creek:

1. There existed a dichotomy between actual practice and perceived expectations.

2. (overhead) **1866 Battle Creek resolution: urged the members to be scrupulously plain in dress, and not to use gold, coral, pearl, rubber, hair jewelry, flounces, loops, braids, embroidery, and buttons in dress trimmings. Shaving and coloring the beard for men constituted vanity, and members greatly erred in growing a moustache or goatee.**

3. In 1866 Ellen White indicated members in this area were wearing rings, gold watches, and chains. An offering taken in 1893 the collection included gold watches, gold chains, gold rings, gold bracelets, gold sleeve-buttons, diamond studs, and pins. Consistency between the teaching of the Battle Creek church and actual practice does not appear to be evident.

4. Spectrum, 1989. Thomas Lewis submitted pictures of his great-great-grandparents and their family who lived in Battle Creek during the late 1800s. The Lewis family

included church members who wrote for the Little Friend, sang in the choir, lived next door to the Whites, were denominationally employed, and wore necklaces as the pictures clearly reveal.

Comment: There is the picture of Ellen White and her granddaughter wearing a necklace that Ellen gave her. The Review and Herald originally had this necklace airbrushed out of the picture.

d. Church Trends

1. In 1918, Stemple White quoted John Wesley in an apparent protest against the increasing acceptance of the wedding ring in Adventist circles.

2. A 1931 writer described "God's professed people wearing rings, bracelets, chains, and almost everything in the line of jewelry," including the wedding ring.

3. 1956, R. R. Bietz stated that "today we see more and more fingers, heads, necks, and ears of God's people decorated with ornaments of gold and silver."

4. There was inconsistency between the written and spoken counsel from church leaders regarding the avoidance of jewelry and adornment, and actual practice.

C. DEVELOPMENT OF SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS

Seventh-day Adventists do not have a written creedal statement; however, a statement of fundamental beliefs has developed over the decades. We need to examine the church's possible shift in attitude, or understanding, of the jewelry/adornment issue as revealed by the Statements of Fundamental Beliefs.

The 1872 Declaration of Fundamental Principles

1. Listed twenty-five commonly held beliefs.
2. There is no mention of adornment, jewelry.
3. The church did, through other means, try to discourage the usage of such, but apparently did not feel the need to include any mention of jewelry and adornment in its statement of beliefs.

The 1931 Statement of Fundamental Beliefs

1. It did not refer specifically to jewelry.

2. It listed twenty-two fundamental beliefs.

3. Article # 17: "That the believer should recognize his body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that he should clothe that body in neat, modest, dignified apparel."

The 1980 Statement of Beliefs

1. It consists of twenty-seven articles.

2. Adornment is first mentioned. Statement 21:
"While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit."

3. The church spoke, wrote and counselled against the use of jewelry and adornment for over a century, yet refused to include this in our fundamental beliefs until 1980.

4. The 1980 statement does not prohibit these items.

Church Manual

"Early in our history instruction was given as to the way Christian should dress, the purpose of which was 'to protect the people of God from the corrupting influence of the world, as well as to promote physical and moral health.'"

"Christians should avoid gaudy display and profuse ornamentation."

"To dress plainly, abstaining from display of jewelry and ornaments of every kind, is in keeping with our faith."
3T 366

D. ELLEN WHITE AND ADORNMENT

(Overhead)

"Christians are not to decorate the person with costly array or expensive ornaments. All this display imparts no value to the character. The Lord desires every converted person to put away the idea that dressing as worldlings dress, will give value to his influence. The ornamentation of the person with jewels and luxurious things is a species of idolatry. This needless display reveals a love for those things which are supposed to place a value upon the person. It gives evidence to the world of a heart destitute of the inward adornment. Expensive dress and adornments of jewelry give an incorrect representation of the truth that should always be the highest value. An over-dressed, outwardly adorned person bears the sign of inward poverty." MS Releases 6:159.

1. Ellen White's Methodist Background

a. She was raised a Methodist, shared Wesley's thinking and adhered to Methodist teaching and belief.

"Self denial in dress is a part of our Christian duty. To dress plainly and abstain from displays of jewelry and ornaments of every kind is in keeping with our faith."

She repeated his counsel against lace and trimmings.

b. At the age of twelve she was baptized into the Methodist church, and recalled a lady who was also being taken into church membership. It was distressing for her to see this lady accepted with all her gold rings, earrings, and a bonnet well-adorned with flowers and bows. The pastor did not seem to take any exception to this lady's dress, but young Ellen vowed she would always be plain in her dress.

c. Quotations have an historical setting.

(Overhead)

Female loveliness never appears to so good advantage as when set off with simplicity of dress. No artist ever decks his angels with towering feathers and gaudy jewelry; our dear human angels, if they will make good their title to that name, should carefully avoid ornaments which properly belong to Indian Squaws and African princesses.

NOTE: THE SAME PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION THAT ARE APPLIED TO THE BIBLE NEED TO BE USED WHEN INTERPRETING THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN WHITE. SHE WROTE WITH A CULTURAL BIAS, AND SPOKE TO ISSUES OF HER DAY.

2. The Urgency of Time

a. Ellen White sensed that she was living in a day when Jesus' return was very imminent. The events of 1844 had stirred many to consider spiritual things.

b. Everything else was subservient to proclaiming the second coming--the church leadership and Ellen White could find no rationale for occupying one's time with anything but the proclamation of the gospel. Her comments of adornment are infused with this sense of urgency.

"Time is too short to adorn the body with gold or silver or costly apparel."

