

FEB 2000

EldersDigest

A Quarterly Resource for Local Church Elders Vol. 4 No. 4



**"You need to have the
same love for people that
Jesus Christ had."**

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Elder's Digest

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Subscription rates and address changes:
US\$9.95 for one year (four issues); US\$3.00 single issue. Please send all subscriptions and address changes to Elder's Digest, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6516.

To Writers: Articles about the work of the local elder are welcome and may be submitted to Elder's Digest, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6516. A stamped, self-addressed envelope should accompany unsolicited manuscripts.

Elder's Digest is published quarterly by the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association © 1999, which retains full editorial control. It is printed by the Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1350 N. Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687-3193. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Editor's Note: The articles in this publication have been revised slightly or updated to conform to the intended audience and nature of Elder's Digest.

Issue 18
Vol. 4 Number 4



Joel Sarli

Outlet For Spiritual Power

Every line of activity in the church ought to be an outlet for spiritual power. There is no place for secular leadership in the local congregation.

The work of the elder is to prepare people for the coming of the Lord. That is a spiritual work, and it can be done only with spiritual power.

No one is likely to be appointed to eldership without having had a strong spiritual experience with Jesus Christ.

We may fall into the success trap of which God warned us through the prophetic ministry of Ellen White: "As activity increases, and men become successful in doing any work for God, there is danger of trusting to human plans and methods. There is a tendency to pray less, and to have less faith. Like the disciples, we are in danger of losing sight of our dependence on God, and seeking to make a savior of our activities. We need to look constantly to Jesus, realizing that it is His power which does the work. While we are to labor earnestly for the salvation of the lost, we must also take time for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the Word of God. Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been sufficient for good." *Desire of the Ages*, p. 362.

In the Seventh-day Adventist *Minister's Handbook* are presented four reasons why spirituality is essential to any officer in the local congregation.

First, spirituality is essential to leadership.

Without the spiritual dimension, leadership will degenerate to implementation of psychological techniques, organizational methods, and motivational cheerleadings.

Second, spirituality is essential to soul-winning success.

Knowing Jesus and holding Him up before the people is the first secret to soul-winning activity.

Third, spirituality is essential to the preparation and delivering of the sermon.

Fourth, spirituality is essential to the elder's courage and boldness in doing his/her responsibility.

It is always a great mistake to look at any responsibility in the church as being merely an office or a title granted to a person.

We shouldn't appoint an elder to be responsible for the spirituality of the congregation. Every officer in the church ought to be a source of spirituality and an outlet of spiritual power.

It is good to remember that all programs and all sectors in the local congregation are working together and contributing to the great work of preparing men and women for the coming of the Lord and the setting up of His kingdom.

Here are two barriers to an elder's spiritual growth:

1. Lack of confidence in God and His church.

Some members of our church are losing confidence in the Adventist Church as the prophetic movement of God and the remnant people in the last days.

If you lose confidence in God and in His church, your spirituality will decrease and your leadership will not be effective in building the spirituality of your people.

2. Lack of time and planning.

Today we never have enough time for the number of things we have to do every day, but finding time is basically an issue of priorities. If you feel private devotions are important, you'll find time.

If you don't, you won't. Martin Luther once wrote to his friend, "Today I have so many things to do, that instead of spending just one hour in prayer I will need to spend two hours." Luther knew that time in prayer would speed up his ability to do things.

If you promise to spend your spare time with God, the devil will see that you don't have any.

Daniel's secret of spiritual power was his prayer life. And one secret of his prayer life was his specific plan to pray three times a day (see Daniel 6:10). Even a royal edict could not interfere. Dare to be like Daniel and your ministry as an elder will increase greatly for the glory and honor of the name of the Lord.

How to Lead Your Church to Grow

BARRY CAMPBELL

In *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth*, Gene Mims said there are five things every church should do. These functions are evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship. When these five things are done in a healthy and balanced manner, church growth will be the natural result.

Church growth is natural. It is natural for living things to grow to maturity. When they don't grow, something is wrong. It is natural for the church to grow. If your church isn't growing, something is wrong. Church growth is achieved by doing natural things in a healthy, balanced manner.

To lead your church to grow, do something intentional about each of these five functions.

Evangelism

Don't neglect the basics. In *Effective Evangelistic Churches*, Tom Rainer told about his research into what

Integrate your congregation in the process of evangelism through the Sabbath School units

more than five hundred evangelistic churches are doing to fulfill the Great Commission. It surprised some to learn that most evangelistic churches are doing some pretty basic, even traditional things. They do weekly outreach.

They have revivals. They have strong Sabbath Schools.

Be intentional. Plan an outreach project each quarter. Include witness training, prospect discovery, and projects designed to encourage your people to participate in outreach.

Lead your church to participate in an evangelism process. Integrate your congregation in the process of doing evangelism through the Sabbath School units. Every Sabbath School class may be organized as an evangelism group and this is a way to organize your church into

outreach teams. Find a ministry that matches your church and get involved.

Be a personal soul-winner. If you, personally, are faithful to share your faith with others, your church will baptize many each year.

Discipleship

Make Sabbath School a priority. Start a new Bible study group. Enlist your teachers and provide training

for them. Fulfill the Great Commission through your Sabbath School.

Encourage your people to involve themselves personally in discipling others.

Encourage your people to involve themselves personally in discipling others. Any time one believer engages another the result is that they both are more like Christ; discipleship is happening. Whether two neighbors share a glass of juice as they study the Bible or a group meets for Bible

study in an apartment complex, encourage your people to disciple others.

Fellowship

Fellowship is more than punch and cookies. When

we bear one another's burdens, fellowship is strong. When we rejoice in the common blessings we share as Christians, that is fellowship.

Encourage Sabbath School classes to be intentional about fellowship.

Encourage Sabbath School classes to be intentional about fellowship. One strong

Sabbath School class gathers to share a meal once a month. This fellowship time around a meal opens the door for class members to bear one another's burdens.

Make much of the fellowship of the Lord's Supper. This is a time of fellowship and worship. The Lord's Supper shows us and the world all that we have in common in the body and blood of Jesus.

Ministry

No matter how many people you win, your church will not grow without effective ministry. Organize your Sabbath School to minister. The Sabbath School class I attend has 15 members. Because of the relatively small group, we are able to keep up with ministry needs. Every Sabbath School class should be organized to meet needs in Jesus' name.

Your church will not grow without effective ministry. Involve your deacons in ministry. The Deacon Family Ministry Plan is used effectively by many congregations.

Worship

Worship can be defined as an encounter with God. While one may encounter God in many places, that encounter should always take place when the church is gathered on Sabbath morning. Strive for excellence. You would not dare enter the pulpit without praying and preparing extensively for the sermon you will deliver. The same attention should be given the rest of the worship experience. Pray, prepare, and make the Sabbath day the most warm, authentic worship experience possible.

An encounter with God should take place when we gather together on Sabbath morning.

Barry Campbell writes from Nashville, Tennessee.

Elders Digest Mission Statement

The *Elder's Digest* is an international journal for local church elders published quarterly by the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

As the church experiences rapid growth around the world, increasingly heavy burdens of leadership rest upon local elders. This is particularly true in multi-church districts. The objective of the *Elder's Digest* is to help train and support local church elders as they attempt to fulfill the gospel commission by nurturing their members and reaching out to their communities. It will do this by:

1. Addressing the elder's spiritual, mental, physical, and social needs.
2. Reviewing the great Bible themes of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, showing how each one centers in the Lord Jesus.
3. Providing resources which will assist in giving strong administrative leadership to their congregations.
4. Giving assistance which will strengthen their preaching skills.
5. Providing instruction which will assist in the nurture of believers and new interests.
6. Encouraging leadership and participation in evangelism on the part of elders.
7. Providing materials which will assist elders in supporting the pastors and the congregations they serve.
8. Maintaining a simple writing style in the journal.
9. Including articles from the Spirit of Prophecy relating to the areas listed above.

The *Elder's Digest* is designed to meet the needs of the elders and other leaders in the local congregation.

The *Elder's Digest* joins *Ministry* as a prophetic voice calling the church to be faithful to the biblical principles that constitute Adventist truth, ideals, and values. It encourages elders continually to grow stronger in Christ that they may model faith as they encourage spiritual development in the flocks they serve as undershepherds.

Position Does Not Give Holiness

ORLEY M. BERG

"Position does not give holiness of character" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 30). How frequently we as leaders need to be reminded of this.

Consider the experience of Solomon. His true humility and sense of divine need was markedly demonstrated when at Gibeon he prayed, "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." He realized that without divine aid he was as helpless as a little child to fulfill the responsibilities resting on him (*Ibid.*).

Unfortunately, through the future years of prosperity and the gradual spiritual neglect of his own soul, he lost his way. "From the wisest and most merciful of rulers, he degenerated into a tyrant. Once the compassionate, God-fearing guardian of the people, he became oppressive and despotic" (*Ibid.*, pp. 55, 56). "From being one of the greatest kings that ever wielded a scepter, Solomon became a profligate, the tool and slave of others" (*Ibid.*, p. 58).

The Peril of Success

Solomon couldn't stand success. Before he was aware of it he had wandered far away from God. "Almost imperceptibly he began to trust less and less in divine guidance and blessing, and to put confidence in his own strength" (*Ibid.*, p. 55).

The once wise king had declared, "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in." But pride and self-glory found their way into his heart until, no

longer feeling his need, he accepted the praise of men and took to himself the honor of Heaven's blessing.

We are told: "Man cannot show greater weakness than by allowing men to ascribe to him the honor for gifts that are Heaven-bestowed" (*Ibid.*, p. 68).

