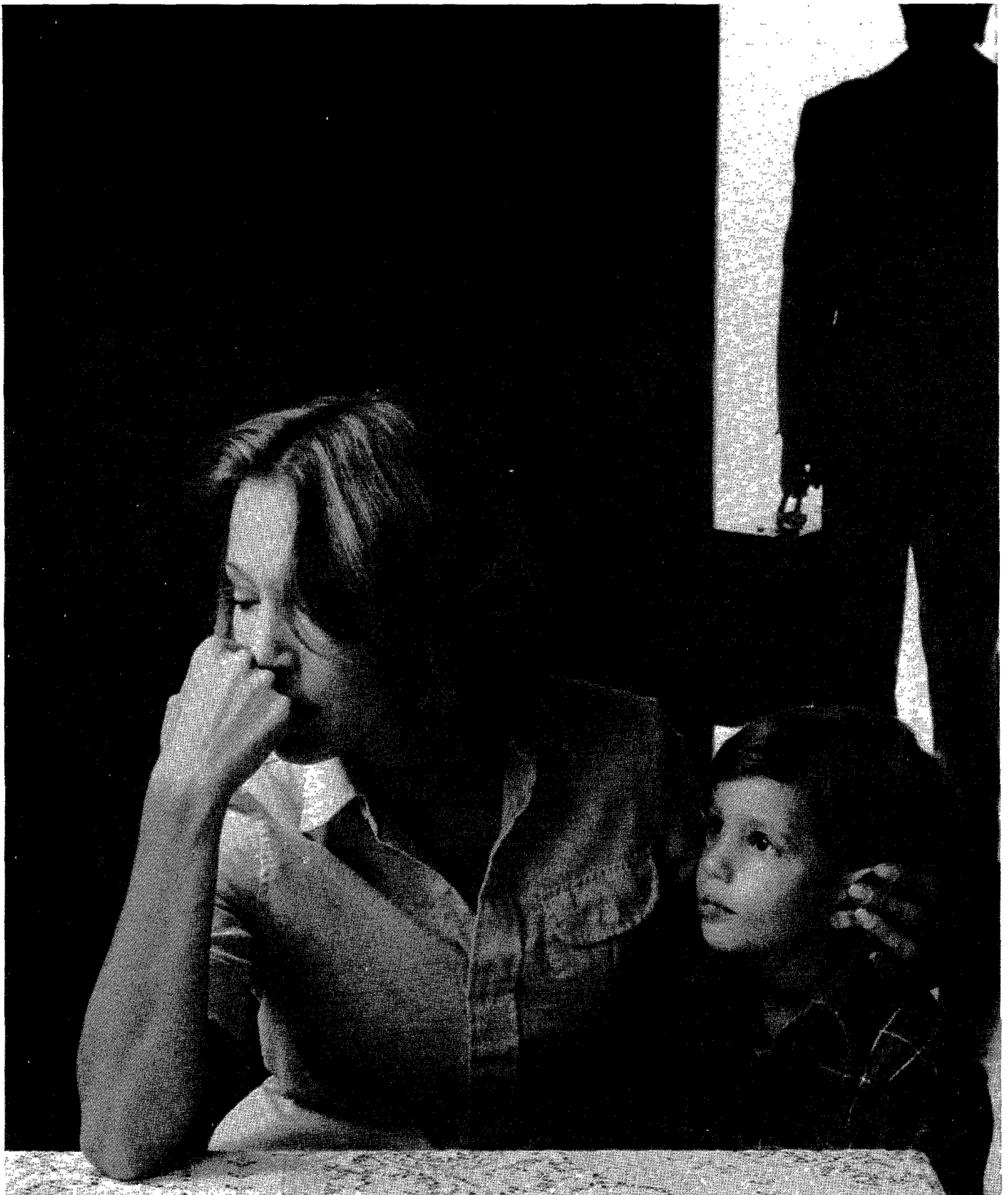


Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/November 1981



Ministering to One-Parent Families

Letters

Old readers follow up previous articles with additional information and comments, while new readers discover that MINISTRY can be a definite benefit to their ministries.

"Brother Lawrence" still available

I appreciated the article by Robert M. Johnston on the "Devotional Life of Brother Lawrence" (July, 1981). The booklet that inspired this article has been published for many years and is still available from Forward Movement Publications, 412 Sycamore Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 at 50 cents per copy. The author may not have been aware that the booklet was still in print and readers of MINISTRY may wish to order copies.

Also, as a follow-up comment to the article in the same issue by Donald B. Simons, "Help for the Sight and Hearing Impaired," and the work of the Christian Record Braille Foundation, your readers might be interested to know that Forward Movement Publications publishes a braille edition of the daily devotional book *Forward Day by Day* and the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* in thirteen braille volumes. Subscriptions to the braille edi-

tion of the devotional book are free to any blind person requesting it. The braille edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* costs \$5 per volume. Since so little worship material is available in braille and the prayer book is rich in resources that should be of value to the whole Christian community, we would be happy to supply this not only to Episcopalians but to any who are interested.—Charles H. Long, Episcopalian Church, Ohio.

Distinctions not obliterated

Professor LaRondelle's hermeneutic and Charles C. Ryrie's exposition of the dispensationalist view concerning Israel and the Church share in common the failure to deal with the whole prophetic picture.

Ryrie and the dispensationalists confuse those aspects of God's covenant with Israel having spiritual and eschatological implications (the establishment of God's kingdom and salvation) with prophecies having limited application to Israel as an earthly nation, focusing on the latter. LaRondelle, on the other hand, deals exclusively with Israel in the spiritual dimension, leaving out the fact that God has obligated Himself to relate to literal Israel as a nation—a politico-ethnic-historical entity—to the end of history (see Amos 9:8; Isa. 49:15; Jer. 32:37). Such dealings, however, were never meant to imply collective salvation, as LaRondelle correctly points out, citing Amos.

When Paul speaks of Jews and circumcision in Galatians 3:28 and 1 Corinthians 7:19 he is obviously arguing against viewing these as badges of one's spiritual standing before God. Yet, in Romans 3:1, 2, he speaks of these same qualities as a mark of distinction of a people upon whom God conferred certain privileges.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek . . . male or female" (Gal. 3:28) is certainly true in the spiritual sense. But as both a Jew and a married male, I'm glad the distinctions have not yet been completely obliterated, while I am aware that neither will confer upon me the assurance of salvation that comes only through the Messiah.—Albert P. Wellington, Project Gamaliel, New York.

Growing churches

I want to express my appreciation for the fine quality of MINISTRY. If all of us would

read and practice the good counsels given there, we would see a radical change in our soul-winning activities. The article "How Churches Grow," by Roger L. Dudley (July, 1981), should be published where all our church members can see and read it. We have not carefully followed the counsel God has given us. Whenever we have, our churches have grown and are growing.—C. M. Anoram, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Oahu, Hawaii.

One of the finest

I have just been transferred and thus have a new mailing address. I'm enclosing a label from my last issue of MINISTRY to aid you in making the change. I don't want to miss an issue, since I consider this to be one of the finest magazines in print for ministers. I'm truly grateful to you for sending it. It is a great help.—W. Robert Wood, United Methodist Church, Kentucky.

New readers

I read MINISTRY at the Bible College that I attended and thoroughly enjoyed it. I would appreciate taking advantage of your offer of a complimentary bimonthly subscription to enhance my effectiveness in spreading the gospel.—Elihu Hoagland, Church of God of Prophecy, Kentucky.

Recently at the home of a friend who is a minister I was introduced to your magazine, MINISTRY. I enjoyed the articles I was able to read. Since I am always looking for periodicals that will help me in ministering to others, I would very much like to be placed on your mailing list. I am a licensed minister presently working in evangelism.—Gary T. Giedra, Assemblies of God, Washington.

I would very much like to be placed on your clergy mailing list. The articles in MINISTRY are lucid, stimulating, and urgent in tone.—Eileen M. McCabe, Roman Catholic Church, New York.

We are still able to offer bimonthly subscriptions to MINISTRY without charge to ministers who request them (see the note, "An Outstretched Hand," appearing on this page). Currently some 265,000 ministers of all denominational affiliations are taking advantage of this program.—Editors.

An outstretched hand

If you are receiving MINISTRY bimonthly without having paid for a subscription, it is not a mistake.

We believe the time has come for clergy everywhere to experience a resurgence of faith in the authority of Scripture and in the great truths that reveal the gospel of our salvation by grace, through faith alone in Jesus Christ. Since 1928 MINISTRY has been designed to meet the needs of Seventh-day Adventist ministers. However, we believe that we have much in common with the entire religious community and want to share with you our aspirations and faith in a way that we trust will provide inspiration and help for you too.

We hope you will accept this journal as our outstretched hand to you. Look over our shoulders, take what you want and find helpful, and discard what you cannot use.

Bimonthly gift subscriptions are available to all licensed and/or ordained clergy. Each request should be on your church letterhead (if possible) and include name, address, denominational affiliation and position. Clergy outside the U.S. and Canada please remit \$2.00 postage.

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Ministry

A Magazine for Clergy/November 1981/Volume 54/Number 11



COVER: TOM RADCLIFFE

Ministering to One-Parent Families/4. Harold Ivan Smith. With homes breaking up at a brisk pace, the pastor often finds himself trying to minimize the damage and steer parishioners through the complicated process of a divorce. But the need of these individuals for perceptive ministry doesn't end along with their marriage. Indeed, new and more subtle needs arise that a pastor should be aware of.

The Grace of Law/7. Jack Blanco. We usually find the terms *grace* and *law* in opposing contrast rather than associated together in harmony. In defense of his unusual title, the author says, "The moral law as expressed in the Ten Commandments is as much of grace as is the good news of the gospel, which speaks of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

To Such Belongs the Kingdom of Heaven/10. Alvin C. Rose. Were the lively youngsters of Placid Place Community Church included in the Master's words regarding children? Pastor Cale wasn't sure when he had to face them on Sunday morning!

What Jesus Said About Justification/12. Morris L. Venden.

Pity Poor David!/14. The humble local preacher may feel like David facing Goliath when he runs up against television with all its vaunted sophistication. But he has some things going for him that TV would give 10 Nielsen-rating points to have, says reader Robert J. Versteeg in arguing against the conclusions of an editorial in the May, 1981, MINISTRY.

One Glorious Inheritance/16. Hans K. LaRondelle.

The Fingerprints of God/20. Robert V. Gentry. Even such little-known entities as radiohalos (microscopic colored-ring patterns in rocks) carry the identifying signature of the Creator.

Why We Publish Creationism Articles/22. J. R. Spangler.

Ancient Crematorium Discovered?/24. Larry G. Herr.

The Pastor and His Pastime/26. Warren Heckman pondered the reason for his increasingly "workaholic" schedule. Was it guilt? A distrust of God? Pride? Insecurity? He finally decided the reason didn't matter; the important thing was to change.

Whatever Happened to the Family That Prayed Together?/28. Denise Turner.

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Ministering to one-parent families

Nearly half the children born in the mid-seventies will spend time living in one-parent homes before age 18. Many of these children and their parents will turn to their pastor for help. Are you prepared to do more than apply spiritual and emotional band-aids to their special and long-term needs?

by Harold Ivan Smith

A man came to Jesus asking for help; his son was possessed by an evil spirit. The man asked not only for the child but also for the parents: "If you can do anything, have pity on us and help us" (Mark 9:22, R.S.V.). That request comes also from millions of single parents: "Pastor, if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us."

Today, 11.5 million children under age 18 live with one parent. More than 1.2 million homes will be dissolved by divorce; another 2 million will be affected by separation. Nearly half the children born in the mid-seventies will spend time living in one-parent homes before age 18.

In a day of rapid change and an unprecedented assault on the home, pastors need guidelines for ministering to single parents and their children. They need more than just the facts; they need

Harold Ivan Smith is general director of Single Adult Ministries for the Church of the Nazarene and author of numerous books on this subject.

"handles" to help them. These guidelines are not the final answer but rather suggestions that will need to be adapted for your church.

1. The pastor does not have to have all the answers. There are few easy answers. Traditional proof texts and solutions must be understood in their contexts. Jesus noted it was the "teachers of the law" who were taking advantage of widows—that day's predominant single parent (see Mark 12:38-40). Those who rely on legalism will miss opportunities for significant ministry, and may regret earlier counseling stances.

The absence of well-defined, black-and-white answers may well mean that we will struggle as we minister in this delicate arena. But the pastor who seeks the Lord's guidance and assurance and leans on the leadership of the Holy Spirit reaches people. Sometimes he may have to say "I don't know" to problems even Solomon could not solve. Such situations should send us to our knees, imploring wisdom from the One who does know.

2. The pastor doesn't take sides. Both ex'es and their children may remain active in your church. It may be tempting to support the offended (the underdog) and reject (directly or indirectly) the instigator. Veteran family counselors have learned to carefully weigh the testimony.

The public rationale for a divorce may be different from the private motivation. For example, Mary was branded "a backslider" after she initiated a divorce from her husband of twenty years. She was asked to resign from all her roles in the church. "How could you?" demanded the outraged pastor.

Mary endured the pain of the criticism until she moved. Although anxious to put her to work in the church, her new pastor had reservations and questioned her about the divorce.

"Do I have to say I've sinned?" she asked me. I raised questions about the marriage and then explained my understanding that divorce is sin. I shared God's willingness to forgive and direct us into the new. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us . . ." (1 John 1:9).

"But I don't feel as though I've done anything wrong," she protested.

"Mary, by your own admission, you initiated the divorce," I replied.

"But I had to," she responded, "I had to."

After a moment, I asked, "Mary, was your husband a homosexual?"

She looked stunned, then burst into tears. "No one knows," she sobbed. "I couldn't tell anyone. We hadn't had sex in fourteen years. For years, I thought it was me. I tried to help him. I wanted him to go for counseling, but he wouldn't go, and there were times he stayed away from the house for days."

"What forced your decision?" I asked.

"I was afraid for the children. He didn't

act right around them. So I told him, 'You have eighteen months to get some counseling. If you don't, I'm going to leave you!'"

The man *appeared* to be a model Christian: Sunday school teacher, board member, and good financial contributor. But eighteen months later, she left him. Mary paid a tremendous price for her silence.

3. The pastor knows things aren't always what they seem. While the pastor will be privy to a great deal of inside information, both sides have biases (and bruises from those biases). He must be careful not to be magnetically drawn into taking a side. Premature assessment or assignment of blame/responsibility creates a gulf between the pastor and divorcing members as well as those supporting each mate.

Dr. Mansell Pattison has noted, "The pastor's job is not to determine who is the culprit. . . . Rather, he should help each to see their own contribution to the problem and responsibility for its resolution."

Don't allow the parties to put words into your mouth. Initial separate sessions might help you gain an overall picture. As pastor you are an authority figure for many members and you must guard your influence.

4. The pastor will carefully assess any participation in the litigation.

Occasionally, attempts are made to involve the pastor in a custody battle, particularly when moral questions are involved. Suppose the ex is living with a woman, and the mother refuses to let the children go on the scheduled weekends. A court may or may not agree with that decision. What do you counsel?

Some may want to enlist you as a character witness or to reveal details reported to you in counseling. Courts sometimes discriminate between information gained in confessional counseling and that gained in other settings.

An ex may be making unrealistic financial or emotional demands on the other. (Some mates believe that the ex should "pay" for freedom or indiscretions.) Some ex'es collect the money but pay an enormous emotional penalty: ulcers, colitis, severe headaches, fatigue.

5. The pastor respects confidentiality. The situation may nourish small talk or congregational gossip. Some members will seek your commentary. If you

choose to remain silent, they may seek to deduce your opinions, particularly in those cases where things "don't add up." You may have at your disposal information to complete the puzzle. Do you "share" what you know?

Pastors create close friendship within the body—with those they trust. But what if that person breaks the confidence? How could you explain that to the offended? How would you repair your relationship with that counselee?

In addition, can you be absolutely certain of the accuracy of your information? What you say as a pastor on any controversial issue will be quoted and requested. By the time your comments make the circuit, they may differ considerably from the original. The hurt may be further inflamed. Tragically, the violation of confidentiality may preempt another couple's invitation to help them in their crisis.

In the trying moments of separation and divorce, the pastor must be Christlike in his relations with the wounded, the injured, the alienated—and the instigator!

6. The pastor understands the cyclical nature of grief. The pastor must have an acquaintance with the grief system as well as realizing that some problems are influenced by seasonal factors. For many, holidays such as Christmas evoke an annual crisis.

Shared custody during the holidays is painful, particularly when distance is involved and especially during the first year. Financial realities probably reduce the spending habits of previous years. The single parent feels depressed. However, some parents engage in a financial duel to outspend the other or "to make it up" to the children for the tensions. And children may play one parent against the other.

Finances do affect emotions in single-parent families. If the father gets behind in support payments and the bills stack up, to whom does the single mother turn? Some ex'es put strings on their financial contributions, causing added resentment.

Financial burdens or uncertainty affect the spiritual state of the single parent. The church must give spiritual comfort and encouragement and go beyond "I'm sure everything will work out."

7. The pastor acknowledges the presence of unresolved issues. Divorce is not as final as many would believe. One

Financial burdens or uncertainty affect the spiritual state of the single parent. The church must give spiritual comfort and encouragement and go beyond "I'm sure everything will work out."

of the major sources of irritation after the divorce is unresolved issues, some of which keep the income rolling into the competing attorney's offices.

Bev, a mother of two, complains that her former husband is prospering with his new family and job, while she struggles to make ends meet. Few divorce settlements include escalator clauses for financial prosperity, and many men pay only what the court requires them to pay.

Bev angrily demands, "How could God let him prosper after all he's done?" Her pastor has grown somewhat weary of trying to explain the grace of God.

The pastor's most challenging task may be to help the wounded person "let go." It is too easy to suggest, "Just give it to the Lord." Suggest "tithing" as an alternative. Ask the counselee, "Would you be willing to give the Lord 10 percent of this problem? Then, if the Lord deals with that 10 percent, would you offer Him another 10 percent, and another, until the problem is gone?"

For some, the enemy uses the struggle to tithe, or contribute financially, to challenge the profession of faith, particularly when a person was able to give more in previous years.

Carol's pastor expects her call during her children's annual two-week visit with their father. Instead of enjoying the time by herself, she frets about what her ex is putting into their minds. "I know he's trying to turn them against me." The father wants his children to have a good time while they're with him, and he is financially overindulgent and lax in discipline.

Ex'es may conflict over values. The types of entertainment the father permits, for example, may offend the mother, or vice versa. In cases with polarization on religious values, one parent may fret because the children don't go to church when the ex has them. When she gets them ready the next week, they protest, "We didn't have to go to church at Daddy's."

