

REFLECTIONS *on*

# PHOEBE

## *the* Deaconess

SECRETS  
UNSEALED



MINISTRY UPDATE  
Second Quarter 2014

## Dear *friend* of Secrets Unsealed,

Momentous events are taking place in the religious world even as I write. Probably most of you have already seen the video where clergyman Tony Palmer of the Celtic Anglican Tradition delivered a message from Pope Francis I to a convention of Pentecostal leaders led by Kenneth Copland. In the video, Palmer, the Pope and Copland appealed to the Christian world to unite in the essentials of the Christian faith while leaving the resolution of doctrinal differences to when we get to heaven.

A lesser known event took place on March 9, 2014 when Ulf Ekman, Senior Pastor of the largest charismatic mega church in Scandinavia announced to his church on the Sunday morning worship hour that he was resigning his position and joining the Roman Catholic Church. His main reason was that his church is 'part of the ongoing Protestant fragmentation of Christendom.'

Since the Palmer video appeared on the internet, I have received multiple pleas from supporters of Secrets Unsealed to measure in on these significant prophetic events. For this reason I have decided to produce a 2-hour DVD response which we will post on You Tube for a worldwide audience as soon as it is ready. The production will highlight the relevance of the book The Great Controversy and stress the importance of Christian unity but only upon the foundation of doctrinal truth. We hope and pray that this presentation will encourage many in the religious and secular world to do further research.

This production will be undertaken next month. Please pray that the Lord will lead in this project so that thousands who have not bent the knee to Baal will take their stand on the Lord's side.

We are thankful for your continued prayers and financial support which make it possible for us to continue spreading truth 'like the leaves of autumn.' Only eternity will reveal in its fullness the fruit of your investment in the salvation of souls. I leave you with the wonderful promise: "*he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.*" (2 Corinthians 9:6)

Yours in Christ,



### Hallelujah Praise The Lord!

As of February 25th all funds needed for our Building Project Phase 3 have been received. Please join us in praising the Lord for His goodness in supplying all our needs. We are eternally grateful to everyone for supporting us in our building project through your prayers, and your financial support.

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SECRETS  
UNSEALED

MINISTRY UPDATE

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Monday-Thursday  
8:30am- 5:30pm PST

#### Friday

8:00am - 12:00pm PST

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# TESTIMONY

## Time

### *One of the World's Most Powerful Ministries*

"Blessings to all of you who are working in one of the most powerful Adventist ministries in the world! May God bless you all! I have followed your work for about three years, and I can say that you are one of my biggest inspirations. I can't explain to you how my faith has grown as a result of watching, listening and reading the materials that you have done.

Thanks to you, I understand what it means to think, to live, to act as Adventist in authentic sense of the word! Thanks to you, I understand the importance of the Adventist message and the urgency to be spread everywhere and to everyone. I would like to single out especially the following series from you that helped me a lot, The Three Angels' Messages, His Way Is In the Sanctuary, Catching Up to Jesus, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus. And there are a lot of other series and sermons that helped me to connect the things in my head, especially authentic Adventist things, most of them presented at GYC events. Also, I have to mention that thanks to you I started to appreciate the Spirit of Prophecy and understood the wealth legacy that we Adventists have. Now the SOP is a part of my daily life, daily spiritual food. One other thing that impresses me is your seriousness and stability about the issues that are shaking the Adventist nowadays, for example issues about women's ordination and issues about the Trinity. I really experience your ministry as an established ROCK that can't be moved by the strange winds of doctrines that are blowing from everywhere (from outside and inside). I'm happy for each of your successes, for a lot of successes of Secrets Unsealed. Especially I'm happy because of ANCHOR School of Theology! I strongly believe that that school will continue your tradition of teaching AUTHENTIC Adventism."

SASO, MACEDONIA

### *Blessing of Truth*

"My husband and I watch you most days. Sometimes we can't get Pastor Bohr on our Christian satellite, and the times are always different. Pastor Bohr is a blessing to us. He has a way of explaining scripture in a way that is understandable. We hope that we can get his study of the scriptures at a regular time each day. Is that why you are building your own network? Thank you so much for the blessing of teaching us the truth."

PAMELA & VINCE, ZIMBABWE

### *Worth Eternity*

"Thank God for this ministry and many alike. I just love it all. They add a very big blessing to my soul that is worth eternity."

GENAMI, FACEBOOK

### *Wealth of Knowledge*

"I am truly amazed with the wealth of knowledge that Pastor Bohr has. May God continue to give him wisdom. What a great teacher. I watch him on 3ABN on Wednesday at 1pm, the same program is repeated at 8pm on Friday. Wow! Wow! I am so grateful such sagacity concerning the Bible. I recently watched the series on the 24 Elders. It gave me a new perspective. I'm an elder in my church so I found out that what I used to teach was totally different from what I learned from Pastor Bohr. I was convinced with the amount of Spirit of Prophecy quotations. Please I would like to enroll for your school of Theology next year. God bless you all."

ELDER VINCE

### *Eye Opener*

"I'm 27 years old and currently live in Gdańsk, Poland. Just recently and actually by accident I became familiar with your series of 24 elders. The first encounter with you was on 3ABN discussion panel on women's ordination. I have to say that you inspire me and I thank God for people like you. As it was said by apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 14:20, Eph. 4:14, Heb. 5:12-14 we all need to become more mature and be able to digest the "solid food," to be able to look behind the first impression of the written Word of God. Thank you so much for all the work and endurance."

MACIEK, POLAND

### *ANCHOR*

"I wish I could be part of Anchor School of Theology, but I'm not able due to distance. God bless your ministry in a special way during this new year. Every day I listen to Pastor Bohr's Revelation CDs.

I understand much better this special book of the Bible now. Praise the Lord. I also had the chance to share it with my family in Europe (Spain and Austria) during my holiday last year. They were very interested."

LOUISE, AUSTRALIA

### *Beautiful Transformation*

"Thank you so much for sending out the magazines. They are truly a blessing. I read them through numerous times. Your ministry has helped so many people who I personally know. It's beautiful seeing such transformation in people."

TABITHA, AUSTRALIA



# REFLECTIONS *on* PHOEBE

## *the* Deaconess

BY STEPHEN BOHR

As I have studied the literature on women's ordination, I have found that Adventist egalitarians frequently make sweeping generalizations to impress the reader with the idea that in New Testament times it was commonplace for women to occupy positions of pastoral leadership. Oftentimes general statements are made, and only Scripture references are given, and readers are left with the impression that women served in every leadership position conceivable

in the Apostolic Church.

For example, after providing the usual New Testament references (but no quotations) in favor of women in positions of pastoral leadership, the North Pacific Union Women in Leadership Ad Hoc Committee released the following statement: "We see no teaching that prohibits the church from appointing women to **any** position of ministry or leadership and much that suggests such actions to be entirely appropriate." John McVay,

Al Reimche and Sue Smith, "Reflections on the Theology and Practice of Ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," draft dated 10/3/2012, p. 6.

It is significant that the seven page document does not make any reference whatsoever to 1 Timothy 3:1-7 or Titus 1:5-9. The reason is obvious. If the authors had included these passages in the document, their thesis that *all* positions of leadership are open to women would have been instantly overthrown because both of these passages restrict the office of elder/overseer to men who are husbands of one wife and manage their homes wisely.

### Women in Ministry

In an attempt to prove that we should ordain women to pastoral leadership, a well-known and highly respected Adventist scholar provided a list of leadership positions which were *presumably* filled by women in the New Testament Church. After admitting that "*women did not immediately receive full and equal participation with men in the ministry of the church*" the author goes on to confidently state with great certainty: "*However, Phoebe is mentioned as a 'deacon' (Rom. 16:1); Junia was a female apostle (Rom. 16:7), and leaders of the church at Philippi were women (Phil. 4:2, 3). Priscilla assumed an authoritative teaching role over men (Acts 18), and the 'Elect Lady' (2 John) may well have been a prominent church leader with a congregation under her care.*" Richard Davidson, Pacific Union Recorder "Yes:

The Bible Supports the Ordination/Commissioning of Women Pastors," Special Constituency Edition (August 2012), pp. 45, 47.

### Women on the Scholar's List

But there are problems with our scholar's sweeping generalizations. Scripture is clear that Phoebe did minister in and to the church of Cenchrea. But there is no clear evidence in the text to suggest that she was ever ordained or that she was a deacon in the sense of a *church office*. The fact that scholars are divided on Phoebe's role and status in the church of Cenchrea should lead us to be cautious about making definitive statements. We will come back to Phoebe a little later in this article.

What about the other women who are mentioned by our respected scholar? As I have shown in a previous article (Secrets Unsealed Ministry Update, "Reflections on Junia", First Quarter 2014), the evidence is inconclusive that Junia was an apostle or even a female for that matter. Philippians 4:2, 3 nowhere says that the women at the church of Philippi were *leaders* but rather that they were fellow-laborers with Paul. My wife is a fellow-laborer with me in ministry, but this does not mean that she is an ordained elder/overseer in the church or the head of our household!