Moses' Sin

This was the great sin of Moses. Because of it he was denied entrance into the Promised Land. When chided by the people, the patience of this meekest of men finally gave way and he angrily declared, "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" In such a declaration the great leader gave the impression that it was within his power to supply the water.

Through the journeyings of the Israelites Moses had repeatedly warned the children of Israel that their murmurings were not directed against him, but against God.

Now "his hasty words . . . were a virtual admission of their charge, and would thus confirm them in their unbelief and justify their murmurings" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 419). It was to remove this impression forever from their minds that Moses was forbidden to enter the Promised Land.

What a lesson for all who labor for the Lord! What a warning against the temptation to assume the glory that belongs only to God! We are told: "If the children of God, especially those who stand in positions of responsibility, can be led to take to themselves the glory that is due to God, Satan exults. He has gained a victory" (*Ibid.*, p. 421).

How many times we permit Satan to gain such a victory, and how the cause of God inevitably suffers for it. "It is to place us on our guard against his devices that God has given in His word so many lessons teaching the danger of self-exaltation" (*Ibid.*).

By the experience of Moses God warns us against the temptation to assume the glory that is due only to Him.

Man cannot show greater weakness than by allowing men to ascribe to him the honor for gifts that are Heaven-bestowed.

What Might Have Been

It was during the days of the united empire that God's plans for His chosen people came nearest to realization. We can hardly imagine the further blessings that would have come to Israel had Solomon remained humble and dependent upon God. But through personal ambition and prosperity he fell so low that "his case seemed well-nigh hopeless" (*Prophets and Kings*, p.75).

The warning is for us. "It is not the empty cup that we have difficulty in carrying; it is the cup full to the brim that must be carefully balanced. Affliction and adversity may cause sorrow, but it is prosperity that is most dangerous to spiritual life. Unless the human subject is in constant submission to the will of God, unless he is sanctified by the truth, prosperity will surely arouse the natural inclination to presumption.

Affliction and adversity may cause sorrow, but it is prosperity that is most dangerous to spiritual life

"In the valley of humiliation, where men depend on God to teach them and to guide their every step, there is comparative safety. But the men who stand, as it were, on a lofty pinnacle, and who, because of their position, are supposed to possess great wisdom—these are in gravest peril. *Unless such men make God their dependence, they will surely fall*" (*Ibid.*, pp. 59, 60). (Italics supplied.)

King David's Problem

The important lesson is taught also in the experience of David. Through repeated victories over their enemies the kingdom of Israel came finally to reach the extent indicated in the promise to Abraham. It was then that the king became self-confident and was lured into his great sin. "In the time of his greatest outward triumph David was in the greatest peril, and met his most humiliating defeat" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 716).

Through self-confidence and self-exaltation the good king gradually lost his sense of the exceeding

sinfulness of sin and came to trust in his own wisdom and might. Then came his fall.

Fortunately, he accepted rebuke and was led to thorough repentance. God intended the history of David's fall to serve as a warning that even those whom He has greatly blessed and favored are not to feel secure and neglect watchfulness and prayer" (*Ibid.*, p. 724).

Let the warnings of Bible history teach us. "If one comes to lose sight of his entire dependence on God, and to trust to his own strength, he is sure to fall. . . . It is impossible for us in our own strength to maintain the conflict; and whatever diverts the mind from God, whatever leads to self-exaltation or to self-dependence, is surely preparing the way for our over-throw." (*Ibid.*, p. 717).

Orley M. Berg lives in North Fork, California. He was Associate Secretary of the Ministerial Association at the General Conference when he wrote this article.

God intended the history of David's fall to serve as a warning that even those whom He has greatly blessed and favored are not to feel secure and neglect watchfulness and

Those to whom you minister may not always perfectly understand what you say, but they will soon know whether you love them or not.

The secret of many a successful Christian elder is not that he is skilled, knowledged, and has endowments which are superior to others, but that those to whom he ministers know that he really cares about them, not in some abstract way, or from sense of duty, but wanting with all his heart the best that God wants for them.

D. L. Moody

The Elder and the Sabbath School

MILTON T. REIBER

If the church were to depend entirely upon the efforts of the elders and the pastor to win souls, the task at times would seem almost hopeless. However, this is not the case in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The church is so organized that it gives the elders many helpers. Every department of the church exists for the purpose of winning souls. Each adds its contribution to the total church program and the building up of God's kingdom upon the earth.

The Sabbath School is especially conducive to winning souls. The elders should recognize this and capitalize on the various facets of the Sabbath school to enlarge the church membership. It has often been said that the Sabbath school is the church at study. But it is more than this. It can be, and many times is, a baptismal class and an introduction to a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is common knowledge that in the fast-growing divisions in the world the Sabbath School membership exceeds that of the church. In one place the baptized church membership was fifteen, but the Sabbath school membership was two hundred. What a glorious opportunity existed there for the winning of souls to Jesus!

It goes without saying that the elders should attend the Sabbath school. Because most of our churches are not large, the elders can greet each member as he arrives. This gives the members an opportunity to introduce to the elders visitors they may bring with them. Knowing who is present will help to guide the elder in his sermon, and greeting the visitors as they arrive will give the elder an opportunity to invite them to be in his Sabbath School class. The fact that the elder is there to welcome them shows the members that he is interested in the Sabbath School.

The elder's work with the Sabbath School should begin in the Sabbath School planning committee. There he can guide the affairs of the school without dictating. He should urge the officers to see that the school operates smoothly, that no embarrassing incidents take place that would give an

unfavorable impression to visitors. In the Sabbath School planning committee meetings the elder can guide in the selection of teachers who will put their best into their teaching. They should be cautioned to use tact, never arguing with the members or visitors. The teachers should be encouraged to present

additional facts and thoughts related to the lesson, because most of the members have studied the lesson at least once. The teachers can be reminded that they have the "first chance" with the class members and visitors.

One of the elders will want to have a Sabbath School evangelistic class. Visitors should be urged to attend this class, and the Sabbath School members should be encouraged to introduce any visitors to the pastor or elder if he has not already met them. Some of the less-informed members of the church can be put into this class so their faith can be strengthened, and they will thus form a nucleus for the class. If non-Adventist visitors attend this class regularly, they can be led step by step into the message.

One of the most fruitful phases of the Sabbath school is the branch Sabbath School. This can be conducted in a variety of places. If members live some distance from the church and cannot attend regularly, they should be encouraged to have a branch Sabbath School in their homes, or some other suitable place. If this is held in the afternoon, the elders and other members of the church can assist. Sometimes after a series of Bible studies there are still some in the community who are interested but who have not been baptized. This provides an excellent opportunity for a branch Sabbath School. The elder can ask a layman to carry on the school when he cannot attend. This simple method usually gives good results, and many souls can be baptized from this branch Sabbath School.

Another avenue of soul-winning in the Sabbath School is the Vacation Bible School. To most people their children are their dearest possessions. If an interest is taken in the children, it will be easier to reach the parents. Sabbath School members and church school pupils have been secured also as a result of Vacation Bible School. Fortunate is the evangelist who can conduct an evangelistic campaign in the same location immediately following a Vacation Bible School. The children can serve as advertisers for the meetings.

There have been times when the General Conference asked all departments to be especially evangelistic, but the Sabbath School should always be geared to use every means for the

winning of souls. The elder and pastor can use this department to distinct advantage, not by dictating to the Sabbath School officers, but by guiding them. They should let the officers know that they are vitally interested in the officers' work and will support them in every way.

Milton T. Reiber was a pastor in the Pennsylvania Conference when he wrote this article.

How to Deal With Different Ministries in the Local Congregation

Elders have the blessed privilege of creating an atmosphere where young people and others can hear and respond to God's call upon their lives. It is vitally important that pastors create that atmosphere for all people as God calls them into service for Him. It is also vital that pastors and elders create that atmosphere where people can respond to God's call to ministry. While God calls every believer to serve Him, God calls some to be pastors, evangelists, ministers, and teachers of all kinds. This special calling into vocational or bivocational ministry is what Neil Knierim called "the cornerstone for effective ministry."

Here are some ideas to help you intentionally call out the called in your congregation.

Preach the Word of God Boldly

In your preaching, emphasize how God uses men and women to accomplish His purpose on earth. Tell stories of those biblical heroes of the faith. Preach a message designed especially to challenge young people and others to hear the voice of God and offer themselves at His altar.

Expose Young People and Others to Those Who Have Made a Difference

Bring to your pulpit men and women who have been used of God in a powerful way in His kingdom. Missionaries, pastors, evangelists, and other ministers can be powerful role models for those with whom God may be dealing. Try to make it possible for those who have acknowledged God's call or may be dealing with

Ministerial Association Web Site

Check out our resources for pastors, elders, laypeople, and others who want to take a more active role in their church.

www.ministerialassociation.com

that issue to spend time with the hero. Take these same groups to conventions and meetings where they will hear and meet people who are used powerfully of God.

Pray for a Spirit of Revival

The revival meeting held once or twice a year is important. God may choose these times to make His call clear to someone in your church. But a spirit of revival should be present the rest of the year. Provide time for testimonies throughout the year. When someone is called to preach, let him exercise his gift in your pulpit.

Depend Completely on the Holy Spirit

Ask God to fill you and your people with His Spirit to create a sense of openness as the Lord speaks to individuals about His will for their lives.

Provide Witnessing and Soul-winning Opportunities

Provide witness training and soul-winning opportunities to all the congregation. Personally invite those who have been or may be called to the ministry. Also provide opportunities for mission work to these same people. Mission trips are precious times when young people and others can exercise their gifts.

Lift up the example of those who have gone out from your church to serve the Lord. Pray for them. Recognize them when they return home for a visit. Celebrate the victories God brings to their ministries.