"Much money is spent in the adornment of the person that ought to be devoted to the proclamation of the truth for this time."

3. The Issue of Stewardship

a. EGW stresses faithfulness in stewardship.

b. Her comments were primarily directed towards the middle class of Seventh-day Adventists. They were subject to following every whim of fashion.

c. Whenever she spoke about not spending foolishly on adornment, she consistently dealt with a broad spectrum of articles that showed church members were not careful in their stewardship to God. She did not just single out adornment as a needless expense, but included our homes and even the food with which we sometimes over indulge ourselves.

d. Her comments were specific to the issue of extravagance and expense. For example, if the cost of an item decreased, then she might no longer speak out against it. A case in point is her comment against bicycles--they were not inherently wrong, but it was unwise for Adventists to spend vast sums of money in proportion to their income to purchase this trend-setting status symbol.

(overhead)

"If professed Christians would use less of their wealth in adorning the body and in beautifying their own houses, and would consume less in extravagant, health-destroying luxuries upon their tables, they would place much larger sums in the treasury of God."

"Those who invest the Lord's goods in expensive buildings, in extravagant adornment, in furniture, in dress, in needless ornaments of show or display are embezzling our Lord's goods that are only lent us for a time."

e. Adornment and stewardship were closely linked, but included a whole range of items--dress, houses, food, and buildings. For Mrs. White there was no essential difference between spending extravagantly on our homes or on jewelry. She did not elevate one concern above the other.

4. Ellen White's Inclusive Thinking on the Adornment Issue

a. Ellen White did not just single out jewelry, but spoke against a wide assortment of practices. Comprehending this truth is essential because Seventh-day Adventists generally have taken a microscopic view of this issue and focused only upon adornment or jewelry as being things that Ellen White denounced.

(overhead)

"The parading of bows and ribbons, ruffles and feathers, and gold and silver ornaments is a species of idolatry and is wholly inappropriate for the sacred service of God, where the eye of every worshipper should be single to His glory. . . . When they see their children inclined to follow worldly fashions, they should like Abraham, resolutely command their household after them."

"The arranging of jewelry, sashes and laces, and unnecessary ornaments upon their persons, alone must occupy a large share of their time."

"We see ladies professing godliness wear elegant gold chains, necklaces, rings, and other jewels, with a profusion of feathers and ribbons and expensive trimmings, while want stalks the streets, and the suffering and the destitute are on every side."

b. The list of things that Ellen White felt indignant about included: bows, ribbons, ruffles, feathers, sashes, lace, gold chains, gold and silver ornaments, rings, necklaces, expensive buildings, furniture, and even food.

Jewelry and adornment items were only a small part of the list--feathers, ribbons, bows, laces, sashes, and ruffles are adornment, and these items make up a large part of the list. Consistency should demand that Seventh-day Adventists today, who adamantly oppose the use of jewelry, set aside bows, ribbons, lace, ruffles, sashes, feathers, and extravagant household articles mentioned by Ellen White.

5. Ellen White's Personal Practice

a. To compare a writers' counsel to their actual practices may show an inconsistency on their part, or a misunderstanding on ours.

b. In the case of Ellen White, I believe we have failed to see the total picture and have jumped at some of her thoughts, but have failed to grasp the larger picture.

c. She spoke about not using a wedding ring, yet she supported her daughter-in-law's decision to have a ring ceremony. She was aware of the cultural forces at work in this particular case. **Her objection to North American Adventists wearing the wedding ring seems to be influenced by her opposition to the membership adopting the ways of middle-class Americans.**

d. Ellen White herself wore articles that would have to be classified as adornment and jewelry. Photographs show her use of pins and brooches. An eyewitness account from the General Conference session in Minneapolis described her wearing "a heavy metallic chain which hung suspended near her waist."

e. While in the South Pacific she purchased a shell necklace for her granddaughter and the granddaughter is seen wearing this necklace in a family photograph. It is also reported that while in Hawaii Mrs. White received a gift of some "silk material, a silk scarf, and a pin of white stones costing \$10, a good week's pay at the time. . . . She took them and wore them afterward."

(overhead)

Sister Kerr took me into her parlor bedroom, and opened a box of ruches[a strip of lace, net, ribbon, or the like used in place of a collar or cuff]. . . . She also presented me with three yards and a half of silk,

costing three dollars a yards with which I was to make a sack [a short coat or jacket]. I saw that she was very desirous that I should have this, and I could not refuse without greatly disappointing her. It was beautiful silk left from a dress which she had made. She also gave me a silk scarf, a and a ten dollar pin, composed of white stones, very plain and serviceable. I thought I could not accept this, but she looked so very sorry, that I finally did take it, and have worn it ever since, for it is handy and becoming, while it is not showy at all. MS Releases, 8:658.

Roy Bowett, a retired teacher at CUC stated to me personally that in 1911-1912 his father became a teacher at the college (CUC) and was given a weekly wage of \$7.00 per week. He later told the administration that he could not survive on that, and was granted an increase to \$ 9.00 per week. 20 years earlier Ellen White received and wore a pin (piece of adornment) valued at more than a week's salary. In todays terms, THAT WOULD BE WORTH BETWEEN \$800.00-1,000.00!

f. Her criterion for acceptability of adornment hinged upon serviceability, avoidance of personal vanity, and a refusal to be swayed by society's claims to a higher social class. Circumstances dictated what was considered appropriate and what was objectionable.

