

# Perspective Digest

---

Volume 1 | Number 2

Article 1

---

4-1-1996

## Epistles

Multiple

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pd>

---

### Recommended Citation

Multiple (1996) "Epistles," *Perspective Digest*. Vol. 1 : No. 2 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pd/vol1/iss2/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Adventist Theological Society at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Perspective Digest by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact [repository@andrews.edu](mailto:repository@andrews.edu).

E P I S T L E S

---

*"To be known and read" by all. . .*

---

**Broad Appeal**

Congratulations for your premier issue. ATS is to be commended for the broad appeal that the digest has for a wide constituency, ranging from the local pew through the pastoral pulpit to the theological halls of seminaries. It is heartening to read a publication that will help steady our church by focusing on the fundamental principles of Adventism as we corporately enter uncharted waters of skepticism and diversity.

J. Neville Harcombe, President  
Chesapeake Conference  
Columbia, Maryland

**Easy Read**

I much enjoyed the *Digest!* Such a delight! It reads easily, and I got a great blessing in just 45 minutes reading it from cover to cover!

Loren Nelson, Ministerial  
Director  
Michigan Conference  
Lansing, Michigan

**No Harangue, Please**

Your first issue seemed well balanced (what I expect from you).

Don't let the *Digest* degenerate into a harangue against women's ordination, etc.

Herman Bauman, President  
Arizona Conference  
Scottsdale, Arizona

**Just What the Doctor Ordered**

Just had a chance to read your new edition. It's a winner! It will make a contribution to pastors. I have notified our team here in Greater New York about its release. Keep scholars like Angel Rodriguez in the *Digest* and you will score high marks with me. By the way, when I phoned my order to the 800 number, the lady there said, "Your 'prescription' will be on its way." I knew I needed medication for hay fever but didn't expect to get the answer so quickly!

Charles Griffin, President  
Greater New York Conference  
Manhasset, New York

**Jump Start**

The first issue of *Perspective Digest* jumped to the top of my theological reading list. Well written, interesting, and practical articles from cover to cover.

John W. Fowler, Secretary  
Kentucky-Tennessee Conference  
Goodlettsville, Tennessee

### Digestable Entrees

A pretty good start. Perhaps too slick a design. I like the format. For the future, a number of issues would be of interest not only in the U.S. but also in other parts of the world. Here are a few:

1. A theological discussion on “conscientious objection”—in Europe, Adventism was divided on the issue and even today the issue lives even among mainstream Adventist believers.

2. The theological treatment of Ellen White’s “prophetic” role. This area is usually treated in an apologetic way. Many would appreciate a pragmatic approach to the subject.

3. What’s wrong with the social gospel?—Adventism’s Achilles heel!

4. Liberation theology—Adventism’s response to the “ideology”-driven religious experience.

5. Can I be saved and not be a Seventh-day Adventist?—Crack this one, Roland, and still remain a “solid centrist” in your Adventism!\*

6. Cultural overtones in theology—Is there such a thing as “acultural” (divorced from culture) theology?

7. Can someone do an item on Adventism’s rejection of “political noninvolvement”? The issue can be presented from the U.S., South African, Cuban, Chinese, Eastern European perspective. I’d love to see a forum-type discussion on the subject. Can we defend our stance on the subject from the biblical standpoint?

8. As the church grows in the non-Western world, can there be latitude to interpret Adventism from a cultural vantage point? Can we accommodate to various cultural/economic/political/ethical/moral challenges or options?

A fault of many Adventist publications is that they reflect a ghetto mentality. We can learn from one another if we open up. Often we are condescending with our approach (too American, too German, too French, too British). Please make *Perspective Digest* “global-village friendly.” Bring in authors from different parts of the world.

Theology often becomes an obstacle to progress if it’s veiled in concepts and language that we, the nontheologians, don’t quite understand. *Perspective Digest* has a good chance to break through to the member in the pew with an

## E P I S T L E S

Adventist theological menu that can actually be digested! The success of the magazine will depend also on how varied (attractive) that menu will be and whether it can bridge the theological "Here I stand" with the globally growing and culturally diverse church.

Ray Dabrowski, Director  
Communication Department  
General Conference  
Silver Spring, Maryland

\*Can I be saved and not be a Seventh-day Adventist? I was not even aware that this is an issue to be "cracked." I always thought the "solid centrist" position was a clear and unequivocal Yes. Does not Paul insist that when "the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves"? Paul says this inspired utterance is "according to my gospel" (see Romans 2:14-16). And does not Scripture teach that "to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, it is sin"? (James 4:17, KJV).

I've long assured Adventist audiences, with most nodding in agreement, that the majority of God's children are still in churches other than the Seventh-day

Adventist. Ellen White recorded this sentiment a century ago. Has the situation changed? I would argue, on the basis of the degree to which the term *Laodicean* describes Adventism today, that if the situation has indeed changed, it is not for the better. It is not information about the law, as you know, that saves us. As Hosea put it: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6, KJV). He wrote to people who knew the law backwards and forwards. But its principles were not written in the hearts of professed believers. If "every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195), we must, indeed, have many believers suffering from (new)birth defects.