Calling out the called is a great joy for any pastor. Whether you are privileged to minister one who is called or a hundred, lift up and celebrate God's calling and sending out people to serve Him vocationally or bivocationally.

Adapted from Richard P. Oldham, "Building a Climate for Calling Out the Called." Church Administration, April 1998, pp. 3-7.

Who Is Sufficient for These Things?

C. G. Tuland

In order to evaluate the profile of a Christian elder we should not analyze the position or the office, but we should try to describe the personalities with certain characteristics. The requirements are so comprehensive that the apostle exclaimed, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. 2:16). In his first epistle to Timothy the apostle enumerates the qualifications of a bishop or, as we call him, an elder (1 Tim. 3:1-7). In Phillips' translation the following words are used to describe him: self-control, discretion, disciplined life, hospitable, gift of teaching, gentleness. There are many additional qualities which, when summarized, describe the sum total of a Christian elder's personality, natural abilities, intellectual capabilities, and spirituality.

It seems to be quite natural that when we elect some people as elders we choose those who have a certain social standing and are gifted with some degree of eloquence, for they are not only public representatives of the church but they also should be able to express themselves in a clear and convincing manner when standing in the pulpit.

Nevertheless, the question is whether these are the most important criteria on which we should make our choice.

The Personality

Sometimes people chosen as elders because of their eloquence lacked the more important qualities of eldership. Moses was a poor speaker while Aaron was an eloquent man (Ex. 4:10). Yet the Biblical record indicates that Aaron did not possess the wisdom, stamina, and the moral strength required for this position. Aaron gave in to the demands of the people and made the golden calf for them. And when he was accused of having led the people astray, he laid the blame upon the people he should have guided in

the ways of God (Ex. 32:21, ff.). It was Moses, the man without oratorical ability, who not only had the courage to face the idolatrous masses but who also possessed the spirit of selflessness and offered his life for the wayward flock (Ex. 32:32). Strength paired with humility, resistance against evil, complete devotion to the saving of the erring—these were the characteristics of the greatest of all leaders of Israel.

Such qualities are still needed today because the elders of the church have to preserve the unadulterated gospel. They come up against many influences and sometimes insidious teachings.

There are the so-called *independent ministries* that have to be dealt with in order to protect the church against false teachings and divisions. Such a defense has to be made intelligently, in a well-informed manner, justly, and in a Christian spirit. There are also some within the church who try to bring "new light" that is neither sound nor Biblical.

The elders have to deal with such persons firmly, factually, and tactfully. Such matters have to be clarified in a brotherly and humble spirit, lest some turn away from the church, not because of the new teaching but on account of an unchristian attitude.

A true elder strives for unity. When people of different opinions and strong conviction meet in church board meetings, the qualities of an elder become apparent through the wisdom with which he deals with problems. To be able to distinguish between principle and opinion, the important and the trivial, to be willing to give up an opinion but stand firm on principle—that is true leadership. To do this without giving offense and to be willing to suffer for that which is right are also characteristic of an elder. True elders are true Christians in the first place; men, as Ellen G. White says, "who will stand for the right though the heavens fall" (*Education*, p. 57). God calls for men and women of stability, of firm

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purpose, who can be relied upon in seasons of danger and trial, who are as firmly rooted and grounded in the truth as the eternal hills, who cannot be swayed to the right or to the left, but who move straight onward and are always found on the right side" (*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 75).

The Natural Abilities

What are the natural administrative abilities of an elder? Determination to impose his will upon people and congregations? Such an attitude is wrong, and we do well to heed the admonition of the apostle Peter when he says that elders should not be domineering (1 Peter 5:1-3).

The elder's capacity is best expressed in his relationship to his fellow officers and his congregation. No man should ever expect uniformity of opinion among all in all matters. Diversity of opinion can and should be made a cause of fruitfulness and advancement of the church. But it should never cause division. The ability to work together with men who know their own minds and have plans or methods shows the maturity of a man.

Again, any person is a true elder if he succeeds in gaining the cooperation of the congregation in accepting and carrying into effect the plans of the church. Our denomination is continually involved in one campaign or another. Thus a true elder must know how and to what extent he can urge his flock. An episode from Jacob's life will illustrate this point. When he had made peace with his brother Esau, he declined to rush his caravan, saying, "My lord knows that the children are frail, and the flocks and herds giving suck are a care to me; and if they are overdriven for one day, all the flocks will die" (Gen. 33:13, RSV). The care for the flock, the spiritual welfare of the church, is still the greatest responsibility of both the minister and elders.

It is easy to lose our sense of values in our race for goals. We can easily lose balance in religion when we judge the church by achievement instead of spirituality—the elder or ministers by their success in Ingathering, by their performance instead of by their motivation, by their activity instead of by their spirit.

Let the term "officer" not be misunderstood, for though a man is an elder or officer, he is not a commander but a man endowed with the gift and the spirit

of a shepherd. To be a successful elder requires more of deep human understanding, patience, the capacity to bear and to endure the frailties of humanity than it requires pure intellect or administrative know-how.

The Intellectual Capabilities

We are living in an age when knowledge has tremendously increased. Unfortunately, we as a people do not always measure up to our own preaching. Too often we stand before the congregation with old "warmed-up" sermons of yesteryear, or a collection of newspaper quotations, or we use the pulpit for reading exercises. Well should we remember that there is no substitute for preaching the Word of God, and to do so effectively, we must *study* the Bible. We must not only read it, we must dig deep, search, and increase our knowledge of it. There is more to it than archeological confirmation or speculation on the meaning of some complicated

passage. The essence of preaching has most aptly been expressed by the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16 (Phillips*). "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the faith and correcting error, for re-setting the direction of a man's life and training him in good living."

And again, in order to achieve this purpose, Paul states that: "The scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God, and fit him fully for all branches of his work" (verse 17, Phillips*).

Preaching the Word is serious business. It will not do to pick up the Bible on Sabbath morning, place it on the pulpit, and then preach on a text found where the Bible happens to fall open.

We do not feed the sheep; we do not feed the lambs. The church of God is starved and thus unable to grow into a greater Christian experience. There is no other way to give to the church the Bread of Life than to do it spiritually, intelligently, and with sound knowledge. This is the responsibility of any elder who has been called to stand in the pulpit.

The Spirituality

There is not a single soul in this world who does not

There is no substitute for preaching the Word of God, and to do so effectively, we must study the Bible

have some kind of problem. Many church members are unable to cope with their problems. There are social problems, there is sin, there are young people who need guidance, and there are older ones who seem to belong to the forgotten ones. Some have become bitter, some self-righteous, some callous. The church elder has to meet all of these; in fact, he has to look out for them, for his work is not only in the pulpit.

Many years ago some of our elders "governed" through church "discipline." It may be that some use this method even today. But let us look to our Lord for guidance. Jesus loved the rich young ruler who turned away from Him. He would keep alive the smoldering wick, the waning faith, in the heart of the ruler of the synagogue (Mark 5:36).

Halfhearted Nicodemus, doubting Thomas, despairing Peter—all found in Jesus the One they could trust, to whom they could turn, knowing that He would understand. *That* is the kind of spirit people still desire to find in their elders.

As we search our hearts today let us confess our shortcomings as elders of the church, and in humility and with renewed consecration let us make a new beginning in

order to fulfill this task. The primitive church used a chant in the Greek language, "Kyrie eleison," meaning "Lord, have mercy upon us." Let that be our prayer, and let us believe that He will hear us and make our ministry fruitful for the salvation of His church, for the time to save His people has come.

Note:

*From *The New Testament in Modern English* by J. B. Phillips. Copyright 1958. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company.

C. G. Tuland was a pastor in the Illinois Conference when he wrote this article.

There is no other way to give to the church the Bread of Life than to do it spiritually, intelligently, and with sound knowledge. This is the responsibility of the elder who has been called to stand in the pulpit.

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Using Group Dynamics to Increase Baptisms

K. S. WIGGINS

Numerous experiments have shown that group discussions lead to better results than good lectures.

Dr. Kert Lewin reports that when a nutrition expert told a group of mothers that they should give their babies orange juice, 55 per cent were following his advice a month later. But when groups each consisting of six mothers talked and decided to give their babies orange juice, 100 per cent of them did.

After carefully studying group dynamics methods, I decided to adopt a discussion approach in getting decisions for baptism. I have been able to baptize up to 96 percent of those taking part in the group discussions and making a decision in the group.

During my crusades I arrange to have my best interests come together on a Sabbath morning after the major doctrines have been presented. I try to have something different happen every fifteen minutes, and the aim is to create an informal atmosphere that will encourage discussion and help the interests feel free to express themselves.

There is a series of short talks designed to create a decision consciousness. For example, someone gives a talk entitled "The Importance of Following Jesus Immediately," and someone else discusses "The Importance of Following Jesus When Young." The last one is appropriate because most of my converts have been under 30 years of age. The people are divided into groups of six or seven, and each group chooses its own chairman. The chairman directs the discussion in his group, collects questions, and asks them publicly on behalf of the group.

The questions are answered on the spot, provided they do not call for information on subjects not yet discussed from the pulpit during the crusade. This question-and-answer period is important for three reasons: (1) Confidence in the evangelist and the message is increased when the people see him answering questions from the Bible without prior preparation. (2) It provides an opportunity to answer objections and remove reservations before calling for a decision. (3) The nature of the questions reveals whether or not

the people are ready to make decisions. Experience has taught me that when many questions are asked about the law, the Sabbath, or the state of the dead, the people are not ready for a decision. I then spend some time clearing up the misunderstandings concerning those doctrines. However, if the questions are merely on Christian standards and health reform, I know the people are ready to make a decision to unite with the remnant church.