(overhead)

Summary

1. Ellen White was influenced by Methodist teaching.
2. She taught Methodist concepts of plainness.
3. She spoke against extravagance and needless expense while the needs of people and the church were left destitute.
4. Her counsel also needs to be set in the context of her day, for this was a time when many of the church members wanted to participate in the middle-class lifestyle that so many Americans seemed to enjoy.
5. She did not single out jewelry per see, but considered it among a host of other things that Christians should refrain from using as a matter of stewardship.
6. The Adventist church no longer denounces bows, ribbons, lace, sashes, etc., but still opposes the use of certain articles of jewelry.
7. She personally used and purchased jewelry.

**INTEGRAL ISSUES RELATIVE TO THE CHALLENGE
OF UNDERSTANDING JEWELRY AND ADORNMENT**

I. DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

A. Jewelry

1. Preconceived ideas and well established attitudes and opinions have led to a selective and narrow definition of jewelry which has lead obvious inconsistencies.

2. Definition: "jewels collectively, personal ornaments set or studded with jewels. "

"jewels" : a costly ornament of gold, silver or the like. A precious stone.

Webster's College Dictionary: Jewelry--"gems and precious metals made into ornaments."

"ornaments"--"Anything that beautifies or adorns."
--"that which is added to embellish or adorn."

3. Inconsistencies illustrated:

A. (overhead)

In view of these Scriptural teachings and the principles laid out above, we believe that Christians ought not to adorn themselves with jewelry. We understand this to mean that the wearing of rings, earrings, necklaces, and bracelets, and showy tie tacks, cufflinks, and pins--and any other type of jewelry that has as its main function display--is unnecessary and not in harmony with the simplicity of adornment urged by scripture. Seventh-day Adventists Believe 1988. "Christian Behavior,"

compare

"That in the area of personal adornment, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, rings (including engagement rings) should not be worn. Articles such as watches, brooches, cuff links, tie clasps, etc., should be chosen in harmony with the Christian principles of simplicity, modesty, and economy." 1972 Annual Council

compare

"To dress plainly, abstaining from display of jewelry and ornaments of every kind, is in keeping with our faith." 3T 366

1. Disallow rings, bracelets, earrings necklaces.

2. Cuff links, tie tacks, and pins--one condemns, the other appears to be accepting of their use.

B. Editorial inconsistencies.

1. "The wearing of the signet ring is not condemned in the Bible, presumably because it was regarded as an instrument of authority rather than an ornament."

Although he condemns all jewelry, function determines whether or not an article of jewelry is acceptable. A ring is no longer a ring if it serves another purpose.

Thus a tiny pin can hold a tie in place but when that same item is placed in the ear it suddenly becomes jewelry.

4. David Newman: (overhead)

Seventh-day Adventists have defined jewelry very narrowly. The 1972 Annual Council teaching interprets jewelry as "necklaces, earrings, bracelets, jewelled and other ornamental rings." However, dictionaries and non-Adventists define jewelry as anything used to adorn the person. This would include pins, tie-tacks, cufflinks, brooches, scarves, pocket hand-kerchiefs, etc. If a woman ties a silk scarf around her neck, no one complains, but if she replaces that scarf with a string of pearls, she is immediately condemned. Yet both serve the same purpose--adornment.

5. There has been the challenge as to whether or not the wedding ring is jewelry.

6. Carl George: "for your discussion to have more light than heat, you're going to have to develop a new vocabulary so that you can dialogue things without debating them.

7. The church's is going to have to grapple with the challenge of defining jewelry and adornment.

Consistency demands that we cease to be selective in what we consider to be contrary to the will of God.

The Valuegenesis Report revealed that the majority of Seventh-day Adventist youth have rejected the traditional Adventist stand which forbids the use of jewelry. With rampant inconsistency in evidence the issue is viewed as unsolvable.

8. Corollary issue:

a. George Knight: trivialize sin--how we strive to make it a quantity, rather than quality.

(overhead)

The nice thing about the quantitative approach, from the human perspective, is that sin (and thus righteousness) is broken into manageable chunks, and one can get the feeling of progress and victory. Meanwhile, once sin is defined in terms of such things as wearing costume jewelry or certain dietary habits, it is essentially "contained" in that definition, and one can go about his or her life without worrying about it. In other words, once "sin" is contained in the concept of wearing jewelry, I can then feel good about driving any kind of car I like or wearing the finest suits. I don't think I will ever get over the physician who was death on wedding bands (because he had a proof text) but drove a gold-colored Cadillac. Truly he had contained sin and made it manageable. Certainly he had a type of righteousness. But both the sin and the righteousness had been trivialised. One is reminded of those Pharisees who strained out the gnats while swallowing the camels.

b. Not only have certain members of the church been selective in what they wish to define as jewelry, many are also in danger of watering down their definition of sin. In the minds of some, sin and wearing jewelry are synonymous.

"To experience inner spiritual renewal and reconciliation with God, it is necessary to remove all outward besetting objects of idolatry, including jewelry and ornaments."
(Bacchiocchi, 163.)

What he says, is that sin becomes a manageable problem because we have defined it as wearing jewelry.

9. Sense of false security which is bound up in faulty definitions of jewelry and sin.

Adventists may feel justified in living an extravagant lifestyle, and at the same time condemn another for wearing costume jewelry that may have cost several dollars.