This conflict between parents on religious values in strict families upsets sensitive children who may be torn by "honoring mother and/or father." Who is right?

Jane, a 45-year-old mother of three, sulks because another church "lets" her ex (who initiated the divorce) sing in the choir and do solos. In talking with the children, she dismisses the "spirituality" of the church they attend when they visit their father.

Some of these emotional hot spots are firmly entrenched. They have been carefully nurtured into their current status. They will require time (and occasional prodding) to dissolve. Problems are solved when people face them and assume responsibility. A commitment to work on the problem is a starting point. Dr. Isaac David Rubin says that although some problems will not be solved, we eventually will

become reconciled to them.²

Occasionally the pastor must confront the wounded person and ask, "Are you willing to sacrifice your health and sanity for the luxury of being right?"

8. The pastor supports the children. The welfare of the children must be considered. You help the children by helping the parent.

Single parents have the following primary tasks: (1) income production; (2) home maintenance; (3) child care; and (4) personal growth. These are demanding tasks for two-parent families, and in most cases one-parent families must accomplish the same tasks. That gets tiring, and burnout occurs much easier.

Single parents require spiritual undergirding. You can help the single parent press toward what is ahead (see Phil. 3:13) by letting go of the past.

When the children are members or attenders of the church and the parents are not, the child may be the initiator in counseling—caught in the crossfire, and tired of choosing sides. Remember that a child from a non-Christian background may have to make sense of his homelife through a budding theological/spiritual awareness. The child may turn to you for consolation and support. He may share confidences that cannot be repeated.

9. The pastor is sensitive to the realities of single parenting. There will be times when something you say in conversation or preaching will have abusive connotations for single parents. The pastor must be sensitive to their feelings.

One pastor discovered that perspective when his wife had to be away for three weeks with her mother, who was quite ill. As a temporary single parent who had to manage the church, the parsonage, and three children, he gained an insight that years of pastoring and counseling had not given him.

Ask yourself, "How would I respond if I suddenly became a single parent?" Consider the child-care or home-maintenance responsibilities you share with a mate or that your mate performs. How would you accept them if they became your permanent responsibility?

When you attempt to raise money, leave room for the widow's mite or the divorcee's dollar. In a building fund or special offering, challenge everyone to give something. However, don't use the widow's mite as bait to solicit other contributions. "If

this poor divorced woman, Mrs. Jones, can give \$25, I believe some people ought to give \$100!"

Suppose parents are slow in signing up to send their kids to camp. For parents who have the money and need to be reminded, a pep talk is appropriate. But what about those who want to send their children but cannot afford it? How will they feel during your pep talk?

While there are places of service for the single parents in every local church, we must be sensitive in our time expectations of the single parent. Time to be a Sunday school teacher may be either an overload or an obedient sacrifice.

10. This ministry has high dividends/risks. Ministry with single parents is risky. We must never forget that the passage that deals with divorce (Matt. 19:1-12) is followed by Jesus' interaction with the children (verses 13-15). Is that only coincidental, or does the placement in Scripture speak to us?

Some fine leaders in the evangelical community have come from broken homes. At the time of first contact with the church, some were not as acceptable as they are now. They were hostile, angry, mean, irritating, attention-seeking, and hurt—but a church loved them. Often that meant a Sunday school teacher or pastor saw through the façade of boisterous misbehavior to the struggling and developing emotions of the child.

In these cases, the church has stood with the children from the one-parent home in their childhood, through their adolescence, in their college years, and as they established their own homes and professions. The church is richer (not just financially) because of that investment. These Christians dispel some myths about the effect of divorce on children. The church can make a difference.

The pastor may not desire to get involved in the problems of the single parent. However, by the very nature of his calling, his Lord occasionally leads him into the fires of marital tension and hopelessness. The One who calls you enables. As a pastor, you can make a difference!

¹E. Mansell Pattison, "Family Tensions," *Baker's Dictionary of Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), pp. 220, 221.

²Isaac David Rubin, *Reconciliations: How to Have Peace in an Age of Anxiety* (New York: Viking, 1980), p. 15.

Some emotional hot spots are firmly entrenched. Occasionally the pastor must confront the wounded person and ask, "Are you willing to sacrifice your health and sanity for the luxury of being right?"

"The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator who gave it. Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen, this obligation." "They who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, do practice any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty; which is, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life."—The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), Chap. XIX, Art. V; Chap. XX, Art. III.

This We Believe/5

by Jack Blanco

The grace of law

We believe that the moral law as expressed in the Ten Commandments is as much of grace as is the good news of the gospel, which speaks of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We further believe that these ten moral absolutes codify God's personhood, represent the principles of His government, and set forth the rights and limitations of those choosing to have a part in Christ's redemptive kingdom.

These beliefs are not reached capriciously nor are they without scriptural foundations. We believe that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" and that the Bible in its wholeness provides the necessary instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16). It follows, then, that interpretations of Scripture and definitions of faith are predicated not only on the immediate context of scriptural passages but also on the "wholeness" context from Genesis to Revelation.¹

A faith built on only one portion of Scripture would be highly suspect as to whether or not it is teaching the whole counsel of God. To reduce the risk of misinterpreting God's revelation or misunderstanding the function of law within the theater of His grace, we choose to begin our interpretation at the beginning.

Jack Blanco, Th.D., is pastor of the Palm Springs, California, Seventh-day Adventist church. For the title of this article, the author is indebted to Ernest F. Kevan's book by the same title, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1976.

The age of innocence

Scripture says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). We hold to the Genesis account of Creation as being factual and see the Garden story in the same light, not as myth, saga, or some sort of poetical expression depicting a moral dilemma. We believe there was a time of innocence, a real tree, a serpent, a literal transgression, and the divinely vocalized promise of redemption through Jesus Christ (see chap. 3:15).

As soon as man sinned, God graciously responded by promising to save man at any cost to Himself, thus restoring in him the image of God, which was fractured by his disobedience (see verse 15; John 3:16; Rom. 8:29, 32). This divine objective is yet today God's good news and is also the goal of God's redemptive community (see Eph. 4:22-24).

We do not believe that man was created to fall into sin in order to reveal God's grace or that the Garden prohibition was against him. Instead we believe that because of man's sin, God's graciousness could not be contained.² If man was created to sin, sin would have a cause, but God made man to reflect His glory by not sinning (see Gen. 1:26, 27; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 9:8; Rom. 1:19-25).³ This is still God's purpose for man today, and the power to obey is a gift from God received from Him by faith. If obedience were a viable option as a means of salvation, then Christ need not have died and God need not have written His law on man's heart (see Matt. 5:17-19; Heb. 10:15-17). The

great object of creation is to be like God, to be in the image of His person, which means to live a life in harmony with His holy character (see Matt. 5:44-48).

Thus the Genesis story is an a priori to understanding God's purpose for man. In the beginning God created man able to obey and expected him to do so. When sin disabled him, God promised to live out obedience in him (see Gal. 2:20).⁴

The risk factor

Biblical morality differs from secular morality not only by revelation but by its particularization of moral life. It also stands in sharp contrast to the moral generalities about sin in the Christian community. As Carl F. H. Henry points out in *Christian Personal Ethics*: "The Ten Words enunciated on Sinai contain the essential principles of a righteousness that truly mirrors the pure character of the holy God. Their explicit definition of man's religious and moral duty unveiled with one bold stroke the holy nature and purpose of the Living God and a morality of permanent universal obligation. They stand apart from all temporal injunctions in the scriptural revelation; they are valid for all men in all places and at all times."⁵

But if Biblical morality includes the ten words articulated at Sinai, then what does Paul mean when he says that the Sinaitic covenant led to bondage, but the new covenant leads to freedom? Are God's universal moral principles in conflict with His law written in the heart? The moral code was not given to Israel to be against them, or for them and against us, as if there

were two methods of salvation, one by grace and one by law, but the law was given that the sinfulness of sin and the need of saving grace would be made plain (see Rom. 7:12, 13).

God's prohibition arrangement with Adam in Eden and His covenant of ten words with Israel at Sinai are in perfect agreement. They both promise life to those who choose them. They differ only in the means of obedience, not in their objective. In Eden obedience was predicated on man's inherent ability to obey, while at Sinai it was predicated on what Christ would do for man and in him.⁶ Daily the Israelites were pointed to the Lamb of God, who would actualize the promise, take away sin, and empower them to obey God's Ten Commandments, articulated for their own good (see John 1:29; 15:10; Gal. 3:28, 29; 4:26-28; Heb. 9:12-14). God never intended for His people to make themselves acceptable through their own efforts to obey, but in receiving Him by faith they are to be changed internally, enabling them to do His good pleasure (see Phil. 2:13).

By codifying the essential principles of righteousness that mirror His person, God risked being misunderstood and having the purpose of the Decalogue misapplied. However, the "divine risk" that He took at Sinai underscores the great need for a propositional articulation of God's will and makes the Law irreducibly important as an instrument pointing men and women along a continuum of right moral choices. Israel's total inability to realize that they could not improve themselves morally without the aid of God's grace has made the Sinai experience a symbol of bondage—analogous to Abraham's self-help program with Hagar (see Gal. 4:24, 25).⁷ Any Abrahamic attempt to fulfill God's promise by human effort is legalism (see John 15:4, 5). But "legalism is not due to the law and commandments, but to a misuse of them. . . . In an ultimate sense the contrast between Spirit and command, between love and law, is artificial."⁸

God's verification

With one bold stroke of the pen John exposes the nerve of a conflict that has plagued some Christians for centuries: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).⁹

In Paul's day, the conflict between law and grace was caused by Judaizers peddling the law of Moses as a means of salvation with such zeal that young converts were backsliding from grace into law. This led Paul to write, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth? . . . Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal. 3:1-3; 5:1).

We believe that men and women do not

have to meet certain requirements to be justified and free; they are invited to come to Christ just as they are (see Isa. 1:18; Acts 4:12; Rom. 5:8). Then once they are free, forgiven, and born again with a new nature (see John 3:3), they no longer live by promise, but by fulfillment, by the "much more" of Romans 5, which is their joy and motivation (see 2 Cor. 5:14).

However, the freedom in Christ of which Paul speaks in Galatians is not to be confused with either capriciousness, autonomy, or moral irresponsibility. Biblical freedom is predicated on the restoration of free choice, which expresses itself in obedience and moral accountability (see Matt. 25:14-30), as well as the maintenance of a growing relationship with Christ (see Eph. 4:11-15). While holiness and relationship are possible only in freedom, holiness in isolation is totally inadequate to fulfill God's plan for man, for it demands responsible relationship.

Thus the proclamation of the gospel includes not only the good news of salvation and the forgiveness of sins but also the invitation to fellowship with the Father and His Son (see 1 John 1:3, 4). As the new head of the human race, Christ restored man's relationship with God and offered him spiritual life and continuous fellowship by faith. But a permanent entrance into His kingdom is granted only on condition of obedience (see 2 Cor. 5:17, 18; Rom. 2:4-13).

After his first sin man's nature was too far gone for any amount of obedience to restore his spiritual health. Describing man's condition Isaiah says, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Isa. 1:5, 6). "Is there no balm in Gilead?" Jeremiah asks. "Is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jer. 8:22). He then answers his own question when he prays, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved" (chap. 17:14).

It was to answer this prayer springing from the heart of mankind that Christ came. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," He said, "because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind." For "they that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick" (Luke 4:18; 5:31). It was God in Christ who went in search of sin-sick man to re-create and heal him, not vice versa (see Gen. 3:8-10; 2 Cor. 5:17).

Therefore, in addition to being a re-creative act, salvation is also a restorative process by which man grows into a greater likeness of God. Within this process man must continually choose life. As a newly

born person he needs to learn how to prevent moral deterioration by maintaining his spiritual health. The cause and effect of obedience or disobedience seen in the natural world is seen also in the spiritual world. Activity is the very essence of life. Attempting to live by eating without being active leads to degeneration; likewise, Christians cannot maintain spiritual life by passively receiving God's grace and not actively responding to Christ by keeping His commandments. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). How then can good works stand contrary to what God is offering—a vibrant spiritual life? How could God nail to the cross and abolish the ten moral principles on which the behavior of His entire universe is built?

The law cannot save, but it can condemn; it cannot give life, but it can take it away. Obedience cannot produce spiritual life, but disobedience can lose it. This means that good works cannot save us, but neither can we be saved without them. Man's free responsibility is not to *attain* salvation, but to *maintain* it as a steward of God's gracious act in Jesus Christ. As the apostle says, "This is what loving God is—keeping his commandments; and his commandments are not difficult" (1 John 5:3, Jerusalem).¹⁰

Stewards of grace

Paul did his utmost to help his "brethren . . . according to the flesh" see that lawkeeping is not righteousness (see Rom. 9:3, 31, 32). However, his efforts to help them see their need of God's grace were interpreted as if he were against obedience. Though Paul stood against lawkeeping as a means of salvation, he does explicitly affirm and uphold both the law of the Decalogue and the commandments of the Lord (see Eph. 6:2; 1 Cor. 14:37), rendering innocuous any attempt to picture the great apostle as antinomian.¹¹

A similar misunderstanding occurred in the days of Luther when the Anabaptists and particularly J. Agricola held that their antinomian views logically followed from Luther's doctrine of justification and that the believer was in no way obligated to fulfill the moral law.¹² Luther vehemently objected to this, and subsequently a proscription of antinomianism was written into the Formula of Concord, where it was firmly asserted that the liberty of Christians with respect to the demands of the law must not be misconstrued to mean freedom from obligation.¹³

Thus over the centuries the motions of the theological pendulum caused by an overcompensating emphasis on either law or grace have disrupted the proper relationship of both to God's redemptive process and have even destroyed their effectiveness. Scripture cautions against just such imbalances. Therefore James speaks out against neglectful behavior caused by the abuse of grace (see James

2:14-26), and Paul shows how irresponsible behavior is caused by the abuse of law in which people find no strength to obey and consequently abandon morality as something unattainable (see Rom. 2:17-29).

Without question man is saved by grace and not by works (see Eph. 2:8, 9), but it is also true that "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14). "Every work" includes that of Christians. If works were of no account to them, then why are they held accountable? Those who accept Christ as Lord are not exempt from judgment before being permanently incorporated into God's kingdom (Matt. 7:21-23; 25:34, 45).

Unfortunately, the certainty of a judgment has frequently led to a legalistic preoccupation with sin and an overanxious introversion. To avoid such a "troubled mind," the antinomian attempt to achieve a deeper assurance than outward evidence can give often leads to an inner security that can not be objectively verified.¹⁴ When the rich young ruler asked Christ, "What must I do to have eternal life?" he was searching for objective assurance, and Christ, accepting his question as legitimate, responded, "Keep the commandments," and "Follow me" (see Matt. 19:16-22). Obviously He was not telling the young man to earn his salvation, thus endorsing legalism; nor was He suggesting that obedience was inconsequential, thereby supporting antinomianism. Love in the heart for Christ and obedience in the life is a divine composite whereby believers can verify their saving relationship with Christ and their growth in fellowship with the Father (see John 17:3; 1 John 1:3). Objective self-evaluation is part of the legitimate assuring process of the Christian life, and when guided by the Holy Spirit, it is not contrary to the gospel (see Isa. 8:20; 1 John 4:1-3; 5:1-3).

Thus the final judgment is more than an unexplainable eschatological triumph of the glory of Christ. The end point (*telos*) of God's time line includes a final moral evaluation of all men, including Christians (see Matt. 24:30, 31; 25:31-33). We accept this account of end-time judgment found in Scripture just as realistically as we do the Genesis account of Creation. To say, then, as some do, that judgment took place at the cross and already has been completed is to make the great day of atonement a past phenomenon by wrenching it out of its end-time environment and ignoring the entire judgment motif of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, especially the eschatological preparation expected of the saints (see Matt. 25:1-13; Rev. 19:7, 8).¹⁵

If moral living (lawkeeping by the free choice of that which is good according to God's articulated will in Scripture) is not necessary for the permanent bestowal of eternal life, then why a final evaluation of

Christians (see 2 Cor. 5:10)? Why the end-time emphasis on "the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:5-7) if the judgment is past? If the moral law is a codification of Christ's character, which is unchangeable, then the law is also unchangeable (see Heb. 13:8; Ps. 89:34; Rom. 7:12; Matt. 5:17, 18). As the Scripture says, "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3:6). It is the unwavering sameness of God's holy character and sovereignty that gives cohesion, substance, and security to His creatures and to the universe (see Col. 1:16, 17). What was morally wrong yesterday is morally wrong today, and will be morally wrong tomorrow.

We do not believe that man's moral decisions and actions are inconsequential to his ultimate entrance into God's literal kingdom (see Rev. 22:12-15) or that freedom and responsibility are mutually exclusive, nor that the actions of the flesh have nothing to do with the spirit (see 1 Cor. 9:25-27; Phil. 3:8-10). Man must be saved body, soul, and spirit, and his whole person must be under the Lordship of Christ (see 1 Thess. 5:23; Matt. 20:1-14; Rev. 22:12-15). Jesus must be his Saviour and his King.

As believers in Christ and in God's special revelation, we accept the Bible "in its wholeness" as providing the best hermeneutical context by which the function of law can be understood. In Eden, at Sinai, and at Calvary the law has always pointed to life as it is in Christ, whether that life be creatively given, redemptively offered, or permanently bestowed (see John 1:1-4; Gal. 3:24; 1 Cor. 15:51-54). "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31).

¹ According to Biblical hermeneutics we know that the application of a text of Scripture often varies depending on the size of the context chosen to interpret it. Consequently, we feel that the "immediate" context should not be the sole authority for a proper understanding of God's Word, but that the "wholeness" of Scripture plays just as important a role in its interpretation.

² Grace is not an entity apart from God to be used by Him to save sinners, although that is its purpose; in its broadest sense grace is God's graciousness, an attribute of His person (see Ex. 34:5-8). By His graciousness we are saved and that not of ourselves (see Eph. 2:8, 9).

³ There are various definitions of sin to be found in Scripture, ranging from specifics such as "Did you eat of the tree?" "Yes, I did eat" (see Gen. 3:8-12) to such broad definitions as "Sin is lawlessness [anomia]" (1 John 3:4). We believe that sin is best understood when seen in both its dimensions, the specific as well as the general. Today general definitions of sin seem to be used as an umbrella for

shielding disobedience by minimizing personal accountability to God. As Karl Menninger in his book *Whatever Became of Sin?* (New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc., 1973) points out, "They may talk in terms of immorality and ethics and of antisocial behavior instead of sin, because it absolves them from acknowledging a God to be sinning against."—Page 46.