At this point I say: "I can see that you believe that what you've been studying is the truth. The only thing an honest person can do with truth is to accept it and act on it. I believe that is what all of you will do; but I cannot tell the church this until you give me permission. Therefore, I am going to ask you to discuss this among yourselves for three minutes and then tell your chairman to report to me what you have decided to do about the truth you have learned."

After three minutes the chairmen of the groups report the decisions, and there is usually a 100 percent decision for the truth and baptism. My experience has been that these decisions are more trustworthy than the ones made during an altar call. In short, this method results in more decisions and better decisions.

K. S. Wiggins graduated from West Indies College in Jamaica and received his M.A. degree from the London College of Applied Sciences.

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If Jesus Came to Your House

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two—
 If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do,
 Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honored Guest,
 And all the food you'd serve to Him would be the very best,
 And you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there—
 That serving Him in your own home is joy beyond compare.

But—when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door
 With arms outstretched in welcome to your heavenly Visitor?
 Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in?
 Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been?
 Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard?
 And wish you hadn't uttered that last, loud, hasty word?

Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
 Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?
 And I wonder—if the Saviour spent a day or two with you,
 Would you go right on doing the things you always do?
 Would you go right on saying the things you always say?
 Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?

Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace?
 And would you find it hard each meal to say a table grace?
 Would you sing the songs you always sing, and read the books you read,
 And let Him know the things on which your mind and spirit feed?
 Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you'd planned to go?
 Or would you, maybe, change your plans for just a day or so?

Would you be glad to have Him meet your very closest friends?
 Or would you hope they'd stay away until His visit ends?
 Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on?
 Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?
 It might be interesting to know the things that you would do
 If Jesus Christ in person came to spend some time with you.

“The grace of God . . . hath appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11).

—Author Unknown

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Distinctives of Discipleship

Text John 8:31

A. INTRODUCTION

1. *What does it really mean to follow Jesus?*
 - a. Somehow in the latter part of the twentieth century people have lost sight of what it means to follow Jesus.
 - b. Discipleship is linked to external observance of religion rather than a relational experience with Jesus Christ.
2. During the life and ministry of Jesus Christ many people sought to follow the Lord. "As he spake these words, many believed on him." John 8:30.

B. A TRUE DISCIPLE HAS CONTINUANCE.

John 8:31-33.

1. *Jesus realized that some people made an impulsive decision to follow Him.*
 - c. He knew that many would decide not to follow Him. "After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him." John 6:66, RSV.
2. *Jesus pointed out that perseverance would be the sign of a true disciple.*
 - a. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." John 8:31.
 - b. Discipleship is not the excitement of one moment. It is a patient continuance in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.
 - c. *Illustration.* Ignace Jan Paderewski started playing the piano at the age of three. He developed slowly, but he was determined to become a master of the piano. He practiced six hours almost every day of his life. By discipline and determination he reached his goal.
3. *To a crowd of potential followers Jesus gave a sure sign of a disciple.*

- a. A disciple is one who follows Jesus continuously.
- b. The genuine evidence is in the sustained effort.

C. A TRUE DISCIPLE HAS FREEDOM.

John 8:34-38.

1. *Jesus taught of a freedom which led to bondage.*
 - a. "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." John 8:34.
 - b. To a group of potential disciples Jesus taught how sin leads to bondage.
2. *Jesus spoke of a bondage which leads to freedom.*

- a. A true disciple is one who has renounced his way to the way of Christ.
- b. This kind of bondage to the Lord leads to authentic freedom. Jesus said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

John 8:36.

D. A TRUE DISCIPLE HAS CHRISTLIKE BEHAVIOR.

John 8:39-47.

1. *The Jews made claims to be Abraham's children.*
 - a. By physical lineage this was true. However, Jesus taught that a true disciple was not one of mere physical descent.
 - b. The Jews claimed to be disciples on pedigree and name. John 8:40.
2. *God's children behave like His children.*

E. A TRUE DISCIPLE HONORS CHRIST.

John 8:48-59

1. *Many claimed to be disciples of Jesus, but they did not honor Him.* Jesus said,
 - a. "I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me." John 8:49. The people dishonored Christ by saying that He was possessed with a demon.
 - b. Also, they called Him a Samaritan.
2. *True disciples honor Christ.*

F. CONCLUSION

Are you a true disciple of Jesus Christ?

1. The proof is not in mere externals. It is in continuance, freedom, the way one lives, and honoring Christ.

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What Jesus Is Doing Now ?

TEXT: Mark 16:19.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. New life in the church is desperately needed today.
2. The hope of the church is Christ Himself. The basic question is: Where is Jesus?
3. The answer to this question enables us to praise Jesus Christ for His position now in God's eternal plan.

B. WHERE IS JESUS?

1. *His ascension was His home-going.*
 - a. It was His going back to His Father.
 - b. It was the restoration of the glory He possessed before the world was. John 17.
 - c. Jesus longed to be there. Matt. 21: 33.
 - d. He talked about being "lifted up." John 12: 32.
 - e. He talked about preparing a place for us. John 14:3; and He announced, "I go unto my Father." John 14:12, 28; see also 16:5, 7.
2. *He is exalted to the Father's right hand.* Mark 16:19. In Acts 2:33 Peter proclaims His "being by the right hand of God exalted."
3. In Philippians 2:9-11, Paul beautifully concludes, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him . . ."
4. However, Ephesians 1:19-23 even more fully describes where Jesus is and what it means.
 - a. This describes His victory.
 - b. His work was finished.
 - c. He was ready to sit because He had done all the Father had told Him to do.

C. WHAT IS HE DOING?

What kind of ministry is Jesus performing today?

1. *His is a drawing ministry.* John 12:32.
 - a. He is drawing all men to Himself. Acts 4:12.
 - b. He is doing this right now in the world, through His Spirit, through His love, through His Word, and through His people. So, from heaven He is drawing on earth!
2. *His is an interceding ministry.*

- a. He stands between us and the Father. Romans 8:34.
- b. First, John 2:1-2 teaches that Jesus Christ is our Advocate, our heavenly lawyer, our Counselor. He represents us before the Father.
3. *His is a directing ministry.* Ephesians 1:22-23.
 - a. He is the Head of the body; and as the head leads the body, so Christ leads the church. He tells the church what to do.
 - b. As the Head, He does two things for the church.
 - (1) He gives the gift of the Holy Spirit, then and now. Acts 2:33, 38.
 - (2) He gives spiritual gifts to believers, by which He directs the ministry of the church. Romans 12:6.
4. *His is a building ministry.* Matthew 16:18.
 - a. Acts 2:47 describes saved people being added to the church.
 - b. Acts 6:7 reveals that the Lord is not satisfied just in adding to His church, He is multiplying it. This is His work and desire today for His churches!
5. *His is a preparing ministry.*
 - a. He is doing something in heaven. John 14:2.
6. *His is a sharing ministry.*
 - a. His desire for us is expressed in John 17:24.
 - b. The reality of this desire is expressed in Ephesians 2:5, 6 and Romans 8:28-30.
 - c. His victory is our victory! I John 4:17. All He has, we share with Him. His new position and ministry in heaven is our new position and ministry on earth!

D. CONCLUSION.

1. Christ's new position is the basis of knowing victory in our Christian life.
2. We are in Him. We are identified with Him.
3. This means victory over the world and every circumstance.

Healing of the Soul

GRIEF IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE

CHARLES E. WITTSCHIEBE

The subject of grief has many ramifications. Let me point out at the beginning that we cannot confine the experience of grief to the death of a loved one. There are many situations in life that are comparable to this. Perhaps the emotional distress is less in degree but much the same in quality. In grief we have to begin with a withdrawing of love from someone or something. We have invested a great deal of affection and feeling either in a person or in a particular thing. This may be a father, a mother, a wife, a child, a job, a leg, or a plan to marry. When the object is taken away, the love that was invested "has no place to go" and in a sense is dammed up within us. Frustration intensifies the hurt and the sense of loss and is a principal component of the emotional pain we call grief.

In dealing with grief we have to remember that there are characteristics which can be called normal and some characteristics which are abnormal or pathological. Let me first describe what might be termed normal symptoms of grief. And here, of course, like everybody else I am deeply indebted to Lindemann who has done some of the finest work in this field. I must also acknowledge a debt to Richard Young, Paul Johnson, and Ernest Bruder.

A. CONSIDERATION OF SYMPTOMS

I. Physical Distress

Just what are the symptoms of normal grief? Basically, you have physical distress. Your parishioner will be

bothered by a variety of physical symptoms like these: sighing, tightening of the throat, shortness of breath, feeling of emptiness in the abdomen, feeling of exhaustion, dry mouth, food tasting like sawdust, loss of appetite, sleep not restful, painful breathing, choking sensations, a breath feeling like a knife thrust, legs giving way, lack of muscular power, a feeling of hurt, and so on. Not all of these will necessarily appear in each case. They can come on momentarily or they can come on in waves. Intensity and duration will vary widely. These are the least worrisome of the effects of grief, because they will gradually disappear more or less naturally. This is the part that friends and relatives can accept, I think, without too much trouble. Most people will see that when you are suffering from grief you will have some of these things to trouble you. They would probably be surprised or even disturbed if such symptoms did not appear.

Most of the people will see that when you are suffering from grief you will have some of these things to trouble you.

II. Changed Sensory Functions

A second kind of symptom is an alteration in the functioning of sensory faculties. Reality seems to dim somewhat. The person makes such remarks as, "I feel as though I'm in a dream."

There seems to be a distance between them and the familiar things of their lives. Sometimes there will be walking in the sleep. Things often do not seem as they used to seem. One looks at life through a sort of haze, as though he were coming out of an anesthetic. He is in an intermediate zone between the conscious and the semiconscious. He is emotionally distant from people.