B. Simplicity and Modesty

1. Simplicity

a. The Bible does not define the meaning
The word appears several times in Scripture
It is not linked with dress or adornment.

b. There is a generally accepted principle of simplicity.
This principle is usually related to dress and adornment.

c. SDAs have not adopted simplicity in dress as have the plain people (Amish, Hutterite, and some Mennonites).

d. Plainness can become an outward show of religion. "What is the point of living a righteous life if no one knows about it? The only thing more important than being humble is to look humble."

e. "Seventh-day Adventists must not allow themselves to forget that more than any other Bible characters, John the Baptist and Elijah, both men who lived very simply, typify the life the Lord would live out in them today."

f. We are not called to live an ascetic lifestyle.

g. **SIMPLICITY IS A LIFESTYLE PRINCIPLE.
IT SHOULD COVER ALL ASPECTS OF OUR LIFE!**

We cannot berate those who have spent several dollars on some article of costume jewelry, and we have spent tens of thousands of dollars on our house or a new car.

(Overhead)

The subject of dress and adornment gives rise to glaring inconsistencies. It seems to invite us to point the finger--in a most unchristian way--at someone else. So the person whose eyes have been riveted on someone's simple wedding band may drive away from church in his \$30,000 Mercedes, blissfully unaware of the self-contradictory nature of his position. Thus, if simplicity is to be maintained as a church standard, consistency again requires that we do not limit this requirement to one aspect of lifestyle, but that it be inclusive of everything in the Christian life. RH March 20, 1986.

h. Simplicity is our attempts at overcoming greed and extravagance. It concerns the inner person more than what is on the outside. It's concern for others, not oneself.

i. The meaning of simplicity constantly changes because the world is constantly being changing. Braided hair in Bible times was a sign of haughty ostentation, but that is no longer relevant for today. Frankincense and Myrrh, once very valuable have no value today.

Jesus upheld simplicity, but not at the expense of becoming legalistic.

2. Modesty

a. Modesty occurs one time in the KJV
1 Tim 2:9 "in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation." Paul does not define "modest apparel."

b. Two options.

1. Moderation, or freedom from excess.

or

2. Dressing with an intent to be sexually provocative.

"Modesty in dress implies that clothing must provide sufficient covering for the body so that others are not embarrassed or tempted."

c. Sexual modesty:

(overhead) 1. "The concern of the modern fashion industry is to sell clothes, jewelry, and cosmetics by exploiting the powerful sex drives of the human body, even if it means marketing immodest products that only feed pride and sensuality."

The writer ascribes jewelry to the realm of those articles of clothing which contributes to modesty.

Modesty in the sense of sexual modesty should not be associated with the wearing of jewelry. The two concepts must remain mutually exclusive from each other. Jewelry is not thought of being something we wear or put on to make us modest. Clothing serves that function.

d. Moderation:

(overhead)

"Wearing finger rings is not compatible with the Biblical principles of modesty; historically, they have tempted people to wear all kinds of jewelry."

e. Principle of modesty in the sense of moderation

But consistency demands we include all aspects of life and not just jewelry and adornment. It is hypocrisy to demand moderation (meaning abstention) with reference to wearing jewelry, and not applying the same principle to every aspect of our lifestyle.

f. Modesty is determined by culture and what may be modest in one culture is totally immodest in another.

(overhead)

Different concepts of modesty are found in different cultures. The covering of the body or the lack of it is considered improper or immodest because of cultural interpretation. In the Japanese public bath, both sexes bathe together and their nudity is not considered immodest, but for any other social situation, the conventional Japanese apparel for both men and women is body enveloping. . . . The Botocudo of the Amazon are nude except for ear and lower lip plugs. It has been observed that when the plugs were removed for the purposes of trade, these people fled into the jungle in shame. Conventions of modesty change from

time to time in the same culture. . . . Almost all parts of the human body have been considered indecent or immoral at some time.

Australian Aborigines are indifferent to their nakedness, yet feel deeply ashamed if seen eating. Arab women if caught without their veil over their face may throw their skirt over their head. In China at one time it was considered shameful for a woman to show her foot, and in Japan the same was true for a woman's neck.

If modesty by definition is clothing the body in an appropriate and culturally acceptable manner, it is difficult to understand how the use of jewelry can contribute to that state. In other words, we cannot argue that jewelry should not be worn by saying it is immodest.

C. Worldliness

1. Members of plain dress conservative churches have labelled those who wear jewelry/adornment as being worldly.

2. 1 John 2:15-17. "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

" For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

What does it mean to be worldly?

3. Meaning of worldliness. Has different meanings.

a. Wearing a mustache without the beard was considered an expression of worldliness.

b. (Overhead) "We knew what worldliness was, back then in the fifties. Worldliness meant lipstick and make-up, short skirts and bobbed hair, wedding rings and jewelry, movies and church kitchens. Strangely, many of the issues had to do with how women dressed. Now these things are no longer issues, but the question of who won and who lost is not neatly clear."

c. For Seventh-day Adventists worldliness is clearly defined by the baubles they wore, their dress, what they ate and drank their lifestyles, how they talked. Generally speaking, to call someone worldly referred to the person's appearance or dress.

d. 1878 Review and Herald, "Like the World" There was a lament that one could no longer identify an Adventist due to their dress and adornments.

e. "In this passage Peter followed the pattern of Paul in 1 Timothy 2:9-10, contrasting the outward adorning of the body by worldly women with the inward adorning of the heart by Christian women. The negative outward adorning of worldly women consists of "braiding of hair, decoration of gold, and the wearing of fine clothing." Bacc. 69.

f. Wearing of a simple wedding band has been sufficient cause to be labelled worldly.

Many Seventh-day Adventists, deeply troubled by the fact that more and more young Adventist women are wearing wedding rings, conclude that the standards of the church are slipping and that the love of many waxeth cold. To them, ring-wearing proves that the influences of the world are creeping in and undermining the purity of the message of the church.

g. Can't conclude that "the world" in 1 John means everything that finds its origin in a sinful world.