⁴ When Christ promises to enable man to obey by living within him, this control does not destroy man's freedom to choose by making him a robot. God still holds man accountable for his moral choices and actions whether there is a written law or not (see Rom. 5:12-14).

⁵ Carl F. H. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1957), p. 269.

⁶ Because Christ's sinless life is credited to man's account (see Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:21), this does not imply that man is no longer under moral obligation (Matt. 7:21; 25:31-46). However, neither is the converse true that once a man has accepted Christ and been forgiven he must obey God's Law alone and unaided (Eze. 36:26, 27; Heb. 4:15, 16).

⁷ We do not understand man's total depravity to mean his total moral collapse, but his total inability to help himself morally. This understanding of man's moral predicament places us closer to the Brunnerian position concerning the effects of sin on the *imago Dei* than to the Barthian one. As helpless as man is in his moral predicament, he is nevertheless accountable to God for the nonuse of available grace and any lack of demonstration of faith.

⁸ Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

⁹ This text is frequently understood to mean that grace is in opposition to law. The preposition "but" was supplied by the King James translators and often detracts readers from John's main emphasis that Christ, not Moses, is the source of grace. The *New American Standard Bible* translates the text more accurately when it says, "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Christ." From the *New American Standard Bible*, © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975. Used by permission.

¹⁰ From *The Jerusalem Bible*, copyright © 1966 by Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd., and Doubleday & Company, Inc. Used by permission of the publishers.

¹¹ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1979), vol. 1, p. 736.

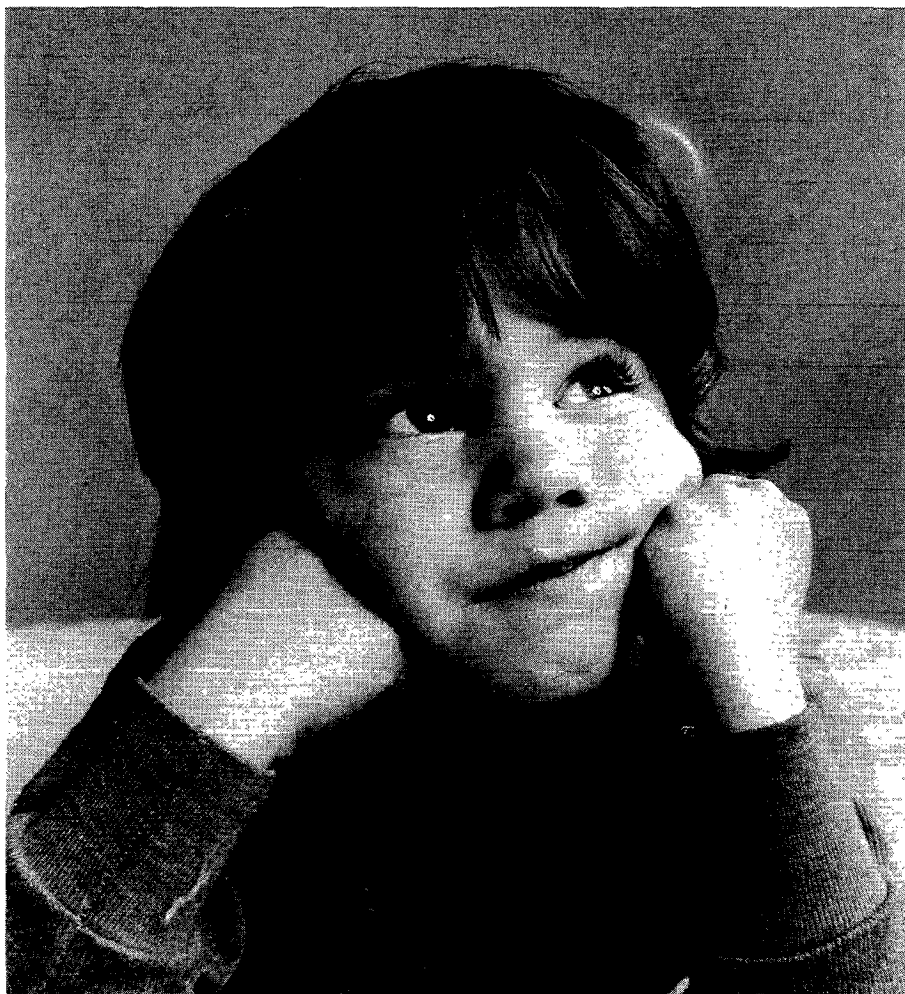
¹² "In the Disputation with Luther at Wittenberg (1537), Agricola is alleged to have said that a man was saved by faith alone, without regard to his moral character. These views of Agricola were denounced by Luther as a caricature of the Gospel, but in spite of this, the Antinomians made repeated appeal to Luther's writings and claimed his support for their opinions. This claim, however, is based merely on certain ambiguities in Luther's expressions, and a general misunderstanding of the Reformer's teaching."—Ernest F. Kevan, *The Grace of Law* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 23.

¹³ The Formula of Concord firmly asserted that Christian liberty in relation to the demands of the law must not be construed to mean "that it were optional with them to do or omit them or that they might or could act contrary to the Law of God and nonetheless could retain faith and God's favor and grace" (Art. IV) (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, p. 141).

¹⁴ Kevan, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-212.

¹⁵ We do not interpret the preparation of the saints spoken of in Revelation to refer to the Schweitzerian ethic, which interprets the need for moral preparation to apply only to a brief interval immediately preceding the setting up of God's kingdom regardless of when that kingdom comes.

In addition to being a re-creative act, salvation is also a restorative process by which man grows into a greater likeness of God. Within this process man must continually choose life.



CLAMERIQUE

To such belongs the kingdom of heaven

When Jesus spoke these words regarding the children, He surely couldn't have had in mind the youngsters in Pastor Cale's Placid Place Community Church! Or could He?

by Alvin C. Rose

The congregation of Placid Place Community Church took out their bulletins and looked again. There it was! "Minister's Moments With the Children." Could it be that, finally, after months of crayons, paper, mints, and gum, the children were going to have their own special part in the service? Sure enough, there was an uneasy shuffle on the platform. Pastor Jay Cale stepped to the pulpit and cleared his throat (was that a tremor in his voice?):

"The worship committee met Friday and decided that the children should be included in our services . . . and . . . uh . . . so . . . will the children please come forward?"

Jimmy, who had already gone through three pieces of candy, four sheets of paper, and two broken crayons, caught the

trailing invitation, and promptly responded. Leaping from his twelfth-row seat, he exercised all the energy of his 7 years to give the congregation an instant replay of the recently televised track meet. The race was on, with only a few parents having time to make an ineffectual grab at their departing young athletes.

Pastor Cale momentarily seemed about to disappear under the "hooves" of the thundering herd. Narrowly escaping, he seemed a bit shaken as he gestured for them to be seated on the steps of the chancel. The great moment had come—but it had to wait. Three-year-old Robbie, one of the first up front, discovered that her mother was not with her, began to scream at the top of her lungs, and headed back to the security of her mother's lap.

"Now, children," began Pastor Cale in a brave attempt to regain the initiative, "the Bible says that Jesus loves us all, and the picture I have here—"

"Johnny! Let go!" (Johnny was pulling the pigtailed of the interrupter, a girl seated a step below him.)

"The picture I have here shows a fisherman—"

"My daddy has a boat too!"

"Yes, I know your father has a boat. This fisherman—*children*, please be quiet! This fisherman is trying to do what?"

"Get away from his mommy so they won't fight," loudly responded a red-haired 5-year-old.

Cringing, Pastor Cale ignored the response. Johnny (bless him), who momentarily had stopped pulling pigtailed, broke in with "Catch a fish!"

(Deliverance!) "Yes, that's right. . . . No, Susie, he won't hurt them, either. . . . No, Dickie, I don't own a boat." (Occasionally, Pastor Cale's voice was heard amid the din.)

"Yes, I know your daddy went fishing this weekend, Margaret." (Desperation.) "The point is this: Jesus said we ought to . . . uh . . . be . . . fishers of men. We ought to share God's love. . . . You've got to go *what?*" (The audience tittered in expectation.) "Oh, go *fishing* with Jesus." (Relief.) "Yes, . . . uh . . . I mean . . . oh, let us pray! Thank You Lord for Your patience and Your love amen."

As the cherubs raced proudly to their families (hadn't they contributed to the education of their pastor?), Pastor Cale fled to his pulpit, where his eleven-o'clock presentation seemed characterized by a strange, distracted air.

Indeed they *had* contributed to his education! It's unfortunate he could not have advanced a few grades under other teachers before joining the School for Aspiring Communicators of the Gospel to Little Cherubs. As one who has had experience in both schools, I'd like to share a few lessons that would have helped Pastor Cale.

First, the decision to have a Minister's Moments With the Children should not be

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made by a worship committee, or even the pastor himself, on the Friday before the big moment. Planning is in order. The committee should ask, What do we want to accomplish? What help can we give the person we ask to lead out? How can we best use the time? (Other questions will come to mind.) To place the burden of these decisions entirely upon the "anointed" leader is only to add to his apprehension and anxiety. A spirit of mutual support and encouragement should exist between leader and committee.

There are valid reasons for including children in the morning worship service. Says Dr. Harriet Miller, professor of Christian education at United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio: "Children learn by experiencing a closeness with God, and with others. There are few moments of real awe and wonder in a regular worship service. Pastors need some direct relationship with children on an informal, learning basis."

Preparation is essential—more essential than Pastor Cale seemed to realize. Says Dr. George Boone, a United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. clergyman: "Instead of being simple, kids really do understand profound things. Preparation for Children's Worship Sharing often requires more exegesis than for adults."

If props and objects are needed, they should be in place beforehand. Always check before the service to make sure that they have not been removed by someone "cleaning up the clutter."

Rehearse. Do not read from a script. Children sense discomfort. When you lose your trend of thought, they'll be only too glad to change the subject. Maintaining communication with the majority of children before you is more than important; it is essential! Stand or sit where both the children and the congregation can see and hear you.

Speak clearly, but not too loudly. Children shrink from too-loud voices. Move around—your audience of children does! Children enjoy movement and will relate to your freedom of movement. How you respond to *their* movement will determine the result of your mutual learning experience.

Preach the Word. Be sure you are sharing something worth communicating. Help the children into the rest of the worship service by hints about the sermon to come that may give them entry points. You may also be enhancing adult interest in what is to follow.

Don't be disturbed by divided attention. You will usually enjoy the undivided attention of your adults and the divided attention of your children. Most of those squirming, wide-eyed creatures before you have come to listen. Don't worry about the few who aren't. It is difficult for any speaker to hold the attention of such a

variety of ages and interests—the usual children's audience will range from 2½-year-old toddlers to sixth-graders. Make it your objective to share something of worth with the majority gathered before you in a manner that will command their attention and interest.

You will likely observe many forms of youthful exuberance, some of which will be difficult to overcome. Your response will determine, to quite an extent, how effective your sharing is with the larger group. Here are some of the more common types of distractions and some possible means of response/control/inclusion:

1. The Showoff. This child's need for attention is extremely high. He will do anything to gain your attention and acceptance. Your response can mean the difference between behavior improvement and chaos. A gentle word can do much to change the situation. If the child knows that he is loved and accepted when acting less aggressive, better behavior will come.

2. The Talker. This child will compete with you for the attention by your audience. Encourage his participation in the group's listening activity by such a response as "Thank you for sharing. Now, children, let's all hear what the Bible [pastor, object lesson, et cetera] has to say."

3. The Frightened Child. This child is intimidated by the environment. A moment taken to comfort him is not out of place. Sometimes the child can be calmed by encouraging him to come close to you.

4. The Wanderer. If the child is not destroying the Grandmother Jennings Memorial Bud Vase or some equally important church artifact, don't get distracted by his wandering. Should it become necessary to "rescue" the child, do it without comment and with as little disturbance as possible.

5. The Bored Child. Occasionally, you will be greeted by blankly staring eyes, impervious to your commentary. Don't be alarmed; include this child in the presentation by motion or touch. Make him aware that you care about his presence. Warmth will do much to open a child's personality.

6. The Big Kids. Remember Brother Fred? For the moment, you've got even his interest. Like most adults present, he's listening—and not just for the cute response (or embarrassing response) his child might make. He may be remembering when he was a child and first heard

the gospel message. This special moment is not just a time for children to become little adults; it is a time also for adults to become as little children, listening in simple faith and trust to the message of the gospel.

But a word of caution: Don't use the children's special time to send "coded" messages to your adults. You've got the next half-hour for that purpose.

What should the leader share with the children? One pastor spent several months explaining objects from the sanctuary and relating their importance for worship. Another printed a bulletin especially for children each week and explained a different aspect of worship. Telling about the origin of hymns or the experience of hymn writers is always appropriate. Well-known church leaders may offer a rich source of stories.

Experiment with a broad variety of resources and ideas. A few simple rules may help you share the gospel:

1. Use variety. No one style of communication can be effective for all children in all situations. Variety is the key to meaningful communication.

2. Be yourself. Don't try to "perform" or be someone different than you are under other circumstances. If you are not at ease in your role, the children will sense it.

3. Communicate enthusiasm for what you are doing, but never talk down to children. Strive to treat each one as an individual who has come for sharing and instruction.

4. Allow for the unexpected. Don't be dismayed by laughter at a child's comment—or the lack of laughter. Be patient when distractions occur. After all, you do have the floor, and some are hearing the message you're sharing.

6. Be prepared. The attentiveness of your audience generally will be in proportion to your preparation.

7. Have a sincere desire to share the love of God through His Word. This is the only requisite of these rules.

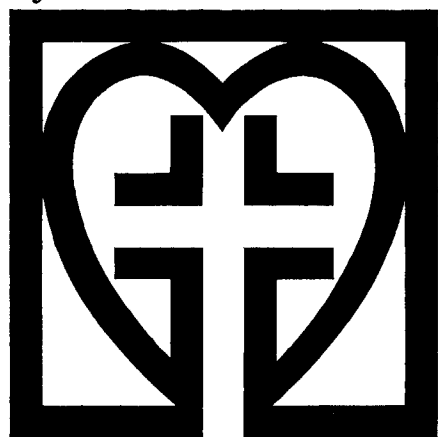
How will your sharing affect the children? You can only speculate how your lessons will be applied. But inevitably the cherubs will become the adults of your congregation. And each will have some harvest from the seeds you have planted in his faith garden.

What is left but to march forth in peace and love, inviting the little children to come and participate in growth experiences that will activate their faith?

This special moment is not just a time for children to become little adults; it is a time also for adults to become as little children, listening in simple faith and trust to the message of the gospel.

Jesus always accepted those who came to Him. Based on His actions and teachings, acceptance is the key word in the entire theme of justification—freely given and grounded in a relationship.

by Morris L. Venden



What Jesus said about justification

And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:9-14).

Two men went to the Temple to pray. One man prayed to himself, the other prayed to God. One man worshiped himself; the other worshiped God. One trusted to his own merits; the other to the mercy of God.

The Pharisee felt that his own works, his tithe paying, his fasting, his spotless behavior, was sufficient to earn his salvation. Depending upon works for salvation is the distinguishing mark of a legalistic Pharisee. But Jesus said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20). "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (chap. 9:13). Justification is mankind

being put right with God because of what Jesus has done (see Rom. 3:24). It is a provision in heaven for the redemption of the whole human race, and has as its foundation the spotless righteousness of Jesus. It is not something we can secure by our own efforts. It is a *gift*. The Pharisee has no advantage over the publican.

When Jesus cleansed the Temple, He rebuked the religious leaders of His day for making His Father's house a marketplace. Consider for a moment what a marketplace is. It is a place where things are bought and sold. It is a place where one presents the fruits of his own labors to purchase that which he desires. It is a place of exchange. God's house is not a marketplace, for salvation can never be bartered. It is to be freely given, and freely accepted. Salvation is totally a gift. Jesus said it in the words "This is my body which is *given* for you" (Luke 22:19). It is the ones who *cannot* pay who are invited to the gospel feast (see chap. 14:14).

We also notice in the study of Jesus' life that for the person who tries to save himself, there is an inevitable result—he forsakes Jesus. This result is found in the story of Peter, who took out his sword and tried to save himself and the rest of the disciples (see Matt. 26:51-56). The very next thing that happened was that Peter and the other disciples all forsook Him and fled. Jesus was left alone with the mob. This is the inevitable result for anyone who tries to save himself. In the end, he will leave Jesus.

The publican recognized that there was nothing he could do to earn or merit God's mercy. He did not attempt to add anything to the salvation provided. He realized his totally helpless condition. He stood afar

off, under conviction, not daring to lift even his eyes unto heaven. Yet he must have seen something of the love of God, in addition to the enormity of his own sin, or he would never have dared to show up in the Temple. And because of his hope of pardon, he came to seek reconciliation with God.

The publican admitted to being a sinner. Some translations read that he said, "God, be merciful to me *the* sinner." He felt that he was the worst man in the world. But do you suppose that he really was? Is it necessary to have topped Hitler's record of murders, or to have been more treacherous than Judas, in order to pray the prayer of the publican? Paul prayed it—he who had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He was willing to say, I am the chief of sinners. It is perhaps possible in Christian circles to vie with one another in claims of wretchedness. There are people who don't feel righteous unless they feel sinful! It is possible to have a form of legalism that takes comfort and assurance in *penitence*, instead of in Jesus Christ. There have been those who, upon seeing that being a "worm" was somehow noteworthy, could not rest until they had tried to prove that of all worms, they were wormiest. But notice that the publican does not say, "God, be merciful to me because of my penitence." He said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He *was* penitent—no question about that. But he didn't make his salvation dependent upon his penitence.

And the publican was accepted. He went down to his house *justified*. *Acceptance* is the key word in the entire beautiful theme of justification. Jesus always accepted those who came to Him. We are accepted just as we are—in fact,

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that is the only way we can come. We cannot change ourselves in order to come. This is true every day, not only at the beginning of the Christian life. Jesus always accepts us just as we are. He said it in John 6:37: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." He said it in John 12:47: "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." He said in John 8:11 to the woman they dragged into His presence: "Neither do I condemn thee." Even the Jewish leaders recognized this truth, although they didn't appreciate it, when they said, "This man receiveth sinners" (Luke 15:2). Jesus said it in John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Isn't it good news to know that we don't have to fear the judgment? This acceptance of Jesus is full and free, based on His sacrifice in our behalf. It is good for every person who accepts it, and it is good for every day. The poor publican, who cannot even dare to lift up his eyes to heaven, who stands afar off, but who cries out to God for mercy, is able to return to his house holding his head high because he realizes his worth in the eyes of the universe. He can hold his head high because he realizes what God has done for him through Jesus Christ, for when God forgives us, we stand before Him just as though we had never even sinned. "He [Jesus] died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in the place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

The publican was justified when he accepted God's mercy. Justification is no good for any sinner until it is accepted by that sinner (see John 1:12). The Bible does not teach that justification is by grace alone. It is always by *grace through faith* (see Eph. 2:8). Faith is essential on the part of the sinner (see Heb. 11:6). Faith immediately involves two parties, one trusting the other. When the sinner trusts Jesus for salvation, there comes into existence a saving *relationship*, which is a subjective experience based on an objective fact. God's forgiveness must be accepted in order to benefit us personally. And we must continue to accept His forgiveness if we would continue to know His justifying grace.