There may be, too, a preoccupation with the image of the deceased. The woman thinks frequently about the form, the face, the voice, and the touch of the person who is dead. She finds it hard to do things and cannot seem to

Healing of the Soul

get up to do anything. The wife who before could take care of her whole house now cannot even seem to raise her cup to her mouth. She is troubled with lassitude and a lack of energy.

There is an emptiness here. She cannot share with her husband. She is not able to turn and say, "Honey, isn't that beautiful?" Or, "Honey, do you . . . ?" There is no one to share the experiences that formerly were all shared. Even the arguments are missed. She thinks, "I know if John were here, he'd say that was crazy. I can just hear him saying it. I wish he were here to say it now." Life becomes empty, distasteful. Often the wish to die becomes almost an obsession.

This preoccupation with the image of the deceased is likely to make friends think that the bereaved one is becoming mentally ill. This is especially true if the widow says that she felt she saw John yesterday evening. At this point friends become concerned. They do not know that a person may hallucinate in normal grief a few times after the death of the loved one. Hallucinations may occur as much as four months later, in the opinion of some, and still be within the normal range. Often the hallucination will be of the auditory type—the bereaved one imagines she hears her husband's voice. Naturally these hallucinations are upsetting in their nature; they are, however, not necessarily pathological.

III. The Guilt Complex

A third symptom found in normal grief is a feeling of guilt. This is an area in which we Seventh-day Adventists have done very little. We have generally proceeded on the premise that there is no guilt in grief; in other words, that all anger is gone when loved ones die. If one ever had feelings of hostility for the dead, they are certainly gone now. Yet, often there is much guilt in normal grief. How many of you, if a loved one were to die, could say, "Never did I fail to do everything that would make her happy. Never did I do anything to make her unhappy." Could you say this about your wife? When a loved one dies, such thoughts as these come to mind: "Why didn't I do that when he wanted me to?" "Why did I talk to her like that only two weeks ago?" The husband who has allowed his wife to go out of the home to work (and for the best of reasons), may not have done a reasonable share of the housework. He will say to himself, "Maybe I could

have made things easier for Mary and maybe she wouldn't have gotten sick so easily." The teenager who has been worrying his mother sick night after night, or the girl who has been "going with" the wrong kind of young man, can both find much to feel guilty about. The girl may think, "Why did I bother mother so much. Maybe if I had been the right kind of girl, God would have healed her as an answer to my prayers. Maybe He couldn't answer my prayers for mother because I wasn't doing what I was supposed to be doing." (By the way, our theology can create a lot of guilt. We find occasions for guilt pointed out not only in the scriptures but also in the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy, where many more are brought out in detail. We often do not have a sense of forgiveness equal to our greater knowledge of guilt.) If there is an accident, we may say to ourselves, "Why did I let my boy go swimming that day? Maybe if I had said No, he'd still be with us. He wouldn't have drowned." Or, "If I hadn't been late to my appointment, maybe my husband wouldn't have had the accident. He wouldn't have been driving fast to make up the time." "Maybe my child wouldn't have been run over if I had been a more careful mother."

Sometimes the guilt comes from the feelings of relief that are experienced in spite of the grief. When a badly retarded child dies or an individual suffering interminably from an incurable disease finally succumbs, it is almost impossible not to feel that the best thing for all concerned has happened. And yet there can be guilt from questioning whether we welcome the relief because of our unwillingness to carry the burden any longer. Even when reason tells us that we have done all we could and would cheerfully have done more, there is often a tendency to feel guilt. This is probably due to the fact that we are basically selfish and that our motives are seldom completely unselfish. In dealing with grief, we want to make it possible for the guilt to be expressed. This is what we often prevent. We are so quick to give reassuring texts, to salve feelings. The husband does not get a chance to say, "She sometimes made me real angry, pastor, but I loved her very much." Or the wife to say, "Sometimes he'd almost drive me crazy with his teasing, but I loved him." Many times, as soon as a person dies, we canonize him. He is idealized. This is another way of paying off the feeling of guilt. If you make him very, very good after he's dead, that sort of pays up for not treating him so well before he died. It's sort of undoing—a defense aroused by the anxiety of feeling guilty. One tends to wonder a bit in cases where excessive and endless attention is given to the deceased's grave or to

Healing of the Soul

his den.

Sometimes the feeling of guilt comes from an inability to grieve at all. A woman was in my office some years ago. She is one of our finest workers and a delightful person to know. She told me, in connection with the problem we were discussing, that when her father died, she and her sister were so happy they laughed. This is not a normal way to talk about a father. She was telling this honestly for the first time outside the family. The reasons for her feelings became evident in our later conversation. For this woman to try to persuade herself that she was deeply stricken when her father died would have been a lie. She had to come to terms with this reality. Another woman came to see me because of trouble with her teenage son. Soon we began talking about the father—how long he had been dead, what influence he had over the boy, and so on. I detected a slightly odd note in what she was saying. Moving along the road of thought she seemed to have opened, I soon found out that she was relieved when he died and so were the children. She said her home was much happier after the death of her husband in an auto accident. Not a person in the home had any regrets about it at all. This kind of feeling, of course, colored the relationship of the mother to her son and had much to do with the whole climate in which he was growing. But this had to be faced honestly. To keep this from sight would have kept us from getting to the root of her trouble with the boy.

Guilt then, is a real thing, and we often do not give it a chance to come out. If kept in and unreleased, it can have a part in causing a breakdown years later. It is somewhat like a hidden abscess that has not been drained and has built up a tremendous pressure from the pus that is forming inside.

IV. Attitude of Hostility

Another characteristic often found in normal grief is the presence of hostility. We ministers almost never take into

account sufficiently that with grief there can often be anger, bitterness, resentment, and irritation. Some national groups display this more obviously. They may actually have fights at a wake or a funeral. Liquor served on such occasions makes it easier for such feelings to come into overt expression. Sometimes, the anger is directed toward the doctor. "Maybe if we had a different doctor he wouldn't have died." Or, "If the doctor had come when I first called him she might have made it."

We ministers almost never take into account sufficiently that with grief there can often be anger, bitterness, resentment, and irritation.

Sometimes it might be the milder form of not wanting to be bothered by other people. Sometimes it appears in strong feelings against God. "Why did He have to let this happen to my child—to me—to my husband?" If the individual could verbalize his feelings freely, he would be able to say that, for the moment at least, he hates God.

Sometimes there is anger directed at the deceased, usually in an unreasonable manner. A husband will think of his wife and wonder how she could do such a thing to him as leave him. This is particularly true of a man who has had a maternal sort of wife. A child will be tempted to feel, "I don't like mommy; why did she go away?" Occasionally we make things worse by saying that Jesus took mommy away. Then the child feels resentful against Him. We tend to apologize for God in cases of grief as though He needed a defense. This, mixed with platitudes of reassurance, does very little to help.

Charles E. Wittschiebe was professor in the Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University at the time he wrote this article.

Healing of the Soul

THE LORD KNOWS US

*“Bless the Lord, O my soul:
And all that is within me, bless His holy
name.*

*Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:
Who forgiveth all thine iniquity;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; . . .
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.
The Lord executeth righteousness
And judgment for all that are oppressed. . . .
He has not dealt with us after our sins;
Nor rewarded us according to our
iniquities. . . .*

*Like as a father pitieth his children,
So the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.*

*For He knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust.”*

Psalm 103: 1-14

Healing of the Soul

Dealing With Abnormal Symptoms of Grief

CHARLES E. WITTSCHIEBE

A characteristic often seen is the loss of normal patterns of conduct. There will be restlessness, aimless movements, a continual searching. The careful person will now become careless. The tidy housekeeper quite sloppy. The person who before could concentrate even to the point of becoming absent-minded now can't even remember how to pick up the telephone or how to dial a number.

Still another characteristic that occasionally occurs is the appearance of traits of the deceased in the life of the bereaved. The oldest son may start to act like his father, the oldest daughter like her mother. Frequently the individuals in the family will get some of the symptoms of the disease that took away the loved one. After the father has died of heart trouble, particularly at an early age, the son closest to him may start having pains in the region of the heart.

Less frequently the bereaved may take over the work of the deceased. In a sense the dead person continues to live on vicariously in the living. This is a form of identification with the dead that can easily become very unhealthy—it may lead to the smothering of the individual's own personality.

You see this now and then in politics when the wife of a senator or other officeholder will carry on in his stead. If the woman is in politics herself to a degree and has a natural bent in this direction, then it can be quite wholesome.

But if she forces herself into such a pattern as a labor of love, then we can expect emotional trouble sooner or later.

The negative possibilities here are seldom seen, since the conduct of the bereaved is considered to be a rare type of devotion to the memory of the dead—almost heroic in its nature.

SOME SYMPTOMS OF ABNORMAL GRIEF

I. Hidden Factors

Now let us examine the symptoms of abnormal grief. We have already said that physical distress accompanies normal grief. For this to be pathological is more a matter of intensity and of duration. An unusual degree of illness of a chronic type, with all kinds of morbid emotional overtones becomes "abnormal." For physical distress to go on for months and years raises the suspicion that other factors not seen are at work. This requires a careful look by the counselor. Consultation with the in-doctor is certainly in order. This would be an excellent area in which to work together.

II. Delayed Reactions

A second characteristic of abnormal grief is the delayed-grief reaction. This is to say that grief does not work itself out in a normal way in the weeks following the death. Sometimes it breaks out, often in bizarre forms, years later. It may be a large factor in bringing about a condition of mental illness.