These passages of scriptures were coined in Greek, a language developed by pagans.

Separateness from the world cannot mean distancing ourselves from everything that originated in this sinful world. If so, Paul and Jesus would certainly be guilty.

h. (overhead)

Worldliness does not lie in the things we do, the places we go, but is an attitude that comes from our heart. It involves participation in the attitudes and activities which God defines as sin.

We are of the world and like the world when we share the world's values--making physical pleasure all too important, collecting beautiful homes, cars, and whatever, and above all by our desire to surpass others and make them admire us. We are worldly when we lust carnally, when we crave and live for possessions and raise our proud heads above others. . . . We are like the world when we compete with either the world or our Christian neighbours in the race for nicer cars and more fashionable clothes. We are of the world when, as Christian organizations, we adopt the world's organizational philosophies and promotional techniques. We are of the world whenever we strain at gnats and swallow camels.

"The heart of worldliness has more to do with carnality, possessiveness, jealousy, pursuit of beautiful material objects, pride, and snobbery than with the more traditional evangelical taboos."

(overhead) i. **If we want to be different, we must recognize that it is not about do's or don'ts, but how we treat people. Spirituality does not promote isolation, it**

initiates qualities that are different. Christians will be distinct from others by these attributes: their character--having a thirst for righteousness, being peacemakers and pure of heart; their influence; their moral teaching; their piety and sincerity of devotion; their ambitions--seeking God first instead of self-serving; their relationships--not judging others but serving them; and their commitment to obey Christ as Lord.

It has been said that Seventh-day Adventists are separatists. We keep the secular and the religious totally apart. We've come to the point where almost everything is tainted and we have nothing left. We find our belonging by what we find wrong.

II STANDARDS AND PRINCIPLES

The church needs standards to function

It is preferable that Christians live by principle. By becoming over-anxious about rules and regulations, the Christian life no longer reflect God's ideals for mankind.

Principles are eternal, standards change with time and cultural diversity.

A. The Source of Standards

1. Methodist thinking is one of the various dynamic forces that have shaped the standards we have adopted.

2. Standards are rules of thumb that we have collected through various sources over the decades.

They are just tools.

They have their place to bring about good, but what is important is the life that we build with them.

3. SDA standards developed through these forces:

Local church legislation

The Review and Herald

Position papers

The writings of Ellen White

4. We must also consider that during the eighteen hundreds there was considerable unanimity among all classes of people as to what was acceptable, especially in the area of dress and adornment. **"In the nineteenth century Adventists and society were a lot closer to each other than most of us realize. . . . The only problem is that it isn't the nineteenth century anymore."**

SDA's were children of their time and brought with them a certain amount of "cultural baggage."

"We must never forget that their answers to issues of value and standards were related to questions of their time and place and may not always be issues of proportionate importance for those living in the late twentieth century." Knight, Fat lady, 116.

B. Standards and Culture

1. Culture impacts every living being. We may deny that we have been conditioned by our culture.
Standards reflect our cultural bias.

2. Need to realize that "differences in values, culture, experience, and perceptions may lead parties to disagree about the relative merits of different standards."

3. Cultural differences separate church members over the interpretation of church standards.

(overhead)

Certain activities are wrong only because of the way that they might be understood in a given culture. There are basic principles in the law which certainly transcend human culture, but those basic principles also suggest that when we are within a particular culture we must avoid those things which would be offensive or which could possibly lead to a dangerous misunderstanding.

example: Christian missionaries in India rejected red saris for brides as this color was worn by Hindus. Instead they introduced white to symbolize purity. They did not realize that in India, red stands for fertility and white for barrenness and death.

example: In Arab countries jewelry is considered an essential item of dress for women.

4. Our cultural standards impact the younger generations in our church.

(overhead)

All that has been said about the need to share the message in terms of people's specific cultural conditions, needs, and circumstances applies with equal force also to the communication of the gospel to our own youth. They are part of a culture that in many ways differs radically from the one that shaped the Adventist Church yesteryear. Large--all too large--percentages of Adventist young people are leaving the church. They do not reject the message. To the contrary. Research indicates that the vast majority of them leave because they do not feel at home in this church. It represents to them a culture that no longer exists.

5. "Religion must be redefined, both individually and corporately by each new generation, if it is to remain dynamic, relevant, and powerful."

When it comes to jewelry and adornment, what was once universally forbidden by culture, has now become acceptable. Nineteenth century prohibitions may no longer be valid. Because our culture and our faith are blended into one, we have a difficult time in letting go those things and issues which are no longer relevant.

C. The Transitory Nature of Standards

1. Standards are transitory in nature and need to be relevant to the present.

Cultural contexts change

Standards that remain insensitive to changing conditions may place the church under the added peril of joining groups like the Amish who have lapsed into a historical curiosity.

(overhead)

"The problem is that the church that fails to change fails to impact the culture of change. It becomes a dinosaur, a memorial to a world that no longer exists."

2. Example: In the early 1970s Joe Crews wrote:

(overhead)

"With this inspired counsel in mind I wonder if those who favor pantsuits realize what a pandora's box would be opened if the church ever approved that fashion?"

Pantsuits may have been controversial twenty-five years ago, but the issue is no longer discussed.

3. Church standards have banned goatees, mustaches, beards, high heels, lipstick, wedding rings, pantsuits, slacks worn by women in church. We have measured the length of ladies dresses, the length of hair, and dictated the color of one's shirt to be worn in church. It is difficult to change because one's reason for being is strongly related to one's standards. It is easy to be out of step with present issues when our focus is upon maintaining the past.