Notice in four texts what Jesus said about forgiveness, and how it is connected to our relationship with God. The first is found in Matthew 18:21, 22. "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but,

Until seventy times seven." Of course, Jesus wasn't here setting the limit for forgiveness at 490 times, but He was teaching that we are to forgive our brother as long as he keeps asking—unlimited forgiveness.

In the second text, Luke 17:3-5, we see an even deeper application: "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith."

Is this advice limited to human relationships? Of course not! God would not ask us to do among ourselves more than He would do. This is God's forgiveness. This is the kind of forgiveness that God gives to us. His forgiveness is unlimited. As often as we turn again to Him, admitting our need of His mercy and forgiveness, He gives it to us freely.

Here is where some people get nervous about the theme of justification. They think that a forgiveness like that will lead people to play fast and loose with God's grace. They think that such a forgiveness will lead to license. But let's notice the third text, Luke 7:40-43: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged."

Jesus said in Luke 17:3-5 that forgiveness is unending. He said that His Father forgives anyone who comes to Him, and who keeps coming. Does this lead to license? No, because in Luke 7:40-43 the Saviour says that the more one is forgiven, the more he loves.

The last of the four texts is John 14:15: "If you love me, you will obey my commandments" (T.E.V.).* So when we understand God's forgiveness aright, it leads us to a response of love. And love leads to obedience. It's just that simple.

How long do we need the forgiveness of God? Don't fall into the trap of thinking that justification is only for the beginning of our Christian life. We need God's

justifying grace every day. We need His justifying grace because of our past track records. Whether we ever sin again or not, we still need the blood of Jesus to cover our sinful past. We need His justifying grace because we are sinful by nature, and will be until Jesus comes again. And we need His justifying grace every time we fall or fail. It was sin that brought about alienation from God and man in the beginning. And it is only the sacrifice of Jesus, accepted day by day, that is sufficient to heal the broken relationship between God and man, thus making communion between God and man possible.

As we accept His justification, as we accept *Him*, we have certainty and assurance concerning our eternal destiny. Eternal life isn't something that we are going to have later on—we have it already! "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (chap. 3:36). "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life" (chap. 5:24). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (chap. 6:47). "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (chap. 20:31). "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

This seems to many of us truth almost too good to be accepted. But it's still the truth—Jesus said it! "Put away the suspicion that God's promises are not meant for you. They are for every repentant transgressor. Strength and grace have been provided through Christ to be brought by ministering angels to every believing soul. None are so sinful that they cannot find strength, purity, and righteousness in Jesus, who died for them. He is waiting to strip them of their garments stained and polluted with sin, and to put on them the white robe of His righteousness; He bids them live and not die."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 52, 53.

God's forgiveness was good for the publican back then, and it's still good for every person today. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17).

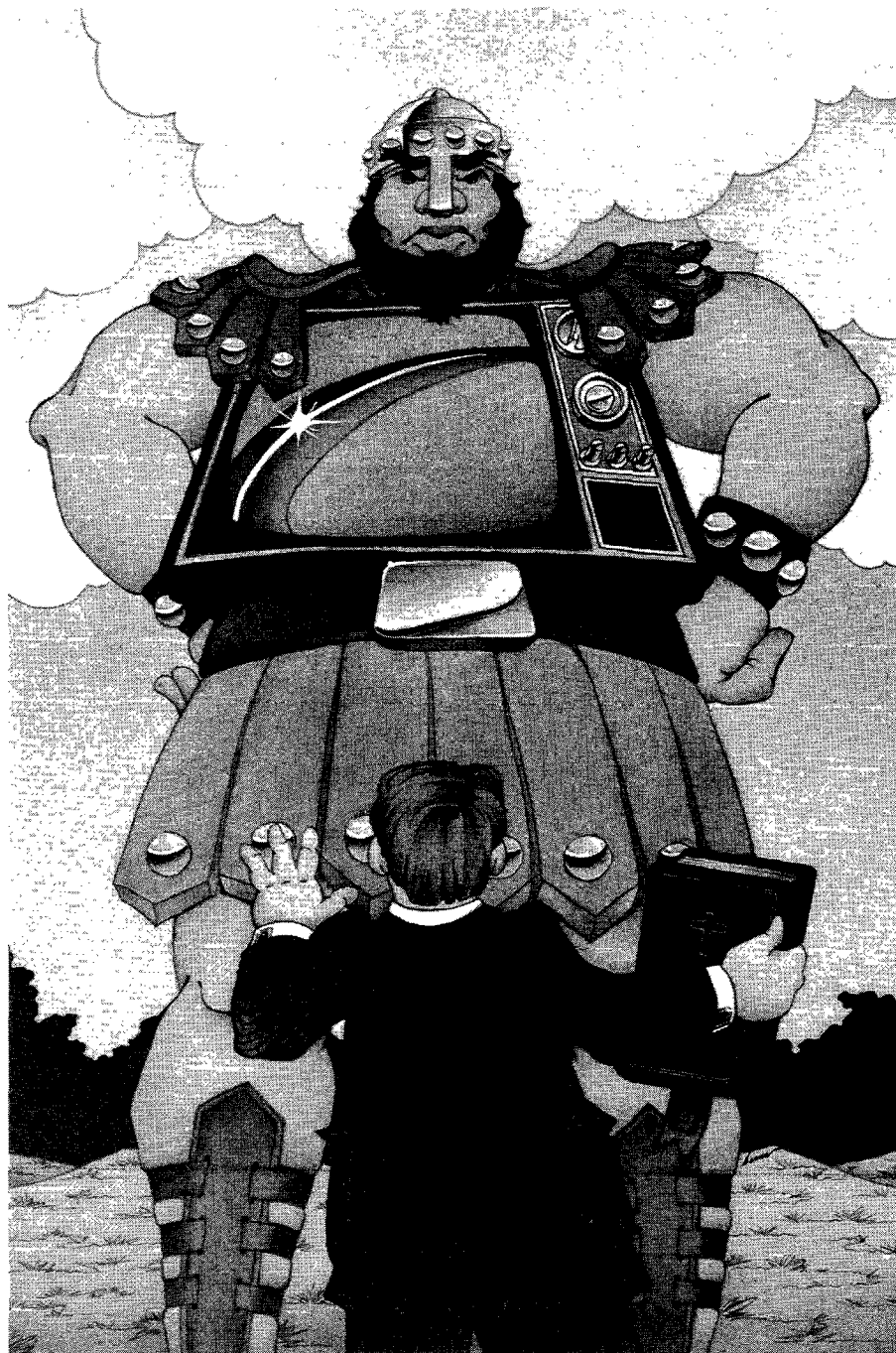
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The Bible does not teach that justification is by grace alone. It is always by grace through faith. Faith is essential on the part of the sinner. Faith immediately involves two parties, one trusting the other.

MINISTRY made a Goliath out of television in its May editorial, says the author, but the humble preacher has something that any advertizer would cheerfully pay for—ten times what he pays for prime-time commercials!

by Robert J. Versteeg

Pity poor David?



A recent editorial ("Why Johnny Can't Listen to the Sermon," *MINISTRY*, May, 1981) suggested that in comparison to television's appeal the weekly sermon may well end up a distant second best. "Not so," argues reader Robert J. Versteeg, a United Methodist pastor who in addition to preaching each week has a Master's degree in television and motion pictures, has directed a campus TV facility, and has acted professionally. The humble preacher, he maintains, has some things going for him that more than matches television's supposedly superior attraction.

Here, then, is the other side of the coin (or as they say in television—equal time for opposing viewpoints).—Editors.

When the giant television industry looms up before him, the humble preacher may indeed feel like David facing Goliath.

But David beat Goliath.

Likewise, the humble preacher's weekly sermon may be more effective than television's most sophisticated efforts, in spite of the recent *MINISTRY* editorial to the contrary. "Pity the poor pastor who has to try to convey the Word of God in mere words," it wails. As a matter of fact, however, we have at least as much evidence that the sermon can come off far out in front of TV's impact.

Why do we tend to assume that because people like and watch television, they therefore do not like and cannot listen to a sermon? Why do we imagine that TV must be more effective than preaching?

For one thing, we admire TV's self-vaunted technology and know-how. But if the technology works so well and if the programmers know so much, why do they have to scuttle half the programs in their series every season?

Maybe we should take a closer look at the seemingly awesome arsenal of TV gimmickry and then compare the power of "mere words."

It is generally true, as the "Why Johnny Can't Listen" article says, that on TV "it is the visual that always contains the most meaning," with the result that TV "isn't suited to conveying ideas" (at least, some ideas for which words are more suited). In other words, TV is TV; it presents what pictures can present.

How then, can "mere words" hope to compete against pictures, one of which, according to the Chinese proverb, is worth a thousand words? (The proverb, you will note, comes down to us not in pictures, but in mere words!)

Broadcasters do try to know and use the strengths of their medium. No less, preachers should know and use the strengths of the medium of words.

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Words are ambiguous symbols, not specific pictures. As such, words engage listeners on many levels. Words may allow the hearer to respond with a mystical experience, an emotional insight, a concrete recollection, psychological release, unforeseeable cross-references, or any number of responses. Each individual hearer, because his lifetime history of associations with words is unique to himself, responds to words (the same words) with his own personalized meanings for that instant. It is this great richness and potential for simultaneous personalization of response that makes words, as compared with pictures, a mighty medium, a chosen medium for the Lord.

Words hoard our past and therefore much of our sense of identity. Words are the lodes of our culture as of our personalities. Rather than envying or joining civilization's disintegrative tendency to bury words in cartoon balloons, preachers of the gospel can mine and refine the riches of language as a source of spiritual treasure.

But since pictures are ready, if debased, currency, don't they circulate more easily and drive out good words? True enough. With TV "the medium is the message." But that TV's message is all the message that people desire or seek is another assumption that needs to be tested.

TV's incessant hawking of products does indeed appeal to and conspire in worldly values. But that does not mean that we, too, must surrender to the principalities and powers of this world in order to compete. People come to our churches (instead of watching television) because they hope to find more satisfying values than those portrayed in commercials. In our sermons we can offer them what television cannot. What not even television preachers can offer them. What? Yes, because by the very fact of appearing on the tube, TV preachers incur TV's liabilities—liabilities we will discuss shortly.

We are told that TV has an advantage in appeal because its commercials wrap things up in a hurry. But does that mean that TV viewers (or sermon listeners) are therefore rendered incapable of sustained attention, provided there is something worth attending to? Even large TV audiences have been willing to watch extended broadcasts of *Roots*, *Shogun*, *Masada*, and other series.

Why should we envy a medium because it feels free to set up situations in which problems are solved in twenty-eight seconds? Not only is such speed offensive to common sense in real life, but also the assumption that the objective of preaching is to solve problems reflects a limited idea of what sermons can be. Not all sermons should be problem-solving sermons. "Thinking" may not always be what sermon listeners should be doing. There are other, equally weighty, matters of the Spirit.

But TV beats preaching, says the "Johnny Can't Listen" article again,

because TV successfully panders to supposed miniscule attention spans by changing shots and angles at a rapid pace (at an average of three seconds says the article, but surely that is recognition time, not the average length shot). It is equally true, of course, that a listener-looker can and does change the focus of his sermon attention in corresponding ways. The preacher also can appropriately vary viewpoints and approaches at the same time that he provides visual variety in gesture, facial expression, and body position, and aural variety in vocal rate, pitch, quality, and volume. A human being is more flexible than a camera and capable of far more infinite variety.

TV offers caricatures of the world and thus enjoys freedom from the demands of reality, the editorial complaints. Someone sympathetic to TV might suggest that those caricatures provide means by which the viewer may establish emotional control in an uncontrollable world. But in contrast to TV's caricatures, preaching can lift up the Bible's vision of what the kingdoms of this world can become when Christ controls.

Thus we see that some of the apparently impressive weapons in the arsenal of the television Goliath turn out in fact to carry their own encumbrances, and by contrast call attention to the alternative opportunities available in the "mere words" of preaching.

But even more than all of this, television broadcasting as we know it at this moment suffers certain definite liabilities.

Commercial television cannot escape—indeed, must keep blazoning—the basic premise of its existence, namely, that it is there to make money. And therefore at some level the viewer is continually aware that he is in a selling situation in which caveat emptor applies and taints the entire phenomenon.

Furthermore, the very slickness that we fallible preachers envy in television may in practice erode its credibility even more. It is *too* good to be true. Human beings tend to be wary of slickness and glibness. The preacher in his pulpit may have to struggle to get his point across, but, quite apart from the fact that struggling rivets attention, the very unpolished nature of his delivery may make his message seem more believable to his hearers.

Another inherent liability of television is that, with the exception of some

phone-in situations and the CUE system (which is by design oversimplified and limited in its own right), television is largely unresponsive. The television set doesn't know your life, doesn't read your body language, doesn't respond to your questions. If you raise a question to NBC, chances are NBC will not come up with a "special" about your question next week. The preacher may. The preacher can respond to the real-life situations and questions of his people.

It follows that people may perceive television as being irresponsible as well as unresponsive. After all, the broadcaster has to look only into the camera lens, not into the viewer's eye. The viewer can't hold him to account. Regulations, as applied, give the broadcaster immense latitude in what he can "get away with." Your local TV weather forecaster just rattles confidently on as if he had been right yesterday.

But to my mind, television suffers one major, fatal weakness that makes it extremely vulnerable in a contest with preaching's most compelling strength—TV comes over a set; preaching comes in person.

No matter how elaborately television contrives to create an illusion of reality and presence (love those "hidden camera" commercials!), it is trapped in its own box. It is a thing. Perceptually, whatever appears in it becomes part of that thing. We all know that what comes to us "live" on TV is not live at all, but a succession of flashing and fading phosphorescent dots.

The gospel is that the eternal God is a live person and Christ is a live person who loves and lives in living persons. For the encounter with such a God, lively preaching—"the truth expressed through personality" in a person-to-person meeting—is vastly superior.

Any advertiser would cheerfully, greedily, pay ten times what he pays for prime-time TV commercials to have what the Christian church has: a gathering at least once each week in every neighborhood in the country in which people are brought into personal and continuing contact with enthusiastic users and endorsers of his product to sing the praises of his product, to sample it, to share it freely, to experience its goodness, to ask for more of it, and to learn how to get unlimited quantities of it without price!

Pity poor David!

Television suffers one major, fatal weakness that makes it extremely vulnerable in a contest with preaching's most compelling strength—TV comes over a set; preaching comes in a person.

Many Christians are looking for a national reinstatement of an earthly Davidic kingdom in the land of Israel. New Testament evidence seems to indicate, however, that Abraham and his believing descendants looked for a heavenly country and city—to a new heavens and a new earth.

by Hans K. LaRondelle

One glorious inheritance

Dispensational writers are sufficiently committed to the hermeneutic of literalism that even if the result is a dichotomy or dissection of Israel and the church, it is accepted and defended for the sake of literalism. "If the dispensational emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Church seems to result in a 'dichotomy,' let it stand as long as it is a result of literal interpretation," C. C. Ryrie insists.¹

Such a dichotomy becomes most conspicuously evident in dispensationalism's projection of separate, compartmentalized hopes and eschatological programs for Israel and the church. In such a view, the church can hope only for *heaven* and Israel only for *Palestine* as their respective eternal inheritances. Dispensationalism calls God's covenant promise to Israel in Deuteronomy 30:1-10 "the Palestinian covenant"² because God clearly laid down the boundaries of the Promised Land in His covenant with Abraham: "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18; cf. Deut. 11:24).^{*} The destiny for national Israel in this Middle East land is seen as being unfolded in Isaiah 32: "See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice." "My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest" (verses 1, 18).

In sharp contrast with Israel's "Palestinian" covenant, the church can claim only heaven as her destiny and hope. God "has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (chap. 2:6).

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The marked contrast between Isaiah 32 and Ephesians 2 brought John N. Darby in 1868 to infer "an obvious change of dispensation"³ on the basis of literal interpretation. It led him to the conclusion that the royal reign of righteousness and peace on earth was God's destination for the Jewish nation *only*.

Unity of Biblical eschatology

Instead of seeking our own independent solution to the different aspects of Biblical eschatology by means of compartmentalizing two eschatological programs, we are duty-bound to ask how Christ, the true Interpreter, and the New Testament writers understood the Old Testament hope for peace and righteousness in relation to the church of Christ.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Christ assured "the poor in spirit" that they would receive "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3; also called "the kingdom of God," in Luke 6:20), and "the meek" that they "will inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). Two conclusions must be drawn: (1) Jesus assigns to His spiritual followers the whole *earth* together with the kingdom of *heaven* (or of God)⁴ as their inheritance; (2) He applies Israel's territorial inheritance to the church by enlarging the original promise of Palestine to include the earth made new. In ancient Israel, David had assured those Israelites who endured suppression by evil men and who hoped that God would vindicate their trust in Him that "the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace." "The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever" (Ps. 37:11, 29).

Clearly, Christ applies Psalm 37 in new and surprising ways: (1) This "land" will be larger than David thought; the fulfillment will be the entire earth in its re-created beauty (see Isa. 11:6-9; Revelation 21, 22);

(2) The renewed earth will be the inheritance of all the meek from all nations who accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Christ is definitely *not* spiritualizing away Israel's territorial promise when He includes His universal church. On the contrary, He widened the scope of the territory until it extended to the whole world.

The apostle Paul understood the territorial covenant promise just as Jesus did—as universal from the outset and as a gift of grace. He says: "It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith" (Rom. 4:13). Paul declares that this *worldwide* territorial promise was the essence of the Old Testament covenants, even of the Abrahamic covenant. God's invitation to Abraham to look "north and south, east and west" in the land of Canaan set no limits. "All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted" (Gen. 13:15, 16).