Furthermore, nowhere in Acts 18 are we told that Priscilla assumed an *authoritative* teaching role *over* men. Rather, the text clearly explains that



Priscilla and Aquila *both* taught Apollos the word of God more accurately (Acts 18:26), not in a public worship setting, but rather on a one-to-one basis *in private*! It was *after* Apollos had taught *publicly* in the synagogue that both Priscilla and Aquila took him *aside privately* and explained the Scriptures to him. That Priscilla participated with her husband in teaching Apollos proves nothing of substance for Adventist egalitarians because there is nothing in Scripture that would forbid women from serving as a Bible instructors along with their husbands! There have been many successful husband and wife ministry teams in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

And finally, with regards to the Elect Lady of 2 John 2, there is not the slightest hint in the text to indicate that she was an apostle, an elder/overseer or even a deaconess. Nor is there any evidence that she was ordained and was the leader of a specific local church. Ellen White identifies this woman as “a **helper** in the gospel work, a woman of good repute and wide influence” (Ellen G. White, Acts of the Apostles, p. 554). There were many women in the apostolic church who could fit this description who were never ordained or served as elders/overseers of churches, women such as Lydia, Dorcas and Priscilla.

## Women in Adventist History

Some Adventist egalitarians such as Bert Haloviak, have carefully documented

that in our denominational history from 1872 to 1915 women were *licensed* to preach, several served as very successful evangelists, some were conference treasurers and others served as conference departmental directors. What is most frequently deemphasized is the fact that none of these women were ever *ordained* to positions of pastoral leadership on a local, regional, or global level. None of them received a ministerial *credential* or served as pastors or elders of churches or as Conference, Union or General Conference presidents. And none of them were ever addressed with the title of ‘Elder’ or ‘Pastor’.

## Dr. Margaret Caro

Some egalitarian Adventists have suggested that there was at least one other woman besides Ellen White who received a ministerial credential. Ellen White wrote about Dr. Margaret Caro, a prominent New Zealand Adventist dentist: “Sister Caro is a superior dentist. She has all the work she can do. She is a tall stately woman, but sociable and companionable. You would love her if you should see her. She does not hoard her means; she puts it into bags which wax not old. She handles an immense amount of money, and she uses the money to educate **young men** to become laborers for the Master. I am greatly attached to her. She holds her diploma as dentist and her **credentials as minister**. She speaks to the church **when there is no minister**, so you see that she is a very capable woman. Her husband is a physician and surgeon.”

Letter 33, 1893 quoted in 9MR 25.

Thus it would appear, by Ellen White’s own testimony, that Dr. Caro was a *credentialed* minister, and some Adventist egalitarians have argued that *if* she was credentialed then she must have been ordained. But was she a credentialed minister? According to The Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook of 1894 (one year after Ellen White wrote!) Dr. Caro received a Ministerial License, not a Ministerial Credential and Ellen White herself recognized this fact when she stated: “She [Sister Caro] is a queenly woman, tall, and every way proportioned. Sister Caro not only does her business, but she has a **ministerial license** and bears many burdens in their church at Napier [New Zealand]. She speaks to the people, is intelligent and every way capable. She supports her three sons—two in Battle Creek, and one in England who is studying law. ... Dr. Caro supports the home. Sister Caro takes in a great deal of money, but nothing is expended in luxuries. She is supporting **young men** in the Bible school at Melbourne, besides some in America. The Lord blesses this noble, unselfish woman. Her work is about double when compared with the patronage of the other dentists in Napier.” Manuscript 22, 1893

## Ministerial License and Ministerial Credential

In the times of Ellen White (as well as today) there was a clear difference between a Ministerial License and a Ministerial Credential. While a good

number of women in the history of our church have received Ministerial Licenses, my research has indicated that the only woman who ever received a Ministerial Credential in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church from its inception until recent times was Ellen G. White. And I have shown in a recent article (Secrets Unsealed Ministry Update, “Reflections on Deborah and Huldah”, Third Quarter 2013) that Ellen G. White was never ordained, she was never referred to as ‘Elder White’ or ‘Pastor White,’ never pastored a church, never occupied a position of leadership at any level of our denominational structure and strongly denied that she was the leader of the denomination.

On March 5, 1899 Pastor D. W. Reavis asked the chair of the General Conference Ministerial Credentials and Licenses Committee to clarify the difference between a Ministerial License and a Ministerial Credential. In his own words: “I have wanted to know for some time what is the difference between ministerial credentials and ministerial license.”

The Chair answered: “Ministerial **credentials** are granted to **ordained ministers** in good standing, and engaged in active labor. Ministerial **licenses** are granted to **licentiates**—those who are engaged in preaching, but who have **not yet been ordained** to the gospel ministry.” Minutes of the March 5, 1899 General Conference Daily Bulletin, 147.50



## Not Opposed to Women in Ministry

Contrary to what many Adventist egalitarians would have us believe, Adventist complementarians are not opposed to women serving in various ministries in the church. In fact, Adventist complementarians strongly encourage women to use their Spirit-given gifts, but within the clear biblical parameters that God has established in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

As I was writing this article, a woman was elected treasurer of the Central California Conference where I serve as a pastor. Did I disagree theologically with this appointment? Not at all! When I heard that she had been chosen, there was no doubt in my mind that she was the best qualified person for the job and I warmly congratulated her and wished her the best in her new responsibility. But it bears noting that our conference president, (whose position is equivalent to regional overseeing elders such as Timothy and Titus in the apostolic church) in harmony with the Bible criteria and denominational policy, is the 'husband of one wife'.

For several years in the past, my wife managed the finances of our household. Our salaries were deposited in the bank and she made sure the bills were paid on time. This lifted a great burden from my shoulders. Although my wife managed our household finances, she never made unilateral decisions. When a decision requiring a large and unusual expenditure was needed, my wife always con-

sulted with me to ask for guidance as to what she should do. Was my wife the head of our household because she managed our finances? Of course not!

Actually, during that time I felt somewhat like Potiphar who delegated the administrative responsibilities of his house to Joseph and therefore did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate (cf. Genesis 39:9). Did Joseph's position as the 'Chief Financial and Operating Officer' of Potiphar's goods make him the head of Potiphar's household? Of course not! Although Potiphar remained the head of the household, Ellen White assures us that he treated Joseph as a son rather than a servant and Joseph became his "confidant and companion" (YI March 11, 1897; CC 366). Did Joseph usurp Potiphar's position as head of the household? The evidence indicates otherwise! I am sure that when important administrative issues surfaced which were beyond Joseph's realm of authority to resolve, he consulted with Potiphar, the head of the household.

## J. H. Waggoner Editorial

As early as December 19, 1878 an editorial appeared in *Signs of the Times* where J. H. Waggoner clearly stated the view of the church of that time on the issue of women's ordination to the church office of 'elder': "*The divine arrangement, even from the beginning, is this, that the man is the head of the woman. Every relation is disregarded or abused in this lawless age. But the*

*Scriptures* always maintain this order in the family relation. 'For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.' Eph. 5:23. Man is entitled to certain privileges which are not given to woman; and he is subjected to some duties and burdens from which the woman is exempt. A woman may pray, prophesy, exhort, and comfort the church, but **she cannot occupy the position of a pastor or ruling elder.** This would be looked upon as usurping authority over the man, which is here [1 Timothy 2:12] prohibited."

## Signs of the Times

Some seventeen years later, the church still held to the same view. In the Question Corner of the January 24, 1895 issue of *Signs of the Times* a reader asked the editors the following question: "Should women be elected to offices in the church when there are enough brethren?"

The response of the editors was unequivocal: "If by this is meant the office of **elder**, we should say at once, **No.** But there are offices in the church which women can fill acceptably, and oftentimes there are found sisters in the church who are better qualified for this than brethren, such offices, for instance as church clerk, treasurer, librarian of the tract society, etc., as well as the office of deaconess, **assisting the deacons** in looking after the poor, and in doing such other duties as would naturally fall to their lot. The qualifications for church elder are set forth in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and in Titus 1:7-9. **We do not believe that**

**it is in God's plan** to give to women the **ordained offices** of the church. By this we do not mean to depreciate their labors, service, or devotion. The sphere of woman is **equal** [italics in the original] to that of man. She was made a help meet, or fit, for man, but that does **not** [italics in original] mean that her sphere [or role] is **identical** [italics in original] to that of man's. The interests of the church and the world generally would be better served if the **distinctions given in God's word** were regarded." *Signs of the Times*, "Question Corner # 176: Who Should Be Church Officers?" January 24, 1895.

Several things stand out in this answer:

- There are some positions in the church for which women are **better qualified** than men.
- Those positions do **not include** the office of ordained elders.
- Women are disqualified to be elders because they fail to meet the **Scripture qualifications** in 1 Timothy and Titus.
- Deaconesses are **assistants** to the male deacons in the church.
- The editors openly admitted that although women and men are **equal** in the sight of God their functions in the church are **different**.
- Things in the church and the world would be better served if the **distinctions** given in **God's word** were regarded.



In spite of the fact that at the time there was in society a great cultural push in favor of women's ordination, there was no outcry for the editor to resign because of his 'sexist' remarks and there is no evidence that there was any negative reaction on the part of the readers. It is also interesting that on the very same page there was an article on obedience written by Ellen G. White. **If she did not agree with the editor's response to the question, why didn't she take the opportunity to correct him?**

### Ellen White's 1895 Statement

In an attempt to prove that women should be ordained as pastors and elders/overseers, some women's ordination advocates have misused an Ellen G. White statement which was published in the Review and Herald on July 9, 1895, just six months after the editors of Signs of the Times had stated that women should not be ordained as elders.