4. (overhead) **"Adventists were right in the mainstream of Victorian society. If you have wondered why we take a position against smoking but not apartheid, if you've ever been puzzled as to why we ban dancing but not sexual discrimination, if it has ever puzzled you that the General Conference spells out exactly when and where and why a member may wear a wedding ring, but has left abortion up to**

the individual's conscience, if any of these things have struck you as odd, you have to remember our roots! Theatre, dancing, and jewelry were all hot topics back in the glory days of our church. Abortion and apartheid weren't."

5. To keep the youth of our church, and be attractive to others, our standards have to reflect the test of time and make sense to people today.

(overhead) "As a people, she warned, we are certainly in great danger, if we are not constantly guarded, of considering our ideas, because long cherished, to be Bible doctrines and in every point infallible, and measuring everyone by the rule of our interpretation of Bible truth. This is our danger, and this would be the greatest evil that could ever come to us as a people."

D. Standards and Legalism

1. Two forces strive to give meaning to our comprehension of church standards-- grace, and law. We need to strike a balance between the two. Excesses leaning to either side are destructive.

We can strive to measure up to the standards of the church as did the Pharisees, but that was not the lifestyle that Jesus envisioned for His people. A legalistic approach to life "satisfies rules rather than meeting people's needs."

2. People must be granted the freedom to investigate what God may want from us, otherwise "we become rigid moralists who push people to keep God's standards rather than passionate Christians who entice others to know Christ better."

(overhead)

In moralistic perfection every human act becomes regulated by laws that become increasingly complex and cover every aspect of diet, recreation, dress and so on. . . . Desperately in earnest, people of this persuasion develop long lists of rules, and the more they read, the longer their lists become. The Pharisees and the monks belonged to this camp of perfection, and Adventists and other conservative Christians in the modern world have joined in.

We must become people who learn to live by principle. An emphasis on externals only dries up the soul.

Our focus should be upon worshipping and obeying Christ, not emphasizing or defending Adventist lifestyle.

The standards which characterize all Christians are: humility, simplicity, tolerance, honesty, assurance, wisdom, selflessness, holiness, loyalty, purity.

E. Evaluation of Standards

(overhead)

The question to ask of standards: Are they effective in enabling people to internalize Christian principles and the loving character of Christ? Every standard and value must be evaluated in the light of the cross, rather than in the light of Adventist tradition. Knight, Fat Lady, 124.

III TRADITIONS

(Overhead)

The question to ask of standards: Are they effective in enabling people to internalize Christian principles and the loving character of Christ? Every standard and value must be evaluated in the light of the cross, rather than in the light of Adventist tradition. Knight, Fat Lady, 124.

The name given to the time honored and revered way of doing things that keeps us from doing them better.

illustration

1. Knight, Fat Lady, 118 The negative side of tradition can lead to practices that are frightfully like the Pharisaic dilemmas of old. They ruled against carrying a rock above a certain size on the Sabbath day. On the other hand it was lawful to carry a child who happened to be carrying the rock, since carrying the child was an act of mercy.

To those outside the church it appears the SDAs have backed themselves into a corner. After all it is a hallowed tradition that it is lawful to carry a "rock" pinned to one's garment, but some sort of sin if the same "rock" is on a string around a person's neck. The one is lawful if it has a practical use, and is no longer a mere ornament. Thus if a clock is implanted in the "rock," it is technically transformed into a marginally useful watch and the problem is solved.

2. For more than twenty years, for no apparent reason, an attendant stood at the foot of the stairs leading to the House of Commons in England. At last someone checked and discovered that the job had been held in the attendant's family for three generations. It seems it originated when the stairs were painted and the current attendant's grandfather was assigned the task of warning people not to step on the wet paint. "The paint dried up, but not the job."

3. A young couple got married and on their first Sunday together the wife baked a ham. The bridegroom's curiosity was aroused when he saw his wife cut off the end of the ham before putting it into the oven. He asked: "Honey, why did you cut off the end of the ham?"

She replied, "My mother always did."

Next time the family was together the new husband asked the mother-in-law why she cut off the piece of ham.

Her answer was, "My mother always did it." Having never really thought about that, she turned to her mother, "Mother why did you always cut off the end of the ham?"

The grandmother laughed and said, "Because my oven wasn't very big, and I had to cut it off to get it in."

Need to make sure the tradition still has meaning.

A. Traditions are crucial to life, for without them we would have no stability.

They determine our schedules, our transportation, our dress, in fact almost everything we do.

98 per cent of what we do is rooted in tradition, but they must be relevant to have meaning!

B. Traditions mean different things to different people. It is vital to understand what that tradition means today to us, after all a tradition is only valuable to a culture if it still has a relevant meaning.

"Contemporary churches are those that relate to people in terms of today's culture rather than in terms of yesterday's traditions."

C. We have inherited traditions from several sources.

1. We must consider the previous meaning of those traditions.

2. While they made sense in the previous century they may be of little consequence to people today.

3. Cultural Circumcision: Enforcing traditions of another era.

4. Various religions tend to make sacred whatever they think is important and become very immune to change.

D. Forms are confused with principle, and so it develops that "churches nurture and milk their own sacred cows. In the process of fleshing out various biblical principles, they elevate the forms with the principle, and the former is valued as highly as the latter."

"One of the problems with creeds is that they have tended to firmly set marginal issues of current interest next to the fundamental doctrines of the Bible as landmarks of the faith."