In order to understand Paul, one must view the land of Palestine as a down payment, or pledge, assuring national Israel the larger territory in order to accommodate the countless multitudes of Abraham's offspring. The Abrahamic covenant contained the promise of an offspring and of a land for that offspring. These promises have found a gradually increasing fulfillment since Israel's settlement in the land of Canaan under Joshua. W. C. Kaiser, Jr., rightly interprets Israel's conquest of Canaan: "This, in turn, became a token or pledge of the complete land grant yet to come in the future even as the earlier occupations were simultaneously recognized as 'expositions, confir-

mations, and expansions of the promise.”⁵

Notice that Paul reckons Abraham to be the father of all believers who are justified by faith in Christ among all the nations of the world (see Rom. 4:13, 16-24). Abraham “is the father of us all [both believing Jews and believing Gentiles]. As it is written: ‘I have made you a father of many nations.’ He is our father in the sight of God” (verses 16, 17). Paul interprets God’s promises to Abraham concerning land and offspring “in the sight of God,” that is, through Christ Jesus. That is not literalism, but Paul’s theological exegesis. The land becomes the world; the nations become the believers who trust in God and who are justified by faith as was Abraham.

Daniel P. Fuller’s conclusion regarding Romans 4 seems therefore correct: “Paul understood that Abraham would father a multitude of nations through Christ.”⁶ This is in agreement with the apostle’s statement that the land or world that is promised “comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring” (verse 16). Israel’s territorial promises are made sure in Christ and guaranteed through Him to all believers, whether Jew or Gentile. Consequently, Israel’s covenant is conditional with respect to those who qualify as recipients. The condition is: faith in Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.

This conclusion militates against the assertion of the dispensationalist J. Dwight Pentecost: “This covenant made by God with Israel in regard to their relation to the land must be seen to be an unconditional covenant.”⁷ Even *The New Scofield Reference Bible* (p. 251) acknowledges the explicit conditional nature of Deuteronomy 30:1-10, stating, “The Palestinian covenant gives the conditions under which Israel entered the land of promise.” W. C. Kaiser expresses this tension in perhaps the most pointed words: “The conditionality was not attached to the promise but only to the participants who would benefit from these abiding promises. . . . The promise remained permanent, but the participation in the blessings depended on the individual’s spiritual condition.”⁸

This conditional aspect on the part of the recipients does not infringe in the least upon the unconditional foundation of God’s promise regarding the kingdom of God in terms of a redeemed earth (see Isa. 11:6-9; Amos 9:13-15). Isaiah describes it in cosmic terms: “Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. . . . For I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy” (Isa. 65:17, 18; cf. chap. 66:22). Here the prophet unites heaven and earth together as one glorious inheritance for eschatological Israel.

The New Testament declares emphatically that Abraham and his believing descendants (spiritual Israel) looked forward “by faith” not to some human conquest of Palestine or a rebuilt Jerusa-

lem, but to a heavenly inheritance: “By faith he [Abraham] made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country. . . . For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. . . . All these people [spiritual Israel] were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised. . . . If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them” (Heb. 11:9-16).

Paul and Israel’s future glory

Commenting on Romans 11:26 (“And so all Israel will be saved”), *The New Scofield Reference Bible* declares: “According to the prophets, Israel, regathered from all nations, restored to her own land and converted, is yet to have her greatest earthly exaltation and glory.”—Page 1226. It is true that Paul appeals to the Old Testament Scriptures to substantiate what he had just said regarding the salvation of Israel: “As it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins’” (verses 26, 27).

As explained earlier (see “Is The Church Spiritual Israel?” *MINISTRY*, September, 1981), the apostle reveals the “mystery” that God will still save many Jews by making them “envious” of the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus as bestowed on the Gentiles (see verses 11, 14, 31). Through the living witness of Gentile Christians many Jews will believe in Christ Jesus and thus be saved and regrafted into the true Israel of God (see verse 23). Appealing to a combination of scriptures (Isa. 59:20, 21; 27:9) promising a spiritual renewal of Israel through the forgiveness of sins, Paul argues that such a conversion of Jews to God by faith in Christ as Israel’s redeemer will be in agreement with and a fulfillment of Old Testament promises. These passages express also, however, the condition for Israel’s restoration to God. God’s promise of redemption in Isaiah reads: “The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,” declares the Lord” (chap. 59:20).

God promised that the Redeemer, or the

Messiah, would come to “Zion” for those “who repent of their sins.” This repentance of natural Israel was necessary because systematic injustice in Israel had brought its people into exile among the nations (see verses 2-8). From the very beginning true repentance was the condition for any return to the Promised Land under God’s theocratic government on earth (see Deut. 30:1-10).

Paul, therefore, stresses twice the *spiritual* nature of Israel’s redemption by calling the ancient covenant promises a redemption from “‘godlessness’” and a taking away of “‘their sins’” (Rom. 11:26, 27). And Jeremiah promises a new heart in order to obey God from a loving heart (see Jer. 31:31-34). These are the very gospel blessings that Christ offers to both Jew and Gentile through His cross, resurrection, and exaltation as the king of Israel: Christ is the redeemer who now has come “‘from Zion.’” (Isaiah in the Hebrew has the expression “to Zion”; the Septuagint says “for the sake of Zion.”) Paul, it seems, purposely modifies Isaiah’s phrase because of the historical reality of the first coming of Christ. R. C. H. Lenski concludes, “If this God comes ‘out of Zion,’ as Paul says, he will not come ‘out of heaven,’ as the millennialists think. ‘Out of Zion’ refers to Christ’s first advent.”⁹ “Salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22). According to the gospel of Paul, Christ now comes continually to Zion to redeem her from her sins of unbelief and hardening of heart. “And so all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26).

Leading New Testament scholars have pointed out that in Romans 11, although Paul speaks about Israel’s return to God by faith in Christ, he says nothing about Israel’s return to glory in Palestine, “nothing about the restoration of an earthly Davidic kingdom, nothing about national reinstatement in the land of Israel. What he envisaged for his people was something infinitely better,” according to F. F. Bruce.¹⁰ The testimony of Herman Ridderbos during the 1971 Jerusalem Conference on Biblical Prophecy is also significant: “I cannot find any scriptural guarantee for the national restoration and glory of Israel as the people of God. . . .

* Unless noted otherwise, all Scripture references in this article are from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. Copyright © 1978 by New York International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Israel’s territorial promises are made sure in Christ and guaranteed through Him to all believers, whether Jew or Gentile. Consequently, Israel’s covenant is conditional; the condition is faith in Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.

Romans 11:26 proclaims that all Israel will be saved; I understand this to mean that pleroma of believers in Israel; by God's grace all those who believe will be gathered into His kingdom, together with the pleroma from all other nations."¹¹

Abraham, Israel, and the church

To Abraham and his believing offspring was promised, not Palestine in its present sinful condition, but a heavenly country with a heavenly city (see Hebrews 11); in short, they looked beyond Palestine to a new heaven and earth, and to a new Jerusalem. This eternal inheritance is not restricted to the Israel of God coming literally from the houses of Judah and Israel. The comforting message of the letter to the Hebrews is, "God had planned something better for us [the church] so that only together with us would they [Israel] be made perfect" (Heb. 11:40; cf. chap. 13:14).

This apostolic letter to the Hebrew Christians now applies the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34, which God had promised to the twelve tribes of national Israel, to the church through Christ (see Heb. 8). The inspired writer even declares to natural Israel the shocking message that the Mosaic covenant is antiquated, the Levitical law has been abrogated, and the earthly Temple with its ritual of sacrifices "set aside" as "obsolete" by Christ (Heb. 8:13; 10:9). Because of the cross of Christ the earthly Temple has "no longer any sacrifice for sin" before God (chap. 10:18). All Hebrews must, from now on, turn their eyes upon Jesus, the king-priest sitting on God's throne of grace and serving as the only mediator in the only true temple, the one in heaven. He provides the true rest for the soul and a place of rest for eternity (see chap. 4:9).

In Christ "we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken" and are "looking for the city that is to come" (chaps. 12:28; 13:14). But the unassailable certainty of the coming New Jerusalem and kingdom of God on earth does not annul the conditional aspect as far as the participants of the coming Messianic banquet are concerned. Jesus Himself stressed this conditional feature in unambiguous terms: "I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 8:11, 12; cf. Luke 13:28, 29).

In other words, according to Christ, natural (unbelieving) Israel has no part whatsoever in the territorial-kingdom promise. Believing Gentiles will take the empty seats of Israel at the eschatological festival of Israel and the church.

The church of Christ has no other hope, no other destiny, no other inheritance than the one that God gave to Abraham

and Israel—a redeemed heaven and earth (see Isa. 65:17). This could not be confirmed more conclusively than by the words of the apostle Peter: "That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" (2 Peter 3:12, 13). With apostolic authority Peter transfers the hope of Israel to the church; the new heaven and new earth that—Isaiah 65:17 predicted to be Israel's inheritance—has now become the promised destiny of the church.

The question arises, How can the church triumphant, glorified and taken to paradise with God at the second advent of Christ (see 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; John 14:1-3), receive the earth as her eternal home? The answer is found in Revelation 21 and 22, where divine inspiration reveals that the New Jerusalem by God's power will descend from heaven to the earth: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.' . . . He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true'" (Rev. 21:1-5).

A new earth is the final goal of all redemptive history. Man's ultimate destiny focuses upon a regenerated earth (see Matt. 5:5; 19:28). According to Paul, "the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). Only then will Abraham's hope be fulfilled and the saints of all ages, Israel and the church, live together throughout eternity as one flock under one Shepherd.

This final realization of perfect unity between God and His people (see Rev. 21:3) is the glorious consummation of His covenants with Abraham (see Gen. 17:7), with Moses (see Ex. 6:7; Deut. 29:13), with David (see 2 Sam. 7:24), and of the new covenant with Israel (see Jer. 31:1,

31; Eze. 36:28; 37:23). In Revelation 21 and 22, God's continuing covenant promises find at last their perfect fulfillment in the new earth of the age to come.¹² Through Christ Jesus both Israel and the church are one and meet together in one new city, the New Jerusalem, which has gates named after the twelve tribes of Israel and foundations bearing the names of the twelve apostles of Christ's church (see Rev. 21:12-14).

The lesson for Christians is therefore profound, as John Bright concludes in his book *Covenant and Promise*: "So, like Israel of old, we have ever to live in tension. It is the tension between grace and obligation: the unconditional grace of Christ which is proffered to us, his unconditional promises in which we are invited to trust, and the obligation to obey him as the church's sovereign Lord."¹³

¹ C. C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Evanston, Ill.: Moody Press, 1973), pp. 154, 155.

² *The New Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 251 (note on Deuteronomy 30).

³ Documentation in D. P. Fuller, *Gospel and Law: Contrast or Continuum?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 15, 16.

⁴ *The New Scofield Reference Bible* views the terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" as largely overlapping in meaning, but nevertheless as distinct. "Kingdom of heaven" stands for God's rulership from heaven over earthly people alone, nonetheless in the sphere of an external profession of God by people; "kingdom of God" stands for the cosmic, universal kingdom of God (pp. 994, 1002). Ryrie soft-pedals this strange literalism by saying, "This distinction is not the issue at all. The issue is whether or not the Church is the kingdom."—*op. cit.*, p. 173. The real issue, however, is whether Christ's present reign on the throne of God is the present fulfillment of the Davidic covenant.

⁵ W. C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), pp. 90, 91.

⁶ Fuller, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

⁷ J. D. Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Pub. Co., 1961), p. 98.

⁸ Kaiser, *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 110.

⁹ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1945), p. 729.

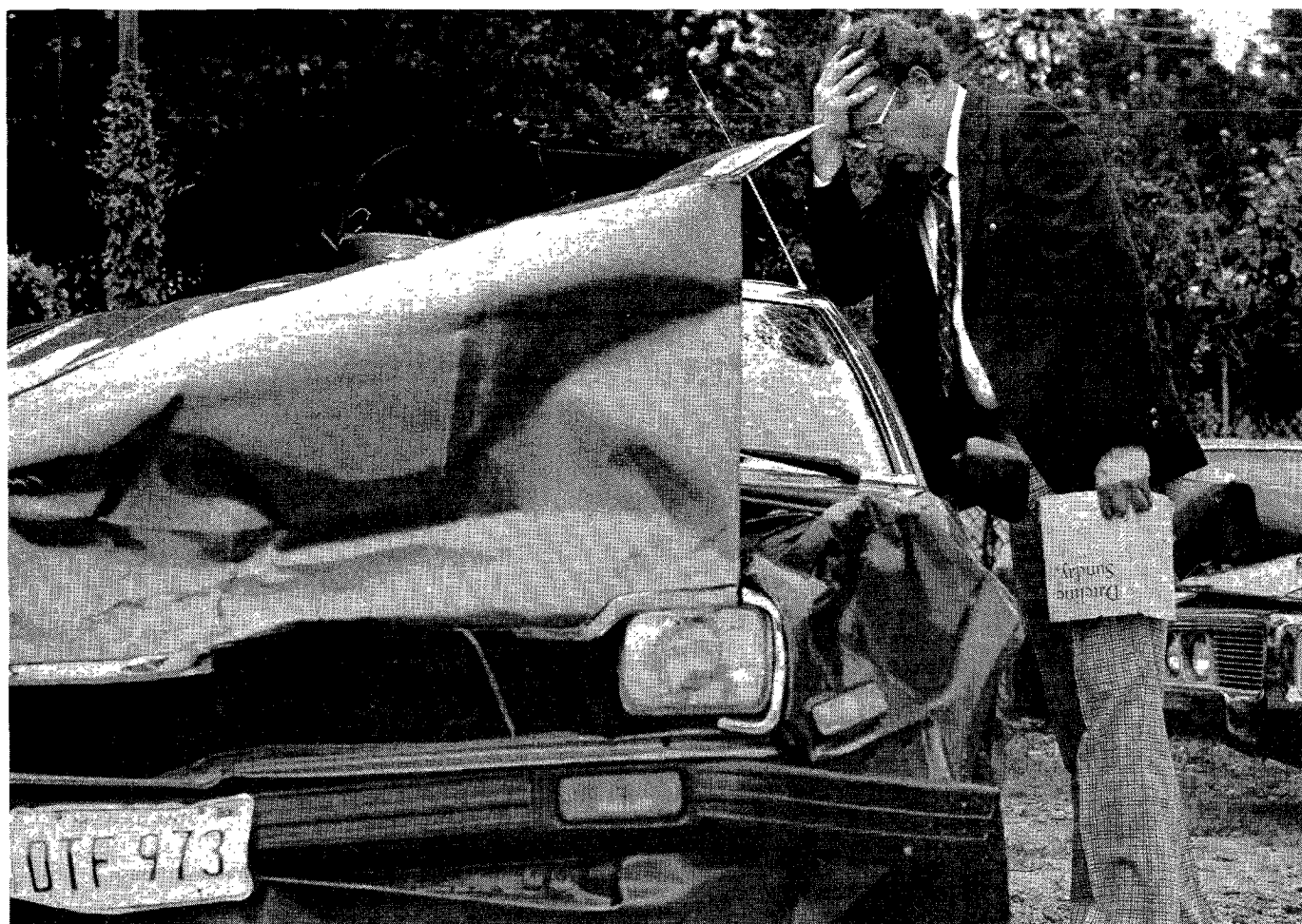
¹⁰ *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary, F. F. Bruce, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 221. See also J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), vol. 2, p. 99. C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: Clark, 1979), Vol. II, p. 579.

¹¹ *In Prophecy in the Making*, C. F. H. Henry, ed. (Carol Stream, Ill.: Creation House, 1971), p. 320.

¹² See G. E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 632.

¹³ John Bright, *Covenant and Promise: The Prophetic Understanding of the Future in Pre-Exilic Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p. 198.

Leading New Testament scholars have pointed out that in Romans 11, although Paul speaks about Israel's return to God by faith in Christ, he says nothing about Israel's return to glory in Palestine.



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MINISTRY Editor J. R. Spangler talks with Robert V. Gentry, associate professor of physics, Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland, about implications of his studies for creationism.

The fingerprints of God

Spangler: I understand that you once worked as nuclear weapons analyst in the defense industry. How did you become interested in the age of the earth?

Gentry: We all experience new insights at times upon rereading familiar material. About twenty years ago I saw for the first time that the fourth commandment stated rather clearly that the earth *and all that is in it* was created in six literal days, which, according to Biblical chronology, seemed to me to have been only several thousand years ago. The view of modern science, that the earth has slowly evolved over billions of years, was one I had learned well in college, and it had succeeded in washing away my belief in Genesis. But now when I found that Genesis was reiterated in the fourth commandment, the matter entered a moral context I had not previously considered.

Spangler: So you embarked on a private research venture in an attempt to resolve the issue for yourself. Where did you start?

Gentry: In science the age of various rocks is computed by radioactive dating techniques on the basic assumption that "element A" changes, or decays, into "element B" at a uniform rate. Many decades ago scientists studied radioactive halos (radiohalos), which are microscopic colored ring patterns in rocks, because they were considered proof of uniform decay. I was unconvinced these studies were conclusive, so I began a study of radiohalos for myself. After a few years I had found some interesting things that I could present before the national meeting

of the American Geophysical Union and also publish in a well-known scientific journal.

Spangler: Why didn't you publish them in a religious journal rather than a scientific one?

Gentry: I thought it only fair that my results be subjected to the most critical scientific scrutiny before publishing them elsewhere.

Spangler: I know that some of your more recent studies deal with the fossil record and the Noachian flood, but in this brief interview could you tell me just what you have found that pertains to Creation itself?

Gentry: Well, I have found that radiohalos in general cannot be used to prove a uniform radioactive decay rate, because that crucial assumption is in fact unprovable. The result in itself would have richly repaid all the years of microscope work that were needed to find the necessary radiohalos. But I experienced a far greater satisfaction when it occurred to me one day that a certain class of polonium radiohalos, thought to be of little significance by earlier investigators, appeared to be evidence that a large fraction of earth's basement rocks, the so-called Precambrian granites, had formed very rapidly.¹

Spangler: Later you will have to explain more about Precambrian granites, but it seems to me that what you are talking about has some enormous implications. How have other scientists reacted to your results?

Gentry: In 1973, two physicists and a geologist published a rather hostile scientific report that attempted to discredit my work by pointing out that the existence of certain polonium radiohalos in granites "would cause apparently insuperable geological problems" to the theory that the earth had evolved over billions of years.²

Spangler: Their report must have raised a lot of questions about your work.

Gentry: Actually, it was one of the best things that could have happened. It showed that other scientists also realized that the occurrence of polonium radiohalos in such rocks did not fit the accepted evolutionary framework of earth history; hence their conclusion that they just couldn't exist. Their report later enabled me to publish new and more convincing evidence to support my previous deductions.³

Spangler: Now, before we proceed further, tell me something of how modern science views the history of the earth so that I can understand the significance of the Precambrian granites and why rapid formation of these particular rocks would dispute conventional geology.