Here is the statement: "*Women who are willing to consecrate **some** of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands. In some cases they will need to counsel with the **church officers or the minister**; but if they are devoted women, maintaining a vital connection with God, they will be a power for good in the church. This is another means of strengthening*

*and building up the church. We need to branch out more in our methods of labor. Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed; let every individual labor, privately or publicly, to help forward this grand work. Place the burdens upon **men and women of the church** that they may grow by reason of the exercise, and thus become effective agents in the hand of the Lord for the enlightenment of those who sit in darkness.*"

This quote leaves no doubt that Ellen White approved of some type of ordination or setting apart for women. Yet a careful reading indicates that Ellen White was not describing the work of a pastor or elder/overseer but rather the basic duties of what today we call a 'deaconess'.

In his penetrating book which is based on his doctoral dissertation, The Twenty-First Century Deacon and Deaconess: Reflecting on the Biblical Model, Vincent E. White Jr. rebukes those who misuse this Ellen White quotation. After lamenting that the church for over one hundred years has discontinued the practice of ordaining deaconesses, White explains: "*And to add insult to injury, proponents for the ordination of female elders and female pastors are **misusing** Ellen G. White's statement, made in 1895 in favor of the ordination of deaconesses, to support their position.*" Vincent E. White Jr. The Twenty-First Century Deacon and Deaconess: Reflecting on the Biblical Model, p. 31.

The White Estate added its testimony

regarding the 1895 statement: "*There is no documentary evidence that EGW was calling for the ordination of women to gospel ministry in the RH article. The immediate internal context ('visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor') may suggest she had in mind the work of a **deaconess**. The opinion of EGW's personal secretary, Clarence C. Crisler, writing within one year of Mrs. White's death, was to the effect that EGW was referring to **ordination of deaconesses** rather than gospel ministers.*" Quoted in, Vincent E. White Jr. The Twenty-First Century Deacon and Deaconess: Reflecting on the Biblical Model, p. 33

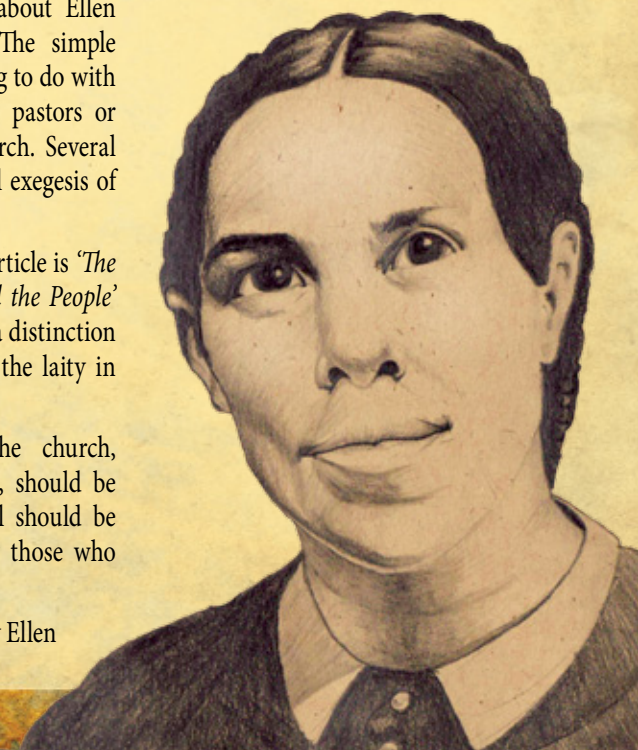
### Analysis of Ellen White's 1895 Statement

What shall we say then about Ellen White's 1895 statement? The simple answer is that it has nothing to do with women being set apart as pastors or elders/overseers of the church. Several facts emerge from a careful exegesis of the statement:

- The title of the original article is '*The Duty of the Minister and the People*' thus clearly establishing a distinction between the pastor and the laity in the church.
- Every individual in the church, whether male or female, should be involved in *ministry*. All should be involved in enlightening those who sit in darkness.
- The women referenced by Ellen

White worked *part time* and their ministry was *not one of leadership* in the church. The job description of visiting the sick, looking after the young, and ministering to the necessities of the poor is what today we call a 'deaconess'.

- Ellen White did affirm that women who were engaged in this part-time work should be set apart by the laying on of hands for *this particular work*. This is in line with the vote of the 59th General Conference session which approved the ordination of deaconesses.
- It would be a gigantic leap of logic to state that because a woman is set apart by the laying on of hands to be a deaconess, she is entitled to serve as





an elder/overseer which is an entirely different function!

- It is clear that these women were *not ministers or officers* of the church because we are told that they might need to *counsel with* the church officers or the minister.

## Questions

As I stated at the beginning of this article, Adventist egalitarians who believe that women should be ordained to pastoral leadership, have appealed to Phoebe as support for their view. Some not only see Phoebe as a female deacon but have ascended her to the church office of *minister* on the same level with the apostle Paul. This makes it imperative to examine the evidence to see if their arguments are valid. There are three questions we will seek to answer:

- Did the *church office* of ‘female deacon’ exist in the apostolic church and was Phoebe a deacon?
- If the *office* did exist, did the female deacons belong to the same leadership group as the males?
- If the *office* did exist, did the women deacons serve in positions of pastoral leadership such as apostles and elders/overseers?

## Who was Phoebe?

Let’s answer our first question. The apostle Paul highly commended the *ministry* of Phoebe and recommended her without reservation to the congregations in Rome. But was she a deacon?

Here are the words of the apostle Paul:

*“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant [diakonon] of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also”* (Romans 16:1, 2).

What does this text actually *say* about Phoebe and what does it *not say*? Does the text tell us that she was *ordained* to the *office* of deacon in the church? Does it say that she was an apostle or an elder/overseer? A careful study of the text clearly indicates that the answer to these questions is no! The text simply tells us that she was a *diakonon* and a *helper* of Paul and many others.

What is the meaning of the word ‘helper’? The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament explains that the original meaning of the word ‘helper’ (*prostatis*, which is used only here in the New Testament) is one ‘who looks after the legal protection of strangers and freedmen’. Kenneth Vine has further defined the meaning of the word:

*“Prostatis* [‘helper’] *was the title of a citizen in Athens, who had the responsibility of seeing to the welfare of resident aliens who were without civic rights. Among the Jews it signified a wealthy patron of the community.”* Vine’s *Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, ‘*prostatis*’ 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Other Lexicons provide similar definitions.

The Louw-Nida Lexicon gives the meaning, ‘a woman who is active in helping—‘helper, patroness.’ Thayer’s Lexicon defines the word as: ‘a female guardian, protectress, patroness, caring for the affairs of others and aiding them with her resources.’ Arndt and Gingrich define the word as: ‘protectress, patroness, helper.’

The overwhelming majority of Bible versions translate the word as ‘help’ or ‘helper’. A handful of versions use synonyms such as ‘assisted’, ‘succourer’, ‘benefactor’. The ESV renders the word, ‘patron’ which the dictionary defines as ‘a person who gives financial or other support to a person, organization, cause, or activity.’ Synonyms in the Thesaurus are philanthropist, benefactor, supporter, advocate, defender, helper, and financier. The Contemporary English Version and Young’s Literal Translation do use the word ‘leader’, but this meaning is incongruous with the context. After all, are we to believe that Phoebe was the leader of many including the great apostle Paul who stated that He did not consider himself “*at all inferior to the most eminent apostles?*” (2 Corinthians 11:5)

## Ellen White and Phoebe

Cenchrea was the eastern port of Corinth which was a metropolitan and cosmopolitan center through which people from every corner of the empire passed. The constant flux of people through the region would have made it necessary for the church to lodge and

feed them. The evidence indicates that Phoebe provided this *service* or *ministry* by supplying shelter and food for those who passed through the area. And when Paul was there, she hosted him as well.

Though Ellen White had no knowledge of Biblical languages, her description of Phoebe agrees with the definitions that are provided by the lexicons. A careful reading indicates that Phoebe had the spiritual gift of *hospitality* and was foremost in providing lodging and food for those who visited the church of Cenchrea. In her own words: “*Phoebe entertained the apostle, and she was in a marked manner an entertainer of strangers who needed care. Her example should be followed by the churches of today.*” Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, volume 6, p. 343

This statement makes clear that Phoebe was not a simple church member. She was a *prominent* and outstanding church member! She was not a mere entertainer of strangers. She was so “*in a marked manner*”. But does this mean that she was an ordained deacon?

While Paul affirmed that Phoebe was a *prostatis* for him and others, Ellen White interprets this by saying that Phoebe was an *entertainer* of the *apostle and of strangers*. It is clear that Ellen White interpreted the word *prostatis* as ‘one who entertains.’ But what did Ellen White mean by the words ‘entertained’ and ‘entertainer’? The 1828 edition of Webster’s Dictionary defines the word ‘entertain’ in the following manner:

*“To receive into the house and treat*



with **hospitality**, either at the **table** only, or with **lodging** also.”

Webster’s Dictionary goes on to give a Biblical example of the meaning of the word by referring to the experience of Abraham who unbeknownst, *entertained* angels:

“Be not forgetful to **entertain strangers**; for thereby some have **entertained** angels unawares.”