III. Distorted Behavior Patterns

A third way of showing abnormal grief is the presence of distortions in the way of behaving. Persons do what we would call odd, queer, peculiar things, as compared to what they usually do. The woman who, for instance, wanders off by herself every evening or goes down to the grave every evening to cry, or wanders alone to the seashore, or sits hour after hour without talking—these can be indications, if long continued, of abnormal grief.

Sometimes we see radical changes in attitudes toward friends and relatives. Of course, when you don't

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like a person before a loved one dies, you are not likely to like him after death. But if you cared for the individual before the bereavement and now turn away from him, this may indicate the presence of deeper emotional trouble than one ordinarily expects.

Hostility of an extreme kind that lasts long is closely related to the preceding. For example: The man who continues to hate God intensely for taking his wife. The survivors who hate the medical staff and the institution in which the individual died. This may be aggravated by a paranoid reaction—a continued feeling of being persecuted, abused, mistreated.

IV. Permanent Loss of Life Patterns

Another symptom of abnormal grief is in lasting loss of patterns of living. We have already said that temporary lapses can be normal. This is often the effect of shock. But if this continues indefinitely, we are dealing with a pathological condition. The careful man is now practically a hobo; the careful woman is almost never neat; the thrifty wife is now a reckless spender; the modest and reserved woman is apparently enjoying the company of gigolos.

V. Agitated Depression

Finally, you may see what is called an agitated depression. This almost explains itself. For this, a referral to a psychiatrist is definitely in order. Out of this can come attempts at suicide or a much slower form of self-destruction in neglect of the body or in the use of alcohol or drugs.

SOME REMEDIAL ACTIONS

Having dealt with symptoms briefly, we can explore for a few minutes what can be done for a person suffering grief. To begin with, we should certainly allow the person to “ventilate” his grief. We should avoid saying, “Pull yourself together. Keep a stiff upper lip. Think about something else.” This is a common approach in our Western culture. Many Asians can find relief in expressing grief almost without restraint. In some groups, mourners may even be hired to express the family’s feelings. We Westerners, however, have to be strong and silent, taking our grief real well. This is especially true of the men. Here the women can often get relief easier and sooner because

society expects her to be “weaker” and more emotionally free.

Efforts to deflect the expression of grief are common. One of my counseling friends told me this story: He went to the home of his wife’s parents at the time her father had died. When he entered the home, a number of friends and relatives were sitting in the living room. He asked, “Where’s mother?” “She’s upstairs. She’s prostrate with grief. We tried to keep her from thinking about it and tried to help.” He went up and sat by the bed. Then he said, “You miss him a lot, don’t you?” She began to cry, deep, welling sobs. As she quieted down, he said, “You lived with him for a long time, didn’t you?” Again the tears. He was, in effect, verbalizing the emotions she was feeling, thus giving her a channel by which her tears could flow normally and drain out these feelings. He did it with understanding, of course. An hour later she was downstairs preparing supper for the whole group. Why? Because the tension level had been reduced to the point where she could momentarily handle it. Her grief had found a normal expression.

Sometimes we mistakenly try to keep persons from talking about the deceased; we even try to keep them from thinking about him. We suggest taking a trip, doing something. Yet we must allow some thinking about the person who has gone, some expression of feelings; in fact, we should encourage this. Grief work must be done when it normally should or it will be done later with more serious consequences to the individual. We ought not to rush in with a text too quickly. We sometimes use texts to block the grief work. There is enough time for the matter of accepting God’s will in the situation. Human grief needs expression. Even Lazarus’ sisters cried a great deal. The Lord evidently did not stop this; in fact, He joined them. After this came the comforting statement and demonstration of “I am the resurrection and the life.”

Admitting the reality of physical death and the great pain that it causes does not make us less spiritual. However glorious the future, the present centers on the fact that the loved one is gone and that a great loss has been suffered—a loss that stirs up a mixture of feelings about the deceased, about God, and about the unhappy situation the survivors find themselves in. Certainly the Lord knows how we feel in these circumstances and is patient and generous enough to allow us time to get our bearings.

Other types of circumstances can also bring on grief

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reactions. In mentioning the following items, I must acknowledge a particular debt to Richard Young.

OTHER TYPES OF GRIEF REACTIONS

Divorce will often create a grief situation. Here one sees many of the symptoms of normal (or abnormal) grief. To some men and women, this ending to a marriage is like the loss of a loved one—the shattering of a life. This is particularly true in women who have been unusually dependent and are frightened to face life alone.

Separation, but usually on a more modified scale, can bring grief symptoms. A son going into the Army can bring this about also. Sometimes the parents fear he will be killed, and so by anticipation he is practically dead on entrance into the Army. The Army's call almost means, "My boy is going to die." For some women, the last child's departure from home has a measure of grief reaction in it. Mothers, you remember how you felt when your child went off to school for the first time. You were proud he was growing up and yet regretful at losing your baby. Someone else, you thought, will now have charge of him for a large part of his day. Mother is not needed so much any more.

Sometimes a sudden loss of property can cause grief reactions. Retiring from a job, particularly if one has the feeling of being "shoved," is another area in which grief reveals itself. Obviously, men and women approaching retirement age should plan constructively for the change.

For some parents, putting a mentally retarded child into an institution is almost equivalent to seeing the child die. "Why did we have a baby like this? What did we do that was wrong?" Now they may feel that they are attempting to evade a burden that is rightly theirs, to get out of "doing penance." Even the feeling of relief of these persons feel brings with it an overtone of guilt.

An amputation, too, is much like a grief situation. A woman losing a breast in an operation for cancer can suffer a great deal of emotional distress because she feels less desirable to her husband. This can add to the shock of losing the breast. Frequently soldiers who have lost limbs through war injuries have felt unwilling to return to their wives, thinking that they were less men than before and

that the wives would share their own reduced image of themselves.

For some children, a move to a new neighborhood may bring on grief symptoms. The child feels he has lost all his friends; he has left all the familiar places. Mixed with this can be strong feelings of resentment and hostility against the parents for making the change. A more common experience of childhood resembling bereavement for adults is the loss of a well-loved pet. Most parents have arranged for at least one "funeral" like this in the course of their family's existence.

SYNOPSIS OF DISCUSSION

Homesickness was pointed out as a type of grief situation.

Catherine Marshall's book *To Live Again* was recommended for its frank and delicate discussion of the emotional distress many widows feel because of unrelieved sexual tensions.

A reprint from the April, 1960, issue of *Good Housekeeping* was recommended as being one of the finest, simplest descriptions of grief work available anywhere.

The most comprehensive work to date on grief, *Understanding Grief*, by Edgar N. Jackson, was called to the attention of the group.

It was pointed out that what is normal and what is abnormal in grief would depend on the standards set by any given culture. The statements made in this exposition of grief work arise out of customs and mores of our North American culture.

A short discussion followed on funeral procedures, funeral sermons, and procedure in the funeral of a suicide.

Charles E. Wittschiebe was a professor of the Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University when he wrote this article.

This section is sponsored by the Children's Ministry Department of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church under the supervision of Dr. Virginia Smith.

DON'T FORGET THE CHILDREN

C. Lloyd Wyman

Do you want to pastor a growing church filled with members who love Christ? Who practically fall into your arms when you extend an invitation to commit their lives to His service? Who have years of witness before them and who seldom apostasize? The material for such a productive ministry sits before the pastor in practically every church.

The Children

Wrote Dr. Torrey: "No other form of Christian effort brings such immediate, such large, such lasting results as work for the conversion of children. It has many advantages over other forms of work. First of all, children are more easily led to Christ than adults. In the second place, they are more likely to stay converted than those apparently converted at a later period of life. They also make better Christians, as they do not have so much to unlearn as those who have grown old in sin. They have more years of service before them."¹

Dr. Spurgeon once said, "I have more confidence in the spiritual life of the children that I have received into the church than I have in the

spiritual condition of the adults thus received. I will go even further than that. I have usually found deeper and warmer love for Christ in the child convert than in the adult convert."

Spurgeon went on to say that "87 percent of adult converts fall away within five years, but not more than 40 percent of child converts, in the same time."²

The child's quick acceptance and long usefulness were emphasized by Dr. George W. Baley: "Less time and effort are necessary for the winning of twenty children to Christ than one adult, and a child is worth more in the extension of the kingdom than many adults."³

Sometimes we fall into the error of thinking that a child must be ready to shave or date before he or she can make a meaningful commitment to Christ. But Matthew Henry gave his heart to Christ at the age of 11; Isaac Watts committed himself at the age of 9; Jonathan Edwards was only 7; and Count Zinzendorf while only 4 is known to have signed his name to "Dear Saviour, do Thou be mine, and I will be Thine."

How early should ministry for the child start? While he is in his mother's arms. A woman once asked the famous educator Francis Wayland Parker, "How can I begin the education of my child?"

"Well, when will your child be born?" Parker asked.

"Born!" she gasped. "Why, he is already 5 years old."

"Woman," he cried, "don't stand there talking to me! Hurry home! Already you have lost the best five years."

Other experts on children support this judgment:

"Even before the birth of the child, the preparation should begin that will enable it to fight successfully the battle against evil."⁴

"Children should virtually be trained in a home school from the cradle to maturity."⁵

"You are to teach your little ones to know Christ. This work you must do before Satan sows his seeds in their hearts."⁶

The pastor's ministry, then, should be only an extension of the parents'.

Our theology of the dignity of man and the church's being the body of Christ should encourage us to minister

to the young as well as the adult. Yet, far too frequently we pass by the younger saints and sinners to concentrate on the older members, not perceiving that the child is often the key to the parent's heart. My experience as a pastor has taught me five things:

1. If you treat children with respect and concern, you earn the respect and appreciation of their parents. Children should not be "used," but they can be an excellent avenue to the hearts and minds of parents.