Gentry: All right. In brief, the earth is viewed as a tiny part of the evolution of the universe, which modern science postulates began at the so-called big-bang—a hypothesized giant primeval explosion that supposedly occurred some 17 billion years ago. In other words, in order to get things started, scientists have to suspend the very foundational cause-and-effect relationship that undergirds all of modern science, for their theory offers no physical cause for the big-bang, nor any conventional explanation of the origin of the source material. At any rate, however, the big-bang supposedly provided matter for stars to form, and certain stars, when they later exploded as super-novae, provided matter for the earth to form.

Spangler: Stop right there for a moment. I'm no scientist, but common sense tells me that matter just doesn't condense even out of ordinary explosion. So how could the kind of gigantic explosion you have described ever give birth to massive stars? And in the same vein, how

For further background on this article, please see the editorial appearing on p. 22.—Editors.

could expanding gas from supernovae ever reaccumulate to form planets? And what about the galaxies—how are they explained and why do they occur in such different configurations?

Gentry: The truth is that despite years of study by many competent scientists, there are still no demonstrable scientifically defensible explanations to these questions you have raised. In this respect two well-known astronomers have said, "If stars did not exist, it would be very easy to prove this is what we expect"⁴ and, "We do not have an adequate theory of star formation (some people say we have none at all), but we can learn a lot by looking."⁵

Spangler: So scientists apparently believe if they just keep on looking, all the monumental difficulties associated with explaining the origin of stars, galaxies, and planets in terms of the big-bang theory will eventually be solved! But tell me, hasn't the solar system been explained?

Gentry: A recently published authoritative review of planetary theories concludes that "Science is nowhere close to a satisfactory explanation of our planetary system." And within the book itself are quotes from a distinguished astronomer who after three decades of study remarked: "Almost everywhere we look in the solar system we are faced by unsolved problems. If we had a reliable theory of the origin of planets, if we knew of some mechanism consistent with the laws of physics, so that we understood how planets form, then clearly we could make use of it to estimate the probability that other stars have attendant planets."⁶

Spangler: All this leaves me with the impression that one has to have *faith* to believe that the big-bang began things, that the stars formed by chance, that the galaxies evolved by accident, and that the solar system just somehow developed. In any event, let's move on to the point where the earth presumably comes into the picture. Remember, I still want you to explain just how the polonium radiohalos in the Precambrian granites dispute conventional geology.

Gentry: According to one popular view, a "protoearth" first condensed out of the gases of a solar nebula and was subsequently heated to a near-molten condition about 4.5 billion years ago by gravitational contraction and radioactivity. In this scenario, different types of crustal rocks are presumed to have slowly crystallized as the earth gradually cooled over vast periods of time. Supposedly, the high temperatures associated with the formation of these rocks were sufficient to obliterate the fossil record of any embryonic life forms that had begun to evolve during this Precambrian period.

Spangler: I can see now the implications of your research more clearly. If I understand what you are saying, evolutionists would hold that Precambrian granites formed over hundreds of millions

of years as the earth's crust cooled, whereas the evidence from certain polonium radiohalos suggests these same rocks crystallized or formed very rapidly, within just a few minutes at the most. It's no wonder some of your fellow scientists could hardly believe the evidence you reported. Tell me, have you presented these findings in scientific meetings, and if so, what has been the response?

Gentry: In 1978, I was one of five invited speakers at the Symposium on Time and the Age of the Earth, held at Louisiana State University. The convener of that symposium, Dr. Ray Kazmann, subsequently published an account of the meetings in the September, 1978, issue of *Geotimes* and in the January 9, 1979, issue of *EOS* (*Transactions, American Geophysical Union*). Both journals have wide circulation among geologists, geochemists, and geophysicists. In fact, a very prominent scientist subsequently published a letter in the May 29, 1979, issue of *EOS*, stating that my results implied the earth had formed in just a few hours, which, in his opinion was complete absurdity.

Spangler: So there was no question that scientists again understood the implications of your results. Did you have an opportunity to respond to that letter?

Gentry: Yes, in the same issue of *EOS* I countered that my results were evidence that the Precambrian granites had been created by fiat, which is really just another way of saying that the billions of years required by the big-bang model could be replaced by a few minutes of divine creation.

Spangler: Was that the end of it?

Gentry: Not quite. Another well-known scientist published a critical review of my work in the August 14, 1979, issue of *EOS* without informing me that my research was under attack. My work was badly represented. Fortunately I was finally given opportunity to correct the errors. My rebuttal was published in the July 1, 1980, issue of *EOS*, but only over the objections of several scientists within the geological community.

Spangler: I thought scientists were supposed to be open and objective in their appraisal of data.

Gentry: I think that generally they are, but in my particular case reviewers in the geological sciences have on several occasions attempted to suppress or censor publication of the evidence that questions the big-bang scenario.

Spangler: Just a side thought, I know many of our readers would like to know whether this evidence for Creation has any bearing on the age of the earth and the gap theory. Could you elaborate on this?

Gentry: This is a very important question, and, in my opinion, we must let both science and Scripture complement each other in order to arrive at a consistent answer.

First, we need to realize that historically the primary motivation for proposing the earlier versions of the gap theory was a desire to harmonize Genesis with the vast time periods demanded by uniformitarian geology. Now just as science has changed its conception of the cosmos over the past century, so has the gap theory, with all its numerous variations, been modified to incorporate these changes. All such theories have one thing in common—they do not stand alone. They are essentially dependent on the prevailing uniformitarian view of the cosmos (at present, the big-bang theory) and hence are almost continually being modified to harmonize with that view. This means that all such theories are alike in picturing the Precambrian granites as having been formed by slow evolutionary processes over eons of time. So if it is granted that the polonium radiohalos contradict the big-bang scenario of a slowly cooling earth by providing evidence for fiat creation of those granites, that same evidence must also contradict all other theories based on the same premise.

Moreover, if the Precambrian granites are, in fact, rocks that were *created* rather than rocks which *evolved*, then the time when they were *created* is, in my opinion, clearly specified in Exodus 20:11 as being within that six-day period when God made the earth and *all that in them* is. (See also Gen. 2:1, 4.) Concerning how long ago that six-day period was, I believe that length of time can be determined only by scriptural chronology.

Spangler: We have covered a lot of territory, and some of our readers may not have understood the significance of every detail. Do you have any last words to clarify this issue?

Gentry: Well, your readers ought to understand that this interview contains only the barest outline of the phenomenon that I see as scientific evidence that God left His fingerprints in earth's primordial rocks when during Creation week He spoke the Planet Earth into existence out of nothing (see Gen. 1:1, 2; Ex. 20:11; Ps. 33:6, 9; Heb. 11:3). Also I am genuinely interested in knowing the truth regarding these things and would welcome response from readers, particularly those who might have demonstrable evidence contradicting my studies.

¹Robert V. Gentry, *Science* 160, 1228 (1968); 173, 727 (1971).

²C. Moazed et al., *Science* 180, 1272 (1973).

³Robert V. Gentry, *Science* 184, 62 (1974); *Nature* 252, 564 (1974); *Science* 194, 315 (1976).

⁴Quoted in L. H. Aller and D. B. McLaughlin, *Stellar Structure* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 577.

⁵Virginia Trimble, *American Scientist* 65, 79 (1977).

⁶Stanley L. Jaki, *Planets and Planetarians: A History of Theories of the Origin of the Planetary Systems* (New York: Halsted Press, 1978). See cover jacket for first quote and page 246 for the other two quotes.

Why we publish creationism articles

Are we overdoing it on the subject of creationism? We don't think so, although some of our readers might. Perhaps an explanation of our stand in this important area will clear up any misunderstandings.

Some readers have questioned our emphasis on creationism, wondering what relevance it has for promulgating the gospel. One reason is that interest in creationism is on the upswing in the United States. Even though a recent court decision in California failed to require that evidence for Creation and evolution be taught together in the public schools of that State, the issue is far from dormant. Pending legislation in several States would require that evidence for creationism must also be included in the curriculum if evolution is taught. In fact, just such a law has already been passed in Arkansas, and a recent challenge to that law by the American Civil Liberties Union may well be setting the stage for a repeat of the famous 1925 Scopes trial.

In the meantime, a nationwide poll is being taken to determine whether individuals believe creationism should be taught in the public schools along with evolution, and plans are being laid for a prime-time TV debate between a prominent creationist scientist and a leading evolutionary scientist. That debate, if it comes off, may well have leading political figures watching intently to see whether creationism can live up to its billing as a truly credible aspect of science.

With such events transpiring, our readers deserve to know that Seventh-day Adventists are creationists, not theistic evolutionists nor progressive creationists. Furthermore, we find nothing in the traditional doctrine of separation of church and state that would prohibit public school textbooks from including evidence for both Creation and evolution. Indeed, it seems to us that for many years the philosophy of secular humanism has so disguised itself in the name of academic freedom that virtually all scientific evidence of creationism has been systematically excluded from many textbooks in favor of presenting evidence for evolution.

Because of our church's strong belief in creationism, we have for years sponsored the Geoscience Research Institute, which has five individuals working full time in the area of Creation research. How could we have done otherwise, believing as we do that the fourth commandment still enjoins all Christians to observe the seventh-day

Sabbath as a memorial of God's literal, six-day work of Creation? In the apostle's statement "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3) we see a reflection of the fact that Christ is the Creator. This is why He could say: "The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" (Mark 2:28). In this context Seventh-day Adventists believe that they are called upon by God to give special emphasis to the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, which are introduced by an unequivocal declaration that the "everlasting gospel" (Rev. 14:6) is inseparably connected with the fact that we are to "worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (verse 7). To us, the similarities between Revelation 14:6, 7 and Exodus 20:11 are unmistakable. From our perspective, God's call to worship Him in the context of His everlasting gospel must acknowledge that not only is He the Creator but He forever memorialized the Creation in the seventh-day Sabbath so that it will be kept holy throughout all eternity (see Isa. 66:22, 23).

I have spent numerous hours with Robert V. Gentry discussing scientific evidence for Creation. A summary of his research and convictions appears in the interview that begins on page 20. Even though Gentry has been on the faculty of Columbia Union College in Takoma

Park, Maryland, for the past fifteen years, he has had the unique opportunity of pursuing his research activity at a national government laboratory for the past twelve years as a "visiting scientist." During this period he has received research grants through Columbia Union College from the J. F. Schneider Memorial Foundation of Atlanta, from the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C., from NASA (to study lunar rocks), and from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

He has a considerable publication record as author or coauthor of twenty research papers in such scientific publications as *Science*, *Nature*, *Applied Physics Letters*, *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, *Physical Review Letters*, *Annual Review of Nuclear Sciences*, and the *Proceedings of the 1978 International Conference on Super Heavy Elements*.

His research is now being funded primarily by Adventist Ministries, Inc., through Columbia Union College. Gentry is a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Physical Society, the American Geophysical Union, Sigma Xi, and the New York Academy of Sciences, and is listed in *Who's Who in America*.

We feel now is an appropriate time for some of his results on scientific creationism to be brought to the attention of MINISTRY's readership.—J.R.S.

Festival of Evangelism

Perhaps you were among the 8,500 delegates to the interdenominational American Festival of Evangelism held in Kansas City July 27-30 and saw the booth that MINISTRY had in the exhibit hall. As editors, we were gratified that 60 to 70 percent of those we talked with were already familiar with the magazine and received it at their home or office. We also welcome the several hundred new readers who registered at the Festival for complimentary bimonthly subscriptions.

Those who stopped by the MINISTRY booth also received a free sample tape

explaining a new service that we are beginning—a Tape-of-the-Month program designed especially for the professional growth and personal enrichment of the pastor or other church professional. (If you weren't at the Festival you can still receive the sample tape as long as supplies last. See the ad on page 19 and fill in the coupon.)

We appreciate getting acquainted with many readers and participating in the objectives of the Festival—to better equip the church to evangelize America.—B.R.H.

Reader Service Page

This page lists in one convenient place all the items currently being offered to MINISTRY readers. Indicate the items you wish to order, fill in your name and address, and mail the entire page along with payment.

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Ancient crematorium discovered?

The strange square building excavated near the Amman airport has puzzled archeologists for several years. The director of a recent excavation shares his interpretation of this unique structure.

The Transjordan, the region to the east of the Jordan Valley, has had a checkered history of human settlement. There were times when it was heavily citted and other times when only Bedouins, who leave little sign of their passing, seem to have inhabited its wide spaces. The longest period of apparent abandonment by settled people was that of the middle and late Bronze Age (c. 1900-1300 B.C.), roughly the period of the patriarchs and Israel's sojourn in Egypt.

Although recent archeological exploration and excavation have uncovered a few sites from those periods that were settled, such settlements are still relatively infrequent and tend to be small in size and shallow in depth of remains. Outside of one or two exceptional sites, it was not a time of high prosperity for the region.

Any Transjordan site found that dates to these periods is therefore of great interest. For those interested in the Biblical history of the region, sites from the late Bronze Age hold particular interest, because it was during or near the end of this period that the Israelite conquest and settlement of Canaan (including Transjordan) occurred. Late Bronze Age sites could hold clues to Israel's arrival on the scene.

In 1955 there was considerable excitement when a small late Bronze Age site was discovered while bulldozers were preparing one of the runways at the airport in Amman, Jordan. Fortunately, the director of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, G. L. Harding, happened to be in the airport at the time, and recognizing the importance of the site, helped to save the remains from destruction. The runway was diverted.

Partially excavated that same year, the site was found to consist of only one building. Further excavations in 1966, which totally cleared the structure, confirmed the isolation of the building. The enigma of the site's isolation was further compounded by the amazing finds recovered in and around the structure. There were great quantities of beautifully painted imported pottery, mostly from Greece,

where the important Mycenaean civilization was flourishing. There were many stone vessels, predominantly from Egypt, carved from stones such as alabaster, serpentine, travertine, and porphyry. Several pieces of gold jewelry were found, as well as bronze weapons and scarabs (small seals in the shape of dung beetles).

The building itself was constructed in a perfect square, about fifty feet on a side, and consisted of a series of rectangular rooms surrounding a perfectly square inner court. The center of the building contained two circular, flat stones sitting one on top of the other with what appeared to be organic ash on the topmost stone (an incense altar?). The walls of the building were constructed with very large boulders, not at all common in domestic houses of the time, which were ordinarily constructed of small boulders.

The first excavators suggested that the building was a temple, basing their conclusion primarily upon the perfectly square plan (not particularly a common temple plan, but not a typical house plan, either) and focusing on the inner, central room with its possible incense altar and the amazing quantity and richness of the finds.

The debate regarding the building's function has raged. Some scholars have suggested that the building was really the house of a rich land baron patterned after typical houses of contemporary Egypt. Others said that it was a watchtower. The problem of its isolation further perplexed archeologists. Why was such an important building located seemingly all by itself? In fact, many refused to believe that it really was as isolated as the excavators let on. Rumors spread of a nearby settlement that no one could find!

Meanwhile, the science of archeology was growing more and more precise in its methods of data retrieval and analysis. The second excavation had collected many fragments of burned bones, items thrown away by earlier excavators. When these were later found to be human, J. B. Hennessy, the excavator, suggested that the site was used as a temple for human sacrifice. If so, this would be the first and only such site discovered in the ancient Near East. (Others have been found, but are mainly connected with the Carthaginian

world in the western Mediterranean. See MINISTRY, March and May, 1977.)

The problem thus remained until Lawrence T. Geraty of Andrews University learned from an airport official whose wife was an amateur archaeologist that the site was again threatened by airport expansion. The next day Geraty and I accompanied the official to see whether further excavations at the site might prove profitable.

Though weeds covered the building, it was readily identifiable. We found virtually no evidence for settlement outside the building except on the north side, where we thought we saw a few stones protruding above the ground. These seemed to have been laid in a line, thus constituting an archeologist's definition of a "wall." We made arrangements for a small salvage excavation, which would be under my direction, immediately following the 1976 Heshbon excavation then in progress. Because the main building had been completely excavated, we planned to center our activities on the possible "wall" we had seen.

Naturally, we hoped to make important finds similar to those made in 1955 and 1966. However, instead of scores of imported Mycenaean vessels, we found fragments of crude platters and bowls made from basalt and related stone. Instead of gold jewelry, we found one bronze arrowhead. Instead of a building constructed of massive boulders, we found only a pile of stones that seems to have been structured by crude "walls" on the outer edges.

Careful observation indicated that many of the stones in the pile showed signs of burning on one side. Could this be the altar of sacrifice associated with the "temple"? But the stone pile was on the north of the building, and altars are usually to the east.

We also found many small fragments of burned human bones strewn all about the building, but their thickest concentration was near the stone pile. If we were to follow Hennessy's suggestion that the site witnessed the practice of a cult of human sacrifice, we had probably found the altar. But where human sacrifices are best documented (in the Phoenician world), the individuals sacrificed were always infants.

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Our bones were primarily from adults. The age of the individuals involved, as well as the unusual location of the "altar" (on the north side of the building), suggested that we should look elsewhere for an interpretation of the burned human bones.

To my knowledge, the only other relatively common practice that involves the burning of human bodies is cremation of the dead. If the structuring "walls" of the stone pile were reconstructed to their probable original extent, the plan would have been in the shape of a rectangle, roughly eleven feet long by six feet wide, an ideal size for a funeral pyre.

So far, this is simply speculation, since no articulated human body has been found connected with the stone pile. Indeed, cremation seems to have been a relatively rare practice in the ancient Near East. This would be the first such site ever found in this part of the world.

But there are other indications (even if they do not directly point to cremation) that the site was used for funerary purposes. Imported pottery, stone vessels, bronze weapons, gold jewelry, and scarabs can all be found at domestic dwellings, but never approaching such quantities as were found at the airport site. Temples can have such riches, but other typically "cultic" objects, such as incense stands, chalices, zoomorphic figurines, and other pottery vessels for specialized use were entirely missing.

However, such objects from the airport site are typically found in tomb deposits of this time. Imported pottery vessels and stoneware are frequently found in late Bronze Age tombs, bronze weapons are typical in burials of men, and gold jewelry is common with women. The massive construction of the building's walls would have housed and protected the valuable contents from raiding nomads or thieves. The isolation of the site also falls neatly into this picture, since mortuary complexes were situated a mile or two outside any settlement. The site could thus have easily served the ancient city of Rabbath Ammon (capital of the Ammonites), the late Bronze Age city that has recently been found about a mile and a half west of the airport.

Cremation thus fits in very nicely with this overall funerary aspect of the site. Just who used the site is not certain. The Ammonites in whose territory the site lay may have practiced cremation at times, but there is so far no evidence for it. All Ammonite burials so far found have shown that they typically practiced inhumation. It is known, however, that ancient Hittites practiced cremation, both within their Anatolian homeland as well as in their Syro-Palestinian settlements (Hittites made up a scattered portion of the Canaanite population taken over by the Israelites; see Joshua 3:10, et cetera). There may have been Hittite elements living within Ammonite territory who practiced cremation at our site.