It is well known that Abraham entertained angels by offering them water, a place to rest and food (Hebrews 13:2; Genesis 18:3-5).

## Diakonon in the New Testament

The various Bible versions do not agree on the meaning of the masculine noun *diakonon*. While most render the word ‘servant’, others translate ‘minister’, ‘deacon’, ‘deaconess’, ‘leader’, or ‘helper’. This broad range of translations should lead us to be cautious about making hasty and definitive statements about Phoebe’s status in the church of Cenchrea.

Clearly, the combination of the word *prostatis* [‘entertainer’] with *diakonon* [‘servant’] in Romans 16:2 is descriptive of one who *serves* or *ministers* to the needs of others through the spiritual gift of hospitality. The apostle Paul leaves no doubt that Phoebe carried out this important *ministry* or *service* in the church of Cenchrea. No doubt, as Kenneth Vine indicates, she must have been a woman of considerable means who used her financial resources and influ-

ence to help the transients who passed through.

But the question that begs to be answered is this: Was Phoebe ordained to the church *office* or is the word simply used in a more *general sense* to describe her as someone who had the spiritual gift of *hospitality* or *service*?

It is difficult to answer this question with absolute certainty from the text itself. Bible commentators and translations are divided on the issue. While some scholars and Bible versions indicate that Phoebe was a deacon or deaconess in the sense of a *church office*, others believe that the word is used in a *general sense* to describe one who served the needs of the transients who passed through the region. I believe that Joseph Fitzmeyer is correct when he remarked concerning Romans 16:1, 2:

“*There is no way of being sure that there existed an ‘order’ of deaconesses in the church at this period.*” (Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, “The Letter to the Romans,” *The Jerome Bible Commentary*, 53:136)

John Murray is even more pointed: “*Though the word for ‘servant’ is the same as is used for deacon in the instances cited [Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8-13], yet the word is also used to denote the person performing any type of ministry. If Phoebe ministered to the saints, as is evident from verse 2, then she would be a servant of the church and there is neither need nor warrant to suppose that she occupied or exercised what amounted to an ecclesiastical office comparable to that of the deaconate. The services performed were*

*similar to those devolving upon deacons. Their ministry is one of mercy to the poor, the sick, and the desolate. This is an area in which women likewise exercise their functions and graces. But there is no more warrant to posit an office than in the case of the widows who, prior to their becoming the charge of the church, must have borne the features mentioned in I Timothy 5:9, 10.*”

## Every Believer a Diakonon

It must also be noted that Jesus admonished *each and every one* of His followers to be a *diakonon* in the broad sense of rendering a service or ministering to others. But this does not mean that all of those who *minister* have been called to the church *office* of deacon. Let’s notice several texts where Jesus used the word *diakonon* in the general sense of service:

Jesus counseled His disciples: “*But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant [diakonon]*” (Matthew 23:11). In another place, Jesus admonished His disciples: “*If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant [diakonon] of all*” (Mark 9:35). To Andrew and Philip Jesus said: “*If anyone serves [diakonee] Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant [diakonon] will be also. If anyone serves [diakonee] Me, him My Father will honor*” (John 12:26).

It is clear that in each of these verses the word *diakonon* could have been translated with the word ‘minister’ just as well as ‘servant’. As stated before, every follower of Jesus should be a ‘ser-

vant’ or ‘minister’. But does this mean that every member of the church has been called to the *church office* of deacon? Further, can a gigantic leap of logic be taken that because Phoebe was a *diakonon* she was entitled to serve in the office of an apostle, pastor or elder/overseer?

## A Clear Distinction

We must now say a few more things about Ellen White’s previously quoted 1895 statement. While I believe that the job description that Ellen White provided strongly *suggests* that she was describing the office of ‘deaconess’, it must be admitted that she did not use the specific word. A search on the Ellen G. White CD Rom indicates that she used the actual word ‘deaconess’ only once.

We will take a look at this lone statement in a few moments but before we do, we must answer our second question: If the *office* of deaconess existed in the apostolic church, did the deaconesses belong to the same leadership group as the males? Did Ellen White believe that male deacons and female deaconesses were in the identical leadership group or did she believe that they were two distinct offices?

Vincent White has conclusively shown in his doctoral dissertation, that the office of ‘deacon’ and ‘deaconesses’ are complimentary, but different. Each office is unique and distinctive. For this reason, the church elects a *head* deaconess and a *head* deacon. I have yet to see



a deacon who is a deaconesses or a deaconess who is a deacon! And yet some egalitarians have argued that Phoebe was a deacon right along with the males!

The distinction between male deacons and female deaconesses is made clear in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (ca. 380 AD) where female deacons ('deaconesses') are described with the masculine noun *diakonos* preceded by the feminine definite article. On the other hand male deacons, in conformity with Greek grammar, are described with the masculine definite article.

But didn't the apostle Paul describe Phoebe with the male noun *diakonon*? Wouldn't this place her in the same group with the male deacons? Yes to the first question and no to the second.

It is important to remember that the masculine noun *diakonon* as it applies to Phoebe does not have any definite article, masculine or feminine. Though grammatically the noun is masculine, it must be interpreted as feminine because Phoebe was a woman. The question is: Why did Paul use a masculine noun to describe a female? Was it because she belonged to the same group as the male deacons? The answer is no. Paul was simply following the rules of Greek grammar! Although the female definite article was used with the masculine noun much later in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, there is not a single instance in the New Testament where the masculine noun *diakonos* was used with the feminine definite article. It appears that this incongruous grammatical

practice in the *Apostolic Constitutions* simply did not exist in New Testament times so Paul, being an expert in Greek, could not have used it. The female noun *diaconissa*, from which we derive our word 'deaconess,' did not exist until long after the times of Paul so he could not have used it either. Further, Phoebe could not have been in the same group with the male deacons because the job description of deacons in 1 Timothy 3:12 requires them to be husbands of one wife. This, in itself, would disqualify Phoebe from being in the same group with the male deacons.

### Ellen White's Lone Statement

Now let's examine the lone reference where Ellen White used the word 'deaconess'. Ellen White was writing a rebuke to Elder A. T. Jones who had taken it upon himself to counsel women in the church who came to him with their personal problems:

*"You are not to set such an example that women will feel at liberty to tell you the grievances of their home life, and to draw upon your sympathies. When a woman comes to you with her troubles, tell her plainly to go to her sisters, to tell her troubles to the deaconesses of the church. Tell her that she is out of place in opening her troubles to any man, for men are easily beguiled and tempted. Tell the one who has thrown her case upon you that God has not placed this burden upon any man. You are not wise to take these burdens upon yourself. It*

*is not your appointed work."* Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, volume 21, pp. 97, 98

This statement leaves no doubt that deaconesses have distinctive duties toward the female constituency of the church, duties that cannot be carried out by males. This clearly indicates that the offices of male deacon and female deaconess, though related, are not the same office. It is to be noted that Ellen White also drew a clear distinction between the office of an ordained elder and the office of a female deaconess.

Ellen White's counsel squares perfectly with the prescription in the *Apostolic Constitution* which stipulates that "deaconesses were to be ordained for the ministrations toward women. She was referred to as the assistant to the deacon, and was to be present at all interviews between women and the priest, bishop or deacon." (Maurice Riley, *The Deaconess: Walking in the Newness of Life*, Second Edition (Newark, NJ: Christian Associates Publications, 1993).

The noted Bible commentator, Adam Clarke, described the distinction between the roles of male deacons and female deaconesses in the post-apostolic church in similar terms: "There were deaconesses in the primitive church, whose business it was to attend the female converts at baptism; to instruct the catechumens, or persons who were candidates for baptism: to visit the sick, and those who were in prison; and, in short, perform those religious offices, for the female part

*of the church, which could not with propriety be performed by men. They were chosen in general out of the most experienced of the church; and were ordinarily widows, who had borne children. Some ancient constitutions required them to be forty, others fifty, and others sixty years of age. It is evident that they were ordained to their office, by the imposition of the hands of the bishop; and the form of prayer used on the occasion is extant in the Apostolical Constitution"* Adam Clarke's *Electronic Database Commentary*, Romans 16:1.

### Are Bible Translations Biased?

Let's move on now to our third question: If the office of deaconess existed in the apostolic church, did the women serve in positions of pastoral leadership such as apostle and elder/overseer? This is an important question because some egalitarians have argued that the word *diakonon* should be translated 'minister', meaning that Phoebe was a female minister in the same category as the apostle Paul.

The former Dean of the Andrews University Theological Seminary has argued that various translations of Romans 16:1, 2 have been biased in favor of men and against women in ministry: "The KJV, NKJV, NASB and ESV consistently translate *diakonos* as 'minister' when the word is used in connection to a male person, but not so when it comes to Phoebe. I think this shows a strange bias against women in



ministry. Since through the centuries the King James Version has had such an important impact on our understanding of the doctrine of the church, could it be that our modern attitudes toward women in ministry have been shaped by biased translators?"

I do agree with the Dean that it would have been more consistent for the KJV, NKJV, NASB and ESV to translate the word *diakonos* as 'minister' or 'servant' in all cases where it appears. But the Dean's statement that the variance in translation 'shows a strange bias against women in ministry' is an unsubstantiated personal assumption. I rather doubt that our present attitudes toward women in ministry have been influenced by a woman whose name is tucked away in the epilogue of Romans. When I recently told several of my members that I was writing a newsletter article on Phoebe, most of them asked: "Who is she?"

