

4-1-2003

A Fervent Call For a Change of Focus

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Recommended Citation

Gonzalez, Cesar (2003) "A Fervent Call For a Change of Focus," *Perspective Digest*. Vol. 8 : No. 2 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pd/vol8/iss2/7>

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A FERVENT CALL FOR A CHANGE OF FOCUS

Old-time Adventists had a battle cry: “We have the truth!” By that, they meant we keep the Sabbath. We know what happens to the dead. And we know who is going to receive the mark of the beast! Some have referred to such thinking as “elitist elation.”

By whatever name, it is built on a fallacy, namely, that correct information about Bible doctrines—“the truth”—equals salvation.

It doesn't.

Our children—who, when asked to define Adventism, come up with “going to church on Saturday, being vegetarians, and not wearing jewelry”—stand as Exhibit One in our Advent-

ist culture. A more mature exhibit: Those who define “unequally yoked” as marrying a non-Adventist, while failing to perceive that the church may have become unequally yoked in its marriage with Christ.

I grew up thinking that an evangelistic crusade (as they were called) offered a stage on which we entered

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into verbal wrestling matches with strangers while hoping to convince them that the only way to be right was to be one of us. And even today I ache at seeing entire congregations that equate the Lord's work with arguments about "the issues," never realizing that their meetings are devoid of the Holy Spirit and the primitive Christianity Ellen White admonishes us to have.

Change of Focus

As I review my experience as an Adventist, I wish that my indoctrination had focused on the redemptive aspects of Christianity, which point the way to intimacy with God. This tenet of Christianity is not passed on to our youth and new converts with the impact it deserves. Instead, we focus on doctrines—good in themselves, of course, for they

reveal aspects of how God relates to his creation—but often presented as if they were more important than the God of which they are only reflections. A wise and inspired woman offers critical enlightenment:

"The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. . . . Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man's theories and conclusions. None of these are Christ's servants to teach. . . . The gospel is to be presented, not as a lifeless theory, but as *a living force to change the life*. God desires that the receivers of His grace shall be witnesses to its power."^{**}

The call to holiness rings around us; let us throw ourselves at the Master's feet. *Now is the future of our faith.* □



Cesar A. Gonzalez

^{**}Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 826. Italics added.