Some interesting details of ancient funerary practices can be gleaned from our excavation. Soon after a person died (possibly a Hittite), the bereaved family would have brought his body to this site outside Ammon and arranged with the operators of the establishment to cremate the body. Because the bones that were most heavily burned tended to be those from the head and chest, it would seem that the fire was hottest in that region, where more tissue needed to be burned. The fire would thus have only been large enough to burn away the soft tissue.

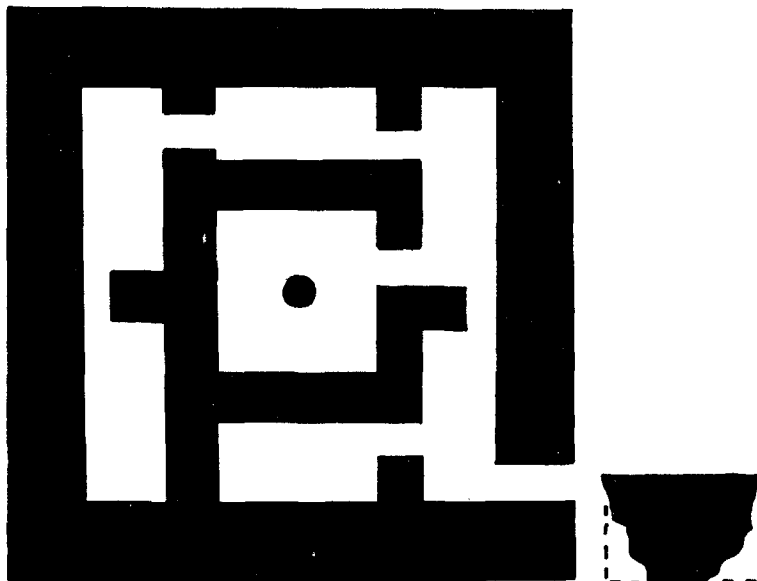
The charred, cracked, and fragmented bones were then gathered from between the stones of the pyre and returned to the family, who probably then purchased some of the exotic tomb furnishings with which to honor their dead and without which no one could be buried, and proceeded to bury their loved one. Alternatively, the bones may have been strewn to the wind, since bone fragments were found all around the building. All of this may have occurred on the day of the person's death, which would have harmonized with the Israelite custom

of burying the dead on the day of decease (see Deut. 21:23).

So far a cemetery associated with the site has not been found, but a similar building just recently discovered some ten miles to the north has contemporary tombs in its proximity.

Just what connection could Israel have had with this site? Within Israel, cremation was not generally practiced. Indeed, when bodies were burned, it was looked upon as a sign of ignominious defeat in battle (see 1 Sam. 31:12; Amos 6:10) or as a punishment of criminals (see Lev. 20:14; 21:9; Joshua 7:25). The Mishna, a Jewish commentary on Mosaic law from the second century A.D., forbids cremation as a form of idolatry. Israel, therefore, probably had nothing to do with this site.

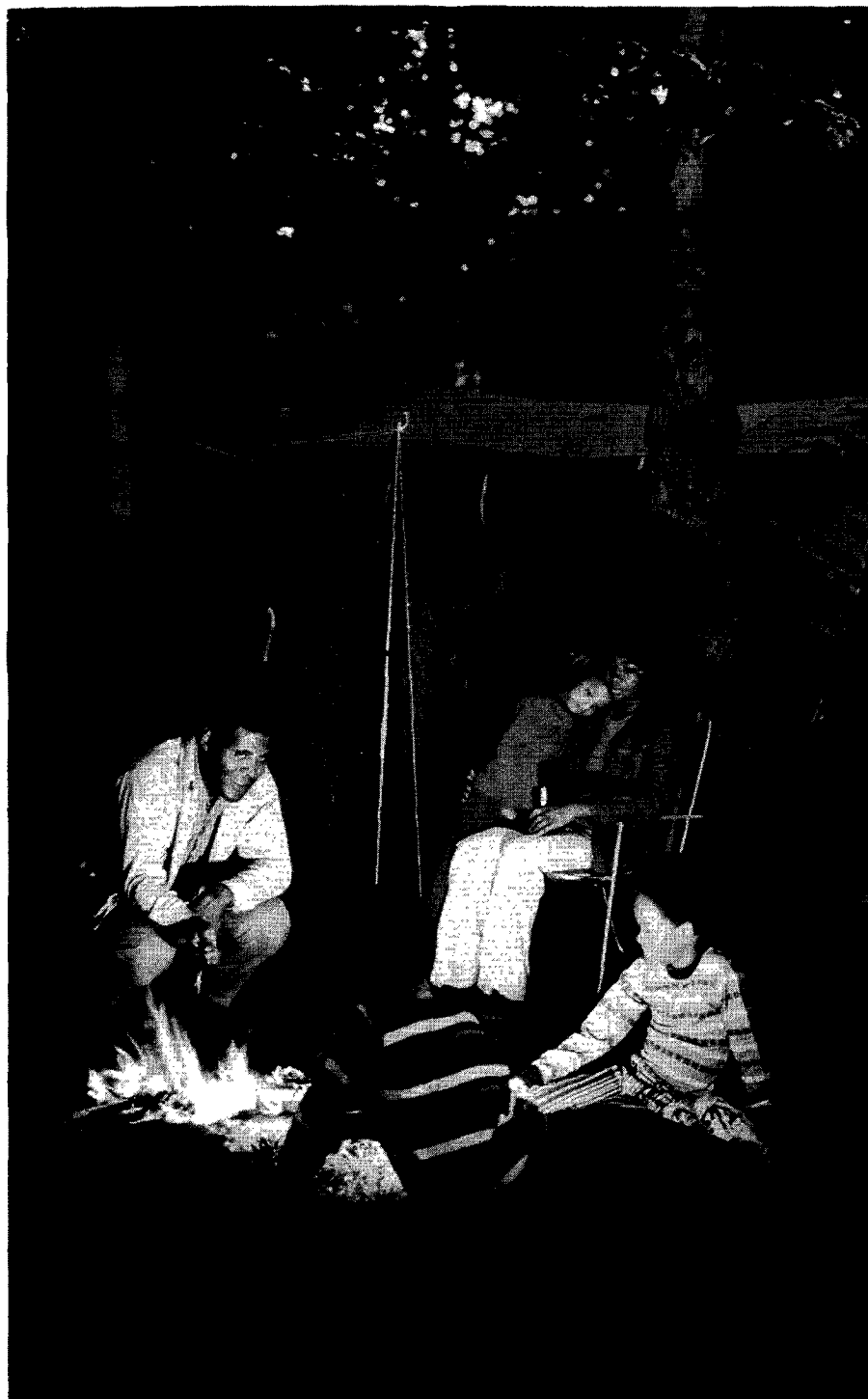
The pottery found in and around the site dated to the thirteenth century B.C., a time when the Israelites were probably already in the region. The Amman airport crematorium is thus an example of the practices of non-Israelite groups living in the region of Ammon, a people God forbade Israel to conquer (see Deut. 2:19).



Above: Plan of the Amman mortuary temple and cremation pyre that was located north of the temple. Note the series of connecting rectangular rooms and the square inner court. The pyre itself measures eleven by six feet. Left: A Mycenaean goblet from the temple of Lachish. Although not from the Amman discovery, it is of the same style as those found in the earlier excavations at the airport site.

The pastor and his pastime

If your philosophy is "better burn out than rust out," and if you have been heard to say, "If Jesus is always on the job, can I do less?" then you had better read this article!



Never take a day off!" The respected elder pastor had such an authoritative tone to his voice and such a spiritual expression on his countenance that my attention was immediately captured. "After all," he clinched his point, "if Jesus is always on the job, can I do less? Besides, I'd rather burn out for the Lord than rust out!"

I was impressed! I was challenged! Indeed, I was so ashamed at my lack of consecration and commitment to the Christ I had publicly professed as my Lord and Master, I slunk away to pray and renew my willingness to offer myself as a "living sacrifice."

But I had a wonderful wife and a beautiful baby daughter, and my new zeal began to be a problem. My wife stopped me one day and solemnly asked whether I'd missed my calling.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, it seems to me you should have been a Catholic priest or a celibate Protestant pastor without wife or children. Then you'd be happy, and we'd be happy too, since we wouldn't expect any of your time, or attention, or care."

That hurt! I had to go to God again. Prayer helps one get a proper perspective.

God reminded me of several senior ministers I admired and loved, all of whom seemed to subscribe to the "All out, burn out, for Christ and the church" concept. One by one they passed before my mind—children away from God, never attending church. Now, in middle age, many were experiencing severe health problems. It seemed God was saying, "That is where you are heading with your false sense of spirituality."

"But, Lord," I protested, "it's all for You. I'd love to be home with my family one or two nights a week, to be able to go fishing, to have a hobby or take an honest-to-goodness vacation that doesn't double as a preaching mission, to relax."

Then God said, "Did you ever read what I did on the seventh day?" Ouch! Later I just happened to read in the Bible that Jesus said to His disciples, "Come

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away with Me. We must rest awhile" (see Mark 6:31).

About that time I attended a conference to hear a man who pastored the largest Pentecostal church I'd ever heard of. As "chance" would have it, one of his subjects was the necessity for pastors to show a good example of family life by giving adequate time, love, and attention to their own wives and children! He said he reserved two nights a week for his family, and nothing except death (either his or a parishioner's) would take him away from his appointment at home on those nights. If he could have a successful church and maintain that schedule, why couldn't I?

In my traveling ministry I had been in many pastors' homes. As I reflected I realized that two extremes existed in the ministry: pastors tended to be either workaholics or loafaholics.

Why was I increasingly becoming a workaholic?

Was it pride, camouflaged as humility? "Look, everyone, see how much I love God, the church, the ministry?"

Was it inferiority overcompensating in frenetic activity?

Was it unbelief? "I can't trust God to do what He's promised, so I'd better do it myself."

Was it insecurity? "If I don't perform like superman, they may vote me out."

Was it uncertainty of my call, my salvation, my qualifications, my success, God's blessing?

Was it guilt that drove me to work longer and harder, always trying to do better?

Was it a sincere burden, a genuine love for God and man and a burning desire to

fulfill my call?

It really didn't matter, I finally decided. If I continued neglecting my family or my body, I'd eventually be out of commission. The law of diminishing returns would nail me to the wall. As I thought about it, I realized I regularly put in sixteen-hour days, seven days a week, for a weekly average of 100 to 115 hours. Yet in all that time there was almost no physical exercise. I was sitting at a desk, riding in a car, visiting in a home, and, you guessed it, eating lots of pie and ice cream.

God gave me two goals regarding these areas of my life:

First, to give my family priority (see Titus 1:6). No, I wouldn't neglect my call, the church, or the Christians in it. But sixty to seventy-five hours a week devoted to my ministry should be adequate. Monday will be my day off for family, relaxation, and fun. Friday evenings and Saturday afternoons [Seventh-day Adventist pastors could easily substitute other times] I will try to reserve as family times, with a variety of interesting experiences.

Second, to exercise faithfully, enjoy hobbies, and keep my weight near what it was the year I graduated from high school.

Not everyone enjoys exercise, and few pastors can afford expensive equipment. But all can take brisk walks, jog, skip rope, or do calisthenics, and watch the diet. Our pastoral staff has taken up the challenge of racquetball and unashamedly tries to play once or twice a week. Our family now owns a boat and, though it cost less than a thousand dollars, it has brought a million dollars' worth of family fun, togetherness,

and learning. Whether fishing, water-skiing, or simply riding, we're away from the pressure, demand, and spotlight of pastoring. My family has me, all of me, for that Monday and/or Saturday afternoon; I'm not being shared with several hundred other hurting, needy, or even happy people.

The church knows now that Monday is our family day and is proud of it. My family knows every Monday is their day, and they love me for it.

God has been most gracious to me as a result of my new life style. Our children are a great spiritual asset, and I have enjoyed outstanding health, exceptional energy, and unfailing enthusiasm and excitement at being in the ministry.

I believe we sin against our bodies and our families when we neglect them week after week. I believe it is sinful to go against God's plan of setting aside one day a week as a day of rest. I believe we can get far more done in five and a half (long) days each week than in seven if we have been refreshed in body, soul, spirit, mind, will, and emotion.

I challenge you, pastors, to change your life style if you are neglecting these areas of your life. Yes, it would seem more spiritual to say, "Pray more; witness more; give more; do more; go more." But my counsel to the workaholic pastor is "Stay at home more and exercise more."

My voice may not carry the same tone of authority as that of the pastor I once esteemed for his prodigious efforts, nor my countenance exhibit such an aura of spirituality, but I raise my voice unhesitatingly in defense of a balanced program of work, family, and physical fitness.

The coronary club

With more and more preachers becoming victims of heart attacks, the coronary club is extending membership to those who only a few years ago were considered much too young to be admitted. No doubt many preachers, young and old, are seeking membership but have lacked information on how to become members. The following rules, if followed, will assure speedy action toward membership:

1. Never say No.
2. Insist on being liked by, and trying to please, everyone.
3. Never delegate responsibility. If you must appoint a committee, do all the work yourself.
4. Never plan a day off, but if you are forced to take one, visit a preacher friend and spend the day talking about church problems, yours and his.
5. Never plan a night at home, but if it

ever happens that you have no meetings or calls, be sure to accept an outside speaking engagement.

6. Take all the revivals your church will tolerate; then book more for your vacations. (Place all honorariums in a special account marked Heart Fund. This will help pay medical expenses when your coronary comes.)

7. Never allow enough time to drive comfortably to an appointment. (This will do two things: show people how busy you are; protect the reputation preachers have as fast drivers.)

8. Watch attendance records, especially the Sunday school's. If they lag a bit, decide it's time to move and always wonder what caused the people to dislike you.

9. When the doctor advises you to slow down, ignore him and brag about the fact that you would rather wear out than rust out.

10. Be sure to beat the record of the former pastor and try hard to beat your own each year.

11. Take the burden of your people to the Lord, but don't leave it there. Play God and pretend that the kingdom depends on you.

12. Lead your church into a building program whether they need it or not; consider yourself better qualified than the architect and give it your personal supervision.

13. Consider it your civic duty to be a member of every club in town and become president of as many as you can.

14. If having done all these, you don't succeed, accept the largest church you can find and work very tirelessly. You should then have a coronary within six months.—George W. Miller, *Pulpit Helps*, AMG International, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Whatever happened to the family that prayed together?

How can a modern family find time for old-fashioned family devotions when Dan Rather reigns at suppertime and home is more like a refueling stop at the Indy 500 than a calm, spiritual retreat?



H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS

Every evening promptly at six-thirty, with the dinner dishes cleared away, they all bow at the family altar. When Dad opens the oversized King James Bible it is a cue for Mom and the girls to start taking notes. The boys stay busy underlining passages in their small New Testaments—with yellow felt-tip pens.

I have never seen that kind of family, except maybe in the pages of an outdated Sunday school quarterly. I don't know if the fact is good, bad, or neutral, and it probably doesn't matter much. What really matters is finding out how the Christian faith can best mesh with family life in today's world.

"Honey," I said to my husband, "why don't we clear away the dinner dishes and bow at the family altar at six-thirty every evening?"

"What family altar?" he exclaimed. "Are you wanting another piece of furniture?"

Denise Turner is a free-lance writer who lives in Middletown, Ohio, with her husband and their 4-year-old daughter.

"I mean, dear, why don't we have family devotions every night at six-thirty?"

"Probably because no one is home," my husband said, chuckling. "And besides, I hardly ever get to see the news now, and God certainly wouldn't want me to miss the news. Seriously, can't we come up with something better?"

Something better. There it was again. The Christian faith/contemporary family life mix is in need of something better. Old-fashioned family devotions seem to be extinct in today's society, but where is "something better" to be found? The next day I began to poll some of my Christian friends.

"Maybe we're not pious enough," one of them declared, "but the scene you just described would never work for us. We have the kind of home where the neighborhood kids are jumping on the beds, the dog has to be taken outside, and the phone is ringing."

"Don't we all," I moaned.

Another friend told me it is hard enough for her to get her three children to sit still in church on Sundays. "If I subjected

myself to stress like that every night," she sighed, "I am afraid the whole concept of Christian motherhood would soon be missing from our family."

One evening shortly after my survey was completed, I was chopping celery for the salad. My husband and daughter were taking Raggedy Ann for piggyback rides. "If only his fraternity brothers could see him now," I mused. When it sounded like they were taking a break, I called into the living room, "What do you want your child to remember most about growing up in this home?"

"That it's a Christian home, I suppose," was the answer.

"What comes second?" I continued.

"I don't know," my husband said. "Probably that we have a lot of fun around here."

That's it! I thought. That's the missing element in my make-believe family—fun. A parent can pound the Bible into his child for years, but if the child doesn't see real joy in his parents' lives, then any attempt at family devotions automatically flops. A vibrant Christian life style, a cause worth living and dying for, days filled with excitement and adventure and fun—these are the things that make a child want to grow up to be like "Mommy and Daddy."

Today my family has a daily devotional time together. Of course, it is our own brand of family devotions. We decided that each family, being unique, probably needs to devise its own.

Our brand simply consists of a short period of time set aside each morning to read the Bible and talk to each other and to God. It is a casual time, mostly because we are a casual family and because God has always fit comfortably into our home. When we feel like laughing, we laugh with Him. When we feel like crying, we cry with Him, and that is the way we want it. That is the way we want our daughter to know God too. She will never be able to withstand the pressures of today's world without that kind of personal relationship with her heavenly Father.

Our family devotion time was born out

of need. Naturally, my husband and I feel that the parental role model of Christian living is the most important element in a child's home. Still, we sensed a need for a structured time of family worship, too. We needed it for ourselves and also for our child. When we devised our brand, we talked about how difficult it is to find a chunk of time in our already-overflowing day. We agreed that families are constantly changing and growing and that when our daughter is older we may need to plan something different. But we also agreed that family worship is extremely important in a Christian home. We would arrange our priorities accordingly.

I know some parents who pray with each of their children at night, plan family conferences when necessary, and feel that other types of family devotions would not work for them. Others think that just having dinner together and talking about a serious topic is almost a "mission impossible." There are some families, though, who are able to squeeze out a little more time. They might visit a bookstore, choose their favorites, and plan reading and discussion nights. Or they might plan family "talk-back sessions" for last week's Sunday school lesson.

Other families save an hour at the end of each day to study a devotional book together or try one of the creative methods of Bible study outlined in various publications. And sometimes little things are more important than they seem. A friend recently told me that his wife always clips a small devotional thought for the day and puts in on the breakfast table. Over the years he has come to realize how that small gesture has helped to shape his family's faith.