2. Love begets love. As you love the children and show them your interest, they will love you in return and there is no love more genuine than the sweet, unadulterated love of a child.

3. The rapport a pastor establishes with children will remain throughout their mutual lives. When the children reach the difficult teen years, or when things are going rough at home or at school, they will come to the pastor, their established friend, for counsel and understanding.

4. A message understood by children is understood by all. And lessons learned by children may be a blessing to their parents too.

5. The child who respects his pastor will respect the ministry also, and this happy relationship will encourage love for his church and loyalty to it that can last a lifetime.

The pastor's ministry to the children within his church should begin, I believe, with this understanding: It's not easy to be a child in church. Lavern G. Franzen emphasizes this point in his book *Smile! God Loves You*:

"On the one hand is the reality of adult concerns that children be properly quiet, immobile, and attentive. On the other hand is another reality of the adult world. For a child it is a world in which pews are several sizes too large, hymns several stanzas too long, and sermon words several syllables too complex. There is little to claim a child's interest, little to attract his attention. The adult church offers a child little to invite participation. The adult church offers a child little to convince him that God's love is exciting and real or that he is already a significant part of the sharing of that love.

"Yet the church hopes the child is so convinced.

After all, children are the church. The Christ of the adult is their Christ now, and if the gospel is God's good news about man's bad situation for the grown-ups, so it is for young Christians. God's people need to share it as that good news."⁷

Here are five suggestions to make it just that:

1. Begin the church service with a three-to-five minute story or lesson. Win your church board's approval for the service and its frequency. I would encourage you to do it at least every other Sabbath.

Should you bring the children down front? By all means, Yes. You give them special recognition when you invite them forward. You say by that invitation, "You are important to my ministry and to this church. Your life counts with God and with us here."

2. One Sabbath each quarter, plan a story time when one or more children share a witnessing experience. This kind of "sermon" will encourage other children—and adults—to live their faith before neighbors and others.

3. Try a children's Sabbath. Once a year or a quarter, let the children take as many parts of a worship service as you can prepare them to do. Direct the sermon that day to the children, on their level; drive home the points by repetition.

Use visual aids, if you can, and get the children to respond to points of truth, if the message lends itself to such a plan. Children love to respond and remember what they repeat. From time to time a children's chorus may fit the conclusion of a story or a sermon. A child's prayer may be very meaningful.

Seek to have a children's choir— even if only to sing several choruses. More children can take part in a chorus than in a story or sermon—and what parent does not like to see his "angel" performing? With training, the children can move from simple verse in unison to two- to three- part songs.

4. Have a potluck dinner following a children's Sabbath, with parents present, of course. Make special mention of the part the children have in the dinner, and highlight their importance to the church.

Our theology of the dignity of man, and the church's being the body of Christ, should encourage us to minister to children

5. In smaller churches it works well to have an afternoon with the pastor (usually an hour long). The children come to the church (a Sabbath afternoon works well), and the pastor, with the help of his lay people, participates in a program including crafts, short Bible story plays acted out by children, songs, and perhaps a continued story told by the pastor. Children can be encouraged to invite friends. Many a neighbor has been won to Christ through the influence of a child working with his children.

Now, let me tell you a story I have told the children of my church. It is a lesson my mother emphasized when I was just a lad. I usually tell it two or three weeks before the nominating committee begins its work.

Mother taught me that whenever I was asked to do something, I should say, "I'll be glad to." She even taught me how to sound enthusiastic about it. "Now, Lloyd," she would say, "you have not been given an abundance of talents, perhaps, but what God has given you He wants you to use to His glory. Whenever you are asked to participate in a meeting, don't make people beg and urge you. Just say, 'I'll be glad to!'"

In telling the story I get the children to sing out several times, "I'll be glad to!" Parents are not deaf. In every church I pastored, it was only a little while before adults were responding to a request for their services with a resounding "I'll be glad to!"

Now, what do you say about expanding your ministry to include the children?

**Children
love to
respond
and
remember
what they
repeat.**

1 Quoted in Theo. F. Frech, *The Junior Leader's Handbook* (L.H. Higley, publisher, 1910).

2 Quoted in "Lessons for Child Evangelism Institutes" (General Conference Sabbath School Department), p. 8.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Assn., 1954), p.21.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

7 Lavern G. Franzen, *Smile! God Loves You* (Augsburg Publishing House, 1973), preface.

C. Lloyd Wyman was director of the Ministerial Association and Continuing Education in the Pacific Union Conference when he wrote this article.

Pastoral Ministry



From the rich treasury of Ellen White's pen, the compilers of this book have woven a fine tapestry of Ellen White's writings that deal with the joys, challenges, and trials of the local church pastor. The topics cover everything from the minister's personal devotional life to ministerial ethics, health, and time management. All pastors and elders should own this book. Available in English and Spanish.



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Healing of the Soul

ELLEN G. WHITE

“Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.” John 5:2, 3.

At certain seasons the waters of this pool were agitated, and it was commonly believed that this was the result of supernatural power, and that whoever first after

Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking.

the troubling of the pool stepped into the waters, would be healed of whatever disease he might have. Hundreds of sufferers visited the place; but so great was the crowd when the water was troubled that they rushed forward, trampling underfoot men, women, and children, weaker than themselves. Many could not get near the pool.

Many who had succeeded in reaching it died upon its bank. Shelters had been erected about the place, that the sick might be protected from the heat by the day and the chilliness of the night. There were some who spent the night in these porches, creeping to the edge of the pool day after day, in the vain hope of relief.

Jesus was at Jerusalem. Walking alone in apparent meditation and prayer, He came to the pool. He saw the wretched sufferers watching for that which they supposed to be their only chance of cure. He longed to exercise His healing power and make every sufferer whole. But it was the Sabbath day. Multitudes were going to the temple for worship, and He knew that such

an act of healing would so excite the prejudice of the Jews as to cut short His work.

But the Savior saw one case of supreme wretchedness. It was that of a man who had been a helpless cripple for thirty eight years. His disease was in a great degree the result of his own evil habits and was looked upon as a judgment from God. Alone and friendless, feeling that he was shut out from God's mercy, the sufferer had passed long years of misery. At the time when it was expected that the water would be troubled, those who pitied his helplessness would bear him to the porches. But at the favored moment he had no one to help him in. He had seen the rippling of the water, but had never been able to get farther than the edge of the pool. Others stronger than he would plunge in before him. The poor, helpless sufferer was unable to contend successfully with the scrambling, selfish crowd. His persistent efforts toward the one object, and his anxiety and continual disappointment, were fast wearing away the remnant of his strength.

The sick man was lying on his mat and occasionally lifting his head to gaze at the pool, when a tender, compassionate face bent over him, and the words, “Wilt thou be made whole?” arrested his attention. Hope came to his heart. He felt that in some way he was to have help. But the glow of encouragement soon faded. He

By sin we have been severed from the life of God. Our soul is palsied.

remembered how often he had tried to reach the pool, and now he had little prospect of living till it should again be troubled. He turned away wearily, saying, “Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.”

Jesus bids him, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” Verses 6-8. With a new hope the sick man looks upon Jesus. The expression of His countenance, the tones of His voice, are like no other. Love and power seem to breathe from His very presence. The cripple's faith takes hold upon Christ's word. Without question he sets his will to obey, and, as he does this, his whole body responds.

Every nerve and muscle thrills with new life, and healthful action comes to his crippled limbs. Springing to his feet, he goes on his way with firm, free step,

praising God and rejoicing in his new-found strength.

Jesus had given the palsied man no assurance of divine help. The man might have said, "Lord, if Thou wilt make me whole, I will obey Thy word."

He might have stopped to doubt, and thus have lost his one chance of healing. But no, he believed Christ's word, believed that he was made whole; immediately he made the effort, and God gave him the power; he willed to walk and he did walk. Acting on the word of Christ, he was made whole.

By sin we have been severed from the life of God. Our souls are palsied. Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking.

Many realize their helplessness; they are longing for that spiritual life which will bring them into harmony with God, and are striving to obtain it. But in vain. In despair they cry "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Romans 7:24, margin.

Let these desponding, struggling ones look up. The Savior is bending over the purchase of His blood, saying with inexpressible tenderness and pity, "Wilt thou be made whole?" He bids you arise in health and peace. Do not wait to feel that you are made whole. Believe the Savior's word. Put your will on the side of Christ. Will to serve Him, and in acting upon His word you will receive strength. Whatever may be the evil practice, the master passion which through long indulgence binds both soul and body, Christ is able and longs to deliver. He will impart life to the soul that is "dead in trespasses." Ephesians 2:1. He will set free the captive that is held by weakness and misfortune and the chains of sin.

The sense of sin has poisoned the springs of life. But Christ says, "I will take your sins; I will give you peace. I have bought you with My blood. You are Mine. My grace shall strengthen your weakened will; your remorse for sin I will remove." When temptations assail you, when care and perplexity surround you, when, depressed and discouraged, you are ready to yield to despair, look to Jesus, and the darkness that encompasses you will be dispelled by the bright shining of His presence. When sin struggles for the mastery in your soul, and burdens the conscience, look to the Saviour. His grace is sufficient to subdue sin. Let your grateful heart, trembling with uncertainty, turn to Him. Lay hold on the hope set before you.

Christ waits to adopt you into His family. His

strength will help your weakness; He will lead you step by step. Place your hand in His, and let Him guide you.

Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. Seek Him as One who desires to be found of you. He desires you not only to touch His garments, but to walk with Him in constant communion.

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul

Like the twelve apostles, the seventy disciples whom Christ sent forth later received supernatural endowments as a seal of their mission. When their work was completed, they returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name." Jesus answered, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Luke 10: 17, 18.