E. There is a fearful tendency towards "embalming the tradition rather than receiving it as a vital and revitalized force--free to grow, free to develop, free to adapt itself to new occasions and new duties."

We need to examine our traditional views about jewelry and adornment.

We must examine the cultural relevancy of our opinions and teaching, and if change is called for, be willing to consider it.

Change is never easy. "At the crossroads of the path that leads to the future, tradition has placed against each of us ten thousand men to guard the past."

(overhead)

"Adventism like the ancient Jews and Christians of the early church and Reformation, has come full circle. From a people fighting against the bonds of tradition, it has become entangled in its own tradition, with no satisfactory way to resolve many of the serious difficulties that face it."

IV. GENDER ISSUES AND JEWELRY

The lifestyle issue of jewelry or adornment is directed almost exclusively towards women.

Token efforts have levelled criticism at the men for shaving or dyeing their beards.

(overhead)

First, if we are going to say anything on the subject we had better include the men among us as well. It is unfair to single out Adventist women for departure from church standards. Today men will spend \$50 on a visit to a hairstylist; they may even pay \$30 for a necktie; they adorn themselves with cufflinks, expensive watches, and tie pins. Many Adventist men spend more on the person than Adventist women do.

Precious little has been directed at the men of the church for their excesses in the matter of dress.

1941: Discussion upholding church standards, but the only items mentioned were the length of women's skirts, wearing hose and stockings.

The General Conference dress code:

The men: encouraged to be dignified and dress in good taste.

The ladies: there is a lengthy delineation of what is considered appropriate, and after the initial comment, 8 sub-headings of directives appear. The counsel for the men

consists of 38 words, for the women 148! And then he concludes, "From this it is clear that the leaders of the church are serious about expediting the practice of the standards they preach." What is clear is that the standards to be enforced are those directed at women.

One person asks "if the rules governing the female dress are yet another example of male oppression of women."

Chastizing women for their dress is not unique to the Adventist church, but parallels other churches with traditions similar to ours. One Methodist writer says,

"We knew what worldliness was, back then in the fifties. Worldliness meant lipstick and make-up, short skirts and bobbed hair, wedding rings and jewelry, movies and church kitchens. Strangely, many of the issues had to do with how women dressed."

"In many instances in the past and present, plain women have been required to be much more nonconformed than men. Many plain women have found this to be unfair and inconsistent; in fact, for some, it has become their reason for changing to more fashionable styles."

Ellen White appears to be rather harsh in nature, and would certainly not be politically correct today.

"Female loveliness never appears to so good advantage as when set off with simplicity of dress. No artist ever decks his angels with towering feathers and gaudy jewelry; and our dear human angels, if they will make good their title to that name, should carefully avoid ornaments, which properly belong to Indian squaws and African princesses."

It is hypocrisy when men can wear all manner of jewelry, yet the same article adopted by women with a slight difference in usage, elicits condemnation. A tie pin and an earring, or a tie chain and a necklace are no different! Society demands equality between the sexes. Concerning the jewelry issue, we must admit that we have not been equitable and fair.

V. ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS OR MODIFYING BEHAVIOR

A. This issue has received the least attention, yet is the most important:

Do we develop personal relationships, or force external behavior?

Do people come first, or do standards?

Prerequisite for acceptance: If you can take off the jewelry, thus modifying their behavior on the outside, their hearts will be in tune with God.

"To pretend to come humbly before God while adorned extravagantly and ostentatiously is hypocrisy."

"To experience inner spiritual renewal and reconciliation with God, it is necessary to remove all outward besetting objects of idolatry, including jewelry and ornaments."

B. Pumping people's mind with our version of Bible truth is not the route to spirituality, it is an excuse for refusing to develop a deeper relationship, and struggling together with the deeper issues of life.

Jesus' method: established relationship first. Externals naturally fell into place.

"Whatever outward control is exercised by authority must be with the hope of affecting the inner spirit."

"When Christ lives within there will be no need for us to make the dress question a primary point in our religion, for there will be greater things to speak of." That's true, yet his entire book is devoted to how we should dress.

C. Requiring external conformity of specific standards of behavior is doomed to disaster, since it tears apart any relationship that may have existed. This might even be called spiritual abuse.

(overhead)

"In all my experience, I have never seen lasting solutions to problems, lasting happiness and success, come from the outside in. Outside-in approaches result in unhappy people who feel victimized and immobilized, who focus on the weaknesses of other people and the circumstances they feel are responsible for their own stagnant situation."

"Christianity is something which works from the inside out and cannot be rubbed into a person like a liniment."

"We need to expose our faith--not impose it."

D. Our treatment of others mirrors our feelings about God. People will understand God as they see how he works in our own lives. Imposing our standards upon others **without feelings of love**, portrays a God who is stern and severe.

E. The following points should be carefully noted.

1. Mandating another's behavior and dress may border on legalism. Appropriate lifestyle will be initiated from the inside-out, and not the outside-in.

2. Righteousness and sanctification "must be defined as what people actively do rather than in terms of what they refrain from doing. Perfection is positive not negative."

We seem to raise successive generations upon the pattern of all the things they should not be doing. We need to be more devoted to loving people, rather than removing every little thing we may find offensive.

3. We need to re-evaluate the mission of the church.
(overhead)

"It is not the business of the church to prescribe for its members how they should behave on Sabbath, what foods they should eat, in what forms of recreation or entertainment they may participate, what books they should read, how they should dress, if they can wear jewelry, or how they should think. Rather, it is the business of the church to uplift and glorify Christ by calling all people to worship Him, and internalize the principles of His kingdom so that they can individually apply these principles to their own decision making and behavior."