Further, there is no persuasive evidence that the King James Version influenced the NASB and ESV translators. The publishers of the ESV have stated: "Each word and phrase in the ESV has been carefully weighed against the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, to ensure the fullest accuracy and clarity and to avoid under-translating or overlooking any nuance of the original text." Similar statements could be quoted from the publishers of the NASB.

And why does the Dean mention only the NASB and ESV? Other reputable modern versions such as the NIV consistently translate the word *diakonos* as

'servant' for Phoebe, for Paul and for others who ministered in the church. There is no bias in these translations. Does the fact that the word *diakonos* is used for Phoebe, Paul and others mean that they were all on the same level of leadership in the church? Was Phoebe an apostle? Was Paul a deacon? No to these questions! The common word simply means that they both *ministered* to the needs of the saints within the realm of their specific calling. Phoebe ministered as a patroness to the needy, and Paul ministered as a preacher of the gospel.

### Broad and Narrow Meaning

It cannot be overemphasized that in the New Testament the word 'minister' (*diakonos*) has a broad meaning (Matthew 23:11; Mark 9:35; John 12:26) and a narrow one (1 Timothy 3:8-13; Philipians 1:1). In the narrow sense, the word describes the *church office* of 'deacon' which was instituted when the seven deacons were set apart by the laying on of hands (Acts 6).<sup>1</sup> But in a broader sense, as we have already seen, the word describes one who ministers or serves, a quality that should characterize *all* the members of the body of Christ, be they male or female, ordained or not ordained, be they Phoebe or Paul.

There is no unquestionable evidence in the text of Romans 16:1, 2 that Phoebe was a deaconess in the narrow sense of a church office or a 'minister' in the sense that we use the word today. It is to be noted that those who believe that

Phoebe was a female deacon commonly take the *extra-biblical, post-apostolic* evidence and argue it back into Romans 16:1, 2. This can be a risky and tenuous procedure. The same method is used by Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars who attempt to prove that the expression 'Lord's Day' in Revelation 1:10 is a reference to Sunday. They argue that because the early church fathers taught that the expression 'Lord's Day' meant Sunday, therefore it means the same thing in Revelation 1:10. It must be borne in mind that the latter meaning of a word or expression does not always convey its earlier meaning.

As I have pointed out in my book, Reflections on Women's Ordination, there is a place for ministering women in the church! One would have to be blind not to see that women were strongly involved in ministry in New Testament times. And, as has been well documented by egalitarians, many women have been involved in ministry in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as well. But women's involvement in ministry does not mean that they were set

apart by ordination to serve in pastoral leadership positions such as elders/overseers. It doesn't even necessarily mean that they were set apart in the apostolic church to the office of 'deacon'. There is a vast difference between women who are involved in ministry and women 'ministers', as we use the word in the parlance of today! All pastors, elders and deacons should minister but not all who minister are pastors, elders or deacons.

Those who support the ordination of women to pastoral leadership have done a masterful job spreading the idea that if one does not believe in women's ordination to pastoral leadership then one does not believe in women in ministry. But this is an argument that is devoid of substance, a phantom argument if you please. I do not know a single complementarian who is opposed to women ministering or serving in various capacities in the church.

### Illogical Assumptions

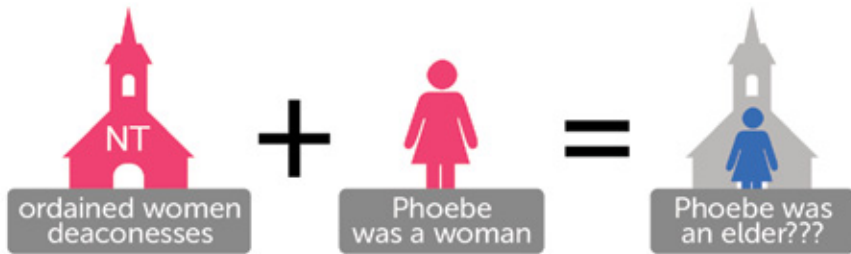
Now let's attempt to answer our last question: If the office of deaconesses did exist in the apostolic church, did

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<sup>1</sup> Some Adventist egalitarians have questioned whether the seven who were set apart in Acts 6 were actually deacons. Ellen White leaves no room for doubt. Regarding the election of the seven she states: "This advice was followed, and by prayer and the laying on of hands, seven chosen men were solemnly set apart for their duties as deacons." AA 89 Ellen White also explicitly mentions that Philip was one of the seven deacons and Stephen was 'the foremost of the seven deacons' (AA 106, 97). The Spirit of Prophecy makes a distinction between ministers, elders, deacons and regular church members such as in the following quotation: "The responsibility of representing Christ to the world does not rest alone upon those who are ordained as ministers of the gospel. Each member of the church should be a living epistle, known and read of all men. A working church will be a living church. Those who are elected as elders and deacons should ever be on the alert that plans may be made and executed which will give every member of the church a share in active work for the salvation of souls. This is the only way in which the church can be preserved in a healthy, thriving condition." RH, March 24, 1891



Does this make sense to you??  
Me neither.



the deaconesses serve in positions of pastoral leadership such as apostles and elders/overseers? We have hinted at the answer to this question in the previous section but let's pursue it further.

Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that Phoebe was an ordained deaconess in the sense of a church office. Would it really have any relevance in the discussion on whether women should be ordained to pastoral leadership? Not at all! The role of Phoebe in the church of Cenchrea is immaterial to the discussion of the ordination of women to positions of pastoral leadership. In the New Testament Church, the offices of deacon and overseer/elder are clearly distinct from one another. Being a deaconess and assistant to the deacons in the church is one function and being an apostle or an elder/overseer is quite another.

Look at the following syllogism and ask yourself if it makes logical sense:

- **Major Premise:** In the New Testament women were ordained to the office of deaconess
- **Minor Premise:** Phoebe was a woman

- **Conclusion:** Therefore Phoebe was ordained and served in the office of elder/overseer

Clearly the major and minor premises in this syllogism are true, but the conclusion does not logically follow. The only logical conclusion would be that Phoebe could serve as a deaconess.

On the basis of my research, I believe that there might be a *sliver* of evidence in Scripture (possibly the disputed text of 1 Timothy 3:11<sup>2</sup> and Phoebe in Romans 16:1, 2) that there were deaconesses in the apostolic church. There is also evidence in early *post-apostolic* church history to indicate that women served in such an office. Furthermore, it has been well documented that Ellen White acknowledged the office of deaconesses and that women were ordained to this office in Adventist history (for documentation see Arthur N. Patrick, "The Ordination of Deaconesses," The Adventist Review, January 16, 1986)

But, as we have shown above, female deaconesses were distinct from male deacons. According to Acts 6, seven male deacons were elected and ordained

to help the male apostles in the administrative matters of the church. If deaconesses did exist, the *Apostolic Constitutions* clearly indicate that their function was to serve the *female constituency* of the church under the leadership of the *male deacons*, and they were to be ordained by the *male bishop*.

It is important to underline that when the Jerusalem Council met to make decisions which affected the entire church, it was the apostles and the elders who represented the church (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23). There is no mention of 'deacons' or 'deaconesses' among the leadership. Further, as I have shown elsewhere, Ellen White makes it crystal clear that all the leaders at the Jerusalem Council were men.

## Summary & Conclusions

The reason for the election of deacons is clearly explained in Acts chapter 6. The text tells us that seven *males* were selected from a pool of *males* to be a *support group* for the 12 *male* apostles who were the *leaders* or officers of the church at that time (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6; 15:22, 23; 16:24; 20:17; 21:18). Later on, the church organization was further perfected and male elders were selected and ordained as leaders of local churches and regions (1 Timothy 5:17;

1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 5:1-4). Although there is *post-apostolic* evidence that deaconesses were later nominated to *aid the deacons* in the work for the female constituency of the church, there is no clear New Testament evidence that they were ordained to the *office* of deaconess. Furthermore, the *post-apostolic* evidence clearly indicates that the female deaconesses were ordained by the bishop/overseer and were under the authority of the male deacons.

If Phoebe was a deaconess, her role was to help the apostles, elders and deacons who were the leaders of the church. The text in Romans clearly states that Phoebe was Paul's helper; not he hers. So it is illegitimate to use the name of Phoebe to argue that there were women in positions of pastoral leadership in the apostolic church. Deaconesses, perhaps! Pastors and elders/overseers, none!



PASTOR STEPHEN BOHR

<sup>2</sup> Here is one example: "They were most likely either the wives of the deacons or a group of female deacons (cf. Phoebe, Rom 16:1). A case can be made for either of these two options, with a slim advantage falling to the first. But being dogmatic about either view is unwarranted by the exegetical data" (from Bible Knowledge Commentary/Old Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries; Bible Knowledge Commentary/New Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries. All rights reserved).