There are lots of possibilities. The important thing is that each family member has a voice in the planning of family worship, in the discussions about the family's changing needs. The spiritual development of each individual must be a top priority, too. Every Christian needs private time with God and time to join with a group of Christians for study and

prayer and worship. That is the only way a person can bring anything significant to his family worship time.

With all this in mind, here are a few more ideas for family worship:

- Families with young children might encourage their tots to act out Bible stories. Parents could also let each child tell his own bedtime story by recounting the events of his day and then praying about them.

- Teen-agers might enjoy pretending a switch in roles. The family could center on a Bible issue and act out an imaginary related situation with a child playing the part of a parent and vice versa.

- As time passes, a family prayer notebook can become a precious keepsake. Start one by entering your family's prayer requests, and then explaining how and when they are eventually answered.

- Use some of your worship time to plan family outings that will deepen your faith. Attend a Christian concert together, or go to hear an interesting speaker. A nature walk might be fun, too, as long as it is not substituted for church.

Of course, an attitude of faith is the necessary ingredient in any of the methods of family worship. Success is found in the constant prayer that God will help us see everything in life through spiritual eyes. It is found in the father who sees a rainbow and explains to his daughter the message behind it. It is found in the mother who sings "Jesus Loves Me" while she pushes her son's swing.

Maybe it will take a little time and effort and experimentation, but family worship can be tailored to the needs of the individual, changing family. It is probably too easy to give up, but having a happy marriage and well-adjusted Christian children is no accident. The family members who remain flexible and grow and vary their worship to meet their needs already know that.

I remember the first time we skipped our family devotions. I spent the day looking over my shoulder, half expecting to be zapped by lightning. It didn't happen,

though, and my day was surprisingly smooth.

"Do you ever feel like our morning devotional time is just a meaningless habit or an empty ritual?" I asked my husband that evening after dinner.

"Habit and ritual, maybe, but not meaningless or empty," he said. "Besides, there is something to be said for having a few habits and rituals in a family," he added.

He was right. In talking about it, we admitted to each other that there are mornings when we feel like we are just going through the motions. "But," my husband reminded me, "the Bible doesn't tell us to put the emphasis on our feelings. We are supposed to be putting the emphasis on our faith."

Needless to say, we decided to continue our daily devotions. The format and time are open to change, but the need to keep God in the number one spot in our family is not a variable. We need to worship as a family. In fact, if we had never spent so many mornings going through the motions, we might never have experienced those spiritual highs along the way. If we had never gone through the motions, we might not be able to talk about God in our family so easily, without embarrassment.

Going through the motions in our family has resulted in a kind of spiritual oneness in marriage that makes every other area of married life full and fantastic. It has helped initiate the spiritual growth of a little girl who now has a good chance of growing up knowing the truth: that the big three are not wealth and power and fame, but "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly" with God.

"No," I said to myself the first day my child wanted to lead our prayer, "my concept of family devotions was not really outdated after all. It just needed to be updated."

Condensed from an article in the Christian Herald, copyright 1979. Used by permission.

Prayers from the parsonage

Unlike the Indians and Pilgrims who prepared that first Thanksgiving meal, I am not dependent on local crops for my dinner menu. I can use Massachusetts cranberries and California walnuts, North Dakota wheat and Florida oranges, or foods from many far-flung parts of the earth.

It gives me pleasure to think of how these products reach our home. So many

people have been involved in planting, nurturing, harvesting, and packaging the food we eat. For some the work is enjoyable, but for others it is a back-breaking way to earn money. The farmer and picker, the factory worker and trucker, the store manager and stockboy, have toiled to bring variety to our table. As much as I like the goal of self-sufficiency, their enterprise and cooperation are virtues too.

"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night

shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22).

Above all, dear God, Your power gives and sustains life. Your laws control nature's delicate balance. Your bounty provides more than "our daily bread."

Thank You for this beautiful earth with its different climates and soils. Thank You for good harvests—from people who cultivate one tomato plant in a pot to those who farm a thousand acres. Thank You for an abundance of good food for health and enjoyment.

At Thanksgiving I rejoice in Your gifts and ask for a generous, sharing heart.

By Cherry B. Habenicht

Shop talk

Two viewer-education programs from the Media Action Research Center look at TV from the perspective of the Christian faith and teach viewers to take their faith and values with them to the screen.

Preaching and worship

Andrews University will conduct its second annual Consultation on Preaching and Worship, from November 2 to 6, in Berrien Springs, Michigan, according to Dr. Arthur O. Coetzee, continuing-education director.

The Consultation features such well-known preacher/authors as Dr. Lloyd Perry, Dr. Franklin M. Segler, Dr. James Earl Massey, and Dr. Norval F. Pease.

"The Consultation is oriented for clergy of all faiths, as well as any concerned Christian involved in the design and planning of worship," says Dr. Steven P. Vitrano, director of the Consultation and chairman of the department of church ministry at the Andrews University Theological Seminary. "Worship and preaching are two areas of immediate and continuing concern to the pastor. He is responsible for these every week. As a professional, he must seek to maintain his proficiency in both areas. The Consultation is designed to assist him to do that."

The program begins Monday, November 2, with an orientation and introduction, followed by a presentation by Dr. Norval F. Pease. Pease is an Andrews alumnus and a former Andrews professor. He is the author of *And Worship Him*, as well as four other books.



Dr. Lloyd M. Perry

Tuesday, November 3, the music department from Andrews will present "Music and Worship." Main speakers include C. Warren Becker, Paul Hamel, and Harold Lickey.

Dr. Lloyd M. Perry, one of America's leading teachers of preaching, and author of 17 books, will present the lectures on Wednesday, November 4. Along with 17 years of pastoral experience, Perry holds degrees from Gordon College (A.B.), Gordon Divinity School (B.D.), Columbia University (M.A.), Northern Baptist Theological Seminary (Th.D.), Northwestern University (Ph.D.), and McCormick Seminary (D.Min.). He is currently the director of the D. Min. program at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Ill.

Thursday, November 5, Dr. Franklin M. Segler will discuss aspects of worship. Since 1972 Segler has been the minister of pastoral care at Broadway Baptist church in Fort Worth, Texas. A former professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he earned his Th.M. and Th.D., Segler has written seven books for Broadman Press and is a renowned lecturer on church worship.

Friday, November 6, Dr. James Earl Massey will give a presentation on preaching. Massey, the speaker on the weekly Christian Brotherhood Hour radio program, has taught New Testament and preaching at Anderson Graduate School of Theology since 1969. A graduate of Detroit Bible College and Oberlin Graduate School of Theology, he has served nearly three decades in the pastoral ministry. He has authored 12 books and was honored with a doctorate from Asbury Theological Seminary in 1972.

Dr. Massey will conclude the Consultation with a Friday evening vespers service in the Pioneer Memorial church in Berrien Springs.

Cost for the Consultation program is \$10 per day or \$35 for all five days. If credit is desired, two continuing-education units (CEU) cost \$50, one graduate credit is \$90. For further information contact Andrews University Lifelong Learning, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104, or call (616) 471-3286.

Video Guide available

David C. Cook Publishing Company, in conjunction with The National Video Clearinghouse, is releasing *The Video Tape/Disc Guide: Religious Programs*. This 188-page reference catalog provides detailed listings of more than 1,350 titles of religious, ethical, and social concern. Articles on video equipment and effective video program use make the book of further practical value to churches and pastors.

Titles are listed both alphabetically and by subject; each program description gives a brief plot summary, available formats, audience level, and other pertinent information. In the back of the guide a complete index of wholesalers/distributors makes location of programs easy and convenient.

Virtually every topic of possible interest to those searching for religious programming is listed in this guide. This resource book, the first of its kind, should provide specific help in choosing appropriate programming and in becoming familiar with currently available products.

The softcover book may be purchased for \$12.95 from David C. Cook Publishing Company, 850 North Grove Avenue, Elgin, Illinois 60120.

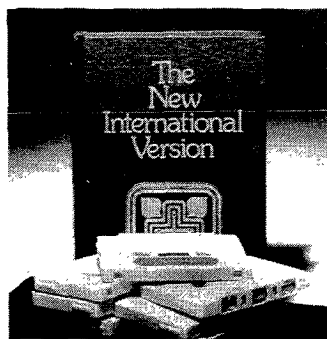


Half price!

Readers of MINISTRY can obtain a 50 percent savings on the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology!* Edited by Dr. Colin Brown, professor of systematic theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, and published by Zondervan, the three-volume set offers concise, easily grasped definitions of New Testament theological terms, all arranged in English, alphabetically, so no prior knowledge of Greek or Hebrew is required. F. F. Bruce calls it a "much appreciated companion to the New Testament for students, preachers, and teachers throughout the English-speaking world."

Each major article consists of (1) an examination of the key terms and related words in light of classical and secular Greek; (2) a further examination of these terms in the Old Testament, Apocrypha, Dead Sea scrolls, and Rabbinic and other writings; and (3) a final examination of their New Testament usage and reference. The set contains other helpful features.

Regular price for the three volumes is \$90, but MINISTRY readers can order at the special price of only \$44.95! Order directly from the Andrews University Bookstore, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103. Mention MINISTRY and please include an additional \$5 for postage and handling.



N.I.V. now on tape

Zondervan/Singspiration has just completed recording the entire New International Version of the Scriptures on cassette tape. Several innovations make this recording different from previous tapes of the Bible. Multiple voices are used in narration to give a fresh dimension; special sound effects and music are used throughout; and Dr. W. A. Criswell gives a brief overview of each Bible book at its beginning.

This new recording should be available at your Christian bookstore by the time you receive this issue of MINISTRY.

Film guide

Pastors often have opportunity to use films effectively. An annual guide that gives latest listings on the thousands of available free films is *Educators' Guide to Free Films*, published by Educators' Progress Service, Inc., Randolph, Wisconsin 53936. Organized by subject and title, it provides ordering information, specific restrictions, producing organization, date filmed, audience level, and viewing time.



Archeological slides

Many pastors and church school teachers have found archeology a valuable means of bringing realism and added information to Bible study. *Biblical Archaeology Review* is cur-

rently offering a set of more than 130 full-color slides selected from thousands in the collections of archeologists and professional photographers around the world. Accompanying the slides is a thirty-two-page booklet describing each slide, calling attention to significant details, and relating the picture to specific Bible passages and events. A special introductory offer is available to BAR subscribers until December 31. For further details, write: BAR Slide Set, 3111 Rittenhouse Street NW.. Washington, D.C. 20015.

Christians and television

"It's 10:00 P.M. Do you know where your parishioners are?" Pastors anywhere in the United States can answer with considerable assurance, "Of course; they're home watching television."

Many will be seeing the same programs, actually having a common experience somewhat similar to the one they have in church. The amount of time spent with TV, alone, has great impact on our lives, *no matter what programs we watch*. But program content has its impact, too.

Concern with TV sex, violence, and profanity is only part of the picture. Bigger questions deal with the very complex nature of our uses of television, uses that for many are beginning to resemble an all-too-easy substitute religion.

A searching study of our complex relationship with TV is at the heart of two interdenominational viewer-education efforts by the Media Action Research Center. They are *Television Awareness Training* and *Growing With Television: A Study of Biblical Values and the Television Experience*. Both look at TV from the perspective of the Christian faith, asking viewers to take their faith and values with them to the screen, becoming *active* rather than *passive* viewers.

Growing With Television is a 12-session Christian study resource with leader's guides and student leaflets for five different age levels. Every session looks at different aspects of the TV experience—our uses of time, TV's taught values compared with the Bible's, how to

use TV in more creative ways, securing better programming, et cetera. Teachers do not need any special media expertise. The far-reaching goal of this program is that persons learn to make every TV experience a Christian education experience as well.

Television Awareness Training (TAT) is aimed at adults, and leads participants into a deep exploration of TV as a values experience. A 280-page manual helps both individuals and families to make their own discoveries for using TV selectively and intentionally. Also, trained TAT leaders are available to make presentations and conduct workshops. Both the book and the workshops emphasize using TV in keeping with one's own values by learning how one is now using TV, what TV teaches, guidelines for watching, and how to use what is on the screen to trigger values discussions.

Since there is little prospect that TV programming will suddenly become what most Christians would like it to be, *Grow-*

ing With Television and *Television Awareness Training* are important resources for helping each Christian to be his own media critic and to use his Christian faith in facing the difficult value questions TV brings into the home.

For more information, write: Media Action Research Center, Room 1370, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, New York 10115. Or call (212) 865-6690.

Your turn

Have you thought of a good new idea that makes your ministry more effective? Have you run across a new product, a shortcut, a better way of doing something? Would your fellow pastors be interested in it? For each idea or helpful hint printed in this column, MINISTRY will pay \$10 to the person who *first* sends us the item. Keep your contributions short (no more than 250 words) and mail to: Shop Talk Editor, MINISTRY, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

Seminars for November and December

MINISTRY's one-day professional-growth seminars continue to provide an opportunity for growth and fellowship among clergy of all faiths. If you have not yet found one close enough to make attendance possible try the following list. Clergy within driving distance of the seminar should receive an invitation in the mail, but just in case you miss getting yours, we are listing upcoming seminars by city, together with a local phone contact for early registration or additional information. Remember, each seminar is absolutely without cost to you.

November 2	November 3	November 5
St. Louis, MO R. S. Watts (515) 223-1197	Moberly, MO R. S. Watts (515) 223-1197	Denver, CO Gordon Retzer (303) 733-3771
November 9	November 10	November 10
Akron, OH James Cress (614) 397-4665	Worthington, OH James Cress (614) 397-4665	Toronto, ON Ted McLeary (416) 571-1022
November 11	November 12	November 12
St. John's, NF Gerry Karst (709) 576-4051	Union Theol. Sem. Richmond, VA C. Murchison (804) 355-0671	Moncton, NB Lawton Lowe (506) 855-8622
November 13	November 23	November 24
Halifax, NS Lawton Lowe (506) 855-8622	Toledo, OH James Cress (614) 397-4665	Kettering, OH James Cress (614) 397-4665
December 7	December 8	December 9
Philadelphia, PA Elden Walter (215) 374-8331	Harrisburg, PA Elden Walter (215) 374-8331	Pittsburgh, PA Elden Walter (215) 374-8331

Recommended reading

Books by two well-known Christian counselors are featured this month. Howard Clinebell surveys the various approaches to counseling, and James Dobson deals with the troubling topic of emotions.

Contemporary Growth Therapies

Howard Clinebell, Abingdon, Nashville, Tennessee, 1981, 304 pages, \$10.95.

This comprehensive survey of the various approaches to counseling offers valuable insights for the pastor who does crisis counseling and refers those who require long-term therapy to clinical specialists. Understanding the key concepts and inadequacies of each school of thought in counseling will assist the pastor in selecting the specialists to whom he will refer troubled people.

Dr. Clinebell has a clarity in statement and style that enables the reader to grasp his points readily. Because this book is obviously directed to the beginning clinical pastoral counselor who is developing a philosophy of counseling, it is much more detailed than is necessary for a pastor's resource guide to counselors. While many pastors might be reluctant to spend the time necessary to become familiar with the amount of material provided here, this can be a very useful resource.—Wayne Willey.

Christian Leadership

Bruce P. Powers, Broadman, Nashville, Tennessee, 1979, 133 pages, \$7.95.

How seriously will you take Christ's words "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Matt. 20:26, R.S.V.)? Was Jesus Himself serious or just idealistic? How can the servant model of leadership be expressed in the life of today's church? These are the kinds of questions Powers addresses in developing his concept of "life-giving" servant leadership. This, he believes, is a new alternative—or at least a renewed alternative, "which defies all the traditional concepts of what being a leader is all about."

With the ministry of Christ as a paradigm, the author distinguishes the love of authority from the authority of love as the basis of Christian leadership. Powers applies this model to the ministry of the church in the context of topics such as relating to other people, implementing change according to Christian principles, and working with people in groups. The two chapters on group dynamics include several samples of devices Powers uses in his own seminars on Christian leadership. These should prove especially useful to the reader.—Brad Brookins.

Sermons From the Parables

Clovis G. Chappell, Abingdon, Nashville, Tennessee, 1979, \$3.95.

The parables of Christ weren't spoken to confuse, but to give practical light on an important subject.

Chappell gives the pastor a refreshing present-day look into the parables of Jesus in his book *Sermons From the Parables*, now in its third reprinting. The book contains sixteen sermons that emphasize the timeliness of lessons from the parables of Jesus for dealing with problems that confront us today. It provides great material for the weekly sermon.—James MacLaughlin.

Prescription for Preaching

Woodrow Michael Kroll, Baker, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1980, 278 pages, \$9.95.

This self-contained course in preaching (both public speaking and homiletics) will equip both students of preaching and pastors for developing logical, clear, and powerful sermons.

Its unique approach to homiletics forces the preacher to work out his sermon in the study so that he is not working it out in the pulpit.

The three main divisions include "Perspective on Preaching," which defines the art of preaching, refutes objections to preaching as a form of communication, and discusses the premier place of preaching; "Manner of Preaching," which describes the vocal process, bodily movements, gestures, and methods of presentation; and "Mechanics of Preaching," which deals with the preparation, plan, and partitions of a sermon, based on the practical approach to homiletics.—James MacLaughlin.

Emotions: Can You Trust Them?

James Dobson, Regal Books, Ventura, California, 1980, 143 pages, \$6.95.

Bombarded by a society of sensationalism, more and more Christians find it increasingly difficult to divorce feelings from reality. *Emotions: Can You Trust Them?* deals with the serious spiritual problems this brings about and gives constructive guidance for getting reality back into focus.

Dr. Dobson, a noted child psychologist and marriage counselor, deals directly with such areas as The Origin of Guilt, Living

With the Conscious, Romantic Love, What Is Anger and When Is It Sinful? and How to Test Inner Feelings and Impressions. He acknowledges that emotions are God-given instruments and stresses that we must learn to understand and control them rather than allowing them to control us.

The major part of the book is in question-and-answer format and at the end of each chapter are "Learning and Discussion Ideas," which make it an ideal book for small group studies or lecturing. There are also quizzes that can be used to stimulate discussion.—Cathy McBride.

The Trouble With Parents

Tim Stafford, ed., Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978, 159 pages, \$3.95.

This is not a guidebook on raising adolescents. Instead it reveals the emotions, the feelings, and the conflicts that are inevitable in the growing-up-and-breaking-away process. It will bring you in touch with the unique needs of ministering to the youth in your congregation. Its one message to all families is clear: They matter. It is worth the effort to work with them.—Dick Tibbits.

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