4. We can enforce, or practice, all the right behavior we want, but it counts nothing towards a saving relationship with Christ.

"Living as a Christian in terms of lifestyle and behavior adds nothing to a person's salvation in Christ . . . such living is a response to having been saved by Christ."

"Christianity and Salvation are not based on what you do but on whom you know."

5. Our behavior, and our relationships must be infiltrated with love. Jesus said His people would love one another, not whether they wore jewelry or not.

We will love those with whom we may have disagreements.

"We long for what God designed us to enjoy: tension-free relationships filled with deep, loving acceptance, with opportunities to make a difference.

(overhead)

"I suspect that happy and well-adjusted Christians, while neat and attractive will be less concerned about, and spend less time and money on clothing than other people, and will tend to be a little behind rather than ahead of the latest fashion. Whether women wear jewelry, make-up, have pierced ears or fake eyelashes, or whether men splash themselves with Musk, wear gold chains around their necks or Gucci shoes on their feet--these are not the basic issues. What is significant is my peace of heart, my certainty that a gracious loving God cares for me, and that dress is not the most important thing in the world." J. White, Flirting With the World, 83.

APPENDIX III

SEMINAR CONCLUSION HANDOUTS

1. We need to come to the realization that the textual evidence using the proof-text methodology to support the nonusage of jewelry is tenuous at best. The context of the passages clearly shows different issues were involved. The texts commonly cited to oppose using jewelry do not stand up to the test.
2. There needs to be an awareness that paradigms, or "maps," greatly influence our understanding about Bible verses. We can even look at texts through denominational glasses. We must constantly be aware of, and examine these paradigms because they affect our lifestyle choices.
3. The same hermeneutical principles used to interpret the Bible have to be applied to the writings of Ellen White. Her writings have a just as much of a context as do biblical texts.
4. We need to understand that Seventh-day Adventists inherited a "plain" tradition from the Anabaptists, Methodists, and the general cultural milieu of the eighteenth century. We simply absorbed many of the realities and practices of that era. Those norms need to be re-examined according to present day society.
5. Ellen White's writings and teachings must be understood according to the context of her time. She was influenced by Methodist thought, and by social actions in vogue at that time. She promoted a simple lifestyle, upheld stewardship, and her counsel was inclusive of all aspects of life, not just jewelry.
6. We may need to re-adjust or reconsider our understanding of terms such as jewelry, adornment, modesty, simplicity, and worldliness. Our definitions are faulty and misleading.
7. A re-evaluation of the role played by traditions, standards, and culture is necessary for a balanced approach to studying jewelry and adornment. All standards should be based upon biblical principles. Constant change may erode the previous meaning or understanding of standards and

traditions. They must make sense today. Our standards are there to help people internalize Christian principles. We need to ask ourselves: "What picture of God am I portraying to people through my values and standards?"

8. We must admit that women have born the brunt of criticism is this challenging issue. Male domination as seen in the 1800's, is no longer accepted practice.

9. Seventh-day Adventists should be taught that it is preferable to live by principle rather than be urged to conform according to the rules of the church. The Sanhedrin approach to lifestyle is simply unacceptable.

10. The issue of jewelry and adornment is a lifestyle issue, not a moral one. Jewelry can be considered to be a convenient scapegoat. When we label its use as sin, it becomes easy to overlook many other kinds of excess when it comes to lifestyle choices.

11. Life must have a proper balance. There are so many inconsistencies relative to the jewelry/adornment issue. It is acceptable to condemn someone for the use of cheap cosmetic jewelry, but no blame is cast for having luxury cars or ostentatious homes.

12. The church's mission is not to have everyone remove their jewelry. We are here to lift up and worship Jesus, and encourage meaningful relationships with fellow human beings. Change occurs from the inside out, and modification of outward behavior will not save a person.

13. Stewardship and accountability must characterize all our choices and decisions. We still attempt to "strain out a gnat and swallow a camel."

14. We need to build convictions, not compliance. We are to uphold God's will, not enforce it.

"Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used." DA, 759.

15. Jesus must be understood as the answer to all lifestyle issues, not our own personal preferences. When we walk according to biblical principles, less will be said about jewelry. His principles affect all lifestyle choices.

16. Romans 14

- a. There are things that are right.
- b. There are things that are wrong.

- c. There are things of personal choice. eg. Color of shirt I want to wear today.
- d. There are things that are a matter of conscience.

17. The church needs to establish a mechanism for evaluating our standards, values, and traditions to insure they are relevant, make sense, and fit the mission of the church.

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

1. PRINCIPLE OF LOVE AND JUSTICE. We are labelled Christians by how we love one another, not whether or not we wear jewelry. We treat one another according to this principle.
2. PRINCIPLE OF PERSONAL FREEDOM. God has given us freedom to choose. We must be allowed some measure of latitude when it comes to making lifestyle choices.
3. PRINCIPLE OF JUDGMENT. "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." John 7:24
4. PRINCIPLE OF STEWARDSHIP. Every lifestyle choice has to be weighed in God's stewardship balances.
5. PRINCIPLE OF SIMPLICITY. Simplicity encompasses every lifestyle choice, not just jewelry and adornment.
6. PRINCIPLE OF MODESTY. We will not use to excess any of God's resources. Every lifestyle action should be judged according to modesty.
7. PRINCIPLE OF BALANCE.
8. PRINCIPLE OF MISSION. All our actions need to be understood in light of our commission to proclaim the gospel.

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