# Oligodendrocytes

(oli-go-den-dro-cytes)

► by MILTON TESKE, MD

Your brain has about 100 billion neurons in it. Some have described the brain as a giant computer, but the more we understand about the function and structure of neurons the more we are beginning to realize that each neuron is actually like an entire computer and the brain like a network of 100 billion computers all wired together. The cables connecting this network are called axons and points of connection are called synapses. There are over 100 trillion of these synapses. The combined function of this computer network is where you create every thought you think and store every memory you have. Every emotion you experience, every sight you see, every fragrance you smell is experienced here. This network controls the movement of your muscles; it controls the beating of your heart and every breath you take. Here it is that the soul communes with the God who created it.

But the brain isn't all neurons. About half of the cells in the brain are various support cells whose function is to protect and nourish and help the neurons so they can carry on their complex and vital electrical activities. We won't begin to describe all of the various types of support cells and their functions here today but will focus our attention on just one type of support cell called an oligodendrocyte.

## The Oligodendrocyte

The oligodendrocytes are located throughout the entire brain and spinal cord. Their job is to protect and care for the trillions of connecting cables called axons that connect all of the neurons. Without these vital support cells doing their job of maintaining and speeding up the electrical impulses it would be impossible for the brain to function. They accomplish their job by providing a special insulating wrap around

the axons that not only protects and maintains these long yet extremely thin cellular "electrical wires," but they also become a powerful electrical accelerator that gives a tremendous boost to the electrical impulse traveling down this wire.

From each oligodendrocyte there are lots of little protrusions reaching out in all directions and making contact with the axons that are passing through its location. Wherever one of these contacts an axon it flattens out and wraps around the axon. It spirals around and around the axon making a flat multi-layered sheath of **myelin**. Myelin is about 80% lipids and 20% protein. Each oligodendrocyte will reach out and build about 50 of these little myelin sheaths protecting and insulating the axons passing near it. Together with all of the other oligodendrocytes in the brain they will insulate all of the axons of the brain with thousands of little segments of myelin insulating each axon.

But the most important function of these myelin sheaths is to speed up the electrical impulses traveling through the axons. Electrical impulses normally travel across the surface of the neurons as sodium ions rush in through little sodium channels in the cell membrane then potassium ions rush out restoring the electrical potential. This is an extremely rapid process with cells repeatedly firing every millisecond if needed. But in order to send electrical impulses even more rapidly across longer distances within the brain, myelinated axons are used. The myelin acts as an electrical conductor with the electric impulse jumping from one segment of myelin to the next at nearly the speed of light. Thus the electrical messages fly from one part of the brain to the other at nearly instantaneous rates making com-

plex brain functions possible at the speed of thought. Without the myelin sheaths covering every axon, normal brain function would not be possible.

There are a number of devastating demyelinating diseases where the myelin is destroyed and the affected areas become basically non-functional such as in multiple sclerosis. Myelin is necessary for the electric circuits of the mind to rapidly send their electric messages. And it is the cell bodies of the oligodendrocytes that support all of their attached myelin segments keeping them functioning properly. The areas of the brain that are mainly composed of axon cables connecting one part of the brain to another appear white because of the myelin and are referred to as **white matter**, while the grey matter is composed mainly of neuron cell bodies rather than myelinated axons. Oligodendrocytes are also responsible to control and regulate the electrolyte fluid surrounding neurons keeping it just right.

## Creating Oligodendrocytes

Oligodendrocytes develop from oligodendrocyte precursor cells or **OPCs**. These OPCs can be turned on and transformed into oligodendrocytes that then send out their connecting arms and wrap their myelin sheaths around the axons. Embryologically the oligodendrocytes are the last type of cells to be formed in the newly developing brain.

When a baby is born there are only a few regions of the brain that are myelinated and have oligodendrocytes. As the baby grows and the mind develops, more OPCs are switched on and turn into oligodendrocytes, thus myelinating more areas of the brain. By age 25 – 30 the brain is fully myelinated.



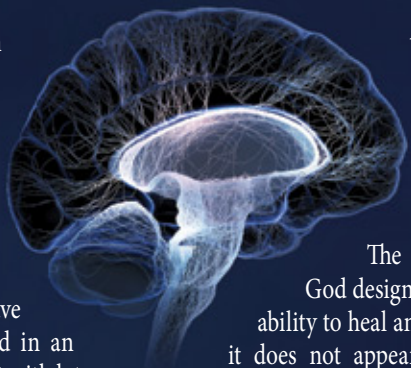
Myelination is an important part of intelligence. Neuroscientists have found a direct correlation — people with more white matter have higher IQs. Researchers have found that rats raised in an enriched environment with lots of different stimuli and experiences will develop more white matter.

## Demyelinating (de-my-eli-nating) Diseases

The demyelinating diseases can be divided into two categories. The first category is those diseases where some specific agent (like a specific antibody) targets the oligodendrocytes such as in the case of multiple sclerosis. As the cells are destroyed and the myelin disappears, the conduction speed is lost and serious disability is the result.

The second category is found in those conditions where some generalized disease process results in loss of white matter. The most common is ischemia, the decreased flow of blood, oxygen and nutrients due to atherosclerotic narrowing and dysfunction of the blood vessels. This gradually decreased blood supply results in a gradual diffuse decrease in the amount of myelination seen in the brain and is referred to as white matter disease. This is frequently seen on CT scans of the brain in middle age and older brains.

We often think of this white matter disease as just a natural part of aging, but it is really the result of common lifestyle related disease processes. The result is a gradual dulling and slowing of the mental func-



tions. As it becomes more advanced, it is often referred to as dementia.

## Remyelination

The good news is that God designed the body with the ability to heal and be restored. While it does not appear that the damaged mature oligodendrocytes can grow new myelin segments even if they do survive the initial injury, OPCs can proliferate and be switched on and be transformed into new oligodendrocytes that can grow new arms and new myelin segments and thus remyelinate the axons. This results in increased conduction speed and a return to normal function. This spontaneous remyelination has been well documented.

Of course we must correct the underlying disease process that is causing the destruction of the oligodendrocytes. For many demyelinating diseases, lifestyle changes have been shown to be very effective. Coming back to God's simple, whole plant food diet with exercise and the elimination of all toxic and inflammatory substances can stop the underlying cellular destruction. Then spontaneous remyelination can occur.

## How Do You Switch On An OPC?

Recent studies just published in the Journal of Neuroscience by researchers from the University of Wisconsin appear to have discovered the secret of how to switch on OPCs transforming them into oligodendrocytes that can remyelinate the axons. **Sleep** is the answer. During deep sleep, the genes responsible for this transformation are turned on.

We have always known that sleep has

many beneficial effects, rejuvenating and restoring our brain energy for the next day. But now we know that there are also slow, but powerful, transforming effects of deep sleep as well. It is sleep that turns the switch allowing OPCs to turn into oligodendrocytes that are so necessary to restoring or maintaining our myelinated axons at their peak function.

So, whether you are recovering from acute or chronic demyelinating disease or just wanting to maintain a good healthy white matter you now know the secret — deep, sound sleep. Sleep is the key to making new oligodendrocytes which will keep your axons well myelinated and running at peak speed.

## Getting A Good Night's Sleep

What is the biggest disrupter of deep sleep in the world today? Caffeine — coffee, tea and sodas. And not just too much — even one cup of coffee in the morning will prevent the neurons in your brain from going into the deep sleep waveforms the next night.

*"Coffee is a hurtful indulgence. It temporarily excites the mind to unwonted action, but the after-effect is exhaustion, prostration, and paralysis of the mental, moral, and physical powers. The mind becomes enervated, and unless through determined effort the habit is overcome, the activity of the brain is permanently lessened. ... The habit of drinking tea and coffee is a greater evil than is often suspected."* Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, pp. 34-35

Melatonin is a hormone made in the pineal gland in the very center of the brain. One of its many functions is to help put the neurons into their sleep cycle. During the day if you are outdoors expe-

riencing sunlight, this bright level of light will stimulate the formation of melatonin in the pineal gland that will be saved up and all released at night to help put your brain into a good, sound, sleep pattern.

If you must spend the day indoors or if through the natural processes of aging you have a decreased production of melatonin, you can supplement by taking 3mg of melatonin at bedtime on a daily basis to help restore more youthful sleep cycles.

## The Essential Oligodendrocyte

While we often speak in awe about the neurons of the brain, they would be a useless tangle of cytoplasm without the constant supporting efforts of the oligodendrocytes. Speed of thought and action is made possible only by this amazing, specialized cell whose action is just to support the neurons in their jobs. So in the church today some may be oligodendrocytes. They may not make the leading decisions or perform the heroic action, but both brain and muscle would be useless without their constant supporting efforts.

But regardless of which part of Christ's church you are called to be, you will need all your oligodendrocytes fully myelinating the pathways of your brain if you are to faithfully do your part in God's final work on this earth.



MILTON TESKE, MD





YOUNG &  
GODLY

## A Disaster of SPOKEN Proportions

[ PART 2 ]

by Justin Torossian

on SLANG  
and SWEARING

It may be hard to find a Christian who really believes there is nothing wrong with swear words. But what about slang? Here in part two, we'll focus our attention on slang and minced oaths, while seeking to discern God's will for us.

### Slang

Slang is a normal part of every language, and there's nothing wrong with much of it. For example, we call potatoes "spuds" or ask someone "What's up?" However, many don't realize that some common slang words carry sexual or other vulgar connotations. As Christians we need to think about the meaning of the words

we use, and say only what is in line with the purity of the gospel.