Henceforth Christ's followers are to look upon Satan as a conquered foe. Upon the cross, Jesus was to gain the victory for them; that victory He desired them to accept as their own. "Behold," He said, "I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Verse 19.

The omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit is the defense of every contrite soul. No one who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power.

It is true that Satan is a powerful being; but, thank God, we have a mighty Savior who cast out the evil one from heaven. Satan is pleased when we magnify his power. Why not talk of Jesus? Why not magnify His power and His love?

The rainbow of promise encircling the throne on high is an everlasting testimony that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. It testifies to the universe that God will never forsake His children in the struggle with evil. It is an assurance to us of strength and protection as long as the throne itself shall endure.

Ellen G. White was one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She wrote more than 100,000 pages by the time she died in 1915. Her work continues as a prophetic voice within the Adventist Church.

Inspiration: What Is It?

GERHARD PFANDL

Inspiration! An orchestra can give an inspired performance. Artists can speak of their inspiration. Athletes are inspired by their Olympic goals.

Inspiration in this context is quite different to its use in relation to the Bible. In arts, inspiration refers to a state of creative fervor preceding the composition of a work; in the Bible it describes the way the Holy Spirit conveyed God's message to the writers.

Jeremiah accused God, saying, "Lord, you deceived me, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me" (Jeremiah 20:7, NIV). He didn't enjoy being a prophet of the Lord at all.

Peter says, "Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21, NIV). As a ship carried along by the wind, they had no control over it. They had to proclaim the message from God.

When the prophet Balaam was hired by Balak, king of the Moabites, to curse Israel, he was promised earthly riches (see Numbers 22:37). But when, under inspiration, he tried to curse Israel, he could only proclaim a blessing (see 23:7-10, 18-24). When king Balak reproached him, Balaam said, "Must I not speak what the Lord puts in my mouth?" (Numbers 23:12, NIV).

"His word is in my heart like a fire," said Jeremiah, "a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot" (Jeremiah 20:9, NIV). Such is the nature of divine inspiration.

The Bible was given "by inspiration" (see 2 Timothy 3:16, NKJV). The Greek word used literally means "God-breathed." Humans wrote, but God so worked with them that what they wrote became His Word.

Some wrongly conclude that the authors received their messages through a process of mystical dictation. This idea-verbal inspiration implies that the prophet or prophetess works like some form of heaven-connected fax machine, transmitting mechanically what God says. Verbal inspiration requires the inspired person to transmit the *exact* words supplied by the Holy Spirit—just as a court stenographer types word-for-word what is said in a courtroom.

If this was how the Bible came into being, we would have great problems explaining, for example, whether it was Stephen or Luke—both believed to be inspired—who got some

names wrong in Acts 7:16 (compare with Genesis 23:8; 33:18).

And if the Holy Spirit dictated *each* word why, then, do each of the Gospel writers quote the inscription on the sign placed on Christ's cross differently? While, in essence, they do not contradict each other, none of them, it seems, quotes the inscription *in toto*.

A better way

A better way of understanding the inspiration of Scripture is to see the Holy Spirit inspiring a prophet's thoughts—not their words. That is, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the thoughts of the authors became the thoughts God wanted them to record.

God provided the thoughts, and the prophets, in relaying the divine message, supplied the best words in their vocabulary. The personality of the writers was not overridden as each expressed in their own manner what had been revealed. Although the prophets were human, the operation of the Holy Spirit guaranteed the integrity of the messages as the expression of God's will.

Ellen G. White has described the process this way: "It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God" (*Selected Messages, Book 1*, page 21).

Nature and authority

Such a view of biblical inspiration makes it unique in its nature and authority. Though God used humans to write the books of the Bible, they cannot be credited to the writers, only to God. Since the content of Scripture has its origin in God, it's endowed with reliability and trustworthiness. Along with the psalmist, therefore, the Christian can say: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105, NKJV).

I have yet to hear a man or woman say: "I was in a terrible state; I was a hopeless alcoholic, a disgrace to my family. I contemplated suicide. But then I began studying philosophy and science, and this completely changed me. Since then I've been as happy as can be!"

However, there are hundreds of thousands of people around the world who can testify that reading the Bible has changed their lives. That's because the Spirit who *inspired* the word is the same Holy Spirit who *speaks through* the Word to the heart of its readers. Not all will respond, but all those who do will experience a transformation of their lives.

Gerhard Pfandl was the field secretary for the South Pacific Division at the time he wrote this article.

Slices of Life

Henry Feyerabend

1. The Son of a King

After the Second World War a young American teacher went to Europe on a teacher exchange program and was given a class of small boys. The boys were vivacious and full of energy, and it wasn't always easy to maintain the discipline of the school.

There was one little blue-eyed boy sitting in the front row that seemed to be different from the other boys. He was full of fun, but whenever there was a fight on the playground, he didn't seem to be involved. He was always offering to stay after school and help the teacher with whatever work there was in the classroom. She was deeply impressed with him.

One day after school, she said, "Johnny, you seem to be so different from the other boys. You must have wonderful parents. Would you take me home to meet them? I would love to meet your parents."

The little boy hung his head and didn't answer. She thought that perhaps he was ashamed—possibly his parents were very poor and lived in a humble abode. She insisted. Then she noticed tears running down his cheek. "I can't introduce you to my parents," he said. "They are both dead."

She was sorry that she had opened the wound. She encouraged him to tell his story, and what a story it was! He told of how he had been living with his parents in a castle in one of the small countries of Europe. His father was a prince. But the war came, and with it the horrors of war. One day an enemy army marched into the palace and arrested his father and mother. They weren't interested in the child. As they led his parents away he followed behind. After walking a certain distance, Johnny's father asked permission to talk to his son. The commanding officer granted him five minutes. His mother ran to him, and swept him into her arms as she wept.

"Then my father came to me, stood at attention, clicked his heels, and saluted," Johnny told the teacher. "I stood at attention, clicked my heels and returned the salute just as he had always taught me. Then he knelt down and said, 'My boy, these men are going to take us away and kill us. But they aren't interested in children. Run away as far as you can. There is only one thing that I ask of you. Never forget that you are the son of a prince. Always act like the son of a prince.'"

"The captain gave the signal. My parents began to march down the road. I saw the soldiers raise their weapons. I heard the shots. I saw my mother and father fall to the ground. I ran away. For days I traveled from place to place. Kind people have helped me, and now I have found a family that is taking care of me. Teacher, don't you know why I am different from the other children? My father was a prince, and I can't dishonor him."

Friends, we too have a great responsibility. We are sons and daughters of the King. Not just an earthly king, but of the King of kings and Lord of lords. He invites us to be born again, into the royal family. He offers us bountiful blessings if we will accept His invitation.

2. Is The Colonel Satisfied?

Just two months from the day that Britain entered the First World War, on October 4, 1914, the S.S. Flobizel loaded the first five hundred Newfoundland troops to sail for the battle front. They embarked to the playing of "Auld Lang Syne," and "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." The captain ordered the anchor hoisted and the vessel steamed slowly out through the narrows into the Atlantic.

Of all the places where soldiers from Newfoundland fought in two world wars, no other name means so much to them as Beaumont Hamel. On July 1, 1916, 753 Newfoundlanders went into action. By the next morning there were only 68 left to answer the roll call. They had been sent out against impossible odds. Someone later remarked that it was a wonder that any man could remain unhit more than a minute in the inferno of fire that swept over No Man's Land. The casualty list from that battle reached into every community of the island colony. From the city of St. John's down to the smallest remote outpost, there was scarcely a family that did not have the loss of some loved one to mourn. Every year while the rest of Canada happily celebrates July 1 as the anniversary of confederation, the people of Newfoundland renew their dedication in proud memory of those dauntless soldiers who fell in freedom's cause.

Brave Newfoundland soldiers faced one of the fiercest situations in the annals of human warfare. A young man named Frank Mayo Lind, in his last letter written from France on June 29, just before the awful massacre, said: "Tell everybody that they may feel proud of the Newfoundland Regiment." One of the stricken men, lying on his stretcher suffering the agony of bullet-torn flesh, his life ebbing away, left a deep impression on all who were near him. Notwithstanding the pain and agony, he showed his real concern, more important than anything else, when he asked the question, "Is the Colonel satisfied? Is the Colonel pleased?" More important than life itself was the question of whether he had come up to the expectation of his commanding officer.

What is your supreme concern, O Christian in the battlefield of life? God has an army of valiant soldiers who follow their Commander with unswerving loyalty.

3. Facing Death With a Smile

Dr. W. B. Mason, a pastor in Portland, Oregon, learned from his physician that his life on earth was limited. Knowing how troubled his faithful flock would be at the news, he entered the pulpit the next week, and with his vibrant Christian faith, he shared the news with his people.

Then he added: "I walked out where I live, five miles out of this city, and I looked at the river in which I rejoice, and I looked at the stately trees that are always God's own poetry to my soul. Then, in the evening, I looked up into the great sky, where God was lighting lamps, and I said, 'I may not see you many times more, but river, I shall be alive when you cease running to the sea; and stars, I shall be alive when you have fallen from your sockets to the great down-pulling of the universe."

Henry Feyerabend was a missionary in Brazil for 11 years. He is currently evangelist and the director-speaker of It Is Written for Canada.



PATHFINDERS & ADRA

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Because young people are the future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA) proudly sponsors the "Discover the Power" Camporee, August 10-14, 1999, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. ADRA will help the 20,000 Pathfinders and their counselors to gain a greater understanding of humanitarian service through:

- Community service in the greater Oshkosh area
- ADRA's Adventure Land -- an interactive exhibit featuring the world's most unusual mini-golf game, a straw bale building, and Pack-a-Box
- Giant quilt display created by Pathfinders for refugee children



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