It occurs to me that I may not be a "solid centrist." Why, I've even pictured some of the ransomed standing before Jesus on the sea of glass and asking wonderingly, "What are those nail marks in your hands?" Fearing that the Adventist Theological Society, contrary to their first impressions, may have hired a maverick as their

E P I S T L E S

---

editor of *Perspective*, I called past president Ed Zinke and shared my views. A respected neighbor, he lives just up the street and I felt sure he would square with me. His answer: "So what else is new?" I found that he holds the same views as I, though he stated them with more theological precision. But then, Ed, you may as well know, is a graduate of Catholic University. Maybe he inhaled a bit too much of medieval theology, as one of his professors once observed. (Don't miss his answer to *that* in the next issue!) So I called Richard Davidson, the new president of ATS. Nothing like finding out what the centrist position really is!

The good news is that all Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Pentecostal, Baptist, and other readers of *Perspective Digest* who haven't been able to sleep nights over this issue, can say a thankful prayer! They, too, may make it! Now there are a few "cultural Adventists" who may not. And even a few Adventist theologians who talk insightfully of "propositional truths," who would be well advised to form an acquaintance with that One who said, "I am the Truth" before drifting off to sleep.

But, Ray, the record is clear:

Scripture, the past and present presidents of ATS, and most of the people I've met in my ministry say that the answer is Yes. If you've been talking to fellow Adventists who think only Adventists are going to make it, you're running with a non-centrist crowd. Come to think of it, I did once meet an Adventist who not only thought non-Adventists were not going to make it, but that most other Adventists were not. He told me that just after explaining that he had lived north of the arctic circle for going on a year and had not touched a molecule of meat!

Rather than do so, he assured me, he had even subsisted for a few weeks on tundra grass! Despite his proximity to the North Pole, I don't think he was "solid centrist." Maybe a frozen-solid centrist. But not a real thawed-out, warm-hearted, loving centrist.—R.R.H.

#### Dynamic Centrist

What an exciting venture! *Perspective Digest*, launched with the purpose of sharing theological discussions in an informative, interesting and practical way. I believe pastors

*Continued on page 92*

E P I S T L E S

---

*Continued from page 7*

and laity everywhere will appreciate this dynamic publication. I especially value its centrist and balanced approach to issues.

James A. Cress, Ministerial  
Secretary  
General Conference of SDA  
Silver Spring, Maryland

### We Must Do Better

I have just learned of your latest assignment that you are adding to your already full agenda, the *Perspective Digest*, as referred to in a recent brochure from ATS. This is a splendid idea.

What I could hope for is some magazine to become distinctively Adventist. We are great on "doing theology." But rarely do I hear/see anyone speaking/writing about the reasons for our distinctiveness—the Great Controversy theme. To do theology as if it consists of pearls unconnected to each other in a remarkable chain of truth—harmonious, coherent, and seminal—shows that some among us have not yet found the simple joy and rock-

bottom security of Ellen White's real contribution to the world.

No wonder we have so many bright people either in dismay or in total rejection of EGW. We must do better.

Herbert E. Douglass  
Weimar, California

### Observations From the Inner Sanctum

*Perspective Digest*—I love it!  
Interesting, meaty, yet understandable.

I have never darkened the doorway of a seminary and in fact, have had only a few college classes, but I love spiritual truth. And now at the age of 74 to be taken into the "inner sanctum" of theological scholarship is indeed a heavenly blessing. It would not be such if it led away from God's Word, but I find your magazine to be as true to inspiration as the needle is to the pole. God bless you all!

I hesitate to respond to your invitation to share an opinion because I cannot qualify with respect to Perrier, designer clothes, or modern cars [see Work Station One in *Perspective Digest*, volume 1, No. 1—R.R.H.]. But I would not have chosen the illustration and text on your cover. It sounds heartless

E P I S T L E S

---

and judgmental upon first glance. Here's a little boy my mother's heart goes out to, and you are saying, "Serves him right."\* I understand the implied question, and the article helps somewhat to answer it, but what of those who do not read the article? I'm just glad the magazine was in an envelope! (You asked for it, Brother H!)

Enclosed is information on Burma Shave signs making a curtain call after all these years, and also my subscription coupon and check. I can hardly wait for the next issue!

Grace E. (Betty) Brand  
Weaverville, California

\*What makes it even worse, Sister Brand, is that it is not Hegstad but an inspired writer who wrote the psalm that translates to modern ears just as you put it so well. I am glad to learn that Burma Shave is making a comeback. I see that the magazine called *Reminisce* from which you send an article, plans to erect one set of Burma Shave signs in every state. As of June 1995, 35 communities had agreed to host a

set of the red rhyming signs, which now end with the word *Reminisce*. On the basis of this information, I retract my abject confession (see Work Station One) that The Great Communicator Hegstad used a metaphor so old that a segment of our target audience didn't know what I meant. In place of that misplaced confession, I humbly suggest that my prophetic insight just happened to be a little ahead of that segment, which, thanks to your information, can now catch up with us old-timers, who shall slow our prophetic pace a bit to permit them to join us on the Information Highway!

In the meantime, thanks to Ann Landers; a reader from Munster, Indiana; and Burma Shave:

When passing schools,  
Please go slow.  
Let our little  
Shavers grow.—R.R.H..

---

*Thanks for sharing your opinion! Be sure also to share your name, address, and phone number. We may cut a bit, especially if your epistle exceeds 250 words, and edit for clarity.*