The book of Isaiah contains an interesting verse: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness."<sup>1</sup> I believe this passage applies in a secondary sense to slang words. Think about it. Back in the 80's, if something was great it was called "bad." Then in the 90's it progressed to "wicked," until finally in the 2000's words like "sick" and "nasty" were being used to describe good things!

### Taking God's Name in Vain and Minced Oaths

Believe it or not, some people only hear

God's name used in curse words. God feels so strongly about this that the third commandment says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."<sup>2</sup> While most Christians won't use God's name as a swear word, many take His name in vain euphemistically—without even realizing it. Check this out.

In the early 1600's, a religious reform movement called Puritanism was gaining ground in England. Because of this, in 1606 the English government passed a law against using the name of God or Jesus 'jokingly or profanely' in plays.<sup>3</sup> To avoid hefty fines, writers like Shakespeare began using "minced oaths" (euphemisms for curse words) in place of God's name. The use of minced oaths became so popular, that when a general ban on swearing was enacted in England, people were already taking God's name in vain through euphemisms.

Many "minced oaths" are still with us today. For example, "Gee" or "Jeez" was first used in 1598, and "My Gosh"<sup>4</sup> in 1757! Another one popularized by Shakespeare was "gadzooks." It takes the place of the blasphemous statement, "God's hooks," referring to the nails in Jesus hands on the cross. Words like "heck" and "darn" fall under this category as well. To illustrate how tolerant we've become to bad language, history clues us in. In 1941, a U.S. federal judge actually threatened a lawyer with contempt of court for using the word "darn"<sup>5</sup>!

**gosh** (gä SH)

a euphemism for "God" used to express surprise or give emphasis

**jeez** (jēz)

an abbreviation of "Jesus" used show surprise or annoyance

### "Have Mercy"

The words "Lord, have mercy" are found in Scripture in two places. First in Psalm 123:3 as the Psalmist's heartfelt cry to God, and second in Matthew 17:15 when a desperate father pled with Jesus to heal his demon-possessed son. Blind Bartimaeus also called at the top of his lungs, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Before a preacher brought to my attention the power of these words in Scripture, at times I flippantly used them in conversation with friends and fellow pastors. We had simply failed to recognize that this is one of the most heartfelt prayers in God's word, and should not be exclaimed unless used as just that — a genuine prayer.

After all, God's name is synonymous with His character. After giving Moses His law, God actually, **physically** came down in a cloud (to veil His brightness for Moses' protection) and proclaimed His name! He said, "The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands..."<sup>6</sup> Mercy is clearly identified with God's holy name.



**euphemism** ('yoʊfə,mizəm)  
an indirect word or expression  
substituted for one considered to be  
too blunt when referring to something  
unpleasant or embarrassing

## A Coal from the Altar

God's desire for us is simple: *"Let your speech always be with grace..."*<sup>7</sup> His word also says, *"He who loves purity of heart and has grace on his lips, the king will be his friend."*<sup>8</sup> This is true for the King of kings as well! When Isaiah saw a vision of the King of kings, so overwhelmed with His glory, he exclaimed, *"Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips ... for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"*<sup>9</sup>

Maybe you feel like Isaiah. Maybe you recognize that your speech is below His high ideal for you. If so, be encour-

aged! The story didn't stop there for Isaiah, and it doesn't have to stop here for you. "Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."<sup>10</sup>

Praise God that He is just as willing to remove impure slang and swearing from our speech as He was to purge Isaiah's lips. All He is waiting for is our permission. **Will you let Him cleanse your lips today?**

- 1 Isaiah 5:20 KJV
- 2 Exodus 20:7 KJV
- 3 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110810104316930>
- 4 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gosh>
- 5 Ashely Montagu, *The Anatomy of Swearing* (2001), p. 298.
- 6 Exodus 34:6 NKJV
- 7 Colossians 4:6 NKJV
- 8 Proverbs 22:11 KJV
- 9 Isaiah 6:5 ESV
- 10 Isaiah 6:6-7 ESV



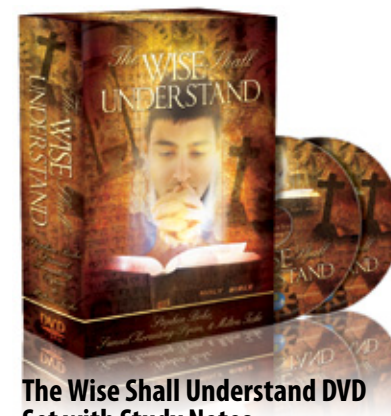
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# SPECIALS



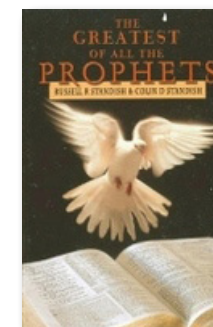
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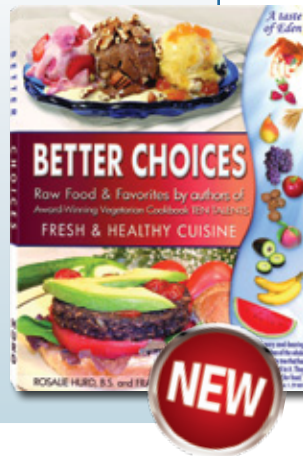
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# The Parable of the

# 10

# VIRGINS

## LESSON 16

Matthew 25:1-13  
The Great Controversy, pp. 613-634  
Christ's Object Lessons (COL), pp. 405-421

In our last lesson we studied how the parable of the ten virgins was exemplified in the Millerite Movement of 1843-1844. In our lesson today we will analyze the broader fulfillment of this parable with those who will live upon the earth immediately before the second coming of Jesus.

## The Setting and Timing of the Parable

1. Where was Jesus when he told the parable of the ten virgins? “Christ and his disciples were seated upon the Mount of \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 405)

2. What was transpiring as Jesus told the parable, which made it even more vivid? \_\_\_\_\_ (COL 405)

3. How do the marriage customs of the day help us comprehend the meaning of this parable? “The bridegroom goes forth to meet his bride and bring her to his \_\_\_\_\_. By torchlight the bridal party proceed from \_\_\_\_\_ father’s house to his own, where a \_\_\_\_\_ is provided for the invited \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 405)

4. To which period of history does the parable of the ten virgins particularly apply? “He [Jesus] told His disciples the story of the ten virgins, by their experience \_\_\_\_\_ the experience of the church that shall live \_\_\_\_\_ before His second coming.” (COL 406)

NOTE: The immediately preceding context of Matthew 25:1-13 indicates that Ellen White’s time frame is correct. In Matthew 24:36-51 Jesus had been teaching the disciples about His second coming.

## The Symbols of the Parable

1. What is represented by the lamps in the parable? “By the lamp is represented the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.” (COL 406; Psalm 119:105)

2. What is symbolized by the oil? “The oil is a symbol of the Holy \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 407; Zechariah 4:1-14)

3. Why are the ten young women called “virgins”? “They are called virgins because they profess a \_\_\_\_\_ faith.” (COL 406; II Corinthians 11:2)

4. What do the two classes of virgins represent? “The two classes of watchers represent two \_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_ to be waiting for their Lord.” (COL 406; Matthew 25:13)

5. How does the Holy Spirit accomplish His work on earth? “So from the \_\_\_\_\_ ones that stand in God’s presence His Spirit is \_\_\_\_\_ to the human instrumentalities who are conse-



*crated to His service.” (COL 408)*

NOTE: Ellen White is here commenting on Zachariah 4. In the light of this chapter, it is clear that the Holy Spirit performs His work on earth through the ministration of the angels. It is in this sense the Spirit is omnipresent.

**6.** Whom does the bridegroom represent? *“And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the \_\_\_\_\_ fast, while the \_\_\_\_\_ is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be \_\_\_\_\_ away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.” (Luke 5:34-35)*

NOTE: The context makes it very clear that the bridegroom in this passage is Christ. He was present with the disciples of the Pharisees and He would be taken away from them upon His ascension.

## Wise and Foolish Virgins

**1.** In what way were all ten virgins similar? *“In the parable, \_\_\_\_\_ ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. \_\_\_\_\_ had lamps and vessels of oil. For a time there was no \_\_\_\_\_ between them. ... \_\_\_\_\_ have a knowledge of the Scriptures. All have heard the message of Christ’s near approach, and confidently expect His appearing.” (COL 408)*

**2.** Though all ten virgins had lamps (the Bible), in what sense were the foolish virgins different? *“They are \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit. \_\_\_\_\_ the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail. The \_\_\_\_\_ of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot \_\_\_\_\_ the soul or sanctify the heart.” (COL 408)*

**3.** How did the foolish virgins regard the truth? *“They have a regard for the truth, they have \_\_\_\_\_ the truth, they are \_\_\_\_\_ to those who believe the truth; but they have not \_\_\_\_\_ themselves to the Holy Spirit’s working.” (COL 411)*

**4.** How were the foolish virgins similar to the “stony ground” hearers in the parable of the sower? *“This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They \_\_\_\_\_ the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 411)*

**5.** What texts of Scripture does Ellen White employ to prove the point she made in question number four? \_\_\_\_\_ (COL 411)

**6.** What type of service to God do the five foolish virgins render? *“Their service to God degenerates into a \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 411)*

## The Shutting of the Door and the Delay

**1.** Why couldn’t the wise virgins give of their oil to the foolish virgins? *“But character is not \_\_\_\_\_. No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another. No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit’s working.” (COL 412)*

**2.** What verse of Scripture does Ellen White employ to back up the assertion in question number one? \_\_\_\_\_ (COL 412)

**3.** Was there a time in the past when it became impossible to “purchase” the oil of the Holy Spirit? *“My Spirit shall not \_\_\_\_\_ strive with man, for that he is also flesh: Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” (Genesis 6:3)*

NOTE: The one hundred and twenty years of probation was the time during which the Holy Spirit could mold and transform the character. After this period the Holy Spirit would not be available to the pre-flood race.

**4.** What happened when Noah finished the task of preaching? *“And the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ him [Noah] in.” (Genesis 7:16)*

NOTE: The Holy Spirit was withdrawn and the door was shut. No longer could people respond to the wooing of the Holy Spirit’s voice. Yet it did not begin to rain at the precise moment the door was shut. Seven days transpired before destruction was unleashed. In the interim the faith of Noah and his family was severely tested.

**5.** What is represented by the closing of the door in the flood story and in the parable of the ten virgins? *“The great final \_\_\_\_\_ comes at the close of human \_\_\_\_\_, when it will be too late for the soul’s need to be supplied.” (COL 412)*



6. What great event will reveal whether a person has been truly transformed by the Word through the power of the Holy Spirit? “So now, a sudden and unlooked-for \_\_\_\_\_, something that brings the soul face to face with \_\_\_\_\_, will show whether there is any real faith in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.” (COL 412)

NOTE: There can be no doubt that Ellen White is referring to the universal death decree in Revelation 13:15 as the “unlooked-for calamity, something that brings the soul face to face with death.”

7. What sobering remark does Ellen White make about the final plight of the five foolish virgins? “All claim to be \_\_\_\_\_. All have a \_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_, a lamp, and all profess to be doing God’s \_\_\_\_\_. ... Five will be found surprised, dismayed, outside the banquet hall.” (COL 412)

8. How does Ellen White describe those who come to the time of trouble without the necessary character preparation? “Those professed Christians who come up to that last fearful conflict \_\_\_\_\_ will, in their despair, confess their \_\_\_\_\_ in words of burning anguish, while the wicked exult over their distress.” (GC 620)

9. Why won’t Jesus allow the “foolish virgins” to come into the wedding supper? “Its light would fall on \_\_\_\_\_ eyes, its melody upon \_\_\_\_\_ ears. Its love and joy could awake no chord of \_\_\_\_\_ in the world-benumbed heart. You are shut out from heaven by your own \_\_\_\_\_ for its companionship.” (COL 413)

10. What biblical indication do we have that those who hear the words of doom “I know you not,” actually claimed to be Christians? “Many will say to me in that day, \_\_\_\_\_, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy \_\_\_\_\_? And in thy \_\_\_\_\_ have cast out devils? And in thy \_\_\_\_\_ done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I \_\_\_\_\_ knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:22-23)

11. As in the time of Noah, will God’s people experience a delay in the coming of the bridegroom? How will they face this de-

lay? “The season of distress and \_\_\_\_\_ before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, \_\_\_\_\_, and hunger—a faith that will not \_\_\_\_\_ though severely tested. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time.” (GC 621)

12. How will we be able to stand in the midst of the excruciating delay? “Only those who have been \_\_\_\_\_ students of the Scriptures and who have received the \_\_\_\_\_ of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. ... To all the \_\_\_\_\_ time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed.” (GC 625)

## Lighting the Path to the Bridegroom’s House

1. What is represented by the virgins who light the way to the bridegroom’s house? “So the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ are to shed light into the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world.” (COL 414)

2. What is represented by the shining light of the lamps? “By \_\_\_\_\_ in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers.” (COL 414)

3. When Moses asked God to show him His glory, how did God respond? “And he said, I will make all my \_\_\_\_\_ pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be \_\_\_\_\_ to whom I will be gracious, and will shew \_\_\_\_\_ on whom I will shew mercy.” (Exodus 33:18-19)

4. What is represented by “midnight” in the parable? “The coming of the bridegroom was at midnight—the \_\_\_\_\_ hour. So the coming of Christ will take place in the darkest hour of this \_\_\_\_\_ history. ... The great \_\_\_\_\_ will develop into darkness deep as midnight, impenetrable as sackcloth of hair.” (COL 414)



5. What will this “midnight” darkness bring upon God’s people? “To God’s people it will be a night of trial, a night of \_\_\_\_\_, a night of \_\_\_\_\_ for the truth’s sake. But out of that night of darkness God’s light will shine.” (COL 414-415)

6. In what sense will the world be in its greatest darkness before Jesus comes? “It is the darkness of \_\_\_\_\_ of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His \_\_\_\_\_. It has been misunderstood and \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 415)

7. What is the last message which will be imparted to the world by God’s people? “The last rays of merciful light, the last measure of \_\_\_\_\_ to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 415)

8. What symbol did Jesus employ to illustrate His mission and that of His followers? “I am the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world. . . . Ye are the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world.” (John 9:5; Matthew 5:16, 16)

9. In practical terms, what does it mean to be the light of the world? “Practical work will have far more effect than mere \_\_\_\_\_. We are to give \_\_\_\_\_ to the hungry, \_\_\_\_\_ to the naked, and \_\_\_\_\_ to the homeless.” (COL 417)

10. How many people must be reached with the light of God’s glory? “From no \_\_\_\_\_, rank, or \_\_\_\_\_ of people is the light shining from heaven’s throne to be excluded.” (COL 418)

11. How can we become light bearers for God? “But no man can \_\_\_\_\_ that which he himself has not \_\_\_\_\_. In the work of God, humanity can \_\_\_\_\_ nothing. No man can by his own \_\_\_\_\_ make himself a light bearer for God.” (COL 418)

12. What is heaven’s most precious gift and why do we not receive it? “In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained \_\_\_\_\_ of heaven’s \_\_\_\_\_. It is not because of any \_\_\_\_\_ on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not

\_\_\_\_\_ earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit.” (COL 419)

13. How will we reveal that the Spirit is truly present in our lives? “The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit will be shown by the \_\_\_\_\_ of heavenly love.” (COL 419)

14. What will characterize the true religion of Christ? “The religion of Christ means more than the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin; it means \_\_\_\_\_ away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit. . . . It means a heart emptied of \_\_\_\_\_, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ.” (COL 420)

15. What must God’s people not strive to do? “Christ does not bid His followers \_\_\_\_\_ to shine. He says, \_\_\_\_\_ your light shine. If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the \_\_\_\_\_, and the Lord’s glory will be revealed.” (COL 420)

## Candidates for Heaven

1. What will happen when we reflect God’s glorious character? “And in currents of praise and thanksgiving from the many \_\_\_\_\_ thus won to God, glory will flow \_\_\_\_\_ to the great Giver.” (COL 420)

NOTE: The moon not only reflects the glory of the sun to earth but in the process, it glorifies the sun from which it received its light. The same is true of us. When the character of Jesus shines upon us, we reflect His glory and bring honor and glory to His name (see Matthew 5:16).

2. What will happen when we are in constant communion with God’s glory? “They are prepared for \_\_\_\_\_; for they have heaven in their \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 421)

3. What is Jesus waiting for in His people? “Christ is \_\_\_\_\_ with longing desire for the manifestation of \_\_\_\_\_ in His church. When the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ shall be \_\_\_\_\_ reproduced in His people, then He will come to \_\_\_\_\_ them as His own.” (COL 69)





# RETURNING TO GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN

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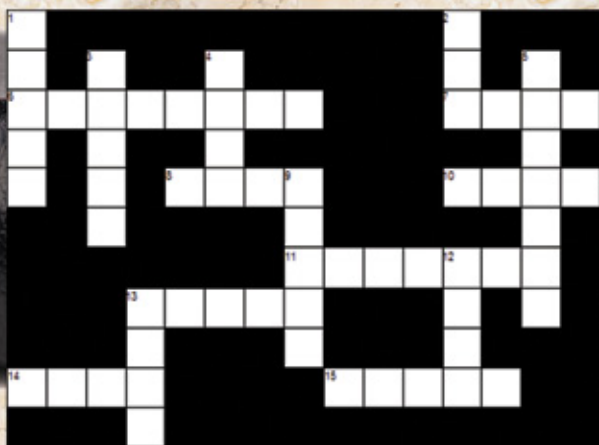
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## ACROSS

6. What is the English meaning of the Greek word "gospel"?
7. Who was the brother of Jacob?
8. One of the miracles performed by Jesus. He turned water into \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Which bible book tells us: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved"?
11. What was the name of the Sea where Jesus calmed a storm?
13. Which tribe of Israel did Jesus belong to?
14. This Kings wife was called Jezebel
15. What language was the New Testament written in?

## DOWN

1. What was the first thing that God created?
2. She was the first Woman
3. Who wrote the Book of Deuteronomy?
4. Which tribe did Moses belong to?
5. Which Gospel mentions the Star of Bethlehem?
9. How many people were on Noah's Ark?
12. Which Gospel tells the Parable of the Prodigal Son?
13. Which book says, "I am the Good Shepherd"?



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